

THE LOVE OF MONEY



by **Matthew Sanderson**



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The Love of Money

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INTRODUCTION

The Love of Money is an *Esoterrorists* adventure for 4-6 players. It is designed as a single stand-alone adventure with pre-generated characters provided, but can be tweaked to accommodate integration into an ongoing campaign.

The paradigm of the Esoterrorist adversary that the Ordo Veritatis are pitted against within may well be something different from what operatives have faced before. Rather than focus on the horrors they can summon from the Outer Dark, it ponders on the insight that one such being can impart and inspire to create more unusual terror. It presents a possible snapshot of what could happen if the Esoterrorist goal is realised and the Great Project is completed. It could be a possible herald of the disaster to come should they succeed, or simply an experiment gone drastically wrong.

Only time will tell...

The primary focus of the adventure is on investigation and evidence analysis. There are definitely moments where lead is more than likely to fill the air, but on the whole, it is designed to get the characters using their brains rather than their fists. That said, the GM should bear in mind that the antagonists presented here are pretty vicious. They certainly don't play fair and there are a number of occasions when the operatives might well find themselves in deadly situations.

The GM should feel free to pull punches where they wish to, or cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war if they want to hammer home the fact that the Esoterrorists can be a very dangerous adversary. As such, the GM should be encouraged to consider using the expanded combat rules in *The Esoterror Factbook* for those moments when combat does occur, to highlight the degree of danger the PCs should find themselves in at these significant moments in the adventure.

A great deal of focus is given on the back-story to the adventure and its supporting cast of NPC's, in order to frame the situation solidly in the GM's mind and provide a sound platform to operate from should the PC's deviate wildly from the general scenario path, or choose to investigate other areas in more detail. This detailed background is intended as a safety net, not a straight jacket.

GM's should not feel such a briefing is restrictive and that they must adhere to every detail presented as being gospel. If you want to tweak details here and there, re-write sections of the back-story or the NPC's themselves, then feel free. Make it your own and roll with it in the best manner you like. The most important thing is that GM's and players alike have fun with the game.

Now, as a great man once said:

Let's go to work.

Investigation Trigger

Six months ago, Ordo Veritatis agent John Sheldon went off the organisations radar following an emotional breakdown in the wake of loosing his wife in a car crash. He held his sister, fellow Ordo Veritatis agent Caroline Sheldon responsible for her death as she was drunk at the wheel that night. Psychiatric Metrics feared John went out to perform a solo mission to expose the heart of an Esoterrorist funding network he had uncovered in Amsterdam. The proposal for that mission had been shelved months ago due to its low probability of success.

When his body turns up in Amsterdam, evidently the sacrifice in an Esoterrorist ritual, the eye of suspicion turns on the rest of his team he left behind. Are they guilty by mere association, or are they innocent of his fate? They are given a chance to find out what happened to their friend and colleague, and in the process clear them from any suspicion in the eyes of the Ordo Veritatis.

The operatives are flown to Amsterdam, given the cover of Interpol agents investigating the victim the local police have discovered, and given 48 hours in which to report their findings.

Sinister Conspiracy

Note: All names referred to in the background and herein are those names that individuals are most commonly known by in the scenario. These are not necessarily their true names, as the Ordo Veritatis give them cover identities for their own safety.

The Curtain Rises

The beginning of the end for John Sheldon (Peter Leighton) was one night long ago when he and his sister Caroline Sheldon (Heather Leighton) approached a shipping container attempting to be smuggled through Dover into the UK. The paperwork detailing the origins of the container and its shipper had vanished. As far as anyone could tell, the manifest of its cargo had been destroyed. As officers of HM Customs and Excise it was their job to find out what was in the anomalous container. What they found nearly killed them.

Monstrosities that even their worst nightmares could not have created flooded out of the darkness within the container and tore into them. Left for dead, these things fled into the night. Not long afterwards, lying in hospital, they met the Ordo Veritatis. Given what they had seen, knowing they could not stand by and let this threat go unchecked, they joined when the offered was given to them.

Operation T610

John's speciality was in financial crime. The more he began to uncover about the Esoterrorist threat, the more convinced he became that at least one major part of it was dedicated to the procurement of funds to keep operations alive in the rest of the world. If he could follow the money back to its source and destroy it, cells around the world would collapse like a house of cards in the wind.

Throughout the course of researching evidence from operations across the UK and the rest of Northern Europe, he uncovered hidden accounts, stashes of hard currency and records of financial transactions that all pointed to companies fronted in Amsterdam. Many of these were connected with the international distribution of precious metals and gemstones from Africa - and industry in which Amsterdam is one of the central players on the global scene.

Sheldon documented his findings and put forward the proposal for Operation T610. The title he took from Timothy 6:10 - For the love of money is the root of all evil. He proposed it would be impossible to take the companies head-on. Their financial power commanded influence in the political and legal arenas that would slam doors on them straight away. As such, he proposed a solo infiltration of one of the companies on their suspected list that had been taken over by the Esoterrorist movement.

His request was submitted for approval, but ultimately denied. The projected probability of success for a lone operative was remote. Control were happy for the operation to proceed if he had some kind of backup or surveillance following him throughout the course of the operation to step in if the worst happened, but Sheldon refused this. As he saw it, all it would take is one member of the surveillance team to be spotted and it would result in him and them being taken down. As a result, they'd never get another shot at the same operation again. Control believed then that if Sheldon was to attempt the mission, all they would accomplish would be him throwing away his own life. He was certainly a skilled and valued operative, but without support he was doomed to failure. As such, until a suitable alternative plan could be suggested, the proposal was shelved.

Not being one to take no for an answer, John began to work obsessively on revising his mission plan. He laid the groundwork for setting up a false identity that he could use to infiltrate the Esoterrorist movement. The persona of Franklin Chase would be his way to ensure his survival, protected by an intricate layer of false references, fabricated history, etc.

One Winter Night

John's work was admirable, but he began to push himself too hard. His sister saw it, and so did his wife, Mary. They urged him to slow down. His obsession was driving a wedge between him and Mary, and Caroline wouldn't allow that to happen. The two of them were happy together and she didn't want to see the work of the Ordo Veritatis tear them apart.

So, with Christmas rapidly approaching, friends surrounding them, they had a party. The darkness of the world was forgotten for a few hours. One bottle emptied after another and cares were scattered to the four winds. After realising her brother had had far too much red wine than he should have, Caroline took the initiative and relieved her brother of his car keys. She'd had a few drinks herself, but she was fine to drive, so she said. John and Mary rode in the back whilst Caroline took them home after the party. They could pick their car up in the morning.

The road through the wooded countryside was coated with ice. If she'd been driving slower, maybe it wouldn't have happened. Maybe if she'd had less to drink, her reactions would have been better. All John knew was that one moment Mary had her head resting on his shoulder as she slept. The next, after the collision with the oncoming car and spinning sideways into the tree, she was dead in his arms.

John's memory was a series of drunken fragments of that night, but one thing stuck in his mind: it was Caroline's fault that Mary died. He shut the door on his sister completely, and refused to talk to her, even to see her. Gradually, he slid into a near-suicidal depression. There was little for him to live for anymore. The one thing that had kept him holding on through the horrors he'd faced had been taken from him.

To Europe

Eventually, John decided he had nothing else to lose anymore. John Sheldon disappeared into the night and Franklin Chase left the country to complete Operation T610. If he died, it wasn't going to be a big loss. If he succeeded, he could destroy a large part of the funding operation for Esoterrorism worldwide.

He arrived in Amsterdam and began following his leads. In the space of a few weeks, he found Métallon Incorporated. Six months after the death of his wife, he applied for a job as an Accounts Manager at the company and with an arsenal of excellent references crafted for his false identity; he soon found himself with a foot in the door and accepted in a matter of days.

Métallon Inc. was one of numerous companies in the city that dealt with the distribution of precious metals and stones for industrial purposes to companies around the globe. A labyrinthine network of subsidiaries that dealt with a wide array of products from diamonds to rubies, from gold to platinum. At its head, the industrial giant, Johan van der Hulst.

Agent of the Outer Dark

Hulst was introduced to the Esoterrorist movement at a fairly young age when his mind was still receptive to believing there was magic in the world. Coming from a family already at the centre of European industry, he would inherit the funds to make himself one the richest people in Northern Europe should anything happen to them. It was a lonely childhood as his parents were always more focused on the business than on him. So he turned inward, making his imagination his playground. It was then that he found a playmate.

THE LOVE OF MONEY

He remembers that day well. It was his seventh birthday. He had been hoping his father would be home from the office, but yet another "important meeting" was being scheduled with foreign investors. His father couldn't possibly let this one pass, but he would "make it up soon" to his son. Words he'd heard many times before that amounted to nothing, and he believed they meant the same now. He ran to the bathroom, locked the door and cried his eyes out over the sink. As the tears fell, sorrow and disappointment turned to burning hate. When he looked up, he found another face staring back sadly at him. There was no-one else with him, which scared him at first, but the anger at his father soon gripped his heart again and overrode the unnatural edge that events had taken on.

The boy in the mirror told Johan everything was going to be fine. It told him that it had been sent here to keep him happy. In a way, the boy was Johan's guardian angel, and had seen how sad the poor child had become and couldn't let it go anymore. Now, he would have a friend to call upon whenever he wanted one. The boy in the mirror didn't have a name. Johan gave him one: Nicholaus. Soon, Nicholaus and Johan became good friends.

They played together and told each other stories; stories of fantasy and magic and of what they wanted the world to be. Nicholaus soon showed him that magic wasn't confined to the storybook, Johan could make it happen, but he had to work hard at it, and it would be years before he could master his hidden art. Nicholaus knew the way to obtain this power, but couldn't walk the route alone. Together though, they could do it.

This odd behaviour, talking to mirrors late into the night, didn't go unnoticed by his parents when they did occasionally direct their attentions towards him. Initially, they passed it off as the overactive mind of a child that had created an imaginary friend. They even indulged his fantasy and mirrored every wall of his bedroom when he asked for it as a Christmas present. However, when it continued, on and on, they started to become concerned. If he was going to become the future heir of the business empire that his father worked so hard to maintain, they had to do something pull him away from this fantasy and back onto the straight and narrow. The time was coming when when the child had to become a man and put away childish things.

As Johan grew older though, Nicholas also seemed to age alongside his friend. As Johan's parent's concerns became more visible, it told him that its existence had best become hidden now. Time to let his parents think that their little boy had outgrown his "imaginary friend". His parents even arranged for him to see a psychologist to make sure that everything was fine and he had put this phase behind him. Johan's performance could have won him an Oscar. How differently things could have gone if his parents had hired someone who could see through the lies and the boy's convincing smile. His parents didn't know any better, and they were satisfied with what the "expert's" conclusion was on the matter.

Johan immersed himself in his schoolwork, particularly in the sciences. By understanding the rules that govern this world, Nicholaus told him he would find the key to opening the barrier that divides his world from the source of all magic, the Outer Dark. When he could do that, he would become all-powerful, as he dreamt one day he was destined to become.

Johan researched physics and engineering. It was soon blatant to his parents that this was the direction he'd chosen to take his life. They didn't complain. The business potential for someone with those skills, even outside of their own Métallon Incorporated, was enormous, so they encouraged his studies. He went to Cambridge, studied amongst the greatest scientific minds in Europe and returned a qualified Engineer. In his studies, he had also taken a second course in Nuclear Physics, for it was here that he had found the way to tear away the membrane.

Not long after his graduation, a rare event took place: the family holiday. Heading to the Alps, Nicholas told Johan it was the time to act. They'd discussed a plan throughout their time at university together. This was going to be best chance they would have. The skiing accident took both of his parents' lives and although it severely injured him at the time, it removed all suspicion himself. He wouldn't have started an avalanche that could swallow him as well, that would be insanity. There were no witnesses to the fact he fired a pistol on the isolated slope, and with a gun now buried under many metres of ice and snow, no evidence will be forthcoming any time soon.

He inherited everything, but most importantly, Métallon Incorporated. He had business advice from numerous sources, but to keep shareholders concerns addressed, he hired a financial business consultant that would help him keep the company headed in the right direction. Nicholas was given a surname for this purpose. Nicholas Laan as far as the outside world could tell, was a real person. No-one ever met "him", but he seemed to do his job well and the business grew from strength to strength under his guidance given to Johan. The shareholders were happy. All obstacles had been removed.

The Face of Esoterror

Nicholaus told Johan that he needed help to eventually be able to destroy the fabric of the membrane. There were people around the world that could help him. People in desperate need of the help that Johan could give them. They would soon come to him, and working together, they could grasp the power that Johan had longed for since his childhood.

From all corners of the globe, strangers came. Granted a revelation from the thing in the mirror, they had come to him, heads of Esoterror cells all over the world. Setting cell leaders up as field researchers for the company, prospecting new sites around the world for metal and gem deposits, the money flowed with all official paperwork signed off and all above board to the outside world.

The fact that they never bring back any tangible results doesn't bother anyone. One, because only Hulst and his consultant, Laan, would see the reports. Two, because if anyone dug deep enough to uncover the amounts going out from their R&D budget, they'd see it wasn't a percentage grand enough to warrant any concern. With his sign-off, the field analysts were set up on their database, salaries set in place and the company did the rest. As long as he said it was fine, everything was fine as far as the company was concerned, and the cells continued to get their funds.

The Philosopher's Stone

Hulst's eventual goal was one born from a moment of insight that Nicholaus granted him. It showed him that there was a way for the membrane to be torn away at a single point, albeit for a given moment.

Humanity's own terror had given birth to one of the most damaging attacks on the membrane in the last hundred years, and in turn gave Hulst what he was looking for. Into a world that had become supremely confident in mankind's ability to master his surroundings, science had heralded in a fear previously unknown to humanity. It was now within humanity's grasp to push a button and end the world in nuclear annihilation. Mankind had split the atom, and could split the earth in two if it so desired.

An Esoterrorist paradise, the Cold War and the lingering threat of destruction at any moment did more to damage the membrane than they could have hoped for. It was not to last though. As the Cold War thawed and eventually died, the fear disappeared from the public view. The damage had already been done though. The global consensus of reality had already set the rules, and Hulst saw the means by which to exploit this.

Rhodium, a particularly rare metal, used in alloys alongside platinum, gold and silver, was one of the vast array of metals that was handled by Métallon Incorporated. One source for this metal was in the byproducts of used nuclear fuel, although its minuscule quantities and expensive extraction process hardly make this a viable production method. Putting aside the fact it was economically unsound to collect it from that particular method, in Hulst's mind the metal gained a significant place in his philosophy. He saw the splitting of the atom being the moment when the door opened to the Outer Dark itself. In that moment, at the atomic level, the two conflicting realities collided in the void at the heart of the splitting atom and caused the explosion known all too well to the world. In its wake, it almost literally created something from nothing – the Rhodium deposit. Even though his science was heavily flawed, he believed that if one were to collect enough of this metal (either from spent rods or in its natural state), it could be possible to reach a critical mass that could open a stable doorway to the Outer Dark. Through this gateway one could then harness the power of the Outer Dark directly in its raw form. Rhodium would be the material from which the Esoterror movement would find their Philosopher's Stone, the missing element that would complete their Great Project.

Métallon Incorporated is Europe's largest industrial supplier of Rhodium, and third largest in the world. Its largest sales of the metal are to the automotive industries both in Europe and in the United States where it forms the key component for catalytic converters. Just one multi-billion Euro facet of their operation that keeps Esoterrorists worldwide in business. It also has allowed Johan to stockpile enough of the metal to build a device of Nicholaus's design that will allow him to tear away the membrane under the right circumstances.

These circumstances were set in motion one winter's night six months ago... Enter John Sheldon.

An Unknowing Pawn

Hulst knew that Sheldon was coming to him. In fact, it was Nicholaus that had instigated this. He had appeared in the rear view mirror of the car that night. Caroline in her drunken state had been shocked for just the moment that was needed to loose control, causing the collision and ending Mary's life. Looking back on the evening, Caroline isn't even sure now that she even saw anything. Was it the drink, or was there really something there?

Letting Sheldon dig as much as he wanted, and even opening some doors for him, Hulst was effectively laying the whole operation out on a silver platter to the Ordo Veritatis agent. Still, he moved slowly, not wanting to be discovered, without knowing he had been played all the time. Eventually, he stormed into Hulst's office one late night and put a gun to his head threatening to end the funding that brought so much misery to the world. That's when he saw Mary in the mirror.

One of Nicholaus's gifts, which Hulst knew full well, was that it could mimic anyone who had ever looked into a mirror. It took Mary's appearance and together they spun the lie that converted Sheldon to the Esoterror cause: that Mary's soul was trapped in the Outer Dark and Hulst could set her free. In order to make this happen, he was going to need Sheldon's help.



Hulst's device could bring her back, but in order to activate it, he needed such an investment of will and blood that he couldn't do it alone. In fact, someone was going to have to die to give it the power it needed. That wouldn't be the end for them. On the other side, they would be together again. The device could bring them back, at a price.

Sheldon's soul would be intrinsically linked to the device, giving him a lifeline that he could follow back into the world. Abiding by the fundamental law of balance, others would have to take his and Mary's place in the Outer Dark. Sheldon knew who should fill that void. Mary told him who had put her there to begin with. The same people that had brought Sheldon here to Amsterdam. The same people that had nearly killed him that night in Dover so long ago by allowing that container into the country. The same people that made Sheldon push himself to limit and brought about the party that fateful night. His sister may have driven the car that night, but none of them would have been out on the road that night if it had not ultimately been because of the Ordo Veritatis.

Convinced by the encounter with Mary, whom Hulst could briefly bring forth from the other side (another incredibly convincing performance), Sheldon gave himself over to the plan. Nearly six months after his arrival in Amsterdam, and approaching the anniversary of the loss of his wife, he allowed himself to be ritually slaughtered by Hulst in the effort to retrieve his love.

Sheldon's physical heart, along with his soul, is now bound to the Rhodium device that has been taken to a remote point in the North Sea, where the membrane is thin, on a half-built oilrig abandoned due to the ever present awful weather conditions. Here, they will open the door to the Outer Dark.

What is left of Sheldon is a hollow echo of hate that survives beyond death. It waits for the final condition to be fulfilled to activate the accursed technology: that the Ordo Veritatis will once again spill blood, this time over the heart of the device, to allow Mary to return. With that, the membrane will be torn asunder and Hulst's lifelong dream of absolute power over creation itself realised.

Fallout

When Sheldon went off the grid six months ago, his teammates had feared the worst. It was completely unlike him to vanish. For weeks they thought, just as those higher up in the Ordo Veritatis had, that he had sunk into a depression and just wanted time alone. When he was gone for longer than this would have explained, they began to work on various hypotheses to explain his absence. Running across the filed away proposal for Operation T610, this became the most likely reason. He'd destroyed all records of his own follow-up work so that no-one from the Ordo Veritatis could track him and bring him back home.

One of the main reasons they had shelved the plan, besides the high chance of failure, was that rather than simply dying, a lone operative could well be subverted into the Esoterrorist movement itself. Given the power these individuals commanded in the financial sector and the strings they could pull, the suspected Esoterrorists could well be amongst some of the most formidable members of the movement worldwide. A lone

operative trying to infiltrate them wouldn't stand a chance. As such, if one member of the cell had gone rogue, then precautions would have to be taken with the remaining members. With Sheldon's body being discovered in Amsterdam, and the eye of caution falling on his former team, this is where the adventure begins.

The Stage is Set

The team has been recalled from the field and briefed on the situation. They are currently guilty by association, until they can prove themselves innocent. There is no hard proof against them as yet, so they haven't been locked away in a cell or otherwise made to disappear, but they have 48 hours to get into Amsterdam and find out what happened to Sheldon and document the Esoterror involvement in this before reporting back to their superiors who will then formulate a plan based on the evidence they have uncovered.

Fitted with GPS tracking monitors linked to their heart-rate, so they couldn't be discretely removed without being noticed, they are also to be accompanied by representatives of the Psychiatric Metrics division to monitor their behaviour and report back directly to the Ordo Veritatis if the team has been compromised.

In case they are confirmed as being compromised, a team from the Special Suppression Force is sent in secret to follow and protect the two observers in the team and neutralise the others as well as any Esoterrorists they might attempt to join forces with. They are under standing orders to contact no other parties outside of Control. They listen to the activities of the team via hidden microphones in the observers' possession, but they are to make no contact with them directly.

Of course, if Forbes' team show themselves to be untouched by Esoterror influence, and if they identify those responsible for Sheldon's demise, they are to make all possible efforts to immediately capture those at the head of the conspiracy as Control could have much to learn of the Esoterrorist organisation from them. All those around them resisting detainment are to be dispatched with extreme prejudice, which on the rig may result in the completion of the grand design itself.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Player Characters

The following presents an overview of each player character in the scenario and their role in the events unfolding before them. Detailed briefings and character sheets for each character can be found in Appendix 3, located towards the end of the document for ease of photocopying.

LUCY FORBES

Formerly known as Rachel Miller, she was the team leader above John Sheldon. An authoritarian, by-the-book leader, she took it hard when John's breakdown and subsequent disappearance badly. As a perfectionist, she should have seen it coming, and so she was driven to find any way she could do deal with her failure. She found release through drugs, but Martin has discovered this and now holds it over her as a means by which to further his position in the Ordo Veritatis.

CAROLINE SHELDON

Formerly known as Heather Leighton, she was John's sister. John holds her responsible for Mary's death. Caroline hates the Esoterrorists with an unhealthy passion. They nearly killed her and her brother before, which eventually led to them joining the Ordo Veritatis. A skilled field operative that keeps marching onwards to get revenge on the Esoterror Movement any way she can.

RANDALL TRENHAILE

Formerly known as Adam Thorne, he was a former member of the Esoterrorists movement in Amsterdam. A skilled occult scholar, he was recruited into the Esoterror cause to strike back at his authoritarian father. When he discovered the abominable creations that the rest of the moment created, he fled and joined the Ordo Veritatis. Kept on a short leash by Control who sees him as a great asset, but potentially a dangerous one as his ambitions of obtaining power remain.

ROBERT MARTIN

Formerly known as Wade Ainsworth, he was an investigative journalist before joining the Ordo Veritatis. He'd been working on an expose of the occult underground in his local community when the organisation found him. He joined with the intention of learning the secrets of the conspiracy but now realises how much of a devastating mistake that would be. He still wants to learn what hides at the top of the power structure though, and after discovering Forbes' drug habit, intends to use her to increase his rank within the organisation until the finds out.

SABRINA TOWNSEND

Formerly known as Brooke Southwell, she was a talented engineer in the aerospace industry, working for the Royal Air Force, with the ambition of eventually joining the European Space Agency. She joined the Ordo Veritatis after being caught up in an attack

on her base by Esoterrorist creations. Now a gifted surveillance operative, she joined Forbes' team, but it was a short-lived stay. Sabrina believed that if the situation justified it enough, rules could be broken. Forbes' standpoint made this impossible and when it nearly came to blows, Sabrina was moved to another team. She's now been called in to help Pendleton in his evaluation of the team as a character witness. Only her and Pendleton know of the SSF team shadowing them throughout the operation.

GEOFFREY PENDLETON

Formerly known as Gerald Wentworth, and a member of the Psychiatric Metrics division. A skilled psychologist and an officer in military intelligence from the First Gulf War onwards, he's been called in to evaluate the members of Sheldon's former team, with Townsend's help, to see if they have become as compromised as he could potentially have become. The rest of the team know very little about him other than his role on the mission. Only him and Townsend know of the SSF team shadowing them throughout the operation.

The Number of Player Characters

The scenario is built for 4-6 of the above characters to be used (with the potential addition of Van Eken [see page 111] if one dies before the conclusion, or if the GM wishes, full inclusion as a seventh PC). In practice, having all 6 would work the best for the adventure, but if as GM you run for a smaller group, then 4 characters would be sufficient. The core characters that are essential for the unfolding adventure are Caroline Sheldon (as she has the emotional connection to John and was used directly in the course of the plan to facilitate Mary's death) and Randall Trenhaile (as he provides background links to the Esoterror movement in Amsterdam). Then there's also the conflict that can arise between the two if Trenhaile's past comes to light in such a way that could set off Caroline's hatred of the Esoterrorists, which can provide an interesting party dynamic.

The characters that make up the rest of the team set the tone from the party relationships. For example, having Sheldon and Trenhaile alongside Forbes and Martin promotes a mixture of personal conflict and determination in the team. The blackmail hanging in the air between the two against Forbes' desire to finally resolve her inner conflict.

Having Pendleton and Townsend in the group promotes a greater sense of 'us-and-them' paranoia as the group is split down the middle from the perspective of the Sheldon and Trenhaile. The two watchers from on high, waiting for them to slip up in some fashion and be branded as Esoterrorist converts.

Having Forbes and Townsend together in a smaller group is another interesting dynamic: the two women who represent unstoppable forces hitting immobile objects. One being investigated, the other doing the investigating, both begrudgingly having to work together, it's a combination that might well appeal to those who seek interesting character roleplay alongside the investigation the story offers.

When playing with 5 characters, the combination can be settled in numerous ways. Either it comes down to which of the above combinations the GM or players don't wish to feature in the game. Or, if simply letting the players choose at random from the

remaining 4 characters besides Sheldon and Trenhaile, which one luck decides doesn't feature in the adventure.

Those characters not used can either be discarded completely, or maybe played as background NPCs if the GM still wishes to try and keep the full party dynamic intact. It's down to you in the end.

One final thing to consider though is the presence of the SSF team shadowing the PCs. In the core write-ups, only Townsend and Pendleton know about them. If they are not being used, or if the GM wishes to be a little more blatant with their application, Mr Verity can

always explain about them in the initial scene, microphones hidden in the watches they are issued with, etc.

Integration into an Ongoing Campaign

The characters central to the background of the story are John and Caroline Sheldon. Caroline, being a player character here can be substituted for any PC in your current game with just a few tweaks. It's recommended that the groundwork for this be done some time in advance, so it doesn't feel a rushed lead in. In fact, spreading the lead up events over the course of a few adventures before should be ample time.

The first step would be to introduce the PCs brother (who will take on the John Sheldon role) to the Ordo Veritatis - maybe in the same team if you want an NPC member, or a different one to give some distance. A mission or two later, the rejection of the Operation T610 proposal happens and he's devastated. Another mission passes, the car crash happens and the PC involved and the John NPC become distanced. Give it another couple of missions and the John NPC goes missing. There's definitely chance here to craft your own adventure doing preliminary investigation work that can tie into the eventual adventure. Then things can tie in nicely with the details presented here, tailoring sections as you need to in order to keep the flow of continuity rolling from previous groundwork already laid.

Major NPCs

The following lists of major and minor NPCs details relevant to investigation named in the course of the adventure. Some are more active than others, but all are presented here for reference to aid the GM. Those involved in scenes where combat could potentially occur have their key stats presented as well.

JOHN SHELDON

Born as Peter Leighton, he became John Sheldon upon joining the Ordo Veritatis, and then Franklin Chase when he undertook Operation T610 in Amsterdam on his own. The agent targeted by Laan to empower the Esoterrorist device to rip a hole through the Membrane to the Outer Dark.

JOHAN VAN DER HULST

Head of Métallon Incorporated and one of the largest Esoterror funding networks in the northern Hemisphere. He believes, with the information he has been given by Laan (who came to him as a child and groomed him for his future role), that he can finally break through the Membrane and harness the power of the Outer Dark and thus become (literally) the most powerful sorcerer in the world, having achieve the ultimate goal of the Esoterror movement.

Athletics 8, Health 20, Shooting 10, Scuffling 10 and a Hit Threshold of 4. Armour: +2 vs. Shooting.

NICHOLAUS LAAN

The thing in the mirror, the so-called “imaginary friend” that came to Hulst when he was a child, and now acts as his unseen “financial advisor and business consultant” in Métallon Incorporated. In reality, a Spectrosite. (See Appendix 1, page 72 for more information on the Spectrosites).

Aberance 20, Health 20 and a Hit Threshold of 4.

MAARTEN VROMME

Formerly under the command of Hulst, now a rival Esoterrorist in Amsterdam. More of a traditionalist in the approach to achieve success in the Great Project, he believes the plan his former master works towards will be a great catastrophe and do nothing to help the Esoterror cause, and could in fact do more harm than good as he sees it. To this end, he attempts to intervene and end the madman’s efforts by disposing of the Ordo Veritatis team, primarily Caroline Sheldon.

Athletics 4, Health 10, Shooting 10, Scuffling 10 and a Hit Threshold of 3.

HAGAN LANGE

Second in command of Hulst’s Esoterror operation. In his master’s absence, he runs Métallon Incorporated in Amsterdam, although he has not been made aware of the true nature of Laan. Whilst Hulst is at the ritual site preparing the device, he remains in Amsterdam and is the most senior member of the Esoterrorists in the company that the PCs come in contact with on the mainland.

Athletics 6, Health 10, Shooting 10, Scuffling 10 and a Hit Threshold of 3.

ARABELLE SKIPPER

The head of wet works for Hulst. When a problem arises that needs to be dispatched, she is sent to deal with it. Reports directly to Lange. She remains behind in Amsterdam to deal with any “problems” whilst the ritual site is being prepared, along with Lange and Groot.

Athletics 8, Health 10, Shooting 20, Scuffling 8 and a Hit Threshold of 4.

BETJE GROOT

Head of mundane security for Métallon Incorporated. She is still under Esoterror employ, and works directly under Arabelle Skipper. She occasionally uses uninformed civilian operatives from the security team as pawns to perform surveillance work on behalf of the company, such as Berg Cansters.

Athletics 6, Health 6, Shooting 6, Scuffling 6 and a Hit Threshold of 3.

MINA KORSTIAAN

Financial analyst who works for Vromme’s company. A new recruit to the Esoterror movement, and one who has embraced it wholeheartedly. She has effectively become Vromme’s right hand in most matters when it comes to more practical field operations.

Athletics 6, Health 6, Shooting 6, Scuffling 6 and a Hit Threshold of 3.

THE SSF TEAM

Admittedly, the team do not play a very visual part throughout the adventure as they continually lurk on the edge of vision until near the climax. They are a crack team of six former SAS operatives that follow their orders to the letter and do not deviate. The stats provided below are the same for each member of the team.

Athletics 10, Health 10, Shooting 25, Scuffling 10 and a Hit Threshold of 4.
 Weapons: Submachine Gun (+1 Damage Mod), 9mm Handgun (+0 Damage Mod).
 Armour: Military grade body armour (3 points vs. Bullets, 2 points vs. blades).

DETECTIVE INSPECTOR EDDA VAN EKEN

The operatives point of contact with the Amsterdam police, and an experienced homicide detective. Fluent in English, but with a heavy accent, she's primarily designed as an NPC to support the operatives in the course of their investigation. Whilst she's a level-headed and by-the-book member of the law enforcement profession, this means that she might be a little frustrated by the team if they start to interfere with set procedure, or if they begin to display 'unorthodox' procedures of their own. She's worked with Interpol before and sees the whole exercise as a way to get a few "brownie points" with those that are higher up in the department. However, if one of the operatives perishes in the course of the investigation, then it's recommended that Van Eken be used as a replacement PC. As such, details for her to hand to the relevant player (or indeed use her from the outset as a PC) are included in full in Appendix 3.

INVESTIGATIVE SKILLS

Academic	Languages 1, Law 1, Research 2
Interpersonal	Bullshit Detector 2, Cop Talk 4, Negotiation 2, Reassurance 2
Technical	Evidence Collection 2, Document Analysis 1, Fingerprinting 1, Photography 1

GENERAL SKILLS

Athletics 5, Driving 5, Health 20, Preparedness 5, Scuffling 5, Shooting 10, Stability 10, Surveillance 2

Weapons: Glock 9mm (Light Pistol) 0 Damage Mod
 Baton (Police Issue) -1 Damage Mod

Languages: Dutch, English **Hit Threshold:** 3

Minor NPCs

BERG CANSTERS

Smuggler and small time drug runner employed on occasion by Métallon Incorporated. Not a major contact in their operation, but was responsible for the shipment of monstrosities through Dover that nearly killed the Sheldon's.

PIET VOGEL

The manager at the Hotel de l'Europe, encountered in the initial stages of the investigation.

SOFIE DEVOSS

The landlady of the apartment block Sheldon used to live in, whilst under the guise of Franklin Chase.

ANKE WIT

Secretary to Franklin Chase at Métallon Incorporated. An innocent civilian with no Esoterror involvement.

Additional Investigative Ability

PATHOLOGY (ACADEMIC)

You are trained in carrying out medical examinations of living human subjects and forming diagnoses based on your findings. You can:

- diagnose probable causes of sickness or injury.
- identify the extent and cause of an unconscious person's trauma.
- detect when a person is suffering from a physically debilitating condition such as drug addiction, pregnancy or malnutrition.
- establish a person's general level of health.
- identify medical abnormalities.

If you have eight or more points in **Medic**, you get **Pathology** 1 for free.

TRAIL OF CLUES

Beginning with the introductory scene in the plane, the operatives are given their brief: their friend and former team member John Sheldon has been found dead in Amsterdam. It's their mission to find out exactly what happened to him in his period of absence, who killed him, and why. In the process, they can hopefully prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that they are not in any way guilty of defection by association.

To get them started, the operatives are pointed in the direction of the hotel where Sheldon's body was found. Here, they meet up with local law enforcement who are not too pleased with being kept waiting by Interpol, but offer them all the facilities at their disposal (an office at the police station with access to their records and access to their labs if needed).

In the room itself, besides the immediate observation is that Sheldon was not murdered on site, there are blatant signs of the evidence having been tampered with after being placed. Amongst the body parts, one of Sheldon's business cards has been left, detailing his address. Security tapes also provide them with the faces of Arabelle Skipper and Mina Korstiaan who were there at the time the body was being planted.

Also at the hotel, the place was also being watched by Berg Cansters, who has subsequently been picked up by the police. Back at the station, he is attacked by the Spectrosite before he can reveal much information, but he does get chance to scream out the name of Betje Groot, head of Métallon Incorporated security, who hired him to go there to watch.

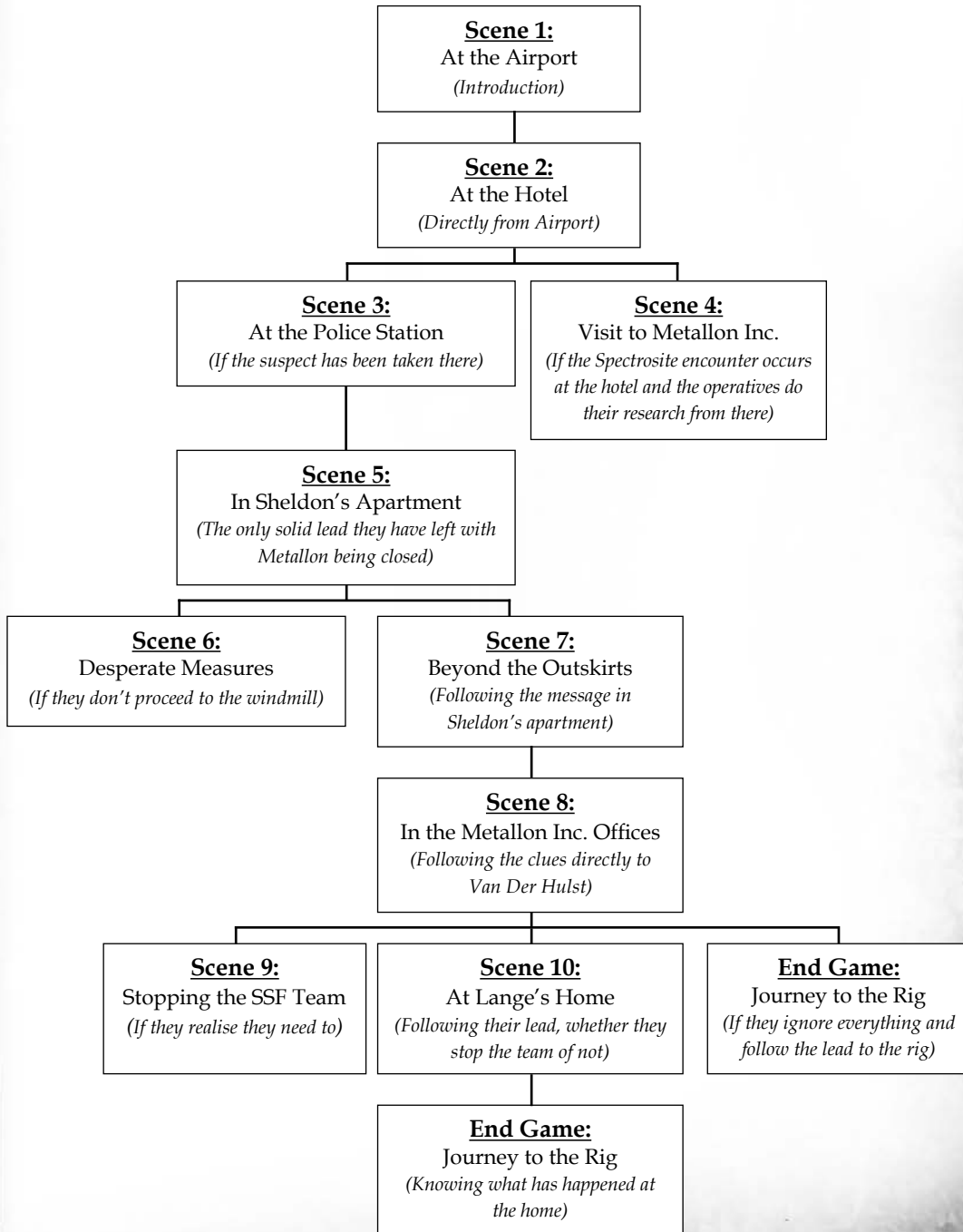
With the business card leading the operatives to Sheldon's apartment, they find the place has been ransacked quickly, but some evidence still remains. Amongst what they find is a note cut out of newspaper print pointing him towards a rendezvous beyond the outskirts of the city, and Sheldon's pass into Métallon Incorporated. The investigation can go one of two ways from this point, utilising a couple of alternate scenes, but ultimately gets them the information they need.

The note leads them to an ambush where they are attacked by Vromme's associates. The evidence uncovered here during the site clean-up tells the operatives that Vromme believed that the operatives are somehow instrumental in the success of Hulst's plans, that they are being used to further his goals. Here, Arabelle Skipper may well attempt to intervene if needed; attempting to make sure that the plan isn't blown apart by their interference.

The pass grants them access to Métallon Incorporated where they can break into Sheldon's office and find the plans for the device and security of the oilrig. If they are to get close to the oilrig, they will need to transmit a pre-arranged code over their radio or be blown out of the sky on route. There's also his forged access key to Hulst's office and Hagan's address for his home office where their ritual site has been prepared to spill blood onto the heart of the device before it is transported to the oil rig by Laan through a mirror.

In Hulst's office, they confront the Spectrosite who guards the terminal where they can acquire the radio code to get them safe passage to the oilrig. From here, the endgame begins and it's down the operatives to find out exactly what happens, whether they fall for the trap and head straight to ritual site, or to the oilrig to recover the device before it falls back into Esoterrorist hands.

FLOWCHART OF SCENES



ANTAGONIST REACTIONS

For the most part, the trail has been laid by Hulst's minions to create a subtle path that will lead the operatives to Lange's residence outside of the city where the ritual is to be performed.

The key moment to this trail beginning is Cansters being captured by the police outside the hotel. He has been paid to be caught on a minor offence and to attract suspicion. Whilst he is told that they will perform a background check on him that ultimately leads them to Groot and to Métallon Incorporated, the Spectrosite will kill him to give it the appearance they are trying to cut off all loose ends.

However, they want to be found, so they won't intervene to stop themselves from being found. They will make efforts like Cansters being killed to make it appear quite the opposite. Also, since the majority of the Esoterrorist cell is already at Lange's residence by the time the operatives arrive in Amsterdam, they are too far away to play much of an active roll and rely on those they have left behind.

Skipper is in the city to make sure no one interferes with Hulst's efforts, such as Vromme. With Korstiaan disrupting the preparations made in the hotel room, it doesn't affect Hulst's goals too much, as Cansters is still in place. She's primarily a sniper, so doesn't need to get into the thick of action up close and personal, preferring to perform surgical strikes from a distance.

However, Vromme does provide another trail of evidence to point the operatives towards Sheldon's apartment, which eventually leads to the ambush outside of the city. If they don't follow his trail, this is where the major piece of antagonist reaction takes place. Their aim is that he hopes to dispose of them and thus destroy Hulst's chances of completing his experiment. If they don't come to him, he will have to take the fight to them. Thus, the alternate scene (Scene 6) plays out if they don't head to the ambush site.

Even if the operatives manage to avoid Vromme completely, the evidence should still draw them into the heart of Métallon Incorporated where the extent of the Esoterror operation becomes apparent and they uncover the information that leads them to the North Sea.

Under their original orders, the SSF team shadowing the team might suddenly become more of a threat than Pendleton and Townsend would have initially thought if they realize the significance of the ritual at Lange's residence too late. For all intents and purposes, they suddenly become the antagonists the PCs are trying to stop at that point from causing the catastrophe to begin.

Up until that point though, they should be visibly sparse. They want to keep an eye on the operatives, not hamper their investigation, since if they suddenly become too visible, the operatives who are not aware of their presence might think they are a hostile force tailing them (although this could amuse some GMs by having the group try to run away and lose these mysterious followers from their own side in this way if they make this mistake!).

SCENES

Scene 1: At the Airport

SCENE TYPE INTRODUCTION

In each of the characters packs, found in Appendix 3, the PCs have a brief lead-in to the introductory scene (entitled 'In the last few hours'). This helps to skip doing the same basic introduction scene six times over for each of the PCs in turn. We begin the scene here, with all the investigators about to come together on a private jet on the way to Amsterdam.

As far as the members of Forbes's team are concerned, they've been driven from their homes in the middle of a cold winter night to the airfield. They've boarded the plane without any idea of who is onboard and where they are destined. Now they've been brought into a cramped conference room on the plane with Mr Verity at the head of the table and the door opens to reveal Sabrina Townsend and Geoffrey Pendleton who take the last two remaining seats at the table.

BRIEFING

Mr Verity begins by outlining the situation, possibly after having to calm down the operatives if Forbes and Townsend leap on the chance to throw snide remarks at each other, given their mutual dislike. It's generally recommend that you come up with your own speech for Mr Verity, rather than read from the book as it helps to set a better mood. However, to provide some inspiration for possible dialogue, an example briefing is provided below.

"Right, let's begin... I'm sorry for the somewhat cloak and dagger approach for getting you all here, but we're running on a pretty tight schedule at the moment. I had hoped to be the bearer of good news, but developments in the last hour have turned this for the worse.

"Electronic Traffic Sifting detected that the Amsterdam police force had been attempting to match a finger print on their database that corresponded to John Sheldon. As such, given this is the first lead we have had on him for some months, we mobilised you as his team to bring him in. To be honest, we weren't particularly surprised that he should turn up in Amsterdam. Given the nature of the mission we suspect he was trying to carry out on his own (T610, as some of you are already aware), going to one of the financial centres of Europe made perfect sense. The city is home to the oldest stock exchange and is renowned for its diamond trade... but I digress.

"We were to fill you in with more details of his exact whereabouts on route as they came in to us, which they finally did, about 30 minutes ago from further police transmissions. However... it's my sad duty to inform you that your colleague and friend, has been found dead in Amsterdam early this evening, the fingerprints taken being an attempt to try and confirm his identity. There will be time for grieving later, but I'm afraid we have to move quickly to apprehend his killer.

THE LOVE OF MONEY

"John Sheldon was murdered by parties we can only believe are in the employ of the Esoterrorist movement. His body was found at the Hotel de l'Europe in the centre of the city on the Amstel river. The early reports as to the nature of his death lead us to conclude this was no accident. You'll see for yourselves upon arrival. A car will be waiting for you at Schiphol airport when we land that will provide you with transportation to the hotel, and the driver will issue you with your cover for the operation.

"You will each be issued with Interpol identification that covers you as agents or specialists brought in by the agency. At the hotel the local law enforcement will no doubt still be in attendance. Your credentials should be enough for them to lend you any assistance you might need, and they have already been given advance notice of your arrival. It's your mission to find out what happened to him in the six months he went off the radar; what they found out; what the Esoterrorist agenda is behind his murder; and stop whatever plans they have put in motion.

"You shouldn't have too much of a problem with the language barrier, I hear about 70% of the country can get by in English these days. In addition, we are each providing you with a standard issue firearm and concealable baton. Given what's happened to Sheldon, we don't want the same happening to you.

"Normally, we wouldn't have assigned any of you to this case, given the emotional involvement of those concerned, but given you were already mobilized, and time is a factor here with us having to hold back the police from stomping all over the scene, we're left with little choice to involve you, and I hope you forgive us for that.



"However, this does lead us to a somewhat unfortunate issue. Being in his team, you all know what happened to John Sheldon about a year ago. The crash sent him over the edge and we need to know exactly how far down he went. Concerns from the Psychiatric Metrics division is that he could have turned to the Esoterror movement in his mental state. As such, we have the unfortunate procedure where we will have to be keeping an eye on you as his former team members. The phrase 'guilt by association' may not be a million miles away from the state we find ourselves in, but there have been cases in the past that can not be overlooked.

"It's for your own safety as ours that you are placed under observation to eliminate you from this possible scenario. As such, Mr. Pendleton from Psychiatric Metrics will be accompanying you on the mission with Miss Townsend to document your behaviour and findings. Again, if we had known what the situation is, Miss Townsend would not have been our first choice, but with her recent secondment to Psychiatric Metrics, working directly with Mr Pendleton, circumstances have left us with little choice there.

"We have the utmost faith that you won't disappoint us, but as a further safety precaution, we are also issuing you with a watch that you will wear at all times. It contains a GPS tracking beacon that is linked to your heart-rate, so we know if you take them off - which I strongly recommend against, you understand. We expect your team's report in 48 hours. Good luck."

At this point, he presents a box containing four wrist-watches for Forbes, Sheldon, Trenhaile and Martin to select. They are varied in style and appearance, so it doesn't attract suspicion with four people all wearing the same kind of watch, if any sharp eyes were to notice.

If you want to word your own introduction, here's a list of the following points to convey to the PCs:

- A lead came in a few hours ago as to Sheldon's whereabouts: Amsterdam police ran his fingerprints through their database.
- The team has been mobilized originally to bring him back in, alive.
- They suspected he might go to somewhere like Amsterdam, given the nature of Operation T610. Highlight the significance of the city in European finance (oldest stock exchange, central to the world diamond trade, etc.).
- In the last hour though, they have confirmed his body has been found in the Hotel de l'Europe in central Amsterdam.
- Esoterrorist involvement has been all but confirmed.
- The operatives will be posing as Interpol agents.
- They will be driven to the hotel upon landing at Schiphol and issued with a firearm and baton by their driver.
- It's the operatives mission to find out what happened to Sheldon in the six months he went off the radar; what he found out; what the Esoterrorist agenda is behind his murder; and stop whatever plans they have put in motion.
- They would not normally have brought his former team in, due to emotional involvement, but since they were already mobilized, and time is against them, they have no choice but to proceed as they are.

- Psychiatric Metrics are concerned that by association, the team could be compromised. They hope this is not the case, but to monitor their activity, Pendleton and Townsend will accompany them on their investigation.
- Likewise, they apologise for the inclusion of Townsend, given previous involvement, but this can not be helped as she is partnered with Pendleton.
- The team will also be fitted with GPS monitors linked to their heart-rate so the Ordo can tell if they have been removed at any point.

Obviously, if any operative refuses to put the watches on, they will have to take more extreme methods. A stewardess comes around to offer the group drinks and then uses a surgical gun hidden up her sleeve to implant them with a tracking device on the back of their neck. If they attempt to remove the watches or implants (with help, as it's difficult cutting it out from the back of their neck otherwise), then there are a number of choices open to the GM: a harsh GM might well have the team member taken away and "retired" from active status as they are certainly compromised once the mission is concluded; a more lenient GM might well have the operative in question taken away for lengthy Psychiatric Metric interrogation and then later cleared before their next mission. Likewise, if the group fails to report in 48 hours, they might suffer the same treatment. The consequences shouldn't interfere with game play, but help to colour the end of the adventure of the character.

PSYCHIATRIC METRICS BRIEFING

Mr Verity then takes Townsend and Pendleton to a side office. It's a nicely decorated, if somewhat compact office. There's just enough room for a desk, an executive seat behind it, and two smaller chairs in front. A large mirror on one wall helps give the impression of the room being larger. Here, Mr Verity explains about the SSF team following them, and gives them their microphones.

There's no set dialogue for this section, but the main points to convey are:

- Due to the nature of the mission, and the potential for team members to be compromised, A Special Suppression Force team has been dispatched to follow the group for the protection of Townsend and Pendleton.
- Listening in through the bug planted in their jacket lapels, they will be able to intervene should the need arise, and will be following them from a discrete distance (either on land or air) throughout the course of the operation. That said, they will only do so if the need is exceptional.
- The rest of Forbes' team will not be informed of the team's presence for obvious reasons.
- They will remain completely out of radio contact for the whole mission and have standing orders that they are to capture those at the head of the conspiracy as soon as they and their locations are identified. Control will have much to learn about the Esterrorist organisation from them.
- All those around them resisting detainment are to be dispatched with extreme prejudice.

Finally, the operatives at this point should feel somewhat uneasy, almost as if they are being watched. If asked, Mr Verity explains there is no CCTV in the room, that it must just be nerves or anticipation ahead of the mission. Only if the operatives specifically look at the mirror should they get a hint of where this feeling is coming from: Laan, having initially followed Sheldon to the plane, now watching the meeting and learning of the SSF team. It hides behind the reflections of those in the room, keeping almost entirely out of sight.

The GM doesn't want to give away too much at this point, otherwise it lessens the impact of the death of Cansters in Scene 3. If they look into the mirror long enough, they can get the overwhelming feeling of someone standing behind them, but obviously when they turn around, no-one is there. At which point, the feeling instantly fades as Laan leaves.

LANDING

As promised, once the jet lands on a dedicated runway at Schiphol airport, the team are ushered to a waiting people carrier to take them to the Hotel de l'Europe. As promised, they are presented with the identification. Forbes, Sheldon, Martin and Pendleton are issued with full Interpol agent credentials whilst Trenhaile and Townsend are given papers and identification to cover them as specialists working for the agency. Their weapons are also issued to them by the driver.

Any operatives looking around whilst they driven away notices a helicopter taking off with a rather distinctive colour scheme of black and silver. Whilst they won't know it yet, this is Hulst leaving for the oilrig. They will see the helicopter again, on the helipad at the rig, in the endgame.

As it is taking off, another is landing: the SSF team who proceed to meet with Mr Verity on the jet for their briefing and to be handed their orders. To what extent they feature through the rest of the adventure is down the GM. That same black car they thought they spotted a few blocks back, the same face they caught out of the corner of their eye, etc. Their orders are quite clear though: do not make contact with the team. They are there to provide support and extraction for Townsend and Pendleton should events prove that the others are compromised. If the enemy attack though, they will not intervene. There's always the chance the whole thing could be staged to force the Ordo Veritatis' hand. They have their orders, and they will follow them to the letter.

It's a reasonable length of time before they finally arrive at the hotel where the driver wishes them luck on their mission. It's now 4:00am.

About Central Amsterdam

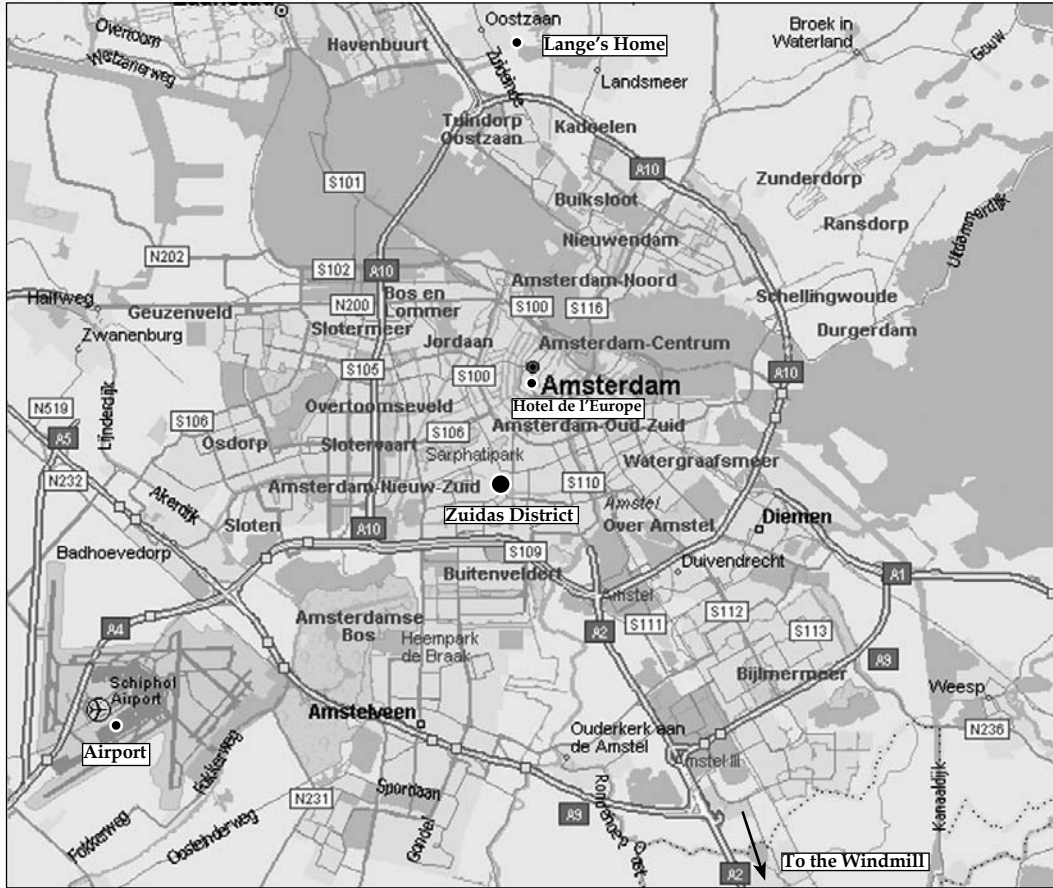
Amsterdam is a relatively small city compared to other capitals worldwide, with a population of only a little over 2 million people. However, this doesn't stop it from being a rich and diverse community. In a relatively small space, there certainly is a lot squeezed in there. For example, it takes only 20 minutes by train to get from Schiphol airport to the Central Train Station, to put things in perspective.

Famously, canals a common sight across the city, and particularly at its heart. Here, they are arranged in concentric semi-circles, surrounding the city centre, along which trams run along the row of shop fronts and trees add a welcome slice of nature here and there. Further out towards the suburbs, they become more regular in formation, crisscrossing the city in a grid formation.

The streets are often narrow, and for single lane traffic, when cutting through the blocks that are otherwise divided by the canals in the city centre and are usually one-way flows. Wider, more open lanes run alongside the tram lines on the banks of the canals, meaning that the quickest route to get to somewhere in the city might not be the most direct. As such, bikes are also a common sight to see chained to most fences along the canals, as this is often the most effective form of transport for moving around the city centre. In fact, people are usually discouraged from driving a car in the city centre due to this congestion and also high parking costs.

The buildings themselves in the centre of the city are for the most part fairly old, although there are definitely a few exceptions, but still maintained to a high quality. With one building built straight after the next, there are very few alleyways or paths that run between establishments. Combined with the narrow roads that divide blocks that are otherwise defined by the canals, the fact that a lot of the buildings are usually five or so storey's high, the narrow backstreets can become pretty dark and claustrophobic places in the dark, compared to the bright open canals.

Like most centers of tourist activity, there are a wide range of places to eat, souvenir stores and museums in particular. Amsterdam as a whole is noted for having a lot of museums, given its size, devoted to numerous subjects, but chief amongst them being art. Venders on street corners also offer a colourful display of flowers and other local produce. There are also a wide selection of jewelers displaying precious gemstones, highlighting once again the position that the city has in the world gemstone market.



Scene 2: At the Hotel

SCENE TYPE CORE
LEAD IN BRIEFING

The Hotel de l'Europe is a Five-Star establishment in the centre of Amsterdam. With rooms costing hundreds of Euros a night, it certainly looks the part, although it seems to be crammed in with the other buildings around it. Indeed, the street passing outside the main entrance is a single lane, one-way street with cars parked on one side. The police forensics van and squad car are parked a little way down the road in one of the few available spots, where the people carrier also pulls in. It takes them a few minutes to be able to get to the hotel, due to the bridge that crosses the Amstel river, that's immediately to the South of the hotel is closed, undergoing repair to its support pillars.

In the lay-by, the few officers left on the scene are somewhat uptight, having been kept waiting for nearly the last five hours. Showing them their identification, the operatives are introduced to Detective Inspector Edda Van Eken. Fluent in English, but with a heavy accent, she explains what has happened here so far. She's a little up-tight about the reception she's got from the hotel and then the wait that Interpol have put her through. She knows it's not the operatives' fault, but simply wants to vent some of her frustration.

Van Eken explains that they were called by the hotel manager, Piet Vogel when one of the room service maids went to her supervisor rather distraught. She'd been delivering a late night meal to one of the guests on the second floor when they noticed a door was slightly open. Going inside to investigate, she found the body and ran back out. Not

wishing to alert the guests, the door was promptly closed and the police were called. Vogel has made it very clear to Van Eken that the police presence is to be minimal in the hotel as they have a reputation to maintain and don't want to concern the guests still there.

A couple of officers went up there to view the scene and call back what they had found to the station, Van Eken included. They gave a description of the man as best they could and then radioed in the name the room had been booked under (one Franklin Chase). The forensic team been documenting and collecting preliminary evidence for coming up to an hour when the word came from on high that this had been flagged as a case for Interpol. Chase was someone that they were after (especially when the photograph of him on record matched that of John Sheldon). As such, they've waited, Vogel's waited and now Interpol are finally here (as far as they are concerned).

The scene is all theirs. When the operatives are ready, Van Eken can take them back to the station where she has an office put aside for them to conduct their investigation from.

POINTS OF INTEREST THE HOTEL STAFF AND THE POLICE

The manager is also fluent in English, but unlike Van Eken, is the embodiment of calm. He can't be seen to be upset in front of the guests, so maintains a calm exterior, but underneath is somewhat shocked by the grizzly nature of the events unfolding in his hotel. Vogel invites the operatives into his office to discuss anything they need to know and offer any service he can to expedite their investigation.

- Vogel will freely admit the circumstances of the day leading up to the discovery. He's had hours to go through the information in the guest register. The room was booked at short notice for a wedding party, as were most of the rooms on that particular corridor, for people attending the wedding reception nearby. However, subsequent checks on all the rooms on that floor have proved none of the rooms have been used.
- **(Flattery, Reassurance)** Talking with the receptionist, who had been called in by the management in case the police want to speak with them (and who has been waiting in the lobby for the last few hours), needs some working on as she's not in the best of moods, she's been up all night and is pretty tired. She does remember though what happened yesterday morning. The call came through for an urgent late booking. A party of ten needing rooms for a wedding in the city and their previous hotel reservations with another hotel (they didn't say which) had fallen through. She remembers the men in suits turning up, all with pretty large cases, and the woman who made all the deposits on her husband's Platinum card (Arabelle Skipper). The receptionist remembers the lady was pretty surprised when she found the wrong card in her purse. She had her passport on her, in the name of Mary Palmer (Mary's maiden name, which Caroline will know). In this case it looked like they'd picked up the wrong cards. She convinced the receptionist to hold the room on her husband-to-be's card, and they would settle up when they left in a couple of days. The rooms were booked under the party name of Chase.

- **(Document Analysis)** The photocopy taken of the passport in the name of Mary Palmer by the receptionist for their records is a blatant forgery. The font of the character is slightly off to the trained eye. The photo is off by a few millimetres in comparison to the correct location of the text on the page. Lastly, the hologram on the cover over photo makes it photo blurred around the eyes and upper facial area when photocopies making it very difficult to identify the person. This wouldn't happen with a genuine document, and was missed by the receptionist when hurriedly making the photocopy earlier.

- **(1 pt. Spend - Flattery, Reassurance)** Now that she thinks back on it, the receptionist does remember another fairly odd incident later that afternoon. Just as she was going off shift, she remembers another young lady coming in and talking with another of the girls on the front desk

(Mina Korstiaan). She was wondering if Mr Chase had checked in yet, because she had been late getting into town. As his wife, and also providing identification to prove this, her story was believed and she was pointed upstairs. It had been a long day and the receptionist didn't think anything of it, until now, when she finally put it together talking with the operatives. Two different people with two different stories... they couldn't both be right.

- **(Forensic Accounting)** Taking the credit card information from the hotel logs, the operatives can track the card used to hold the rooms back to one Franklin Chase. The account was set up about six months ago, just after Sheldon went missing. Using the facilities back at the police station later on, they can pull the details from his account, realise it's definitely John's handwriting for the signature on the account, and his photo, etc.
- **(Electronic Surveillance)** Vogel lets the team have access to their security tapes. Here, they can easily identify the 'wedding party' arrive in suits and carrying large cases. They all take the cases into the room where the body was found. After a few minutes, they emerge and go to their individual rooms with the same cases, now being carried rather than wheeled as before. At random intervals over the course of the morning and early afternoon, each emerges from their rooms in ordinary clothes and leaves with their case. Looking at the rooms later in the day, they spot Mina Korstiaan entering the room where the body is and coming out again after about two or three minutes. The faces on the tapes are a little blurry though, but with some time and effort they can be cleaned up then checked on the police database back station in the next scene if the operatives desire.

PC Conducted Interrogation

If the PCs intervene with the arrest, if they go outside at the time it happens to be taking place, then there's a good chance they may wish to interrogate Cansters at the hotel. In which case, a private room (such as Vogel's office, for example) can be made available. In any case, it should be a room where at least one mirror is present. At which point, this room can then facilitate the events of Scene 3 playing out at the hotel rather than at the police station, with Laan intervening at any point the GM feels it dramatically appropriate, but not for any duration that would put the Spectrosite enough danger to risk destruction (it has a role far too important to perform later that it would risk banishment back to the Outer Dark at this point, so early on).

Whilst the operatives are in the lobby talking with the receptionist, they may well catch wind of a scuffle outside. If they head outside, the squad car door a little down the road is slammed shut and drives off quickly. A couple of policemen still remain outside.

- **(Cop Talk)** One of the policemen reveals in somewhat broken English that officers spotted a car pull up on the side of the road that he swears had passed the front of the hotel at least five times he counted that night (Berg Cansters). An ordinary looking saloon, but with a crack on the rear bumper. It never stopped until just a few minutes ago. One of the officers thought the driver was pointing a camera out towards the lobby not more than a minute after the operatives went in. When they went to confront him, he tried to pull a knife and get out of there, they managed to wrestle him from the car and they've taken him into custody. He'll be back at the station when Van Eken takes them back to their office later.

THE HOTEL ROOM

The room where Sheldon's remains have been planted remains pretty much as it was found by the room service maid and the two police officers that subsequently went in to call in what they found. Nothing has been touched by either party.

Sheldon's remains were wheeled in with the cases, taken out and arranged piece by piece into a pattern on the bed. They were subsequently picked up and thrown about the room some time later by Mina Korstiaan, but the dried bloodstains on the sheets outline the pattern he had originally been intended to be found in: a slightly hunched over figure, laying on his side instead of standing. His head in his hands, looking up to where his head should have been, where only a figure 8 on it's side (the representation of infinity) is painted on the sheets. An image of a circle inside a square inside a triangle inside another circle is repeatedly painted in Sheldon's blood over the walls.

This is definite cause for a **Stability** check for the team members who see the body. Everyone is at least aware he is dead before seeing the corpse and have a good idea of the type of thing they might find, which helps to lessen the impact of the trauma. For the closest members of the team (Forbes, Sheldon, Trenhaile and Martin) it's a loss of 4 **Stability** points if they fail. For Townsend and Pendleton as they had a weaker connection to him overall, it's 2 **Stability** points if they fail.

- **(Occult Studies)** The position of the bloodstains on the bed, once the operatives visualise where each part would have been placed, combined with the infinity symbol, imply he was being positioned according to the stance of the figure in the Rider Waite version of Strength from the Major Arcana of the tarot (HANDOUT 1). There are many interpretations to read into this card, although the major key-words that are associated with the Rider Waite version are: Power, Energy, Action, Courage, etc. Perhaps this was an act designed to generate power for some other purpose? Trenhaile, given his briefing on the device he designed might well be able to connect the dot very earlier on at this stage and realise that his death is the ritual act needed to power it.

The symbols around the wall are representative of Quadratura Circuli: Squaring the Circle (HANDOUT 2). In alchemy, this is detailed as one of the supposed methods of obtaining Philosopher's Stone. Doing this involves making a circle out of a man and a woman, deriving from it a square, and from a square a triangle, then making a circle.

- (1 pt. Spend – **Occult Studies**) Trenhaile will also be familiar with the connotation of the Philosopher's Stone and another term Esoterrorists use for the Great Project.
- (**Astronomy**) The pattern of the symbols for "Squaring the Circle" around the walls are actually arranged as the points for stars in various major constellations. Given those present and the 360 degrees surrounding the body, the operatives can work out that the alignments correspond to the view of the heavens at around midnight this time of year in the Northern hemisphere.
- (**Core Clue, Evidence Collection**) Upon checking the remains, the operatives realise that Sheldon's heart is missing, and just an open hole is gaping from the chest cavity (it has become the literal "heart" of the device). Under Sheldon's right hand, which was thrown and landed in the doorway into the bathroom, is a business card of his (HANDOUT 3). The company name and logo have been scratched off, as has the business address, but the home address and telephone number for "Franklin Chase" remain visible. Given the lack of bloodstains, as the blood on the bottom of his hand is dry, and that the card is unbent, it must have been deliberately placed under his hand after being thrown on the floor.
- (**Forensic Anthropology**) Taking the lack of blood in the room besides the stains from the body parts as they were laid out on the bed, and the fact that the operatives might well know about the cases taken into the room by now, it's pretty easy to say that the body was cut up elsewhere and then reassembled here. Examination of the remains will confirm though that Sheldon was alive when he was cut apart, and it was no more than 24 hours ago, with the body parts probably having been sealed in vacuum bags shortly after being severed.
- (**Fingerprinting**) Besides the prints for the maid, there's no sign of any other prints in the room, around or on body parts, etc. All those involved must have worn gloves as a few older prints from cleaners and the like are smudged, but nothing readable has replaced them.
- (**Forensic Psychology**) Given the way the body was placed, the people in question might well have been acting under very detailed orders from their superiors, so a very definite plan and design is being made use of here, this was far from a random act of murder. However, the fact that someone then came in to move around the body parts implies someone who was acting rashly and unplanned – maybe they didn't expect to find what they did here – but made a conscious effort to disrupt whatever this was intended to perform.

If the operatives are happy they've found all there is to find there, then Vogel gives permission for the forensic team to move in and quietly begin documenting their findings and remove the remains shortly afterwards (as long as the operatives give their consent). Van Eken then offers to give the operatives a ride to the police station as another couple of squad cars come to collect them. By now, given the time they will have needed to perform the above investigation, it's past 5:00am.

At this point, unless the PCs are exceptionally paranoid and are taking the time and effort to point out that they are watching what happens across the river, they notice a parked car pull out and drive away after the driver puts down what looks to be a camera with a zoom lens. Mina Korstiaan, keeping watch on the site in case any Ordo Veritatis arrive on the scene takes their photos and is to deliver them to Vromme at the windmill.

They won't be able to get a licence plate if they look at her from this far away, or be able to get over the river quick enough to follow her (as the bridge immediately outside is closed for repairs), so she will escape for the moment, but they might get the chance to recognise her from the CCTV footage when they've viewed it as being the second lady to enter the hotel (claiming to be Mrs Chase). These photos later appear in Vromme's dossier in Scene 7.

Scene 3: At the Police Station

SCENE TYPE CORE

LEAD IN ARREST AT THE HOTEL. IMAGES FROM SECURITY TAPES TO RUN THROUGH POLICE DATABASE

At this point, the operatives have two choices. They can immediately follow the lead to take them to Sheldon's apartment (in which case skip to Scene 5) or they can make a detour to the police station with Van Eken to work on the footage from the security tapes to try and identify the two faces within. If they do head to his apartment first of all, they are looking at either hiring a taxi or walking across the city on foot unless they can convince Van Eken to take them their directly (which won't particularly please her, being treated like a taxi service, when she's made arrangements for a people carrier to be prepared for them at the police station – which could well prove an incentive but not an obligation to the operatives to head to the station first of all).

Eventually though, they will almost certainly want to head to the station to perform digital enhancement of the images they've retrieved from the hotel security tapes (and if they don't go there within the few hours after the arrest, they might well have a fairly serious damage control issue on their hands after what happens to Berg Cansters in the interrogation room).

The local police station in the centre of the city is not far from the hotel and it only takes a few minutes by car to reach there. The investigators split between the squad cars as they can comfortably fit three passengers, plus the driver. Give the operatives the choice of which car they ride in. Those who ride with Van Eken, now that she's got a spare moment, find she makes some attempts at honest small talk. She'll explain a little about herself: that she's been in homicide for a few years, which went a little against the grain for her family as they've always worked in the diamond trade in the city; she's always looking for new challenges and wants to be independent; strives to be the best, etc. After all, she thinks that they are from Interpol, and getting in their good books is a perfect way for promotion. [Further details or inspirations for elaboration on Van Eken can be found in Appendix 3].

Depending on how soon the operatives go to interrogation room depends on how much they will witness.

- If they head there first of all before going to the office that Van Eken had prepared, then they will find the door jammed and be able to witness the chairs flying through the air attempting to hit Berg, moving by themselves. This is a **Stability** check with a potential loss of 2 points if the operatives fail.
- If they head to the room once the commotion has broken out, they will find others have literally just broken down the door and found him dead. Officers comment about what he was shouting, but by the time they got there, he was already pounded to a pulp.
- If the operatives have skipped ahead and come back to the station much later, then the event has already occurred, the observation tape has been found and it is causing a panic amongst some members of the police force in the building. Is it some kind of trick? Is there a ghost or some kind of demonic entity in that room? The operatives will have to think quick on their feet to take control of the situation and perform damage control before it gets too out of hand.

POINTS OF INTEREST THE INTERROGATION ROOM

- (**Evidence Collection, Forensic Anthropology, Fingerprinting**) The only possible way for Berg to have been killed in the way he was had to have been someone with a great deal of strength beating him to a pulp with the chairs. Each chair shows the signs of being used to kill him, but there's no physical evidence remaining to show that they were being held by anyone in the course of the attack. Maybe they wore gloves, but it looks like they moved by themselves.
- (**Core Clue, Electronic Surveillance**) Taking the tape from the observation room and playing it confirms the course of events as outlined above: the chairs flying through the room, Berg cursing Groot, then being hit by the chairs and bludgeoned to death. If this is the first time the operative sees the scene played out (i.e. if they didn't see it live) it still warrants the same **Stability** check with the same consequences if failed (2 point loss). They can also hear that there is something odd with the audio at this point, but will require further cleaning up to make it clearer. Enhancing the audio, they hear the muffled condemnation that Laan gives to Berg before he dies. *"Good morning Mr Cansters. I'd like to congratulate you on your performance and completing your orders to the letter. Miss Groot sends her regards."* Enhancing the reflection off a reflective surface in the room (the face of Canster's watch, the polished edge of the metal table, a glass of water on the desk for Cansters, etc.), they can make out the figure in the mirror that doesn't appear in the room. It can be cleaned up to give the stark and menacing demeanour of Laan to recognise him with later.
- (1 pt. Spend - **Occult Studies**) The operatives remember hearing rumours of "things in the mirror", people that were not there but the mirror said they were, etc. They have been labelled as Spectrosites. The GM can decide the extent of how much information the player characters get on this one. Holding back a few facts can make for a tenser encounter against Laan later on if the characters don't know the nature of its powers, whilst those striving for a more clued-in battle against the supernatural can let more the characters have more information on the entities.

AMONGST CANSTERS' PERSONAL EFFECTS

- **(Evidence Collection)** Besides the camera and the knife, Cansters was carrying his mobile phone. That evening, he'd made several calls to Betje Groot and received calls back from her too, detailing his instructions. The mobile is currently switched off and left in the security office at the Métallon Incorporated in the Zuidas district to the South of the city, if they try to search for the last known location of where the SIM card was active.

IN THE OFFICE

- **(Electronic Surveillance)** Taking the blurry photos from the hotel security tape, and using the equipment provided to them, the operatives can clear up the image as best they can (HANDOUT 4). If Trenhaile is present or shown the images later, he will recognise Arabelle Skipper almost instantly from the time he had reported to her in his time in the cell. Whilst he doesn't know Mina by name, he remembers her from the night Vromme abducted him. She was with him, one of his people. That's all he can remember.
- **(Core Clue, Research)** There are a few names and faces by this point that can be run through the police database, so we'll deal with each one in turn:
 - Running Skipper's and Korstiaan's face through the police database doesn't come back with any names, but does give them a few hits for Skipper. Facial recognition pulls back a few photos from unsolved murder cases of images of suspects pulled from CCTV footage. She's never been found to this date and is wanted in connection with at least three other homicides of local businessmen in the course of the last two years. Korstiaan has yet to be caught doing anything major to flag up a criminal record so there's no records to be found for her.
 - Berg Cansters was known to be a small time drug runner and suspected smuggler. Rumour had it that he was linked to the import of illegal immigrants to the UK through Dover, but nothing has ever been proved. On the list of suspected involvements, one date tallies with the attack on Caroline and her brother at the port in Dover. In Caroline's mind, this should automatically connect him to the Esoterror movement.
 - The name Betje Groot doesn't pull anything back on the police database, but a quick internet search cross-referenced with Amsterdam brings back a quote in a newspaper article from a couple of months ago about the booming industry in the city. Her quote is in connection with Métallon Incorporated and the importance of security for such a company with key financial and industrial importance to the city.
 - A quick search on Métallon Incorporated reveals the following: It is one of numerous companies in the city that deals with the distribution of precious metals and stones for industrial purposes to companies around the globe. This is one of the more famous industries in Amsterdam, and one of the most lucrative. For example, Amsterdam is one of the centres of the world's diamond trade. The company itself is a labyrinthine network of subsidiaries that deals with a wide array of materials from diamonds to rubies, from gold to platinum.
- **(1 pt. Spend - Research)** A little digging on Métallon Incorporated reveals the industrial giant, Johan van der Hulst. Reports and magazine articles reveal an overview of his background: the empire his parents built, their subsequent deaths in the avalanche tragedy, his acquisition of the company and the way it has flourished under his watchful eye. He's also known to be a qualified engineer who also has an interest in nuclear physics.

From here, the operatives have a couple of directions to go in. They can continue with the information they got from the hotel and go to Sheldon's apartment (in which case, go to Scene 5), or they can follow a new train of investigation and head to the Métallon Incorporated offices (in which case, go to Scene 4). In either case, they have the option to take Van Eken with them as she will ask as they leave if they need her any further, or have her remain at the station to await their updates on the investigation.

Scene 4: Visit to Metallon Inc.

SCENE TYPE ALTERNATE

LEAD IN RESEARCHING BETJE GROOT

If the operatives head to the company offices in the Zuidas district (which takes them to the south of the city, heading back closer to the airport) immediately after the events in the police station, it's still going to be fairly early in the morning, and still dark. It's probably going to be around 6:00am and there's not going to be anyone besides security there for at least the next couple of hours.

The Zuidas district has a very different feel to the busy centre of Amsterdam. The buildings here are generally a lot lower, considerably more modern, and roads are open and usually quiet. On the whole, the place has a distinctly open feel about it in comparison to the packed streets of the city centre. Some might say that parts of the area resemble a huge industrial estate as would be found in the United Kingdom, in that respect.

The "financial mile" as it is known, has become the home for numerous well-known global companies (e.g. Akzo Nobel and ABN Amro, etc.) and their headquarters easily stand out amongst the other structures in the area. For example, the ING House building resembles a shoe mounted on supports.

The Métallon Incorporated building stands out amongst the buildings as a twenty-five-storey office tower covered on all sides by a mirrored front. Every five storey's, the floors become slightly smaller, creating a ziggurat-esque effect. Those paying enough attention to the site's location, and pulling floorplans of the building from the internet, etc. can use **Occult Studies** to realise the building is set on a leyline, and constructed in such a fashion to draw upon the geomantic energy of the area and channel it up a central shaft to the penthouse office. For a 1 Point Spend of **Occult Studies** Trenhaile knows that the building sits on the same leyline that connects to the nexus over the Devil's Hole in the North Sea he examined during his time working on the lodestone project.

If the operatives phone ahead (as they can easily get the phone number for the main switchboard from their research above, or even the local phonebook), they'll be greeted with an answering machine message telling them the office is closed and that it will reopen at 8:00am. It's initially spoken in Dutch, but if they hold out, it will cycle around in English and then various other languages: French, German, Spanish, etc.

Given they will probably want to track down Groot, it's likely they may think she's there with the guards on patrol, but she won't actually be there until the office opens. The furthest they will get would be arguing with a security guard who has a very minimal grasp of English and gets more frustrated if they don't attempt to communicate in Dutch.

GAINING OUT OF HOURS ENTRY

Depending on how the operatives proceed, there's a few ways this can go, and it also depends on how forcefully the GM wishes the react.

If Van Eken is with them, she will get somewhat concerned if they try to force their way in by breaking and entering (which would also attract more guards to them unless they make a successful Infiltration roll with a target number of 6 to bypass the alarm systems to get in undetected). She may even try to stop them from performing such a blatantly illegal act, which would make her question their cover story and credentials.

If they try and bully the guards to let them in, the first thing they are going to want to see is a warrant. If they try to use such skills as **Cop Talk**, **Flattery**, **Intimidate**, **Negotiation**, or **Reassurance** without a point spend, they are going to get pretty hesitant very quickly as they are under orders to not let anyone into the building out of hours that isn't a member of senior management. A sign that they are getting flustered might well be that they threaten to call the police even if Van Eken is outside and shows her own identification. As such, a 1 point spend in any of the above skills finally forces the issue and the guard caves in, but under the condition that he has to accompany them around the building. If they refuse and demand he stays out of their way, all the point spending the PCs want won't stop him from demanding they come back with a warrant or when the office opens and they can meet with the management, or head of security, Miss Groot herself.

If and when they get inside, there are plenty of corridors for them to wander down, but getting into any of the normal offices (such as Sheldon's if the GM is lenient enough to let them find it in the first place) without an improvised battering ram, such as a filing cabinet being somehow wheeled at force into the door, is going to prove vexing. Obviously, if a security guard is accompanying them, they aren't going to be able to get away with this easily. They also don't have key card access to any of the private offices. A lot of the building is open-plan desks, with only management having their own secure areas. Groot and her assistants have key-card access to these rooms, but there's no reason for the security on the night watch to go in there, so they haven't been issued with cards to give them access.

Hulst's office is a completely different story. On the top floor of the tower, careful investigation of the door using skills such as **Ballistics** or **Explosive Devices** will show that without a key-card to get in, or being let in by someone on the inside, they aren't going to get in without high explosives. Likewise, the walls around the office seem to be reinforced. Pretty high security for the office of company director, even in a company such as this, which should get the operatives thinking.

Also, the noise and alarms such action will inevitably trigger will soon attract the attention of the security forces and have them ejected from the building unless they pass an **Athletics** check (target of 4) to get out before being caught. This could land them in hot water on multiple fronts if the police are called in to arrest them as being under review, the Ordo Veritatis aren't going to like to haul them out of the hole they've landed themselves in.

MAKING AN APPOINTMENT

If the operatives play it safe and by-the-book, they can kill time by going to Sheldon's apartment (Scene 5) and then go to the Métallon Incorporated building when they've finished there. Getting to his apartment, performing the investigation there and then heading back to the offices would take a good couple of hours, so it would fit in nicely to their timetable. However, after going to Sheldon's apartment and finding the notes there on his research into the Esoterrorist involvement in the company, they might be going there under very different agendas to what they may previously have had.

Also, if they follow this course of action, ignoring the note left by Vromme to go to the windmill south of the city, it will become obvious to the van trailing them from outside the apartment as they aren't heading in the right direction. When it becomes blatantly obvious they are heading towards the Zuidas district, and therefore towards Hulst's empire, Vromme's orders give them no other options: stop them before Hulst can get hold of them. They ram the operatives off the road and set the Blood Corpses on them, at which point, Scene 6 plays out.

Scene 5: In Sheldon's Apartment

SCENE TYPE CORE

LEAD IN SHELDON'S BUSINESS CARD AT THE HOTEL

Depending on route the operatives take to get to this point, it's more than likely still going to be dark, maybe with out without the first hints of dawn appearing on the horizon. Sheldon's apartment is on the East side of the city, approaching the outskirts. It's a four-storey apartment building in a fairly quiet but narrow road where every other streetlight flickers and casts long shadows given the whole scene a quite claustrophobic feel.

Like on most of the minor streets the operatives will have seen in the city centre, cars are parked bumper to bumper with the occasional gap amongst them in lay-by parking. Bikes are still found in abundance here, chained to lampposts, railings, etc. Every so often, cars quietly passes through, not lingering for long.

Whilst the operatives might not pay much attention to it, as there are numerous vans parked here, a moderately old van is parked a little way down from the building. The occupants in the front keep their heads down whilst the operatives move in so as not to be spotted. Mina Korstiaan and one of Vromme's thugs wait there for the operatives to move on to the planned site of the ambush where they will unleash the four Blood Corpses in the back of the van at them. They've been kept hungry specifically for this

purpose. In the pitch black of the back of the van, they sit silently, awaiting the doors to fly open and their prey to be in their sights.

Heading up a short flight of steps to the front door, the operatives find a row of letterboxes to their right, and door marked "Office" in Dutch to the left. The letterboxes confirm that one 'Franklin Chase' occupies Flat 5 on the top floor.

THE OFFICE

Those operatives with **Evidence Collection** will notice automatically that the door to the Office has tell-tail scratches resulting from the hurried use of a lock-pick. If they knock, there is no answer, but the door is open.

Inside, there is the a fairly standard office the landlady uses: a sofa in one corner to the left of the door; a couple of filing cabinets in the other corner; low table and magazines; a door leading to her own apartment in the far right corner; and a large antique oak desk before them, with three seats in front and a large office chair behind. From behind the desk, the sound of heavy breathing emanates. Those who venture over there find the landlady; Sofie Devoss is securely hog-tied and gagged. At this time she's asleep.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- **(Reassurance)** If the operatives awaken Devoss, she's somewhat groggy for a few seconds until she realises she's either still bound and gagged or that the rescuers have actually set her free. If she's able to speak, she's going to start yelling wildly in Dutch demanding to know who these people are, what they are doing here, etc. Her English is not brilliant, so it's going to be down to either Forbes or Townsend to translate. Those without Dutch can still attempt to calm her down and get her to talk, but it's going to require them spending a point of their ability to do so. At which point, and especially after she has seen their identification, she's calm enough and rational enough to talk and explains the following:
 - She was filing away some papers when the door opened and a very attractive young lady walked in. Devoss's description is accurate enough to match the face of Korstiaan from the security camera footage at the Hotel.
 - Three men entered swiftly behind her, closed the door and quickly overpowered Devoss. As they bound and gagged her, one forced open the draw to the desk and took one of the copies of the key to Flat 5.
 - When they've got the key, they knocked her out. That was late afternoon. She awoke a couple of hours later but unable to move or call out loud enough to attract anyone's attention, she has lain there ever since and fell asleep again a little after 2:00am.
- If pressed for information about Franklin Chase, the man in Flat 5, she has no problem filling them in, as they are officers of the law after all.
 - Mr Chase came over from England about six months ago. He was looking for a place to stay as he'd just started a new job and the area was within his budget and commuting distance, so he applied for a Flat.

- He paid up front for two months in cash and never missed any subsequent payments.
- From what conversations she had with Chase about his job, he recalls that he was something like an “Account Manager” for one of the firms in the Financial Mile (the Zuidas district). She doesn’t remember the name of the company ever being mentioned, but if the operatives have already started down the route that’s uncovered Métallon Incorporated, they will know it’s in the same district.
- Chase also never had any pets, visitors or complaints from any other tenants. As far as Devoss is concerned, he was one of the best tenants she ever had.
- He occasionally went out late, with a camera bag as he said he was a bit of an amateur photographer and liked to capture a few shots of the city at night. All the lights, that kind of thing. He never made a sound coming back in to disturb anyone, so no problems there either.

Devoss is obviously concerned about what’s happened in her building and expresses concern over Chase, if they know anything has happened to him, who broke in, what they wanted, etc. She’ll also make it fairly blatant she wants to give a formal statement to the police, so one of the operatives might well want to call in Van Eken to do this and allow them to continue more directly with the investigation.

- **(Forensic Accounting, Research)** Either looking in the filing cabinets before waking Devoss up, or doing so after she’s woken up and is calm, as well as getting her permission, which she gives freely, the documents she has recording all the papers signed by Chase and also keeping track of his rent payments, all confirm the information provided by Devoss: that Chase arrived six months ago, paid up-front for a couple of months in cash and has continued that way each month on time without needing to be reminded. The signature on the tenant’s agreement is unmistakably Sheldon’s handwriting.
- **(Evidence Collection)** The draw to the desk was forced open with a crowbar, which fits Devoss’s account. However, the key to Room 5 is still present in the draw. The rest of the keys are neatly stored in a rack, but this one has just been thrown back in the draw, implying it was returned after being used by those who bound Devoss.
- **(Fingerprinting)** There are absolutely no signs of any fresh prints on the site around the desk draw, on the key, etc. It looks like the group that came in here wore gloves, most likely leather or latex.
- **(Electronic Surveillance)** There is a distinct absence of any recording devices around here, or any CCTV on the street that would have recorded anyone coming in, or what they did inside the building. The whole street looks like a surveillance black-spot. The kind of place that someone who wanted to go off the grid might well use to hide in.

ROOM 5

Heading upstairs to the top floor, the other apartments are quiet as the tenants there are still asleep. The staircase itself is fairly narrow and the floorboards creak uneasily in places. The door to Room 5 is shut and locked with no signs of forced entry. Using the key from the office, the operatives can gain entrance.

There are no active traps or surprises waiting for them for just opening the door. This would be due to the fact that the operatives can hear a loose wire banging against the door as they open it, which when open far enough is fairly obvious, and leads up to a double-barrelled sawn-off shotgun positioned above the door, pointing downwards. It doesn't look as though the shotgun has been fired as the wooden floor shows no sign of damage or blood, for there would have been a large amount of both if it had. It's a simple trap to have disarmed. If any operative wants to take the shotgun 'as evidence' or more likely to use later, it still has two shells in the chambers, and a box of shells can be found in their search around the apartment. The box will provide them with enough shells to keep them going through combat later, or if GMs want to limit such firepower, it can always be decided there are 1d6 or 2d6 worth of shells left for them to take.

Inside the rest of the apartment, the place has evidently been ransacked, but in a hurry. There's minimal furniture and what decoration there is (ornaments, books, etc.) have the appearance of "coming with the room" that would be passed down from one tenant to the next.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- **(Core Clue, Evidence Collection)** There's several items of significance to be found hidden around the apartment. Each are dealt with separately below:
 - Hidden in a guidebook to Amsterdam that has been thrown onto the floor is a photograph showing John, Mary and Caroline together, a few months before the accident. Their smiling faces portray a moment of being a happy family. However, the third of the photo that shows Caroline has been folded back so that only John and Mary are immediately visible, due to John still blaming her for the accident that took Mary's life. However, the fact he hasn't ripped that half of the photo away completely implies that he still cared something for his sister.
 - The camera bag that Devoss mentioned is discarded in a corner. Inside, the digital camera is still intact, although the memory card is blank, and in an inside pocket for spare battery packs, is Sheldon's pass to Métallon Incorporated in the name of Franklin Chase. The photo on the pass is also definitely Sheldon. (HANDOUT 5)
 - Pinned to the back of the door is a note that reads "16 miles south of the city halfway between De Ronde Venen and Woerden, along the N212. Past the intersection with the N401 to Breukelen away from the road is an old windmill. We have answers." (HANDOUT 6)
 - Behind a large painting of a field of tulips hung on one wall is a corkboard with the Adversary Map that Sheldon built up over the course of his investigation into Métallon Incorporated. Key to note is the link to Vromme and that Laan has never been caught on camera, at least not by Sheldon. (HANDOUT 7)
 - Smashed to a pulp is Sheldon's laptop, it's behind the sofa, having been repeatedly stamped on, thrown against the wall, etc. The screen is useless, but with a laptop (either one of their own, as it's considered standard issue equipment on operations, or one of the ones from the police station they could well have picked up) and enough time and skill they might well be able to pull back some information from the wrecked hard-disk.

- **(Core Clue, Document Analysis)** The note on the back of the door is made up of numerous cut out letters from newspapers stuck onto blank paper, in the stereotypical fashion of a ransom letter or hate mail. Individual printed letters can be identified as coming from numerous local publications (Amsterdam Metro, De Telegraaf, De Volkskrant, Het Parool, etc.) of which there are several examples torn up around the room. The key point though: it is composed in ENGLISH, not DUTCH.
- **(Data Retrieval)** Taking the best part of an hour over the wrecked hard-drive of Sheldon's laptop, with a lot of skill and a bit of luck, the most recent files in the temporary memory can be retrieved. The rest of the machine looks to have suffered irreparable damage. Most of the lost data resembles the remains of high quality JPEG images, most likely from his digital camera. The readable files relate to the Esoterrorist suspects as outlined in the Adversary Map, giving an overview of his finding on each member of the two cells he's uncovered. (HANDOUT 8)
- **(Chemistry, Trivia, Research)** Mentioned in the Suspect Profiles handout, Rhodium is one of the world's rarest precious metals, and with prices in 2010 reaching \$80,000 per kilogram, it's the most expensive too. Silvery white, and chemically inert, it has a wide range of commercial use: jewellery; catalytic converters; and nuclear reactors to name but three. Its main natural sources have been located in South Africa and North America, although average annual production of the element globally is just 25 tons. Deposits are also found in used nuclear fuel rods, but it is not economically viable to retrieve it from this source.
- **(Forensic Psychology)** The operation at the hotel where Sheldon's body was found was planned with fine precision. What has been found here is a very hurried attempt at a search, and quite possibly one performed by an amateur as they missed key pieces of evidence in places a professional would have definitely checked. It has a lot in common with the actions of whoever disrupted Sheldon's body parts after they had been precisely arranged there. The note on the back of the door, being in English also has a stark meaning: they knew that the people coming here would primarily speak English. If it had been for Sheldon, it wouldn't have been pinned to the door, as he would have taken it as evidence. This was left for the operatives in the room right now.

It will take the operatives a fair while in this scene to get everything done, talking with Devoss and then going through Sheldon's apartment with a fine toothcomb. If Van Eken is with them still, they might want to consider leaving her with Devoss, as they might well suspect that they'd find evidence in the room that directly points to the Esoterrorists, and trying to explain what that means to her (or what cover story they come up with on the spot!) might well become more complex than they want things to get.

By the time they are leaving, the sun is coming up on the horizon and dawn is upon them. They have a couple of choices from here. As described in the Antagonist Reactions section and the end of Scene 4, if they don't proceed to the site of the ambush, Vromme needs to bring the fight to them (in which case, proceed to Scene 6). If they do proceed to the site, then all is going as he planned (proceed to Scene 7).

Scene 6: Desperate Measures

SCENE TYPE ALTERNATE

LEAD IN NOT GOING TO THE AMBUSH SITE FROM THE APARTMENT
AS VROMME DESIRES

At this point, the operatives are leaving Sheldon's apartment. The van a little way down the road pulls out as they are leaving and follows them at a discrete distance. For the operatives to get to the ambush site out of town, they would need to head roughly South from where they are now. If they were heading to Métallon Incorporated, they would be heading South West, and if heading back to the police station with Van Eken (or to go back to see her if not with them still, or to use the equipment there to follow more leads) then they would be heading North West.

When Korstiaan realises the potential destination for the operatives, it's time to make a detour and get ahead of them. Coming at them from a T-junction not far from their destination, the van attempts to drive into the side of them and push their people carrier off the road into an alley as it skids around. Dazed in the initial impact, the operatives will have only a few seconds to react, and after that it's going to be the first time in the course of the investigation that lead fills the air.

All around them, early morning traffic skids to a halt and people run screaming as the shots start and horrors stumble out of the van toward the people carrier. No-one's going to play the hero here and step in to save them. The operatives are on their own.

ORDER OF EVENTS

- **Before the Collision:** The operatives in the people carrier get the chance to make a **Surveillance** roll. The target number for the passengers is 8, for the driver it's 6. Success lets them know that they are being followed and that the van is a little way behind them before it zooms off down a parallel side street in order to cut them off at the oncoming junction.
- **Avoiding the Collision:** If the driver is made aware of the van tailing them, they may make a **Driving** roll with a target number of 7 in order to avoid being hit by the van. If they pass, then they have the drop on Korstiaan and the Esoterrorists with her. They have an extra round in which to act before the van comes to a halt and they unleash the Blood Corpses. As a bonus, the driver also manages to catch sight of Korstiaan in the front seat of the van and can recognise her from the photos from the hotel and Sheldon's notes.
- **If the People Carrier is Hit:** If the operatives fail to spot they are being tailed, the world's best driver isn't going to be able to get them out of the collision. They simply aren't expecting it to happen and don't have the time to react quickly enough. The people carrier is catapulted into a wide alley opposite the junction. The driver may roll their **Driving** skill at this point to see if they can maintain control of the vehicle. Their target number is 5. If they succeed, the vehicle is upright and for the first round of combat they are at -1 to all their actions due to being dazed from the impact. If the driver fails, the vehicle tumbles onto its side and for the first round, they are at a -2 to all actions instead.

THE LOVE OF MONEY

- **The Blood Corpses:** Once either of the two options above is resolved (either the people carrier is hit or not) then the van comes to a halt and the back doors swing open. Inside, the four Blood Corpses turn towards the source of light and shamble forwards (HANDOUT 9). With the scent of pulsating blood in the air, they make their way towards the people carrier and attempt to drain the operatives dry.

NOTE: This moment is going to be a bit like a flashback for Caroline, given these are the same creatures she encounter in the Dover Docks, which is key to emphasis to her player. Particularly cruel GMs might well wish to make the stability check for their appearance a little harsher for Caroline in this case.

Their tactics ultimately depend on how many opponents they are up against. If it's an equal footing, they charge in, targeting one operative each and attempting to drain them dry whilst they are still alive. If there are more operatives than Blood Corpses, they attempt to wade through the party one at a time until all are dead or unconscious, at which point they will have no interruptions to get in the way of them draining the bodies.

They have been deprived of blood for long enough by Vromme that they won't stop until they've taken down all the operatives. Their need is too great to stop and run if they are at risk of personal destruction now. It's all or nothing for them.



- Each of the Blood Corpses has the stats as outlined in *The Book of Unremitting Horror* (p. 13-16): Athletics 6, Health 8, Scuffling 13. Hit Threshold: 3. Weapons: +2 (Talons). Armour: +2 vs. Shooting. Alertness: +1. Stealth: -1 (Vile Stench). GMs with access to this book may wish to make use of their extra abilities if so inclined. Otherwise, running with the basic stats (minus Alertness and Stealth) the Blood Corpse description can be found in *The Esoterrorists* (p. 59).

Korstiaan and the Thug: Korstiaan believes the attack will be over in a matter of moments. She's content to sit back and watch the show from the front of the van whilst the Blood Corpses make short work of the operatives. However, to make sure that they have an advantage, the thug takes up a firing stance with a silenced handgun, using the front end of the van as cover, taking pot shots at the operatives when he can.

- The thug has Health, Shooting and Scuffling at 6 pts each and a Hit Threshold of 3.

Skipper's Intervention: If the operatives are losing the battle and need a helping hand, at a moment that's dramatically appropriate in the battle, at the GM's choice, Skipper, having been keeping tabs on Korstiaan after her interference at the hotel, makes her move when she sees the operatives in danger. She swings her estate car around in the road a fair way down the street from the combat, leans out through the back of the car and starts picking off targets with her sniper rifle.

The far away crack of a rifle shot rings out split second before the thug hits the ground, having taken a shot to the face. Korstiaan desperately tries to get the van moving, but another shot catches her in the upper chest. Depending on if the operatives are winning against the Blood Corpses, or not, if they need a helping hand, she can open fire on a couple of them. She doesn't want the operatives dead at Vromme's hand.

Her other key objective is to remain hidden in the whole proceeding (hence being a sniper). The operatives won't spot her unless they have a set of binoculars to hand, or maybe spend a point of Ballistics to locate her. If spotted through binoculars, the operatives might well get a glancing look at her face and be able to identify it from the hotel security photos. At this point, she will attempt to leave, and given she's in a case at extreme distance, and the operatives are most likely still in the middle of a combat situation, she's going to make a clean getaway.

However, if the operatives surprise the GM and manage to prevent her from leaving by some ingenious scheme and take her captive, she's left with no choice. Hulst would hunt her down to the ends of the Earth for failing him, and she'd rather have a comparatively less painful death than one he would arrange for her. She smiles sadly and crunches down on a hollow tooth breaking open a hidden cyanide pill.

- **The Van Eken Option:** If the detective is still with them at this point, the GM has a few possibilities on how to deal with her.
 - She could be killed instantly in the crash, or by one of the Blood Corpses, or maybe even a lucky shot from the thug. This eliminates the NPC from helping the operatives any further. To be honest, she's also pretty much served her usefulness at this point as well.
 - If the GM likes having her around as an aid for the operatives to call on, but doesn't want the occurrences of the Blood Corpses to her questioning what's really going

on here, she could be knocked unconscious for the whole incident and only wake up when they are away from the site and no evidence of monsters is present. The operatives can then spin her any cover story they wish.

- In addition to the previous option, if the GM doesn't wish her killed, but also feels she's outlived her usefulness, this can be the perfect time to have her carted away in an ambulance.
- More interesting options could be that she survives the crash and the following attack, at which point the operatives are going to be left with an interesting explanation to feed to her (and if any of the PCs die in the encounter, they could always quickly generate her as a replacement character for them to play for the rest of the adventure).
- **SSF Reaction:** Ideally, the SSF team won't show their presence throughout the whole encounter. As per their orders, they are to hold back and only move in if there is an exceptional need. Their primary goal is to maintain the safety of Pendleton, and Townsend to a lesser degree.

They won't make an appearance in the scene unless Pendleton specifically calls them in for help through the bug in his jacket, or an operative dies in the course of the attack. One PC death, whilst tragic, is an acceptable loss in the grand scheme of things when they are considered to be potentially compromised.

If they do have to intervene, then their helicopter flies in overhead and a hail of bullets descends, cutting through the Blood Corpses (four shooters in this instance, stats and weapons as provided in the NPC brief). Once they have eliminated the hostiles, they will leave immediately. The operatives will be aware of this blatant SSF presence now, which could well result in Pendleton and Townsend having some explaining to do.

With the Blood Corpses dispatched, the thug dead, Skipper either dead or gone, the only loose end is Korstiaan laying in the van bleeding to death and going into shock. There is of course though the issue that this could well be a very public incident, so immediate damage control and Veil-Out might be in the fore-front of some operative's minds. It's down to them how they handle that.

The operatives here have a couple of choices. She's on death's door and won't be putting up a fight any time soon. She begs them to get her to a hospital, although she's dead either way, as she sees it. If they leave her there, she dies. If they take her to a hospital and don't go to see Vromme, then she dies when they fall into Hulst's hands and he activates the devices, as she sees it. It is pretty much game over for her.

With a 1 point spend of **Negotiation** or **Reassurance**, if they try to pump her for information, she agrees that if they patch her up, then she will lead them to Vromme who will explain everything. They will have to move quickly though as the sound of sirens grows forever closer on the horizon. Moving away at that point with no further lingering, they can escape in either the battered van or the people carrier (if it's not on its side). Pulling up in a side street lay-by and at least one of the operatives spending 2 points of their **Medic** skill (as she is wounded), Korstiaan is stabilised and the operatives can proceed onwards to the original ambush site, where there will now be no one left to run them off the road.

Scene 7: Beyond the Outskirts

SCENE TYPE CORE

LEAD IN THE NOTE IN SHELDON'S APARTMENT OR THE AMBUSH

This scene can play out a couple of different ways. It ultimately depends if the PCs have been ambushed as yet by Korstiaan, or if they are still following the operatives from Sheldon's apartment. With or without the ambush, the operatives will eventually reach the windmill, and here they learn a little more about the dance they have been led through, and the potential end results (as Vromme believes them to be).

The road out of town, the N212 quickly runs into open countryside when they drive past the city limits. Here, wide open fields of flowers, farmland and the occasional house in the distance border the road on both sides. In the early morning traffic, there are still very few people out on the road. The sense of silence and isolation in the cold light of dawn is definitely something to highlight here, again in definite contrast to the claustrophobia of the city.

It takes about 30 minutes to get from Sheldon's apartment to the intersection with the N401. Here, they carry on down the main road and in the distance, to the left, the outline of an old windmill comes in to view. One of the sails has fallen off and it looks to be in a definite state of disrepair. It's now that the operatives have to face which path has lead them here.

If the operatives have gone to the site straight away from the apartment, then everything is going to plan as Vromme's cell is concerned. The van containing the Blood Corpses is tailing them from a distance and getting ready to make its move.

AROUND THE WINDMILL

The operatives can drive down the long stretch of road to the windmill, and begin to look around the site. There are a couple of out buildings that are deserted; a barn containing a van and car used by Vromme's cell to get their gear to the site, etc. Otherwise, the only other feature is the windmill itself, with the door invitingly open.

Inside, as they spend a few moments looking around, they will notice that a large amount of the equipment or other paraphernalia they might have normally expected to be inside has been cleared out, leaving it very empty. As they will be able to see from the inside and outside, the windows have been boarded over and screwed in place with thick, heavy planks... almost as if whoever did it was trying to keep people in as well as out...

There is an old but firm staircase that leads up to the next floor. Here, the room is likewise empty again, apart from a two way radio that has been left on a shelf on top of Vromme's dossier.

Vromme is watching through a remote camera from afar that is hidden in the rafters overlooking the ground floor of the windmill, so he knows when they enter. At this point, he sends out a burst of static over the radio to tempt the operatives upstairs. Once they take the bait, and head up there, he will introduce himself to them. Assuming they

stay to listen and look through the dossier then they will be distracted long enough to not realise what is happening outside until it is too late.

CORE CLUE - VROMME'S DOSSIER

The folder is a detailed collection of photographs and notes concerning each of the operatives, their faces circled hastily in red marker pen (along with 'Thorne' being written besides Trenhaile's face - his real name, as Vromme knows him). The photographs show them each coming out of the Hotel de l'Europe a few hours ago, as the time stamp in the bottom corner will also confirm, having been taken by Korstiaan from a discrete distance through a zoom lens from across the river. There are also some scribbled notes, most of it in fairly illegible handwriting, and in Dutch. One key paragraph is written in block capitals though:

If his plan was to succeed, why did Hulst openly advertise it to the OV? There can only be one reason: he needs these people here. They are integral to his plan. The question is "Why?" The solution is simple. Kill them before they can do whatever it is Hulst wants them to do to active his device. If I can't... I hope this is just turns out to be 10/09/2008 all over again. And where does that traitor, Thorne, fit into all this?

NOTE: Outing Trenhaile here, or in Vromme's communication below may well cause a degree of friction in the party if the information comes out at this point, unless Trenhaile can convince them otherwise... After all, it is a different name on the photo, and only Pendleton besides him knows his true name.

- **(Trivia)** The "10th September 2008" reference above refers to the activation of the Large Hadron Collider at CERN. The media a stirred up hype that by turning on the device, many believed it might bring about the end of the world. Obviously though, for the operatives, it did not. Vromme evidently believes that Hulst's machine (whatever it might be, since this is the first they hear of it - although Trenhaile can make a good guess, given his background), if activated, could well have devastating effects.

VROMME'S COMMUNICATION

There's no set dialogue for the conversation about to take place over the radio, but the following bullet points give an indication of how to structure the discourse.

- Vromme's primary concern is to get the operatives in the windmill, and to distract them in preparation for the ambush as per below.
- If they have already fought and won against the Blood Corpses, then there is no fight here, but at least Vromme gets the chance to try and dissuade them from continuing.
- He is quite happy to state his name that he is a member of the Movement to which they stand diametrically opposed (but never uses the word Esoterrorist).
- He welcomes them to the windmill and regrets that he can't be there in person due to prior commitments (in actuality he is a mile away in another one of the farms along the main road - see below).

- He is disappointed to see Thorne has returned, given their discussion about the plans Hulst had for him, as they discussed in their last meeting (see Trenhaile's background, page 96). He is especially disappointed that he has turned his back on the Movement when a hand of friendship was offered to him and then cast aside by turning traitor to the Ordo Veritatis.

If the ambush has already happened, then he will simply urge them to leave the city, that being here is only going to help Hulst's plans. He's tried to kill them to make sure Hulst's plans (whatever they are exactly) don't reach fruition. As that has evidently failed, he can only try and convince them with his speech to make them leave. He cuts the communication after this and, for all intents and purposes, escapes.

If the ambush hasn't yet occurred, he will apologise for what it about to happen, but simply states that he can't let them live. The longer they remain in the city, the greater chance they will eventually do exactly what Hulst wants them to, and he can't stand by and watch that happen.

The operatives may make a 1 point spend of **Electronic Surveillance** and be able to track down the signal, but by the time they are able to get there after the events at the windmill, he is long gone. Maybe he'll turn up in another adventure to face the operatives again later down the line, but that's left to the GMs discretion.

THE AMBUSH AS PLANNED

Once the operatives are inside (or the majority at least, given they will probably be wanting to hear Vromme's communication and read the dossier) the van turns off the road and heads down the dirt track at speed. It skids to a halt, reversing into the entrance to the windmill, the back doors fly open and the Blood Corpses emerge, rushing into the ground floor. The van pulls forward and the thug quickly shuts the door to the windmill before the van reverses again to barricade them in.

At the same time, small hidden charges in the beams holding up the floor to first floor where the operatives are, listening to the radio and reading the dossier, blow the supports out of the walls and send everyone crashing down to the Blood Corpses below. The operatives get the chance to make an **Athletics** check (Target number 6) to catch hold of a secure beam, one of the window ledges, etc. and thus avoid falling down to the awaiting monsters. Those that fall take 1 point of damage in the process.

- **The Blood Corpses:** As per Scene 6, the four monsters' tactics ultimately depend on how many opponents they are up against. If it's an equal footing, they charge in, targeting one operative each and attempting to drain them dry whilst they are still alive. If there are more operatives in the windmill than Blood Corpses, they attempt to wade through the party one at a time until all are dead or unconscious, at which point they will have no interruptions to get in the way of them draining the bodies.

They have been deprived of blood for long enough by Vromme that they won't stop until they've taken down all the operatives. Their need is too great to stop and run if they are at risk of personal destruction now. It's all or nothing for them.

THE LOVE OF MONEY

- Each of the Blood Corpses has the stats as outlined in *The Book of Unremitting Horror* (p. 13-16): Athletics 6, Health 8, Scuffling 13. Hit Threshold: 3. Weapons: +2 (Talons). Armour: +2 vs. Shooting. Alertness: +1. Stealth: -1 (Vile Stench). GMs with access to this book may wish to make use of their extra abilities if so inclined. Otherwise, running with the basic stats (minus Alertness and Stealth) the Blood Corpse description can be found in *The Esoterrorists* (p. 59).

NOTE: This moment is going to be a bit like a flashback for Caroline, given these are the same creatures she encounter in the Dover Docks, which is key to emphasis to her player. Particularly cruel GMs might well wish to make the **Stability** check for their appearance a little harsher for Caroline in this case.

- **Escaping the Windmill:** The PCs haven't really got many options in the trap. The obvious one is to fight the monsters until they are all destroyed. However, they have a few things that they can do to help shift the odds in their favour.

If any of the operatives managed to avoid falling down to the ground floor, those on the ground may make an **Athletics** check (Target number 6) to jump up, and be helped up, by their colleague get out of the reach of the Blood Corpses. Here, they can shoot down at them, or generally avoid being attacked as they so wish.

Trying to break down the main door whilst the van is in the way is next to impossible. The operatives stand a much better chance of trying to break out through one of the windows, after they have destroyed the thick planking covering it. Their best bet is to try and shoot or beat their way through. A total of 12 points of damage need to be done to break down the planks so they can escape. At which point, they can easily pick off the Blood Corpses as they stumble to try and get through the window and follow them.

- **Outside with the Van:** Korstiaan and the Thug have pretty much served their purpose at this point. They remain in the van after it has been reversed into place, barricading them in. If any of the operatives remain outside, not having gone into the windmill, then they can confront the two Esoterrorists.

The thug's first reaction is to go for his gun. As he does so, two quick rifle shots explode through the windscreen and both him and Korstiaan outright. This takes the place of Skipper's intervention from Scene 6, and introduces the fact that there is another group out there, actively trying to protect the team or at the very least hurt the other Esoterrorist cell.

- **The Van Eken Option:** If the detective is still with them at this point, the GM has a few possibilities on how to deal with her.
 - She could be killed by one of the Blood Corpses. This eliminates the NPC from helping the operatives any further. To be honest, she's also pretty much served her usefulness at this point as well.
 - If the GM likes having her around as an aid for the operatives to call on, but doesn't want the occurrences of the Blood Corpses to her questioning what's really going on here, she could be knocked unconscious for the whole incident (such as from the fall) and only wake up when they are away from the site and no evidence of monsters is present. The operatives can then spin her any cover story they wish.

- In addition to the previous option, if the GM doesn't wish her killed, but also feels she's outlived her usefulness, this can be the perfect time to have her carted away in an ambulance after the scene is resolved.
- More interesting options could be that she survives the attack, at which point the operatives are going to be left with an interesting explanation to feed to her (and if any of the PCs die in the encounter, they could always use her as a replacement character for them to play for the rest of the adventure – see the briefing in Appendix 3, page 111).
- **SSF Reaction:** Ideally, the SSF team won't show their presence throughout the whole encounter. As per their orders, they are to hold back and only move in if there is an exceptional need. Their primary goal is to maintain the safety of Pendleton, and Townsend to a lesser degree.

They won't make an appearance in the scene unless Pendleton specifically calls them in for help through the bug in his jacket, or an operative dies in the course of the attack. One PC death, whilst tragic, is an acceptable loss in the grand scheme of things when they are considered to be potentially compromised.

If they do have to intervene, then their helicopter flies in overhead and drops a grenade outside the windmill, near one of the boarded up windows. The subsequent explosion, whilst not enough to break down the stone wall, is enough to break open the barricaded window and let the operatives escape. Once they have all exited the building, they open fire on the opening as the Blood Corpses come into view, cutting them down in a swift, surgical strike.

Once they have eliminated the hostiles, they will leave immediately. The operatives will be aware of this blatant SSF presence now, which could well result in Pendleton and Townsend having some explaining to do.

From here, it is back to the city, and the only remaining loose end is the Métallon Incorporated offices. By the time they arrive back in the city, it's going to be getting close to 8:00am, and the offices will be open with the first employees arriving to begin their day's work.

Scene 8: In the Metallon Inc. Offices

SCENE TYPE CORE

LEAD IN SHELDON'S PASS AND RESEARCH NOTES

Heading back into the city, it's not far to the Zuidas district, although the rush hour is beginning. More cars pack into the roads and life is returning to the city streets.

NOTE: See Scene 4, page 38, for the description of the area in general. Copied below is the description found there of the Métallon building.

The Métallon Incorporated building stands out amongst the buildings as a twenty-five-storey office tower covered on all sides by a mirrored front. For those who identified the Spectrosite involvement in Cansters death, the mirrored front may now be a somewhat concerning feature of the building. Every five storeys, the floors become slightly smaller, creating a ziggurat-esque effect.

Those paying enough attention to the site's location, and pulling floorplans of the building from the internet, etc. can use Occult Studies to realise the building is set on a leyline, and constructed in such a fashion to draw upon the geomantic energy of the area and channel it up a central shaft to the penthouse office. For a 1 Point Spend of Occult Studies Trenhaile knows that the building sits on the same leyline that connects to the nexus over the Devil's Hole in the North Sea he examined during his time working on the lodestone project.

Depending on the route they've taken to come here and what they've found along the way, there are a few approaches they can take here. The most likely are outlined in turn below:

ASKING FOR A MEETING

They can march straight on in or demand to speak with Hulst, or one of the members of senior management, but as they are not there, Groot as the head of security can meet with them to answer any queries that they have. Of course, she denies all knowledge of Esoterrorist involvement and any connection with Cansters. In fact, she denies all knowledge of Cansters. Those with points in Bullshit Detector will know this is definitely a lie.

She won't stop them from trying to look around, but will insist she comes with them to observe their activities. She's been given orders to make sure that they find what they are looking for, to point them to Hagan, so that they make it to the ritual point, but put up enough of a show that they don't think they are being manipulated.

Groot doesn't know what's going to happen when they get to Hagan's house, so if anyone is especially clever and suspects her of trickery and pump her for information, she has none to give, only that she's following orders.

WALKING STRAIGHT IN

As the operatives have the pass from Sheldon, and if they don't want to go via security on the way in, they can use this to gain entrance. To enter the building past the main lobby there are numerous security card slots that read the barcodes on the cards. They simply put the card in the slot, the door opens and the group walk on through.

Since they know from Devoss that Sheldon, posing as Franklin Chase, was an Account Manager, this should give them a rough idea of where to look in the building, starting with the accounts department. Here, quite high up in the building, a few floors from the top, they find one of the many open plan office floors surrounded by numerous offices for more senior members of staff. Employees are beginning to sit down to work but don't really pay them too much attention unless they do something monumentally rash like trying to kick down doors, etc.

After a few minutes of searching, they can find a door marked "F. Chase - Account Manager". His card opens the door and they can get inside without any problem. If there's security or Groot with them, then they can express concerns if the operatives start

sifting through his paperwork. In either case, one of the office secretaries comes over and enquires if there is any problem. Anke Wit, Chase's secretary, is concerned about him. Security will be quick to try and stop her from talking, but not put up any further resistance if the operatives insist she speaks.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- **(Flattery, Reassurance)** Talking with Miss Wit, she explains that she is concerned about Mr Chase after what she saw happen in the office the night before last. She's been assigned to him ever since he joined the company six months ago and the two of them got on rather well – although nothing beyond a professional relationship.
 - She had come back to collect her purse which she'd left in her desk draw and caught sight of Chase still in the office. It was late, gone 10:00pm.
 - He was pretty stressed by the look of him as he came out of the office and slammed the door behind him. There wasn't anyone else around, and she saw him carrying a handgun.
 - Shocked, she kept out of sight and followed him, fearing he was going to do something rash. He took the emergency stairs, all the way to the top floor.
 - Here, he used a card to get into Mr Hulst's office. He raised the gun and slammed the door shut behind him. She heard yelling from inside, but the doors are really secure and she couldn't hear much for definite in there. She knows though that there definitely were no gunshots, as she would have heard those.
 - She left shortly afterwards, not wanting to get involved. She's no hero and didn't want to risk getting shot by accident. She didn't call the police or security because she thought she could talk with through with Chase the next morning and find out what was wrong.
 - He didn't show up for work yesterday morning, and likewise he's not here this morning either...
- **(Core Clue, Evidence Collection)** The office is pretty sparse, as most of the business information is on the computer, but there are a few things that have been left laying around specifically to be found (and two that the Esoterrorists have missed – the key card and notepad).
 - The blank security card that can be used to get into Hulst's office on the top floor, taped under the draws in the desk (HANDOUT 10).
 - Several of the plans for Hulst's device are taped up on a white board and some notes on a drawn out copy note measurements, weight and value in dollars alongside the note showing the market value of Rhodium. Trenhaile will recognise this designs, as they are his, although modified somewhat (see **Occult Studies** below).
 - One of Hagan Lange's business cards, detailing his home address.
 - Indentations on a writing pad on the desk when highlighted state the last thing written on there was: "Hulst Password = liefdevangeld" ("liefde van geld" being Love of Money in Dutch). That should prove to be one hell of a coincidence that it bares a direct connection to the Bible quote that named Operation T610 not to be ignored.
- **(Occult Studies)** The designs on the wall are bizarre to say the least. They all have a similar theme, being that of a pyramid-like construction with varying numbers

of sides depending on the design upon which a doorway or portal stands above a shaft that runs down through the centre of the device. The portal or doorway in each is a different geometric shape, with circles, squares and hexagons features in the examples. It looks like it's the collection point for some type of energy to flow up from the ground and into the portal area for use there. They have been modified from the designs that Trenhaile remembers. A core unit in the base unit of the device can now be extracted for some reason, and grooves run into it look like it might well be designed for fluid collection. One sketch also implies that it would be about the right size to fit a human heart into the opening that the grooves would channel fluid to.

- (1pt. Spend - **Data Retrieval**) The computer is password protected, but it can be bypassed with some effort. Whether the operatives guess it or it takes a little while to bypass the encryption, it's MARY01. On the computer, there's a lot of information regarding financial transactions for the company, but the biggest project Sheldon was accessing last was a new venture the company looks to be making into oil exploration. They brought up the assets of a UK Company called "N.S.O.E. Ltd".
- (**Research, Trivia**) "N.S.O.E. Ltd" is "North Sea Oil Exploration Ltd". It was a UK government sanctioned oil exploration project that went into liquidation earlier in the year. Because of the appalling weather conditions that plague the area they were positioning their key rig in, the costs of the operation spiralled out of control and the rig was abandoned upon liquidation. Scottish fisherman complained about the rig still being out there being a shipping hazard. News of the company's assets being brought out a couple of months ago lead to it being made public that the eventual plan was to relocate the rig to a more viable spot in the near future.
- (**Forensic Accounting**) The company records accessible on the computer at this level give the operatives all the information they need to pinpoint the Esoterrorist cells worldwide that the company has been channelling funds to. This has all been collected by Sheldon's investigation over the six months he's been here. It doesn't have too much relevance to the rest of this particular adventure, but it's another chance for the GM to throw the PCs some plot hooks to lead into investigations later.

With their core clue collected, this leads the operatives to the penthouse floor, to Hulst's office.

IN THE PENTHOUSE OFFICE

Taking the lift or the stairs to the top floor, Hulst's secretary is nowhere to be found when they arrive. The card from Sheldon's office does indeed open the door. Groot if with them, refuses to go any further under any circumstances. She's not allowed into the room and will not go even if they threaten her, she simply turns away and says if they need her, she will be on the ground floor, waiting for them. If they force her into the office at gunpoint, she won't resist but will be very hesitant about the whole thing. She's been ordered not go in there before, and she doesn't know why. When events begin to unfold in there, she's as much surprised and as much of a target as any of the operatives are.

If they haven't been here as yet, careful investigation of the door using skills such as **Ballistics** or **Explosive Devices** will show that without the key-card to get in, or being let in by someone on the inside, they wouldn't be getting in without high explosives.

Likewise, the walls around the office seem to be reinforced. Pretty high security for the office of company director. Hardly surprising for a high-ranking Esoterrorist.

Inside, the office is a very grand affair. The far wall provides a panoramic view of the city skyline looking out to the North. The walls on all other sides, and the ceiling, are comprised of floor to ceiling mirrors that generate an eerie optical illusion of infinity to the left and right. The floor is made of marble squares, alternately black with white veins and then white with black veins, making a chessboard like appearance.

A three-dimensional piece of artwork takes up the section of the room, which those with Chemistry will be able to identify as the composition of Rhodium. (HANDOUT 11). Hulst's desk is a large oval with a marble top, with five large high back chairs on the near-side, and another larger office chair on the far side in front of a terminal where one could connect up a laptop computer to the company network, which is still there. The desk and the chairs all have a black and silver colour-coding theme, which may make the operatives remember the helicopter they saw at the airport.

CORE CLUE HULST'S LAPTOP

- **(Data Retrieval)** The password on the notepad in Sheldon's office proves to be accurate. The laptop opens and the last couple of open files on the computer are an email to the transport division of the company filing a flight plan for the helicopter to the oilrig in the North Sea (along with its co-ordinates, etc.) and an MP3 file.
 - The file itself appears to have been downloaded onto an MP3 player, and if opened appears to be a series of squeals and squeaks that resemble a modem signal. It's an audible signal to be received by a computer, quite possibly for identification purposes.
- **(1pt. Spend - Data Retrieval)** Digging further on the files connected to the MP3, the operatives can uncover the specifications for an automated weapon defence system. A surface-to-air missile platform recently acquired by Hulst through the black market and installed on the rig. It is designed to fire on any approaching aircraft detected by radar that does not play the signal on a pre-set frequency. As such, the operatives will know that if they approach the oilrig without the signal, they will be shot out of the sky.

LAAN'S INTERVENTION

If the operatives had followed the plan that Hulst had laid out, then they should have gone directly to Lange's residence. As they have begun to tread a little off the designated path, and a getting little close to learning enough that would direct them to the oilrig, Laan has to intervene to get them back on track. The way it decides to do this is to pose as Mary once again and try to convince them the same way that it did with Sheldon.

There's no set monologue here, but the following features and facts should be in the GMs mind when portraying Laan's impersonation here:

- "Mary" appears exactly as she did to Caroline the night of the accident. The same dress, the same bloodstains... It's an image she's seen played over and over again in her mind's eye so many times (particularly vicious GMs could well rule this whole

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scene dictates a **Stability** check from Caroline, with a potential loss of 6 points if failed).

- It is relieved to see Caroline in particular – referring to her by her real name (Heather).
- It states that she (as Mary) and Peter (John Sheldon’s real name) are soon going to be lost forever if they don’t stop Hulst and Lange. The Esoterrorists are gathered where they killed Peter, at Lange’s home, planning to use their souls to power some kind of device they are preparing a ritual around.
- It claims that it doesn’t know exactly where it is, but the address must be here somewhere (knowing full well it is on the business card they have from Sheldon’s office).

Whilst Laan will do a very convincing job of impersonating Mary, those probing with **Bullshit Detector** will uncover its deception. It will hold out as long as it can (specifically until it has mentioned the location of the Esoterrorist ritual at Lange’s residence), at which point it moves in to destroy the microphones that Trenhaile and Townsend have been fitted with, moving up to them with the appearance of begging them for help, grabbing hold of their lapels in the reflections and crushing the hidden devices (which they will obviously feel on their side of the mirror). In this moment, with the same feeling suddenly creeping upon the operatives who looked in the mirror in Mr Verity’s office, Laan drops the act and reverts to the form that they have seen it in previously.

Exactly how the GM also wishes to portray Laan is down to them. It could be eloquent and sophisticated, it could give off the feeling of being a cold-hearted killer or insane sociopath, maybe something completely inhuman and very alien comes across in its movements and its voice. The key thing for it here is that it has passed on the information of where the ritual is taking place, so that the SSF team will go to complete the operation even if the operatives here do not. It even goes so far as to say that, having been watching from the mirror in the side office on the jet when Townsend and Pendleton were given their briefing (the feeling of being watched that they felt). The final thing it has to do is make sure that they don’t leave here, if this is the case. They cannot be permitted to go to the oilrig.

It begins by throwing things around the office at them, (chairs, the desk, the artwork, etc.). It also blocks the door by throwing the artwork against it, making it impossible for them to leave whilst being attacked. Groot is as much of a target as the operatives as she will begin to attack back (ineffectually) at this horrific thing she sees before her, so Laan has no problems dispatching her, and should do so with extreme prejudice. The operatives, if anyone has made the Occult Studies use previously to know the rumours of the Spectrosites, or seen the effect of a breaking mirror on them, can dispel it from the room by breaking all the mirrors present (although there are a lot of them). Once it is dispelled, they can move the artwork to escape.

Armed with the knowledge now from Vromme’s notes about them being instrumental in Hulst’s plan, the fluid collection point in the device, and that Laan said if they don’t go to the ritual site at least the SSF team will do their job for them, the operatives will probably be able to put the pieces together. Knowing what they were set up to perform, they have to stop the SSF team before they can reach Lange’s house to North of the city, just outside Landsmeer. In this instance, proceed to Scene 9.

If the operatives have skipped over Hulst's office completely, or brought Laan's story hook-line-and-sinker and proceed to Lange's home unaware of their role in the ritual, proceed to Scene 10.

Scene 9: Stopping the SSF Team

SCENE TYPE ALTERNATE
LEAD IN EVENTS IN HULST'S OFFICE

As per the briefs that Townsend and Pendleton received about the SSF team, they would have been listening in to the conversation with Laan in Hulst's office through a bug planted in their jackets. They would remain completely out of radio contact for the whole mission and have standing orders that they are to capture those at the head of the conspiracy as soon as they and their locations are identified, which Laan will have done for them.

Whilst Control will have much to learn about the Esterrorist organisation from them, all those around them resisting detainment are to be dispatched with extreme prejudice. This will spill the blood necessary for them to activate the device. Essentially, they are left with just one course of action: stop them before it's too late.

THE RACE

Visually, how this scene plays out is down to the GM, either as a car chase or as aerial combat. The SSF team may have been outside in a car following them as previously that's seen pulling away (either to head to the house or to go to the airport and get their helicopter to make a quicker journey). Alternatively, they might have been circling the area in a helicopter already and now fly out in the direction of the house. In the later case, they can use the Métallon helicopter on the roof's helipad, which is easily accessible from the penthouse floor.

In either case, whether by road or air, the GM sets a target of 6 for three **Driving** rolls to be made by the designated driver/pilot.

Potential Point of Conclusion

Given that Laan still has the vital task to perform (carrying the heart of the device to the rig from Hulst's residence), there's always the chance that if the operatives manage to do enough damage to Laan to send it back to the Outer Dark at this point, then they have effectively succeeded in their mission, albeit without realising yet.

One possible result of the GM going all out and using the Spectrosite's Spirit Gouge ability is that a PC might well go insane, performing a self-destructive act that does the amount of damage needed to bring this about. In this instance, the heart cannot be transported to the rig, so even if the SSF team get to the residence first, they capture the heart and prevent the device from being activated, leaving the rest of the mission to effectively mop up loose ends.

There's nothing stopping the GM from making the call that this happens at this point, should it pan out that way. If the GM wants to see things through to the end though, it's best recommended that Laan flees the scene when the risk of banishment becomes too great.

- Just 1 or fewer successes over any of the three roles means the SSF team arrive at the house ahead of the operatives and have already gotten involved in the fire fight, making their way towards where the device is being held. If the GM's choice of immediate destination was for them to head to the airport, they are already here, in the same place they started, about to leave in their own helicopter. They can either attempt to contact Mr Verity on the jet still there, or attack the helicopter directly, which will invoke a full-scale conflict against them. (Proceed to Scene 10, which details this possible outcome).
- Success on 2 of these rolls indicates that they are just able to beat the SSF team to either destination by a matter of minutes, allowing them to make preparations or get to Mr Verity and avoid a conflict hopefully altogether.
- Success on all 3 of the rolls means they get there with plenty of time before the SSF team arrive with all guns blazing, giving them time to resolve the situation by themselves.

STOPPING THE SSF IN TRANSIT

If the going for the aerial option, if the pilot tries to intercept the SSF team in mid-flight and stop them, they're going to be in for a bad time. In a commercial helicopter with no real armaments, they are outgunned against the SSF team's armed and much faster vehicle. They ignore radio contact as per their orders and will attempt to stop those who get in their way if the operatives try to block their path (which could be seen as tantamount to an admission of guilt, trying to protect members of the Esoterrorist movement).

However, rather than kill other members of the Ordo Veritatis, they would be more likely to try and render the helicopter damaged and have to return to land rather than outright kill them. There, they can be picked up by another team and taken away to confinement. Obviously then, the ritual to activate the device will occur as they are uninterrupted.

There is always the chance that the team might decide that their lives are worth trading in to stop the SSF team from bringing about catastrophe. As such, they might well try to ram the helicopter. In which case, this might well prove a natural point at which to bring the adventure to a close.

If the PCs come up with a creative means by which to disable the SSF helicopter, or do manage to communicate with them in transit, then the GM can always allow them to succeed in a dramatic fashion. Likewise, if the operatives can convince Mr Verity of the situation at the airport, the report goes up to Control about the situation and the SSF team's orders are changed to invoke a non-lethal response against the Esoterrorists on site.

From here, the operatives can move on to Scene 10.

Scene 10: At Lange's Home

SCENE TYPE CORE

LEAD IN DOCUMENTS IN SHELDON'S OFFICE EVENTS IN HULST'S OFFICE

To the North of Amsterdam, a little outside of Landsmeer and on the road to Oostzaan, stand a few isolated houses of the rich and powerful. One such house belongs to Lange. A single storey building, hidden almost entirely by the trees surrounding it, none would know there's a house there if it were not for the gate that borders the road. The driveway and the rest of the grounds are concealed by a ten foot high wall behind the line of trees. The driveway itself turns in an S-bend so that anyone looking through the gate doesn't see anything other than wall. No-one can see the house from the road.

To get in, the operatives aren't going to have any luck trying to raise someone on the intercom at the gate. They can try to ram the gate with their vehicle, which would accomplish nothing but writing-off their vehicle, or they can park up and try to get over the wall. (Note: If the SSF team have beaten them to the location, they will have blown the gates off their hinges and a fire-fight is already well underway).

With a successful Infiltration roll (target number of 4) the operatives can identify a section of the wall that isn't being covered by cameras. Climbing up a nearby tree, they can jump across onto the wall, then down onto the other side.

In the grounds, the wall is also hidden behind another row of trees, which can mask their entrance. However, everything else up to the house itself is open ground. They can see from their location here a second building a little way from the main house. Both structures are mostly glass fronted, and they can see the majority of the outward facing rooms. The second building appears to be swimming pool, which looks like it has a sliding roof, to allow it be open to the sky in better weather.

THE HOUSE

If Skipper is alive, the operatives will recognize her sports car sat out the front. Looking through the glass frontage though, they can't see her or anyone else for that matter moving around. Skipper is positioned on the roof-top. The operative with the highest current **Surveillance** pool notices this as she occasionally stretches or shifts position from her hiding place on a flat section of the roof behind a low wall. She is armed with a sniper rifle.

Her primary role here is to provide a real threat to the proceedings. The aim of the Esoterrorist cell here is to make sure that the operatives spill their blood on the heart of the device. However, if they don't put up a fight, they are going to suspect that something isn't right here. As such, Skipper has no problem with targeting a third of the group for death. Assuming a full compliment of six operatives arrive, killing two means there's still four left to complete their task.

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The house itself is otherwise empty. No-one else is hiding anywhere inside, as they are all in the swimming pool building where the ritual is to be enacted. If they search the house, there's little of relevance to be found here besides Lange's own personal records and business files which would normally be confiscated by the Ordo Veritatis later for post-mission investigation. If the GM wishes, information seeds could be planted here leading the operatives on to a future mission, detailing more of the funding network, other Esoterrorist activities they have been connected to having funded a wide range of cells, etc.

On a helipad behind the house stands a large helicopter that those with **Trivia** or **Driving** can identify as a Bell 407, capable of holding 7 passengers, including the pilot. It has a range of approximately 370 miles, cruising speed of 152 mph, top speed of 161 mph, reaching a ceiling of just short of 5,700 metres. Whilst it's a little larger than the one they saw at the airport hours ago, the colour scheme of black and silver matches the helicopter some may have seen taking off.

THE SWIMMING POOL

The cell members, including Lange, are waiting for the operatives in the swimming pool building, in the empty pool itself. Once within the grounds, the operatives can hear the sounds of chanting in Latin coming from here. A typical invocation, those with **Occult Studies** can identify it as being translated from the likes summoning tomes such as *The Goetia* but something doesn't sound quite right.

Hiding from the tree line and using binoculars to see through the glass frontage, the operatives can observe what is happening in the building. Seeing into the empty pool itself would require a degree of elevation (such as climbing up one of the trees). Around the heart of the device, Hulst's core of the Esoterrorist cell form a solid human shield, shoulder to shoulder. The heart itself resembles a shining cylinder open at one end, etched with arcane sigils, which then slot into the larger device at the oilrig. In the bottom of the cavity inside is the cold, dead heart of Sheldon that will come to life and begin to beat when blood falls on it once again. It is the literal "heart" of the device, without which it cannot function. The inner wall of the swimming pool is lined with mirrors, ready for Laan to transport the heart through once it has collected the blood it needs.

Each cell member wears black robes with a silver mask and holds a sub-machine gun. They know what they need to do: fire into the air and area around the operatives. They can't risk killing anyone outright, hence they are all shaking scared, knowing it's all a matter of chance of whom the Ordo Veritatis hits first amongst them. If they do, even if they only cause a single point of damage, their blood splatters onto the device and it activates the heart.

If the operatives take the time to observe or perform reconnaissance, then they will be able to observe enough to deduce the following points of interest.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- **(Evidence Collection)** Looking into the drained swimming pool itself, a large section of the tiled floor has been smashed. Given the pattern of the smashed tiles, the weight needed to do that, and that the roof is open, the operatives can surmise that one of the

devices in the drawings they found in Sheldon's office had been flown in and placed into the pool area, then been flown out again.

- **(Forensic Anthropology)** The area is splattered with blood in numerous spray patterns. Given the amount of blood here, pooled and still streaking the tiles of the pool floor, it's safe to say that someone was torn apart here, and with the patterns and volume of blood, it could very well have been the place of Sheldon's death.
- **(Occult Studies)** Given the above deduction, if Sheldon was sacrificed on the device itself, it might be he was used in a ritual to embody the device with magical power. It's a known fact the Esoterrorists have been able to perform rituals to infuse items with magical power that when under the right circumstances it could be activated, but how to activate it, they don't know.
- **(1 pt Spend - Occult Studies)** If their worst fears are true and Sheldon really did give himself completely to this (especially if he believed the lie that Laan spun to them about Mary, etc.) and he set the criteria under which it activates, it might be reasonable to conclude that it's something symbolic of his own past (quite possibly Mary's death), something that would represent him getting his wife back perhaps, maybe linking back to the method from which she was taken from him.

IF THE SSF TEAM ARRIVE FIRST

Essentially, if the SSF team arrive on site well ahead of the operatives and go in with their standing orders, they are going to start shooting, attempting to apprehend Lange and Skipper primarily as they are the two figures of authority on site (assuming Skipper is alive at this stage - if not, then just Lange). Everyone else is classified as an enemy combatant and to be taken down with extreme prejudice, as per their orders.

The SSF team are already in the process of cleaning up when the operatives arrive. They can report what happened in the course of their attack though: they blew the main gates, stormed the front of the house and started taking fire from the pool area; they advanced on the pool area and upon still taking fire from inside opened up a burst of gunfire on them, taking a couple down; they fell back onto the heart of the device, at which time it quickly levitated through the air to the mirrors surrounding the pool where they saw it being held by a reflection of a figure matching the description of Laan seen earlier; the thing pulled the object through the mirror like it was a surface of water; one member of the group (Lange) then dived through the same mirror after it. At that point, the Esoterrorists surrendered completely, begging for the team to stop shooting.

This means that the device will soon be active, as soon as the heart is installed at the oilrig. In order for them to perform damage control, or perhaps stop things if it isn't too late, the operatives will have to use the helicopter on site to travel to the oilrig and confront Hulst as he is about to rip a hole straight through the Membrane. The defence system they have in place rules out a missile strike as it will be shot out of the air before it can hit, and an assault heading in by air without the identification signal will go the same way.

Besides, Mr Verity's orders still stand: bring back the head of the conspiracy. Hulst is still out there...

At which point, the operatives proceed to the End Game scenes.

IF THE OPERATIVES ARRIVE FIRST

If the operatives arrive before the SSF team, and they have yet to call them off, they've got two choices: they can wait for them to show up and try to dissuade them from going in (which will require the expenditure of points of any Interpersonal skill representing how they are trying to achieve this); or they can try and solve the problem on their own before they turn up.

If they go in primarily without having deduced their role in the events underway and go straight into combat, things should play out as they do in the scenario above as if the SSF team had turned up first, with the addition of Skipper acting as sniper (if she is alive). Once the events have been completed, any of the cell members present, who can be identified from the Adversary Map in Sheldon's apartment, can reveal to them the nature of what just happened: that they have been played, that they have just helped in the culmination of the Great Work and that Hulst (and through him, as they believe it, the rest of the Esoterror Movement) will soon be in command of power that mere mortals such as the Ordo Veritatis could only dream of.

If the operatives decide to take a non-lethal approach (working with the SSF team and trying to force them out with smoke bombs and gas or setting the building on fire above them, or a flash of brilliance that impresses the GM, etc.) that would get them to flee, then Laan is left with no other option but to take the heart back through the mirror and then to the oilrig. In this instance, Hulst in his fury and desperation will try other methods to activate the device. Lange escapes through the same mirror as above.

Calling in the details to Mr Verity through the SSF team, or through Pendleton, they are reminded that the head of the conspiracy is still in the field, out on the rig, and needs to be brought in for questioning. On top of that, they can capture the device before it falls into other Esoterrorist hands if Hulst's plan fails. Given Trenhaile's intimate knowledge of the device, the team themselves are instructed to recover it as they are the most informed in this matter. The SSF team will remain at Lange's house to perform post-operation clean-up.

As above, at this point it is time to move to the End Game scenes.

OPTION UNVEILING TRENHAILE

If the operatives begin questioning survivors in the pool area, then a sadistic GM wishing to stir up some inter-party conflict might well use this as the point to reveal Trenhaile's background. The Esoterrorists here (particularly Skipper if she has been taken alive) could recognise him amongst the group and comment that he knew he'd be back, that his thirst for power knew no bounds and he would try to get to Hulst any way he could. If the other operatives push, the cell member reveals Trenhaile's past as an Esoterror operative in Hulst's cell.

Throwing the cat amongst the pigeons here, the group could well turn on Trenhaile. Depending on how extreme Caroline takes her hatred of the Esoterrorists to be, she may specifically react more than the others, who may well step in to stop her going too far.

ENDGAME SCENES

At this point, the investigation has given the operatives all the clues they are going to get. It's time to act on what they have. There are a couple of things to consider, and they are deal with in turn below. Ultimately, it's completely in the players hands where things go from here.

The Journey to the Rig

The Devil's Hole is a series of deep trenches running north-south into the bed of the North Sea. The seabed around it is approximately 90 metres below the surface, and then the trenches cut downward to depths of up to 230 metres. The area got its name generations ago when fishermen begun to loose trawl nets down the trenches' steep sides.

As the clues above state, the Bell 407 helicopter outside Lange's house, painted in the Métallon Incorporated colours of black and silver, can just about manage the trip to the Devil's Hole. With time against them if they are to get there before the device achieves its purpose, the operatives aren't going to have the chance to refuel on route. Plus, they know if they can't refuel at the rig then they aren't going to be able to use the same helicopter to get to the mainland. They will need some other transportation back (maybe Hulst's helicopter, for example, if they remember him leaving the airport at the beginning of the scenario).

Given that a number of the operatives have multiple levels of drive, they can easily choose a pilot amongst themselves. Weather conditions are fair as they begin the long journey roughly North-West to the North Sea. Travelling around 150 mph for the majority of the way at cruising speed, it will take them around two-and-a-quarter hours to get to the rig. Thus, by the time they've got to Lange's house, done what they need to there, prepare the helicopter, it's going to be coming up to noon by the time they arrive in the general area of the rig.

Bad Weather, Defences and Arrival

The first thing that the team will come across closer to the site is the bad weather that's building up over the area. Storm clouds can be seen from far off in the distance and the occasional flash of lightning. The wind starts to pick up and it becomes harder to steer the helicopter. Visibility becomes so dire the closer they come to the rig, they almost fly straight into it as they are on final approach.

As they reach the outer edge of the storm, they will pick up an incoming signal on their radio from the automated defence system stating in an voice synthesiser tone

“Identification Required. Please Comply.” It will recite five times before the weapons system on the rig fires. If they do not transmit the MP3 file signal they could have obtained from Hulst’s office at this point, then they are fired upon by a series of surface-to-air missiles. The weapons platform is armed with two missiles, and hasn’t been called to fire on anything so far, so it is fully loaded.

To evade each missile requires a **Driving** roll against a target number of 8 if they are outside the storm front. If they have entered the storm then it’s simply impossible: the missile literally comes out of nowhere through the clouds and the also zero-visibility. As such, this is probably going to spell Game Over at this point. However, a kind GM might give the operatives a chance to survive. That said, being hit with a missile and being inside an exploding helicopter, then plummeting a considerably distance into a stormy sea, it’s not going to be easy. At least 10 damage dice with a +2 modifier should be rolled for the initial explosion, and then a further 1-2 damage dice depending on the height from which they fall from the helicopter. This could just result in many of the operatives being knocked unconscious and drowning.

If by some miracle the operatives manage to survive, they will have to battle their way through the stormy seas to the oilrig, by which time the device is either warming up or misfires (see below) and they are about to be caught in the vortex it causes.

Assuming though that they transmit the code, they are allowed to proceed to the rig and are not fired upon. The rig has two helipads, one on each side. A **Driving** roll with a target of 6 can be made by the pilot to land safely on the empty pad – the occupied one holds Hulst’s helicopter seen at the airport so long ago. If they fail, then they can still land, but they damage the helicopter irreparably in doing so. They may well notice, either as they are landing, or as they crash, that the helipad has been marked with luminous paint, marking a ring of the twelve signs of the zodiac.

Finally being able to take in the details of the rig a little more closely now, it looks like it’s in a complete state of disrepair itself, and in certain areas still not completed. The structure above the helipad has been blasted apart by lightning; the radio mast is bent and leaning over the side near the missile weapons array. Those with enough scientific or technical background can easily determine this has been the way for quite some time and that the whole structure was probably abandoned months ago. Given it’s construction, and that it gently sways under their feet, they can also deduce it’s a semi-submersible platform, designed to float, rather than being built to stand directly on the ocean floor.

A sign above them and on the centre of the helipad reads “N.S.O.E. Ltd” – the company who went into liquidation trying to establish the rig and maintain it in these appalling conditions, and from whom Métallon Incorporated brought out their assets, including the rig itself. (HANDOUT 12).

ESOTERRORIST GUARDS

If the operatives land without issue, it does not remain quiet for long. As the cell is not expecting any visitors, the first couple of guards emerge from inside the oilrig, figures in black oilskins holding a variety of automatic weaponry, and attempt to confront

them. They will demand them to identify themselves or else they will open fire. Vocally replying will confirm that they are not cell members, and a firefight starts.

Each of the guards has the following stats: Health, Shooting and Scuffling at 6 pts each and a Hit Threshold of 3. There are 1d6+6 guards present on the rig, with two of these dedicated to guarding the device at the centre of the structure.

Once the operatives get inside the central structure, the first thing they see in the reception-like entrance to greet visitors from the helipad is a long banner on the far wall proclaiming "Welcome to NSOE Rig MARY". Rigs have a tendency to be named after people or places. Coincidence then that this should bear the name of John Sheldon's departed wife?

From here, it's going to be a running gun battle through the deserted and gutted oilrig to get to the loading bay where the device sits. The guards, if they find themselves outnumbered or overwhelmed will start falling back to this point to meet up with the last two guards to make their last stand, which in turn leads the operatives to the device.

The Device

Advancing through the rig, the operatives pass sleeping quarters that imply the guards have been stationed out here for a couple of days or so, gutted offices, empty rooms, broken windows, gaping holes in the floor and other features the GM wishes to throw in that highlight to them that the rig is essentially a derelict building at sea that it slowly falling to pieces.

As they close in on the loading bay where the drill would descend from the centre of the tower, what they hear is dependant on what happened at Lange's house. If they stopped the heart coming into contact with Esoterrorist blood spilt by the Ordo Veritatis, then Hulst is bent over Lange, whom he has overpowered and tied down on the device, and is ritualistically cutting into him with a ceremonial dagger. His blood slowly pours down him, through the groves in the device and into the heart. He's screaming in agony and begging Hulst to stop, who pays him no heed as he obsessively continues, offering up any and all blood he can in a desperate attempt to get the device to work.

If the SSF team were successful in beating the operatives to the house and activating the heart, then the device is opening the doorway (as per below). Hulst stands in black and silver robes in front of the octagonal portal on top of the pyramid base and chants loudly and wildly as the operatives arrive on the scene.

The central drilling area and loading bay has been cleared of all machinery other than the device itself that is suspended above the hole leading down to the sea below.

The Doorway Opens and Escape

How the device activates is down to Hulst's plan. If he was successful and the heart contains Esoterrorist blood, spilt by the Ordo Veritatis, the whole complex shakes as the device finally works at the culmination of his chant. A beam of black light shoots up from the sea below the rig, the waters parting around it leaving a void down in the darkness of the ocean floor. It begins to form into a ball around which the portal section of the device turns. The ball of darkness grows larger with each revolution.

The remaining guards, if any, flee to a safe distance to watch in awe, leaving Hulst alone there on threshold of the spinning portal. If the operatives advance on him, he turns and they find his eyes black as the night. He hisses at them in Sheldon's voice as his soul, trapped within the heart of the machine, takes its final delight in tormenting them. Finally, so he believes, he will have his beloved back in exchange for the lives of the team. *"As you spilt her blood, now shall yours be spilt in her place!"*

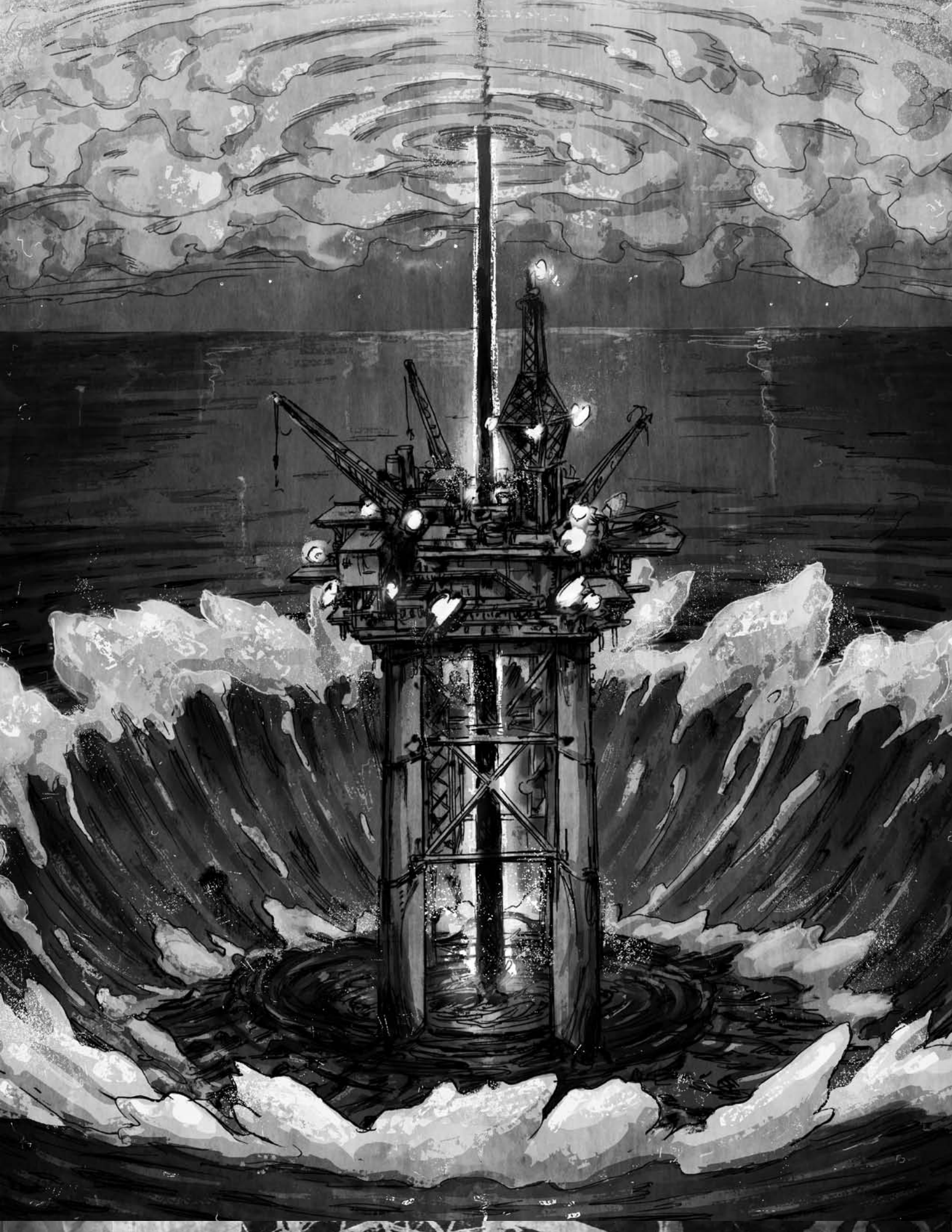
As the ball of turbulent darkness finally grows to the size of the portal itself, it comes to a dead halt and discharges back down the beam into the void below. The waters crash back in upon themselves and Hulst looks confused and worried all of a sudden. This isn't what he expected. There should be a doorway into the Outer Dark right in front of him. However, he's looking in the wrong place, as it's about to start opening below him.

The operatives can start to see a whirlpool forming below the rig and a growing darkness spreads out under the waves. Gently, the rig itself starts to turn. The operatives realise they have only a matter of moments to get to Hulst's helicopter or their own if it's still operable. They flee as the other Esoterrorists are mesmerised by the events unfolding beneath them and shamble in awe towards the edge of the hole to look down at the Outer Dark manifesting before their eyes.

Carrying Hulst out doesn't hinder them, or he can run if he's still conscious. Each operative makes an **Athletics** check with a target number of 4. Failure delays them for a round getting to the helicopter. The operatives have five rounds by which they can get off the rig before it descends beneath the waves. They must pass two checks to get out of the centre of the rig, up out to the helipad and a further **Driving** roll with a target number of 4 to get the helicopter into the air in time.

If an operative with **Driving** makes it to the helicopter first, they can make the roll and if successful hold the helicopter on the pad for as long as they need so everyone can get in (as long as they are in before the five rounds have passed).

Once up in the air, the operatives witness the scene unfolding beneath them. If Hulst's plan has not been successful and he has sacrificed Lange to the heart of the device, then it does activate but only partially: a misfire, if you like. In this instance, the rig falls into darkness with the device inside it. Within a matter of moments, when it has fallen all the way to the bottom of the Devil's Hole, and through the hole in the Membrane, its influence is finally over. The water crashes back together in an almighty wave beneath them.



If the device activated completely, then the mouth of a giant whirlpool is opening under the rig, spinning it around like a cork being sucked down a plughole. Lightning dances around the rim of the ever widening hole as something halfway between a roar and the blast of a mighty horn sounds from the darkness.

Those looking into the void will never look back on Nietzsche in the same way again. As they stare into the abyss, it stares back at them. Their minds may never comprehend exactly what they saw, only that they know it looked back at them and into their very soul. This requires a Stability check with a potential loss of 10 points if they fail.

The exact scope of what happens is down to the GM. It could be something comparatively subtle, or totally devastating. It could be that some truly terrible being is about to come through into the world: a spreading darkness that extends out under the waves as far as the eye can see before the doorway closes. This can plant the seeds for possible follow-up investigations working out exactly what happened. On the other hand, it could be more extreme with some monstrous entity starting to push its way through, or reality itself starting to tear apart, spreading out from the hole in the world before them. The choice is yours.

In either case, if the team have gone for either their own helicopter, or Hulst's, it's the same flying time they've got: it's still 35 miles to the coast. Hulst hadn't filled up his helicopter after landing, seeing the preparation for his ascension to ultimate power as being vastly more important. As such, whichever way they head, they are going down eventually. To lead into the Veil Out and the end of the adventure (assuming it isn't an end of the world moment, which is an option for the GM should they wish it!), a montage sequence of the helicopter going down with a fishing boat in the near distance can play out before the operatives fall into an exhausted and unconscious state.

Stopping Hulst and the Device

There is always the chance though that the operatives could stop the doorway from opening.

The easy option here is to just try and kill Hulst. If his plan hadn't succeeded at Lange's house by this point, it certainly does not. By shooting him, his blood falls onto the device and activates it, opening the doorway to the Outer Dark there and then. Likewise, if it's in the process of opening the doorway already, alive or dead, Hulst is not essential to its completion. The answer to avoiding catastrophe rests in Sheldon's heart in the core of the device.

If the operatives can get close enough to the device, then they can attempt to remove the heart from the hole in the base unit before it completes its task. As they approach, the operatives catch a faint, ghostly apparition of John standing above the heart. He accuses them (the Ordo Veritatis in general) being responsible for Mary's death and that in seconds they will be together again.

If the operatives try to convince Sheldon the whole thing was a lie and that he can't get her back they can cement this with what could well be a very intense scene of roleplay (especially for Caroline and Lucy, given their particular emotional connections to John) followed by a 1-point spend of **Reassurance** from one or more operatives present that engage him. If the operatives have the photograph from his apartment and show it to him, pulling on what are left of his feelings for her, they need not have to spend the point of **Reassurance**. In this moment of realisation, Sheldon's ghost caves in and the device begins to power down. The heart that up

until this point will not dislodge from the device comes loose and where it had been beating previously slowly stops pulsating and stops, becoming lifeless once more.

With a parting look of sorrow and regret at what he had done to bring him to this point, Sheldon's apparition fades forever. This leaves the operatives in possession of the device, ready for pickup by the Ordo Veritatis as they prepare their Veil-Out strategy.

The Veil-Out

Waking up in a hospital in Dundee if they went down in the helicopter fleeing the rig, or being met by the team coming to recover the device, Mr Verity comes to the operatives. It all depends on how well they've done throughout the course of the investigation really as to how the situation is handled from here. In theory, there could be very few loose ends.

Suggestions for some resolutions follow:

- Sheldon's remains in the hotel are quietly covered up, as the hotel doesn't want any bad publicity.
- Sheldon's apartment is completely cleaned of all incriminating evidence and left as a normal burglary for the police to ultimately get nowhere with.
- Canster's death in the interrogation room is marked up as a suicide, beating himself to death with the chair.
- If Van Eken died in the investigation, it could well be explained away in the car crash / attack by Skipper. The tragic death of an officer who will be missed by the Amsterdam Police Force.
- Lange's house is completely sanitised and all evidence of the device and the murder there removed. If he was still there, he is taken into Ordo custody.
- As far as the outside world is concerned, Hulst's helicopter went down over the North Sea in a tragic accident. He'll be spending the rest of his days in Ordo Veritatis hospitality.

NOTE: Bare in mind that Scene 6 could potentially be a very public event, so the operatives might have to come up with something pretty quickly and inventive to hide that one.

Also, there comes the matter of the operative's evaluation:

- Townsend and Pendleton's report is given separately to the review board, and if either wishes to cast any suspicion on any members of the party, it might well involve their review taking just a little longer, unless they have firm evidence to back up a lie of getting them labelled as corrupted.
- Whether or not the operatives obeyed their instructions and didn't remove their watches is closely observed, and if all the operatives come back alive and sane.
- The full report the operatives make on what they found out about Sheldon and his activities and what finally lead him to joining the Esoterror cause (that he was tricked in it from the very start with having Mary killed and then luring him in with the prospect of potentially getting her back, using his hatred for the Ordo Veritatis to fuel the device for them in turn).

To finally wrap things up, we recommend a small coda for each operative, following up on the outcomes of the above review and how they made it through the end game. Otherwise, the case is closed.

APPENDIX 1: SPECTROSITES (THE MIRROR KIND)

No-one quite knows how the Spectrosites (as they have been named) first entered our world, and they certainly aren't forthcoming with any definitive answers either. Even the greatest Esoterrorist summoners have only theories and a handful of inconclusive evidence of their behaviour and abilities. The Ordo Veritatis are even more in the dark than the enemy on this one.

Known Facts and Abilities

The known facts are that these beings have no physical form in our world and claim no name of their own, always having to be given one by those that meet them. They are, at their core, images in mirrors that aren't there in the real world, appearing as anything they desire to be from one moment to the next. If they have a 'true' form, it is as yet unknown. It may be that they have already used it in a documented encounter, but without definitive evidence be able to confirm this, the speculation continues.

Being apparently insubstantial does not stop them from being able to influence the physical world. Reports of one such entity met in a mirror hidden in an Esoterrorist cell headquarters in Scotland documented that when the Spectrosite picked up the reflection of a sword mounted on the wall behind the agents, the sword in the real world moved and mimicked the movements as it did in the mirror. So, they are quite capable of becoming a real threat under the right circumstances.

These beings are known to be keepers of a vast wealth of knowledge. Such as with the mirror on the wall in the fairy tale, the Spectrosites have been able to provide accurate answers to questions posed about future events (when they've wanted to give an answer), and provide answers that only the questioner would know the answers to. They have no problem communicating audibly to those present, but only in little more than a stage whisper, as speaking from the other side of the glass muffles their voices accordingly.

Evading a Spectrosite

The only way to be free of the entities if agents have run across them, is to completely destroy all mirrors in their presence. Even then, when agents have passed by other mirrors soon after, they have found themselves being attacked when possible by the angered entity that seems to be able to move effortlessly between mirrors regardless of what physical distance separates them.

The only way to fall outside of their range of perception after the purge, it has been found, is to completely deprive one's self from contact with mirrors for a whole week. Seven days... Seven years bad luck if a mirror is broken... There might be something there, but what the secret is, it's yet to be found.

Theories and Guesswork

As mentioned, there are plenty of theories about these entities. The first one being exactly how many there are of these things. Although found throughout the world, there have only been a handful of documented cases of their existence. They normally don't stay around to let themselves be documented. One belief is that because they can appear as anything they wish to be (an old man one minute, a grinning school girl the next, etc.) that there could actually be only one entity trapped behind the glass in the halfway-realm between here and the Outer Dark.

The location of the entities is also something that is debated. Some believe the 'mirror realm', as it has been dubbed, to be a physical manifestation of the membrane itself and that the Spectrosites are actually part of the barrier itself. More commonly believed though is that because mirrors have had superstitious connotations surrounding them almost as long as they have existed, it is possible humanity has shaped this creation to exist as part of our reality from the start. This allows the Outer Dark a myriad of small windows it can leak through, into and across our world, but not enough to break out from behind the glass.

Attraction

Spectrosites have been known to attach themselves or befriend individuals for their own nefarious purposes that have been overcome by intense emotion. Like moths to a flame, they are drawn to these moments: to the mirrors overlooking a couple's passionate lovemaking on the bedroom dresser; to the bathroom mirror looking down on the lonely soul who puts the razorblade to their wrists. They have been known to deceive, coaxing pliable souls to do their bidding.

A growing number of investigations that unearthed strange suicide notes refer to figures appearing in the mirrors that have said their master has chosen them for a higher purpose, or that they have been sent by some higher authority. A lie used on multiple occasions? Most likely. But it's something that has sowed a terrifying seed of doubt amongst Ordo Veritatis researchers.

What if the Spectrosites are merely the agents of a greater intelligence? What if something really does reside deeper in the Outer Dark, watching and waiting, using these beings as its eyes and ears into our world to manipulate pliable souls in some grand design that it dreams of completing? It's a thought that has deprived many nights of sleep from amongst those who contemplate this terrifying possibility.

Game Statistics

Abilities:	Aberrance 20, Health 20
Hit Threshold:	4
Alertness Modifier:	+2 (mirrors have a fantastic field of vision)
Stealth Modifier:	+2 (people never pay full attention to reflections in a mirror)
Armour:	None
Weapons:	Manipulate Reflections and Spirit Gouge (Special)

HEALTH DAMAGE

Because of their incorporeal state in our world, it may seem at first that it is futile to attack the Spectrosite with physical damage. However, this is by far the most effective form of attack against them.

Whilst they can move within any mirror, if that mirror was to break, they suffer an equal amount of damage to the very fibre of their being as was done to the mirror. For example, reports have shown when Ordo operatives have opened fire on mirrors containing the Spectrosite presence, where the hole was blasted, and from where radial cracks extended, these apparently seemed to injure the being. The image appears in these instances to have been torn or sliced where the cracks run across them, manifesting in different forms of blood emanating from them. Reports of ordinary blood are as common as black ooze or green slime dripping from said wounds.

Spectrosites, once injured, don't tend to remain in a broken mirror, preferring to flee to the nearest whole mirror. If engaged in combat with an opponent and there is no other mirror to jump to from which they can continue their attacks, they may well be forced to continue operating from the same mirror, which by their presence maintains a form of mystic cohesion so that it doesn't fully disintegrate until they leave.

As such, the opponent can continue to attack the mirror, causing enough cracks that it should have fallen to bits in its frame, but it will remain intact as long as the Spectrosite remains and avoids contact with cracks made directly through them as the result of a successful attack. Attacks that fail to reach the beings Threshold may well cause damage to the mirror, but the cracks fail to make contact with the being and thus cause no damage to it itself.

When the entity leaves the mirror, for whatever reason, it finally explodes in a myriad of shards, into which the entity cannot return. The being can only inhabit a whole, unbroken mirror, not a shard of a broken one. This also entails that anyone within a few feet of the mirror as it explodes takes 1 point of damage.

REDUCED TO ZERO HEALTH OR ABERRANCE

If the Spectrosite is damaged to the point of reaching zero Health or expends enough Aberrance to drain its pool completely, it is out of a scene or combat.

Reaching zero Health results in the being demanifesting. It might explode in a shower of twisted images and shards in the mirror, or it might simply vanish in the blink of an eye. It has been sent back to the Outer Dark to pull itself, literally, back together before it has the strength to appear in a mirror again with a full Health pool. This process takes seven years, which could ultimately explain the saying about what befalls those who break a mirror. Maybe it's not the person who broke it who gets those seven years worth of bad luck... Or maybe they do if the Spectrosite returns for them when it is able.

Reaching zero Aberrance by whatever means (maybe it makes an attempt at Spirit Gouge that exceeds its current strength, as in the example below, or spends its last points in a defiant physical attack) leaves the being effectively defenceless. They can no longer affect the realm beyond the mirror and cannot fight back against incoming attacks. As such, given they have a very definite feeling of self-preservation, they retreat out of the presence of all mirrors in visual range of their opponent in an attempt to rest and regain their strength for later.

REGAINING ABERRANCE

In order to 'recharge' its Aberrance pool, the Spectrosite needs to be exposed to intense sources of emotion (either positive or negative) that are reflected in a mirror, and soak this in for seven whole minutes. This will replenish their entire Aberrance pool. Further to this, it takes the being a further seven minutes to be drawn to such an incident taking place, and be able to latch on to it (making a total of fourteen minutes between the point of leaving and then being able to return with a full pool).

PERFORMING ATTACKS

MANIPULATING REFLECTIONS

As described above, the Spectrosite can influence items through their reflections, grabbing the reflection and causing the real thing to move on our side of the mirror. Due to this being the only physical way the being can interact directly with the outside world, the Spectrosite uses its Aberrance skill in place of making attack rolls. It may spend any number of further points to modify its roll as per normal for an attack.

To manipulate any object, no matter its size, the Spectrosite must have access to its reflection in the mirror, and must spend at least one point of Aberrance to be able to manipulate it. Items that are easy to pick up and use without a normal person having to strain themselves (e.g. pick up a ball and throw it, swing a sword, turn a gun and pull the trigger) require only the first point of Aberrance to be spent and do damage according to their normal stats (i.e. a gun still does its normal damage, as does a sword, if they hit their target).

The Spectrosite can strain themselves to manipulate larger objects if they wish with the spend of a further Aberrance (making a total of 2 spent) to pick up and throw/manipulate larger objects (e.g. office desks, sofas, cupboards, wardrobes, etc.). If they successfully hit a target, they inflict +1 damage due to their weight and momentum involved in their impact.

Replicating truly superhuman feats, such as tossing cars, knocking down walls, tearing down lamp-posts, etc. require a total of 3 Aberrance to spent per attack roll and as such are rarely performed unless the being is under dire threat. It is very much a last resort to drain itself that much. Thankfully though, the being cannot affect items larger than an ordinary car in volume. (There's no need to fear that the plane passing in the sky in the mirror might suddenly be pulled down on top of the opponents.) Because of the size involved with such potential attacks though, they inflict +2 damage if they manage to connect with their target.

SPIRIT GOUGE

Spectrosites are not without their finer arts of attack. By delving into the minds of their opponents, they can summon forth a myriad of twisted, horrific nightmares from their subconscious to attack at their very Stability. The Spectrosite makes a roll as per normal to attack its intended target. It must spend one point of Aberrance to begin with in order to make contact, successful or not. Further Aberrance may be spent to modify the roll to connect.

If the roll reaches or exceeds the targets Threshold it makes its damage roll and reduces this from the targets Stability, but has to spend further Aberrance on a point-for-point

basis to cause the damage. For each point of damage it inflicts upon their Stability, it regains one Health. If it cannot spend enough points of Aberrance to meet the roll result, it spends what it can and caps the damage at that point.

e.g. Ian, an Ordo agent, catches something moving in the corner of his eye in the mirror hanging in the master bedroom of the cultists home. The Spectrosite, appearing as an ominous hooded figure, veiled in shadow, attempts to invade his mind to attack at his very Stability itself.

The GM spends one of the Spectrosite's remaining 7 Aberrance points and rolls to see if they beat Ian's Threshold of 4. Being particularly evil, he spends a further 2 Aberrance to make the chance of connection/successful attack greater. He rolls a 2, adding his bonus of 2 to this, and thus reaches poor Ian's Threshold. So far, the Spectrosite has spent 3 Aberrance (1 as default, 2 to modify the roll to attack/connect).

Reaching into the subconscious depths of the agent's mind, the Spectrosite latches onto the memory of Ian's young daughter who was killed by the cult just a few days ago. It manifests the torturous image as the being pulling back its robes to reveal the squirming figure of his daughter, bound in barbed wire, eating into her bloodied flesh, as she writhes in agony and screams for her father to help. Ian staggers back in horror.

The GM rolls for the Stability damage the psychological assault causes. The dice are being particularly vicious to Ian and come up with a 6. However, the Spectrosite has only 4 Aberrance left to spend (7 minus the 3 spent earlier). Having struck a potent blow that exceeds its current strength, the GM spends the remaining 4 points and drains Ian of 4 Stability, which in turn increase the Spectrosite's Health from 10 to 14. Thankfully for Ian, the Spectrosite did not have a couple more Aberrance to spend, for if it had more, it could have spent the full 6 points to drain 6 Stability.

Having spent its energy on the attack, the Spectrosite, reduced to zero Aberrance, starts to fade from view until all Ian sees looking back at him is his own crying face as he longs for his daughter once again.

OTHER ABILITIES

As outlined above, the Spectrosite can appear as anything it wishes to in the mirror. It doesn't cost the entity anything to transform its appearance, and it can even appear as different things to different people to confuse them (although always in the same relative place in the mirror). I.E. two agents encountering a figure sitting in a chair in a mirror that is otherwise empty in the real world. One might see a man, the other might see a woman, but both see that it sits in the same chair. If it talks, likewise, they might hear a voice that fits the image (using the above example, they would appear to speak in male or female voices respectively) but they would hear the same words spoken in each instance.

The Spectrosites have the potential to travel between any whole mirror in the world at instantaneous speed. They only appear in one mirror at any one given time however. The same entity can not be talking to agents in London whilst attacking others in Hong Kong for example, but could alternate between both mirrors at will from one second to the next (assuming both remain whole and intact). It requires a whole action in combat

for the entity to change location between different mirrors (thus it may not move and attack in the same round of combat).

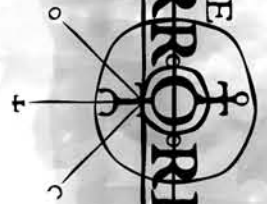
The beings also have demonstrated the ability to take objects and people with them through mirrors, which pass through their surface as if passing through a sheet of water. Only those in the Spectrosite's favour dare make such a journey with these beings, for there are stories abound between researchers who have heard of unfortunate souls falling through mirrors never to be seen again. Their fate can only be guessed upon: trapped in the void between worlds; removed from reality completely; floating forever in the Outer Dark...

Mechanically, it takes 3 Aberrance per round to turn a set of mirrors into a portal (both source and destination). If the target is travelling willingly to another Earthly location, then it appears as an instantaneous journey, like walking through a door connecting the two places with no adverse effects. After their journey, the mirror returns to normal, so they would have to convince the Spectrosite for a further Aberrance spend to return them to their original position via the same method of transport.

Thankfully, it is a very rare that the Spectrosite can punish an enemy by making a target simply 'vanish' through a mirror. On top of the Aberrance they would need to spend, as above, to open a mirror portal, they would have to already have spent enough to be able to influence the real world to somehow engineer their target to fall or be pushed towards said mirror if they are not a willing target (as they can't just reach through and grab someone).

Typically, the easiest method to dispatch a target such as this, trapped in the mirror realm, is to expose them to the horrors of the Outer Dark that manifest beyond the Membrane. Bombarded with horror that man was not meant to know, the unfortunate target needs to pass a Stability check (Target number 4) every round they remain in the mirror realm, with a potential 10 points to lose should they fail the roll. Each round, after their Stability check, they may attempt to make an Athletics roll (Target number 6) to try and latch on to the nearest mirror back into the real world that is left intact from the point at which they left and pull themselves through it. Most fail to find the way out in time and are driven mad, passing through into the Outer Dark itself to meet their eventual demise.

Lastly, the Spectrosites have a vast wealth of knowledge to call upon, as described above. They are keepers of information man was not necessarily meant to know. Liars, manipulators, cheats and very real threats, they taunt operatives with the secrets they look for to resolve their cases. They try to lure them down a dark path, promising more revelations the further down the rabbit hole they go, performing the acts they demand as payment. The extent of how far their knowledge ranges is determined by the GM. They might really know the secrets of the universe, or they might be the world's greatest liars and deceivers... Who knows?



APPENDIX 2: HANDOUTS

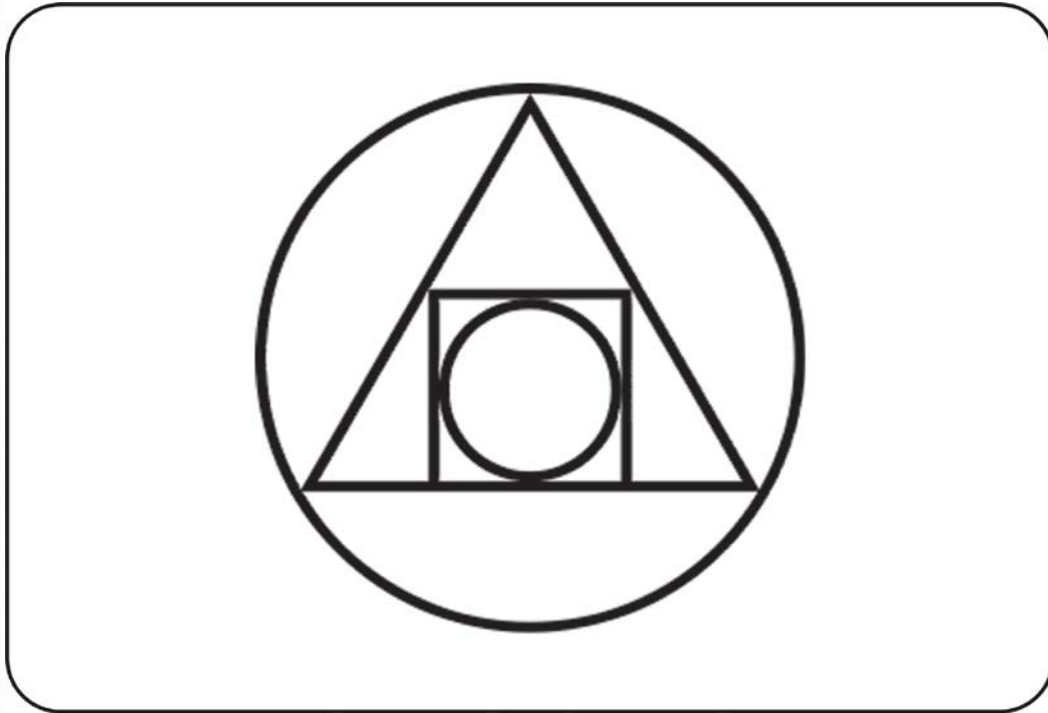
The following handouts are ordered by the scenes in which they appear, given the scenario structure above.

SCENE 2 AT THE HOTEL

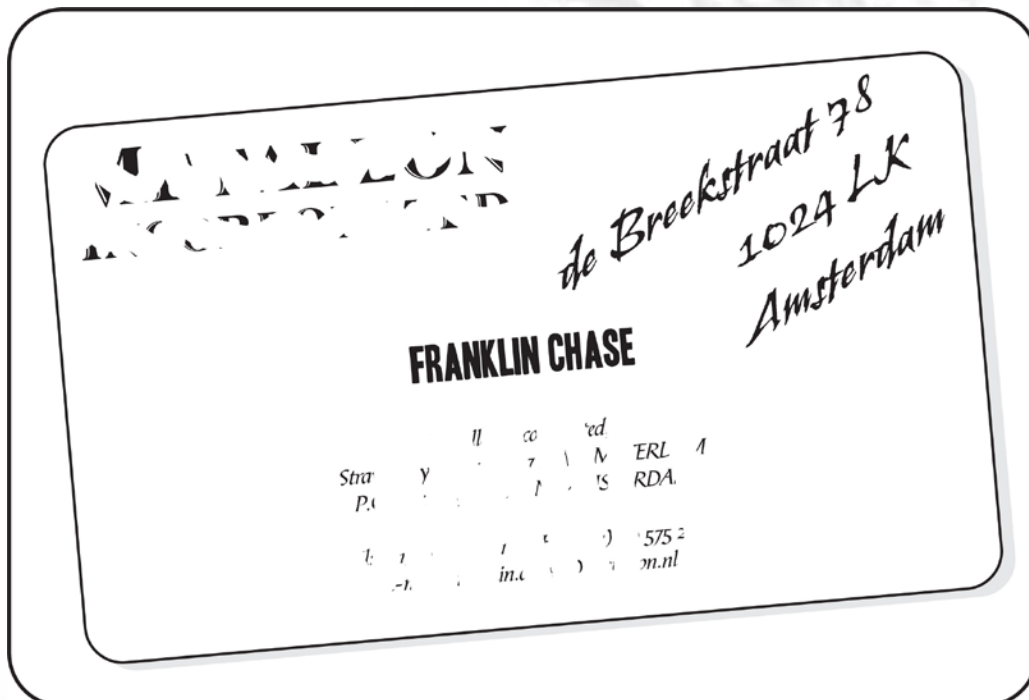
HANDOUT 1: STRENGTH THE RIDER WAITE TAROT CARD



HANDOUT 2 SQUARING THE CIRCLE



HANDOUT 3 SCRATCHED BUSINESS CARD



SCENE 3 AT THE POLICE STATION
HANDOUT 4 THE TWO LADIES AT THE HOTEL



FIRST TO
ENTER HOTEL
(AKA MARY PALMER)



SECOND TO
ENTER HOTEL
(AKA MRS CHASE)

SCENE 5 IN
SHEDON'S
APARTMENT

HANDOUT 5
FRANKLIN CHASE'S
SECURITY CARD



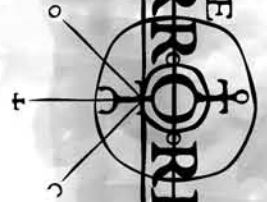
HANDOUT 6 VROMME'S NOTE

16 miles south of the city
halfway between
De Ronde Venen and Woerden,
along the N212.
Past the intersection with the
N401 to Breukelen away
from the road is an old windmill.

We have answers.

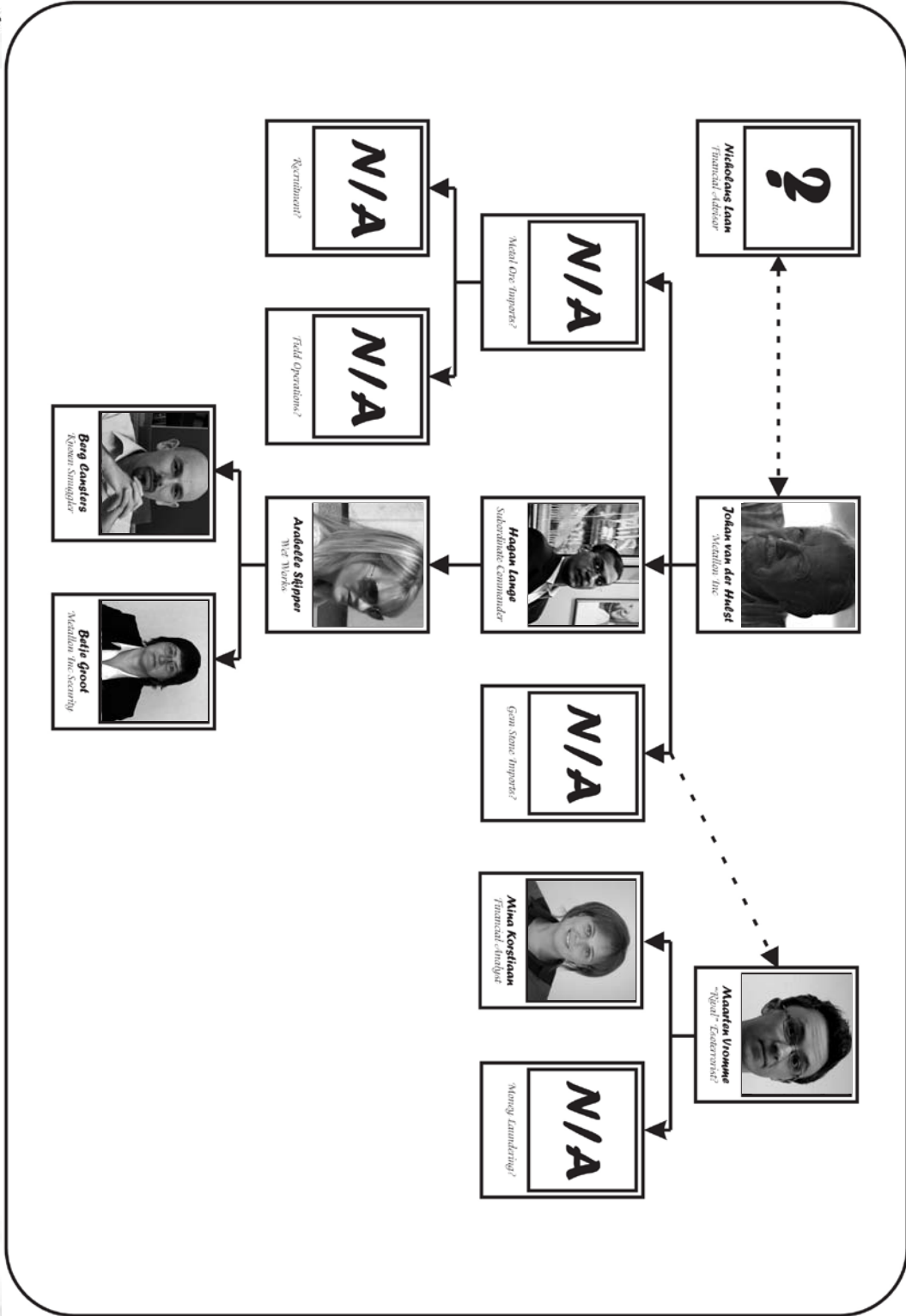
Handout Text:

16 miles south of the city halfway between De Ronde Venen and Woerden, along the N212. Past the intersection with the N401 to Breukelen away from the road is an old windmill. We have answers.



THE LOVE OF MONEY

HANDOUT 7 ADVERSARY MAP



SUSPECT PROFILES



Johan van der Hulst
Metallon Inc

JOHAN VAN DER HULST

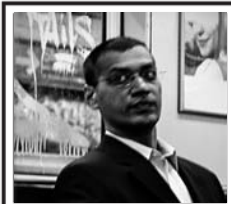
The money flow is ultimately overseen by Hulst. The head of the cell, and architect of their design. His vision drives the cell. Remove him and the others fall without incident. His views are apparently controversial amongst the Esoterrorists community though, hence the parting of the ways between him and Vromme. It must be something very fundamental that divides the two men – such animosity between members of the movement is something I haven't encountered before.



Nicholaus Laan
Financial Advisor

NICHOLAUS LAAN

Hulst's financial and business advisor. Trying to track him down is like trying to draw blood from a stone. Always at the end of a teleconference call, or out of town on business, or completely unavailable for whatever reason Hulst comes up with that day. He exists, I've heard the voice over the intercom, but no one in the company I've been able to track down has met him. He doesn't even have an office dedicated to him in their building.



Hagan Lange
Subordinate Commander

HAGAN LANGE

Hulst's right hand man. He runs the company whilst his master is out of town. Driven purely by the lust for earthly power at any cost. It's assumed he would be the next person in line to pick up the operation if Hulst should fall. He also oversees the collection of the Rhodium supplies the cell is using.



Arabelle Skipper
Wet Works

ARABELLE SKIPPER

Lange's pet assassin. Where her superiors don't have a taste for violence, she makes up for them and more. She disposes of all "problems".

SUSPECT PROFILES 

Betje Groot
Mallon Inc Security

BETJE GROOT

Head of security, works with Skipper, doing the less bloody issues of security for the company. Uses employee as cell pawns.



Berg Cansters
Known Smuggler

BERG CANSTERS

Regularly hired by Groot, and provides occasional contact to other European cells, smuggling gems and hard currency. Does he know more?



Maarten Vromme
"Rival" Esoterrorist?

MAARTEN VROMME

One of Hulst's former associates, not a rival. Given his commitment to the cause as a while, he has yet to be eliminated – might he also run a second funding network? He's recruited people that would certainly indicate this. He seems to be more of a traditionalist, preferring summoning as opposed to Hulst's experimentation. He makes no active movement against Hulst, but the man is not held in high regard by anyone on in Hulst's cell.

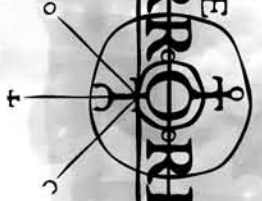
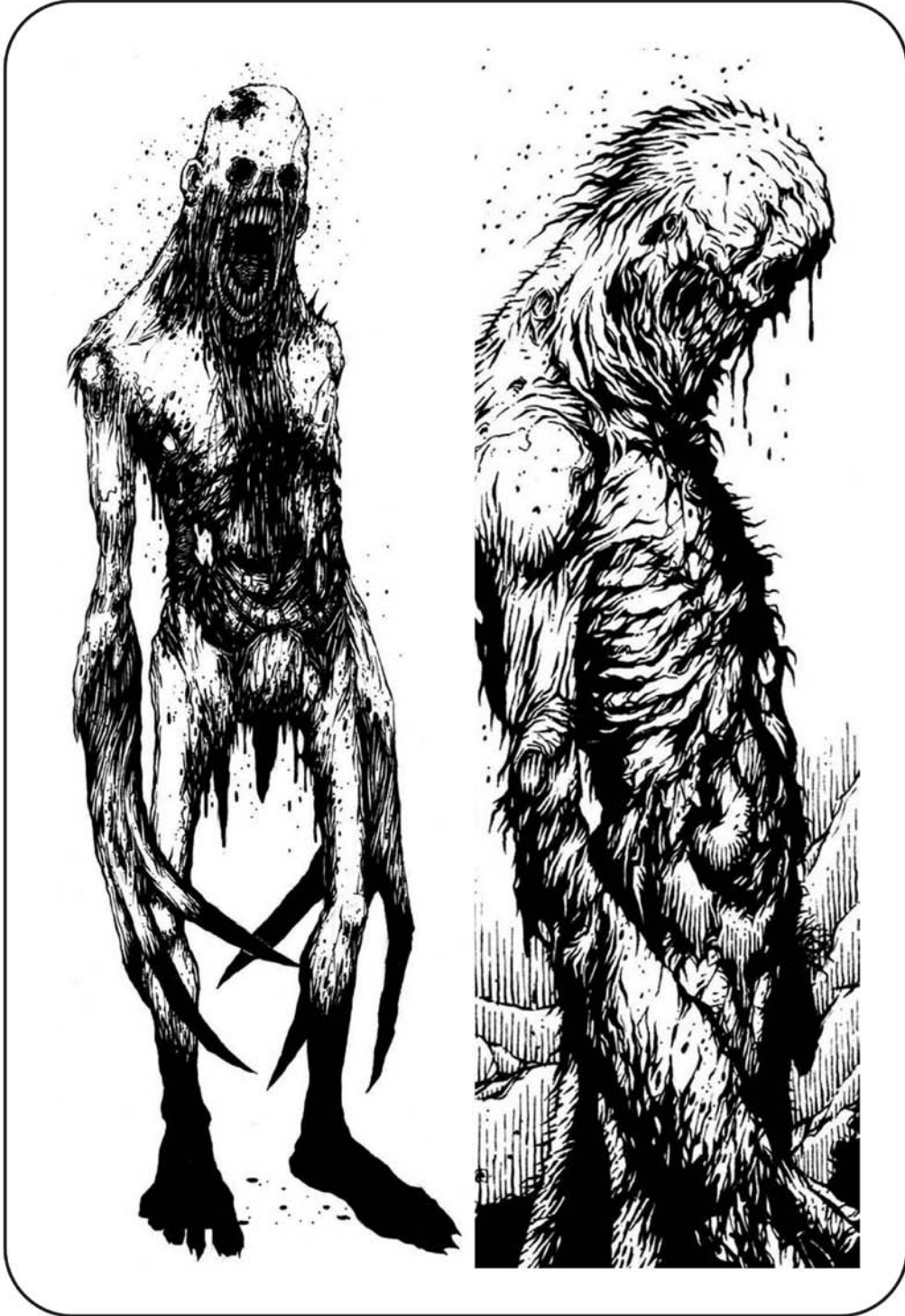


Mina Korstiaan
Financial Analyst

MINA KORSTIAAN

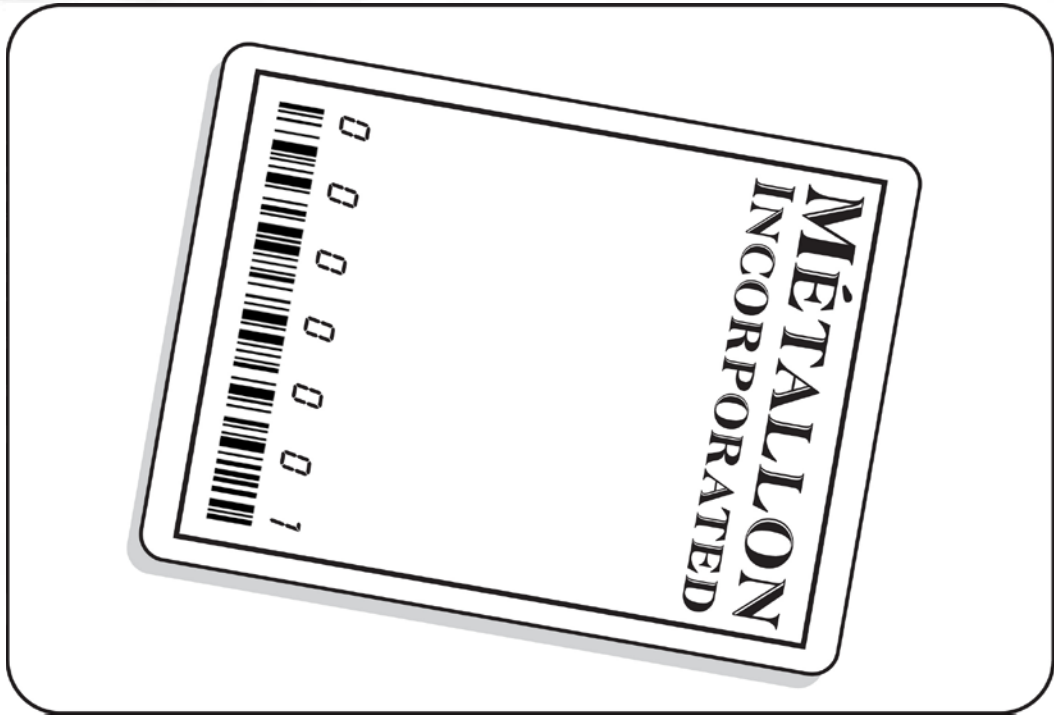
Financial analyst working for Vromme, and his right hand. Either not wanting to get her hands dirty or she is very good at hiding her moves.

SCENE 6 DESPERATE MEASURES
HANDOUT 9 BLOOD CORPSE PORTRAITS

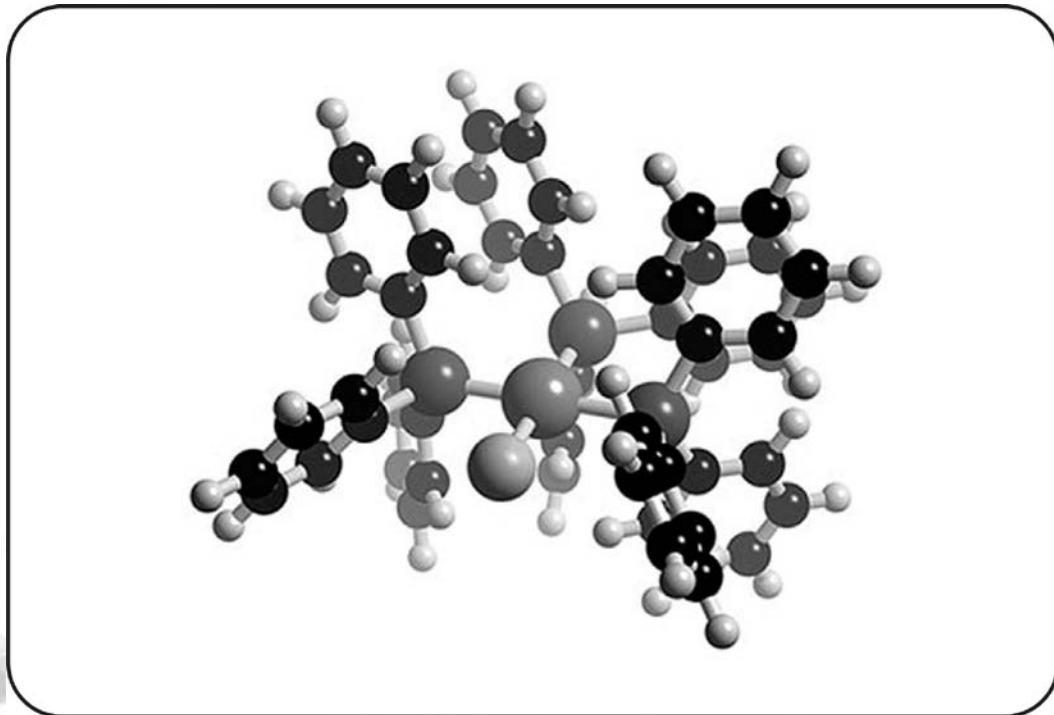


SCENE 8 IN THE METALLON INCORPORATED OFFICES

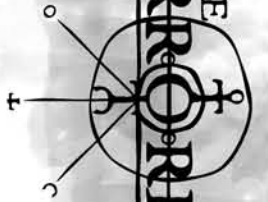
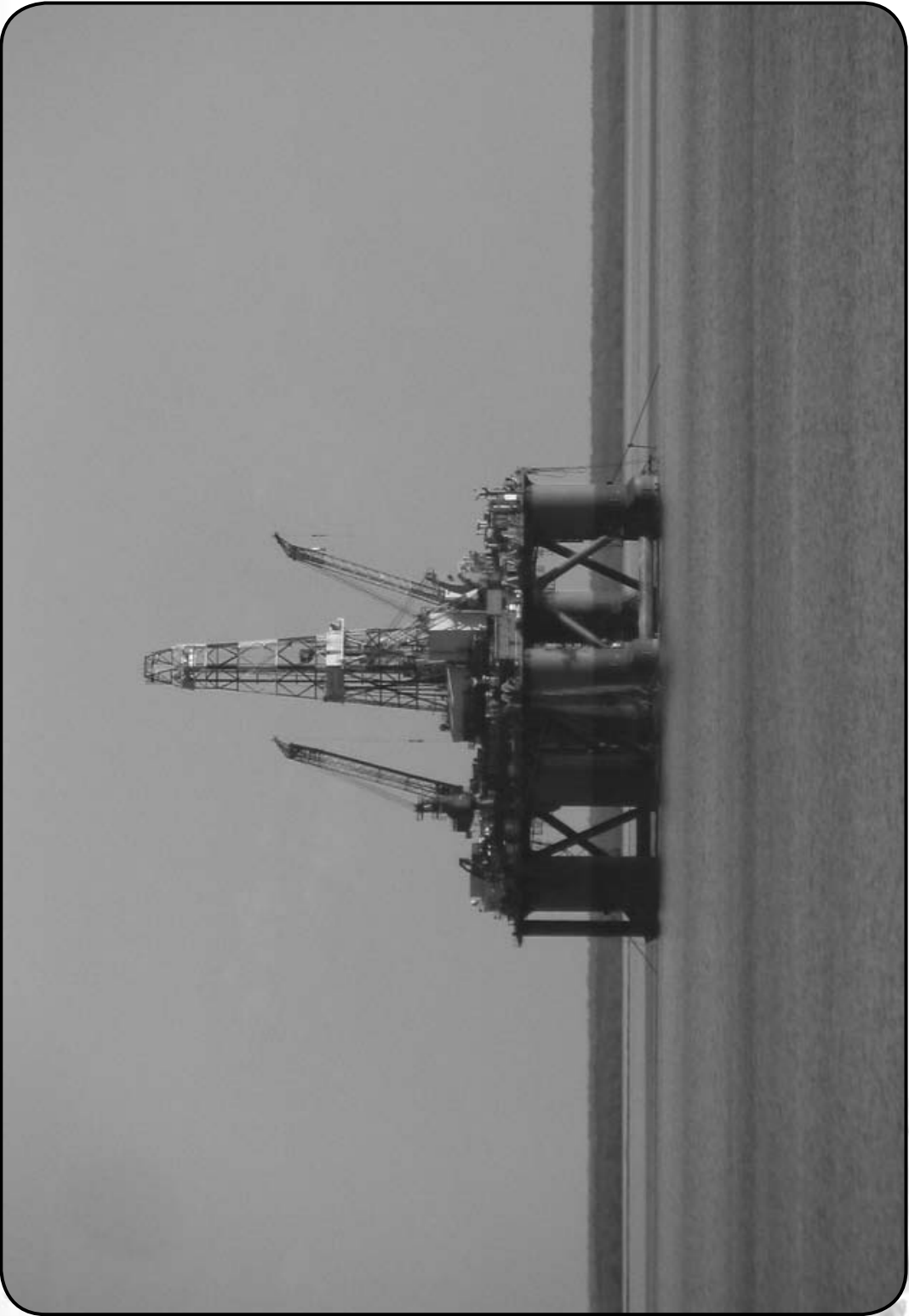
HANDOUT 10 BLANK SECURITY CARD



HANDOUT 11 RHODIUM ARTWORK



END GAME SCENES
HANDOUT 12 THE RIG



THE
ESOTERIC
FORISTS



THE LOVE OF MONEY



APPENDIX 3: CHARACTERS

Skill Sets Overview

The following chart gives the GM an overview of the spread of skills the pre-generated characters have been created with. If you are tailoring the adventure for your own group, this could well help with planning what skills they may want to focus on in order to get the clues they need.

Skill	Skill Points by Character						Clues/ uses for skill in the adventure
	Forbes	Sheldon	Trenhaile	Martin	Townsend	Pendleton	
Academic Investigative Skills							
Anthropology							
Archaeology							
Architecture							
Art History							
Forensic Accounting	1					1	3
Forensic Psychology			3			4	3
History							
Languages	3				2		
Law						2	
Natural History							
Occult Studies	1	1	4	1	1	1	8
Research		2	2	1	2		5
Textual Analysis							
Trivia			1				4
Interpersonal Investigative Skills							
Bullshit Detector		2	2	4		2	2
Bureaucracy	4	2		2		1	
Cop Talk	2	4		2	1		2
Flattery				2			4
Flirting							
Impersonate							
Interrogation				1		2	
Intimidation		2					2
Negotiation	1			3	3		2

Reassurance				3		1	7
Streetwise		2			2		
Technical Investigative Skills							
Astronomy			2				1
Ballistics		3					2
Chemistry					1		1
Cryptography			3			1	
Data Retrieval	2				1	1	4
Document Analysis			2				2
Electronic Surveillance				1	4		6
Forensic Entomology							
Evidence Collection	3	1	1				8
Explosive Devices		1			1		1
Forensic Anthropology	2			2		2	3
Fingerprinting	2				3		3
Pathology	1					1	
Photography							
General Skills							
Athletics	3	3	8	8	3	3	4
Driving	8	5	1	6	10	6	8
Filch							
Health	20	8	8	8	8	20	
Infiltration	1				1		2
Mechanics					20		
Medic		6			3	8	2
Preparedness			10	8			
Scuffling		20	8				
Shooting	8	10		1	8	5	
Shrink						10	
Stability	10	8	20	10	8	8	4
Surveillance	8	1	6	20		1	1

THE
 ESOTHERICAL
 ARTISTS
 OF
 THE LOVE OF MONEY

LUCY FORBES (TEAM LEADER)**DESCRIPTION**

Caucasian. Mid 30's. Slender build. Mid-length dark brown hair. Cold blue eyes. Sharply dressed.

BACKGROUND

Before becoming Lucy Forbes, an Ordo Veritatis team leader, she was Rachel Miller: an avid fan of detective stories from a young age who grew up to become a detective herself in the Oxfordshire police force. Digging a little too deep during an investigation with Interpol regarding a Dutch "John Doe" found in the wake of an Esoterrorist ritual in Oxford brought her into contact with the Ordo Veritatis. Shortly afterwards, she was invited into their ranks. Rachel became Lucy and given the cover of a small-time crime ghost-writer from Cambridge who has managed to produce a couple of minor works to date. She quickly excelled as a team leader, but as her life in the Ordo Veritatis consumed her time, she was forced to take "early retirement" from the police to cope. However, she still works in what spare time she has as a freelance private investigator.

Lucy is an authoritarian leader who believes the rules are there for a reason, and that procedure must be followed, without any exceptions. She takes the safety and well being of her team very much to heart, and takes any failure of theirs as a failure of her own. A perfectionist in many ways, she doesn't tolerate those who don't toe the party line. This attitude brought her into conflict with another agent in the team, Sabrina Townsend, an engineer and field technician. Townsend believed the rules didn't apply to her when she wanted it. Very much like two unstoppable forces hitting immobile objects, after a fight nearly started between the two of them over their ethical conflict, Sabrina was reassigned. The two women haven't spoken since.

However, her greatest ordeal was yet to come. John Sheldon, one of her best operatives, had been working on a mission plan (Operation T610) that he hoped would bring the Ordo Veritatis considerably closer to this goal. Control said the mission plan was too risky though, with little chance of success. He wouldn't accept their proposed revisions and his plan was denied. He believed it could have smashed the heart of the Esoterrorist funding network.

Nearly a year ago, John was in a crash with his sister and fellow agent, Caroline, and another woman who died. This was Mary, who Lucy soon found out was John's wife. Soon after the crash, John suffered a complete mental breakdown. Suspended from active duty, he vanished six months ago and Control feared he might have gone dark to complete Operation T610 on his own.

Lucy believed that it was a failure on her part that had allowed this to happen. She had failed to act in such a way that would have kept him on the straight and narrow, and now he had disappeared. Unable to cope with her own failure, over the course of the following months, she turned to anything she could to escape the pain and self-loathing, and eventually found comfort in narcotics. Fate brought about the intervention of fellow agent Robert Martin who discovered her habit, finding a syringe by chance. He holds this fact over her to do as he says. Thankfully, it has only been a few favours here and there, but time will tell what he really wants.

IN THE LAST FEW HOURS

You woke up in the dead of night, the craving for another fix gripping you as you heard the loud banging at the door. The Ordo Veritatis never seem to ring the bell for you, always pounding at the door. Something urgent had to have come up for them to come to you at this time of night. They gave you just a few brief minutes to pack some essentials (including a well-hidden stash) and then the car took you to their airstrip where a private jet was waiting. On the way, driver was silent throughout other than to say that you'd be given your briefing by Mr Verity on route.

Half an hour into the flight, in a small, private room onboard, you know something must have gone wrong. The briefing should have begun by now... Maybe something came up? Then, the voice over the intercom told you it was time. The team now sits around a conference table onboard: Caroline, Randall, Robert... and Mr Verity, at the head of the table. Two seats are left vacant. Mr Verity, looks somewhat seriously at those present before he finally speaks.

"Right, let's begin..."

THE TEAM

Under the leadership of Lucy Forbes, the team (otherwise comprised of Sheldon, Trenhaile and Martin) have been together for three years now, performing missions solely within the UK. They've primarily been an investigative team, although have helped with Veil Out procedures for other teams before. The following details the other members of the team and their roles in the group.

Caroline Sheldon (Field Operative, Second in Command)

A junior civil servant from South London, she was John's brother. She was taken off active service for a while because Psychiatric Metrics believed the stress of prolonged field missions was beginning to show. She seemed fine enough to yourself, but then you're not a psychiatrist. The fact John blamed her for Mary's death must have weighed heavy on her shoulders. You've known her to have a temper before. One that's best not to be provoked.

Randall Trenhaile (Specialist Support - Occult Expert)

A research assistant into the occult working at several universities across the Southern United Kingdom, the details of his cover are vaguer than they usually are. He's a nice enough guy, a little withdrawn perhaps, but he certainly knows his stuff. He doesn't seem to have any life outside of the Ordo Veritatis anymore and spent a long time moving between different teams before he finally settled in yours. You suspect that Control may be keeping an eye on him for some reason.

Robert Martin (Interpersonal Specialist)

A book reviewer for a local magazine in Swindon. Up until he uncovered your growing habit, you thought he was okay. Even though he's pretty useless when it comes to front line combat, he's a great investigator and people person, which make him a valuable asset to the team. However, now he's got this hold over you, you suspect he has some agenda within the Ordo Veritatis. What that is, only time will tell.

Sabrina Townsend (Former Team Member, Technical Specialist)

An engineer in the motor trade Brighton originally, now she's just a thorn in your side. The woman who thinks the rules don't apply to her, you're glad she was moved out of the team. If Control didn't do something, you certainly would have. After all, they wouldn't have gone and moved a team leader out of the team, it was obviously going to be her. You haven't seen her for over a year, and if you see her ever again it would be too soon.

Geoffrey Pendleton (Non-Team Member, Psychiatric Metrics)

A member of the Psychiatric Metrics division. Further up the chain than yourself, he's someone that you don't really know a great deal about. You've seen him around the place from time to time, but what exactly it is that he does for the division (and Control) is a mystery to you. The way he watches those around him, it reminds you of Orwell's famous words: Big Brother is watching...

THE ESOTERRORISTS



Character Name Lucy Forbes

Off-duty Occupation

Weapons

Glock 9mm (Light Pistol - 0 Damage Mod.

Baton (Police Issue) - -1 Damage Mod

Languages

Dutch, English, French, German

Hit Threshold 3

Investigative Abilities



ACADEMIC	Rating	Pool	TECHNICAL	Rating	Pool
Anthropology			Astronomy		
Archaeology			Ballistics		
Architecture			Chemistry		
Art History			Cryptography		
Forensic Accounting	1		Data Retrieval	2	
Forensic Psychology			Document Analysis		
History			Electronic Surveillance		
Languages*	3		Forensic Entomology		
Law			Evidence Collection	3	
Linguistics			Explosive Devices		
Natural History			Forensic Anthropology	2	
Occult Studies	1		Fingerprinting	2	
Research			Photography	1	
Textual Analysis					
Trivia					

General Abilities



INTERPERSONAL	Rating	Pool		Rating	Pool
Bullshit Detector			Athletics†	3	
Bureaucracy	4		Driving	8	
Cop Talk	2		Filch		
Flattery			Health	20	
Flirting			Infiltration	1	
Impersonate			Mechanics		
Interrogation			Medic		
Intimidation			Preparedness		
Negotiation	1		Scuffling		
Reassurance			Shooting	8	
Streetwise			Shrink		
			Stability	10	
			Surveillance‡	8	

* 1 language per rating pt.
 † rating of 8+ increases Hit Threshold by 1
 ‡ rating of 8+ grants 1 pt Electronic Surveillance

DoD CHARACTER SHEET

Player Name :

CAROLINE SHELDON (FIELD OPERATIVE SECOND IN COMMAND)

DESCRIPTION

Caucasian. Mid-to-late 30's. Moderate build. Short light brown hair. Practical clothing as standard.

BACKGROUND

Before becoming Caroline Sheldon, field agent of the Ordo Veritatis, she was Heather Leighton. Heather and her brother, Peter, worked for HM Customs and Excise, both aspiring to cultivate careers in the civil service. One night, they found a crate in the Dover docks they thought contained illegal immigrants. Instead, it contained creatures that tried to drain their very blood and leave them for dead.

By some miracle, they survived the attack and as they lay in hospital, they were visited by Mr Verity. Offered places in the Ordo Veritatis Heather was renamed as Caroline Sheldon, and Peter became John Sheldon. Both of them were given the cover stories of being junior civil servants from South London.

Not concerned about being a bottom-of-the-ladder field operative, she is driven onwards by her passionate hatred the Esoterrorists ignited that night in Dover, which has landed her in trouble before with a temporary suspension. Her brother, John, is completely devoted to the cause of destroying the Esoterrorist Movement as well. His proposal, Operation T610, was the result of months of research. He believed it was possible for a lone operative to infiltrate the Movement and shatter the funding network that channelled funds to Esoterrorist cells worldwide. Control said the plan was too risky. Because John wouldn't accept the need for more agents to protect a lone operative in the field, his plan was denied. They said all they would achieve is the death of the lone operative chosen for the mission.

John had continued working on the project in his own time, revising the plan obsessively, and it was pulling his marriage apart. So, she invited John and his wife Mary over to his house one winter night before Christmas for a party to relieve some of the building tension. Driving John and Mary home on the icy road that night, having had too much to drink, Caroline thought she saw something in the rear-view mirror about to attack her brother: a marble-skinned figure with a bloodstained mouth and piercing eyes.

The shock caused her to skid on a patch of ice. The vehicle went off the road and Mary died in the crash. There was nothing in the car with them, and Caroline wonders now if it was the drink, or if there really had been something there. In either case, Mary was dead and John blamed his sister for the accident. That was a year ago.

Suspended from active duty, John vanished six months ago and Control feared he might have gone dark to complete Operation T610 on his own. Being eaten up by her own guilt over what's happened, she keeps hoping that the Ordo Veritatis will eventually find her brother safe and bring him home.

IN THE LAST FEW HOURS

You awoke to feeling of something else being with you in the house, the feeling of being watched by something unseen. It's not been the first time, and you fear it won't be the last. Part of you tells you it's just stress. Another part of you worries you might be beginning to crack... The knock at the door helped bring you into focus. The Ordo Veritatis had a car waiting for you. A mission, even at this time of night. With minutes to pack the bare essentials, they drove you in silence to the airstrip where a private jet, and your briefing with Mr Verity awaited.

Half an hour into the flight though and the briefing hadn't begun. They don't normally employ these cloak and dagger techniques. What the hell's going on? Where are the others? The voice over the intercom told you it was time and you made your irritated way to the conference room. The rest of the team now sit around the table: Lucy, Randall, Robert... and Mr Verity, at the head of the table. Two seats are left vacant. Mr Verity, looks somewhat seriously at those present before he finally speaks.

"Right, let's begin..."

THE TEAM

Under the leadership of Lucy Forbes, the team (otherwise comprised of Sheldon, Trenhaile and Martin) have been together for three years now, performing missions solely within the UK. They've primarily been an investigative team, although have helped with Veil Out procedures for other teams before. The following details the other members of the team and their roles in the group.

Lucy Forbes (Team Leader)

Her cover says that she is a small-time crime writer from Cambridge. A natural field agent, she was promoted to team leader very quickly. She's a fine example of an Ordo Veritatis agent that you respect a great deal. However, she took it as a personal failure when John went missing. She's a perfectionist in many ways, and one who takes the success (and failure) of her team a little too close to heart.

Randall Trenhaile (Specialist Support - Occult Expert)

A research assistant into the occult working at several universities across the Southern United Kingdom, the details of his cover are vaguer than they usually are. New to the team, he's an expert on all the weird stuff you've come across out there in the field. Having moved between various teams previously, it looks like he's here for good these days. He knows too much about dark matters though, too much to be healthy for one man. It will do him no good in the long run.

Robert Martin (Interpersonal Specialist)

A book reviewer for a local magazine down in Swindon. There's something slimy about this one. Sure, he's a member of the team and he does his part well. Something tells you he was probably a con-man or a journalist in a previous life, professions neither of which you like. He's a good "face" man, talking to people in the course of investigations, but put a gun in his hand and he becomes a liability. If he ever enters the field on the front line, just duck and get behind him, quick.

Sabrina Townsend (Former Team Member, Technical Specialist)

An engineer in the motor trade from Brighton, she really annoyed Forbes with her disregard for certain procedures. A brilliant mind, there's no disputing that, but someone who needs to learn some degree of tact. After Lucy and her nearly came to blows, she was moved off the team a little before the accident. A pity really, she was otherwise nice to have around.

Geoffrey Pendleton (Non-Team Member, Psychiatric Metrics)

A member of the Psychiatric Metrics division. Further up the chain than yourself, he's someone that you don't really know a great deal about. You've seen him around the place from time to time, but what exactly it is that he does for the division (and Control) is a mystery to you. The way he watches those around him, it reminds you of Orwell's famous words: Big Brother is watching...

THE ESOTERRORISTS



Character Name Caroline Sheldon

Off-duty Occupation _____

Weapons

Glock 9mm (Light Pistol - 0 Damage Mod.)

Baton (Police Issue) - -1 Damage Mod

Languages

English

Hit Threshold 3

Investigative Abilities



ACADEMIC	Rating	Pool	TECHNICAL	Rating	Pool
Anthropology			Astronomy		
Archaeology			Ballistics	3	
Architecture			Chemistry		
Art History			Cryptography		
Forensic Accounting			Data Retrieval		
Forensic Psychology			Document Analysis		
History			Electronic Surveillance		
Languages*			Forensic Entomology		
Law			Evidence Collection	1	
Linguistics			Explosive Devices	1	
Natural History			Forensic Anthropology		
Occult Studies	1		Fingerprinting		
Research	2		Photography		
Textual Analysis					
Trivia					

General Abilities



INTERPERSONAL	Rating	Pool		Rating	Pool
Bullshit Detector	2		Athletics†	3	
Bureaucracy	2		Driving	5	
Cop Talk	4		Filch		
Flattery			Health	8	
Flirting			Infiltration		
Impersonate			Mechanics		
Interrogation			Medic	6	
Intimidation	2		Preparedness		
Negotiation			Scuffling	20	
Reassurance			Shooting	10	
Streetwise	2		Shrink		
			Stability	8	
			Surveillance‡	1	

* 1 language per rating pt.
 † rating of 8+ increases Hit Threshold by 1
 ‡ rating of 8+ grants 1 pt Electronic Surveillance

Player Name : _____

CHARACTER SHEET

RANDALL TRENHAILE (SPECIALIST SUPPORT - OCCULT EXPERT)

DESCRIPTION

Caucasian. Late 30's. Average build. Short black hair. Blue/green eyes. Usually in dark formal wear.

BACKGROUND

Before he became Randall Trenhaile, one of the most knowledgeable occult experts in the Ordo Veritatis, he was Adam Thorne, the son of a priest. He was ordered by his authoritarian father to study theology at university, demanding that he devote his life to the faith as he had done. Adam turned against his father, for whom he'd had no love, and delved into the dark arts to study the devil and all his works out of spite. He became an occult scholar at the cost of being disowned by his father. It was the success of his studies that brought him into the ranks of the Esoterrorists.

Introduced to Hagan Lange in Amsterdam, the second-in-command of a large Esoterrorist cell, he was recruited to work on a project designing a device that would create a doorway through the Membrane to the Outer Dark. His work was overseen by Arabelle Skipper, another prominent Dutch Esoterrorist. It was Adam's theory that ley lines could be used as a means to power the device. He studied key nexus sites in the Alps, Southern France, the Black Forest and the North Sea. Each site required a different geometrical design to resonate with the energies present, which meant several designs had to be produced. But, in order for it to activate and begin the collection of said energy, it would be necessary for them to be transformed through ritual means. Being new to the Movement, he wasn't privy to these secrets. As such, his work ended. In the end, he knew that the device would soon begin construction out of Rhodium (making it incredibly expensive) and that other groups would begin investigating how to give it the magical strength needed to break through the Membrane (which would involve some drastic steps, and potentially sacrifice).

Adam suspected that another part of the cell's operation was the gathering of funds for the Esoterrorist movement worldwide from the diamond trade in Amsterdam. As he began to look deeper into this, he was kidnapped by a rival Esoterrorist cell, lead by Maarten Vromme, formerly in Lange's role. Vromme tried to recruit him to his operation, telling him that Lange planned to sacrifice Adam on the device he was been designing in order to complete it.

Realising the mortal danger he was in, Adam defected to the Ordo Veritatis to save his life. In return for the information he has given the help he continues to give them, Control keeps his dark past hidden from the rest of the organisation. He was renamed as Randall Trenhaile and given the cover of being a research assistant into the occult in several universities across the Southern United Kingdom. He's moved around various teams within the Ordo Veritatis since his entry, and now works directly under Lucy Forbes.

Randall is often called in by Control to evaluate various mission proposals to comment on their probability of success, given his previous role. One such proposal was from agent John Sheldon. Operation T610 brought together a wealth of evidence to follow the money of broken Esoterrorist cells back to its source and outlined the plan to destroy the heart of the funding network that fuelled cells worldwide. Sheldon advocated one undercover agent could bring down the whole network. It would only result in them dying or being turned. Highlighting this, it was Trenhaile's testimony that meant the proposal was rejected.

Nearly a year ago, following the rejection of his proposal, John was in a crash with his wife, Mary, and his sister and fellow agent, Caroline. Mary died. Soon after the crash, John suffered a complete mental breakdown. Suspended from active duty, he vanished six months ago and Control feared he might have gone dark to complete Operation T610 on his own. As such, Randall's simply waited, knowing it's just a matter of time until John's body turns up somewhere.

IN THE LAST FEW HOURS

After all you've seen, you find it better to take pills to help you sleep. This normally means a peaceful rest, unless you're woken up in the dead of night after being shaken by an Ordo Veritatis team who have been trying to raise you on the phone and hammering on the door. Having made their own way in, they gave you just a few minutes to get dressed and pack a few essentials. A mission even at this hour. The driver wouldn't say what this was about, only that you'd be given your briefing by Mr Verity on route, who was waiting for you onboard the private jet at the airfield.

You were waiting in your private cabin for half an hour before they finally called you out. Normally the briefing would have been finished by now. They never wait this long. Had something gone wrong? Finally, the voice over the intercom told you it was time. Now, the team sit around the conference table: Lucy, Caroline, Robert... and Mr Verity, at the head of the table. Two seats are left vacant. Mr Verity, looks somewhat seriously at those present before he finally speaks.

"Right, let's begin..."

THE TEAM

Under the leadership of Lucy Forbes, the team (otherwise comprised of Sheldon, Trenhaile and Martin) have been together for three years now, performing missions solely within the UK. They've primarily been an investigative team, although have helped with Veil Out procedures for other teams before. The following details the other members of the team and their roles in the group.

Lucy Forbes (Team Leader)

Supposedly a small-time crime writer from Cambridge, you take the cover story with a pinch of salt as it seems an odd background for an adept team leader. A brilliant agent and a respectable leader, her one major flaw is that she's a perfectionist who takes the success (and failure) of her team too much to heart. As such, she took it badly when John went missing, seeing it as some fault of her's. You can't help but feel a little worried as your testimony to Control could be seen as what ultimately lead to events occurring as they did, in Lucy's eyes.

Caroline Sheldon (Field Operative, Second in Command)

A junior civil servant from South London, and one with a powerful temper. She hates the Esoterrorists with a passion after they nearly killed her and her brother. Now that there is a good chance that they could have finished the job with John, you keep your distance from her where possible. If she ever found out about your past, she might very well turn on you out of blind hatred. Be very wary of her.

Robert Martin (Interpersonal Specialist)

A book reviewer for a local magazine in Swindon, you think he must have been some kind of socialite in a previous life, since talking is what he does best. The "face" man of

THE LOVE OF MONEY

the group, the one who gets witnesses and suspects to open up, he's a little slimy but has a personality that fills up a room. He's okay in small doses, but you prefer a quieter life, and that isn't going to happen with him around. He has an insatiable curiosity that might well be his downfall.

Sabrina Townsend (Former Team Member, Technical Specialist)

An engineer in the motor trade from Brighton, she was definitely the most troublesome of the group, when she was around. She came into the team and from the outset made it very clear that the rules weren't necessarily for her. She came directly into conflict with Forbes who plays everything by the book and it didn't go well. She was removed from the team when it nearly came to blows. A brilliant mind, but blinded by her ego. Someone who could be great, if only they could learn restraint.

Geoffrey Pendleton (Non-Team Member, Psychiatric Metrics)

A high-ranking member of Psychiatric Metrics. He was on the review board and heard your testimony of the Esoterror threat in Amsterdam first hand. It was down to his evaluation of you that ultimately allowed you to join the Ordo Veritatis. A man of considerable power within the organisation, he keeps an eye on you from time to time, just to see how things are going. Otherwise, the rest of his activities are shrouded in secrecy.

THE ESOTERRORISTS



Character Name Randall Trenhaile

Off-duty Occupation _____

Weapons

Glock 9mm (Light Pistol - 0 Damage Mod.)

Baton (Police Issue) - -1 Damage Mod

Languages

English, Dutch

Hit Threshold 4

Investigative Abilities



ACADEMIC	Rating	Pool	TECHNICAL	Rating	Pool
Anthropology			Astronomy	2	
Archaeology			Ballistics		
Architecture			Chemistry		
Art History			Cryptography	3	
Forensic Accounting			Data Retrieval		
Forensic Psychology	3		Document Analysis	2	
History			Electronic Surveillance		
Languages*			Forensic Entomology		
Law			Evidence Collection	1	
Linguistics			Explosive Devices		
Natural History			Forensic Anthropology		
Occult Studies	4		Fingerprinting		
Research	2		Photography		
Textual Analysis					
Trivia	1				

General Abilities



INTERPERSONAL	Rating	Pool		Rating	Pool
Bullshit Detector	2		Athletics†	8	
Bureaucracy			Driving	1	
Cop Talk			Filch		
Flattery			Health	8	
Flirting			Infiltration		
Impersonate			Mechanics		
Interrogation			Medic		
Intimidation			Preparedness	10	
Negotiation			Scuffling	8	
Reassurance			Shooting		
Streetwise			Shrink		
			Stability	20	
			Surveillance‡	6	

* 1 language per rating pt.
 † rating of 8+ increases Hit Threshold by 1
 ‡ rating of 8+ grants 1 pt Electronic Surveillance

Player Name : _____

CHARACTER SHEET

ROBERT MARTIN (INTERPERSONAL SPECIALIST)

DESCRIPTION

Caucasian. Late 30's. Average build. Untidy dark blonde hair. Brown eyes. Often appears untidy.

BACKGROUND

Before he became Robert Martin, he was Wade Ainsworth, a young man captivated by the exploits of Woodward and Bernstein who followed a career into journalism. Working on the local newspaper in his hometown of Reading, he began working on an article regarding the occult underground of Berkshire following a public disturbance by robed figures one night in the ruins of the abbey. His investigation proved to be a little too effective and the cult using the ruins for their midnight rites abducted him to be used as a sacrifice.

The Ordo Veritatis saved him on the altar and offered him membership within their ranks. Their investigations had crossed paths unknowingly several times in the past as he he'd been researching the story. Renamed as Robert Martin and given the cover of being a book reviewer for a magazine in Swindon, he was quickly given training to survive in the field. Here, he found that he was absolutely terrible with a firearm, to the extent where others would actively duck if he pulled out his weapon. So, he has become the team's "face man", using words instead of bullets.

Still armed with the nose for a story, Robert wants to find and reveal the secrets that reside at the summit of the Ordo Veritatis hierarchy. It would be the greatest expose in history. So far though, his efforts to rise through the ranks of the organisation have met with failure.

A fellow member of the team that Robert got on well with was John Sheldon. A former civil servant, completely devoted to the cause of destroying the Esoterrorist movement, he had been working on a mission plan (Operation T610) that he hoped would bring the Ordo Veritatis considerably closer to this goal. Robert worked on some of the research with John and it certainly looked like they were on to something. However, Control said the mission plan was too risky, and as it would endanger the lives of their agents for little chance of success, his plan was denied. If it had worked, he believes he could have smashed the heart of the funding network that channelled funds to Esoterrorist cells worldwide.

Nearly a year ago, John was in a crash with his wife, Mary, and his sister and fellow agent, Caroline. Mary died in the crash. Soon after, John suffered a complete mental breakdown. Suspended from active duty, he vanished six months ago and Control feared he might have gone dark to complete Operation T610 on his own. This made Robert increasingly concerned about his team leader, Lucy Forbes, as she took any failure of team as one of her own, and this was one monumental failure. As he watched Lucy, he began seeing telltale signs of drug abuse. It was her way of coping with such a failure. Even though it repulses him to a degree, when he found a syringe in her possession, he knew it was a way to finally advance in the Ordo Veritatis. Holding it over Forbes to make sure she does everything he says, it's only a matter of time before he starts climbing the ladder to the secrets that hide up on high.

IN THE LAST FEW HOURS

There never seem to be enough hours in the day. You've been compiling a report on the personnel you've met within the Ordo Veritatis, trying to outline the upper command structure as best you can from what limited encounters you've had. As you searched for connections, trying to unravel the truth from behind their cover identities, the knock came at the door. Panic set in first. Had they discovered what you were up to? Hiding the papers in the safe, the team outside only gave you a few minutes to pack bare essentials before they drove you silently to the private airfield.

Was this a mission, or had they found out? If it was a mission, then the briefing should have already happened by the time you were half an hour into the flight. Panic started to build up until the point when the voice over the intercom told you it was time. Now, the rest of the team

sit around the conference table: Lucy, Caroline, Randall... and Mr Verity, at the head of the table. Two seats are left vacant. Mr Verity, looks somewhat seriously at those present before he finally speaks.

"Right, let's begin..."

THE TEAM

Under the leadership of Lucy Forbes, the team (otherwise comprised of Sheldon, Trenhaile and Martin) have been together for three years now, performing missions solely within the UK. They've primarily been an investigative team, although have helped with Veil Out procedures for other teams before. The following details the other members of the team and their roles in the group.

Lucy Forbes (Team Leader)

A small-time crime writer from Cambridge, and really a very nice person at heart. It pains you to look back on what you've ended up using her for. You'll never tell anyone else about the drug habit that would have her removed from her position, but you keep the threat hanging over her to ensure her co-operation. You're fairly sure she hates you for the blackmail. If only she knew what you want to achieve. It might make things better, but you can't let her know. You may never get the chance to uncover the truth again.

Caroline Sheldon (Field Operative, Second in Command)

The story about Sheldon being a junior civil servant from South London is blatantly a lie to anyone who even looks at her. You're fairly sure the London part of the story is accurate, but for someone with the amount of rage being in the civil service? She's one of the most anger-driven people you've ever met. Nice enough when you first met her, but her time in the field has definitely taken its toll. She was taken off active duty for some time to calm down, but not enough it seems...

Randall Trenhaile (Specialist Support - Occult Expert)

A research assistant into the occult working in several universities across the Southern United Kingdom, the details about him are pretty vague. He's definitely got something to hide. Control has been moving him around different teams constantly up until now. He arrived in your team a few months before the Sheldon affair. He's definitely an expert in his field, but a he can be a little distant at times. Is it possible that Control is keeping an eye on him? If so, why?

Sabrina Townsend (Former Team Member, Technical Specialist)

An engineer in the motor trade from Brighton. She made all the wrong moves almost as soon as humanly possible. She started learning the ropes in the team, but made it blatantly clear that rules were for other people. Lucy as the by-the-book team leader didn't stand for it. Sabrina was removed from the team and reassigned out of Lucy's sight. A brilliant surveillance operative, but never really given a chance in the team. Her mouth acted long before her brain should have.

Geoffrey Pendleton (Non-Team Member, Psychiatric Metrics)

A member of the Psychiatric Metrics division. Further up the chain than yourself, he's someone that you don't really know a great deal about. You've seen him around the place from time to time, but what exactly it is that he does for the division (and Control) is a mystery to you. The way he watches those around him, it reminds you of Orwell's famous words: Big Brother is watching...

THE ESOTERRORISTS



Character Name Robert Martin

Off-duty Occupation

Weapons

Glock 9mm (Light Pistol - 0 Damage Mod.

Baton (Police Issue) - -1 Damage Mod

Languages

English

Hit Threshold 4

Investigative Abilities



ACADEMIC	Rating	Pool	TECHNICAL	Rating	Pool
Anthropology			Astronomy		
Archaeology			Ballistics		
Architecture			Chemistry		
Art History			Cryptography		
Forensic Accounting			Data Retrieval		
Forensic Psychology			Document Analysis		
History			Electronic Surveillance	1	
Languages*			Forensic Entomology		
Law			Evidence Collection		
Linguistics			Explosive Devices		
Natural History			Forensic Anthropology	2	
Occult Studies	1		Fingerprinting		
Research	1		Photography		
Textual Analysis					
Trivia					

General Abilities



INTERPERSONAL	Rating	Pool		Rating	Pool
Bullshit Detector	4		Athletics†	8	
Bureaucracy	2		Driving	6	
Cop Talk	2		Filch		
Flattery	2		Health	8	
Flirting			Infiltration		
Impersonate			Mechanics		
Interrogation	1		Medic		
Intimidation			Preparedness	8	
Negotiation	3		Scuffling		
Reassurance	3		Shooting	1	
Streetwise			Shrink		
			Stability	10	
			Surveillance‡	20	

* 1 language per rating pt.
 † rating of 8+ increases Hit Threshold by 1
 ‡ rating of 8+ grants 1 pt Electronic Surveillance

CHARACTER SHEET

Player Name :

SABRINA TOWNSEND (FORMER TEAM MEMBER TECHNICAL SPECIALIST)

DESCRIPTION

Caucasian. Mid 30's. Average build. Long dark brown hair. Blue eyes. Sharply dressed.

BACKGROUND

Before becoming Sabrina Townsend, Brooke Southwell was a gifted pilot and aerospace engineer who had worked in Holland on the Eurofighter program and in Japan on the preliminary stages of the ATD-X Shinshin before she moved back to the UK. She worked for a company that held key contracts for the Royal Air Force designing fighter jets. It was her work with the RAF that ultimately meant she crossed paths (at first unknowingly) with Geoffrey Pendleton from Psychiatric Metrics who worked with military intelligence as part of a delegation looking at plans for an unmanned spy jet she was involved in the production of. Given her skills and her behaviour impressed Pendleton, he recruited her into the Ordo Veritatis.

Renamed as Sabrina Townsend and given the cover of being a motor engineer from Brighton, she primarily filled the surveillance and technical support roles. As such, she was left back in the van on operations, well away from the front line. Sabrina moved around a number of teams in this role before finally ending up under Lucy Forbes' command. Here she met John Sheldon, a man she liked very much. But, it was a relationship that was never given the chance to grow.

In her life before the Ordo Veritatis, Sabrina learnt that sometimes she needed to act outside the rules to get the job done. Lucy couldn't stand this approach one bit. The rules were there to be followed and it was certainly not Sabrina's place to question that. The two nearly came to blows over their differing opinions and Control reassigned Sabrina to another team. Wanting to get her own back, she found her hands tied by Control. However, things were about to change.

Pendleton made another appearance recently and interviewed her about John. Sheldon's wife, Mary, died in a car crash following a Christmas party last year and blames his sister, Caroline, who was driving. This was the first Sabrina heard of John being married. Shortly after the crash, John had a mental breakdown and vanished. Control knew that he had been working on a mission plan (Operation T610) that he hoped would destroy the Esoterrorist funding network. However, the mission plan was too risky, and as it would endanger the lives of their agents for little chance of success, Control denied the proposal.

It was their belief that he had gone solo to complete the mission, so they called Sabrina in to help with profiling and possibly finding him. Whilst they ultimately didn't find Sheldon, Pendleton, feeling a degree of sympathy (being her recruiter) stepped into help Sabrina with her recent problems. Pulling a few strings, he managed to gain her a secondment in Psychiatric Metrics. With her proven analytical skills, she would be a great asset, and with careful guidance, she could repair a lot of the damage done to her career with the incident between herself and Forbes.

IN THE LAST FEW HOURS

The bedside phone woke you in the middle of the night. You'd decided to get an early night, a rare luxury recently. The interruption wasn't appreciated. A car would be ready for you in ten minutes. Time to get bare essentials ready. Secondment to Psychiatric Metrics evidently didn't stop having to get up at all hours of the night, despite what you'd hoped. The driver wasn't very talkative on the way to the private airfield where the private jet stood waiting. Mr Verity would give you your briefing onboard.

That was the first sign that something didn't feel right. Psychiatric Metrics going into the field? This must be something different... Something special. Then there was the half hour wait on the plane after take-off in the private cabin. The briefing should have begun by now. What could be keeping them? The stewardess came by to open the door for you and told you the others would be waiting for you in the conference room onboard, but Mr Verity wants to meet with you, and Mr Pendleton, who was also here, afterwards.

As you reach the door to the conference room with Pendleton, you can hear the voices inside. Mr Verity, Caroline, Randall, Robert... and Lucy. This could be messy...

THE TEAM

Under the leadership of Lucy Forbes, the team (otherwise comprised of Sheldon, Trenhaile and Martin) have been together for three years now, performing missions solely within the UK. They've primarily been an investigative team, although have helped with Veil Out procedures for other teams before. The following details the other members of the team and their roles in the group.

Lucy Forbes (Team Leader)

A small-time crime writer from Cambridge with an infuriating desire to play things completely by the book. She couldn't bare the fact that someone didn't agree with her. She used all her power and influence to get you out of the picture. She took John's disappearance pretty hard, so you hear, treating it as a personal failure. You know you can't just rule that the team is compromised because of a personal grudge, but you can at least try to get your own revenge in other ways.

Caroline Sheldon (Field Operative, Second in Command)

A junior civil servant from South London, just like John was. Brother and sister who followed the same career and ended up in the Ordo Veritatis after crossing paths with the Esoterrorists. John seemed to hold his sister responsible for the crash, and it definitely hurt her, from what you've heard. Being out of touch with the team since Lucy had you reassigned, details are sketchy. You know the two of them were close though, so it must have been painful for her to bare her brother's anger.

Randall Trenhaile (Specialist Support - Occult Expert)

A research assistant into the occult working at several universities across the Southern United Kingdom, you never really got to find out much about him. His cover story was pretty vague. He had been assigned to numerous teams before ending up with Forbes. Before you could try and get to know the somewhat distant expert, you were reassigned. Something about him got your interest... Something is different about him compared to the average operative... But what?

Robert Martin (Interpersonal Specialist)

A book reviewer for a local magazine in Swindon, he was a pretty friendly to you in your time there. Again, a story cut short by Forbes, just like what could have been her relation with John. The "face" man, left to do all the talking whilst others did the more practical front line work. Word was that he was a pretty poor shot with a gun, and more of a liability in the field with any weapon other than his mouth. Like you, he didn't see much front line action as a result, but he seems to like it that way.

Geoffrey Pendleton (Non-Team Member, Psychiatric Metrics)

A member of the Psychiatric Metrics division, and military intelligence outside of the Ordo Veritatis, he was your recruiter in the organisation. You worked with him initially when Sheldon went missing. He was trying to piece together his possible moves from a psychological profile, but Sheldon still remained hidden. He's a fairly serious, straight down the line gentleman, and a consummate professional. Perhaps he sees you as a protégé of his?

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THE LOVE OF MONEY

THE ESOTERRORISTS



Character Name Sabrina Townsend

Off-duty Occupation _____

Weapons

Glock 9mm (Light Pistol - 0 Damage Mod.)

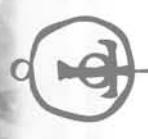
Baton (Police Issue) - -1 Damage Mod

Languages

English, Dutch, Japanese

Hit Threshold 3

Investigative Abilities



ACADEMIC	Rating	Pool	TECHNICAL	Rating	Pool
Anthropology			Astronomy		
Archaeology			Ballistics		
Architecture			Chemistry	1	
Art History			Cryptography		
Forensic Accounting			Data Retrieval	1	
Forensic Psychology			Document Analysis		
History			Electronic Surveillance	4	
Languages*	2		Forensic Entomology		
Law			Evidence Collection		
Linguistics			Explosive Devices	1	
Natural History			Forensic Anthropology		
Occult Studies	1		Fingerprinting	3	
Research	2		Photography		
Textual Analysis					
Trivia					

General Abilities



INTERPERSONAL	Rating	Pool		Rating	Pool
Bullshit Detector			Athletics†	3	
Bureaucracy			Driving	10	
Cop Talk	1		Filch		
Flattery			Health	8	
Flirting			Infiltration	1	
Impersonate			Mechanics	20	
Interrogation			Medic	3	
Intimidation			Preparedness		
Negotiation	3		Scuffling		
Reassurance			Shooting	8	
Streetwise	2		Shrink		
			Stability	8	
			Surveillance‡		

* 1 language per rating pt.
 † rating of 8+ increases Hit Threshold by 1
 ‡ rating of 8+ grants 1 pt Electronic Surveillance

DoD CHARACTER SHEET

Player Name : _____

GEOFFREY PENDLETON (NON TEAM MEMBER PSYCHIATRIC METRICS)

DESCRIPTION

Caucasian. Early 40's. Average build. Short greying hair. Blue eyes. Somewhat rugged appearance.

BACKGROUND

Before becoming Geoffrey Pendleton, officer within Psychiatric Metrics, he was Gerald Wentworth. Torn between wanting to follow a career in medicine (as he wanted) and the military (as his father wanted) from a young age, he settled on a compromise: he became a field medic just as Operation Desert Storm began.

Amidst the fallout of the conflict, he heard the soldiers screaming about the horrors they had seen in the battlefield. His involvement and observations led to him being transferred to military intelligence where his reports were heavily classified. He was recruited by the Ordo Veritatis soon afterwards, and still retains his role in military intelligence outside the organisation.

Renamed as Geoffrey Pendleton, and given the cover of a private sector psychiatrist from Bedfordshire, he was enlisted into Psychiatric Metrics very soon after his entry. Here, he works to monitor field agents for signs of trouble and resolves these problems swiftly. One such problem was an agent by the name of John Sheldon. John was completely devoted to the cause of destroying the Esoterrorist movement. He had been working on a mission plan (Operation T610) that he believed could smash the heart of the funding network that channelled funds to Esoterrorist cells worldwide. However, following expert testimony from a former Esoterrorist now working with the Ordo Veritatis (Randall Trenhaile), Control said the mission plan was too risky. It would endanger the lives of their agents for little chance of success. As such, the plan was rejected.

Nearly a year ago, John was in a crash with his sister and fellow agent, Caroline, and another woman who died. This was Mary, John's wife. Soon after the crash, John suffered a complete mental breakdown. Suspended from active duty, he vanished six months ago and Control feared he might have gone dark to complete Operation T610 on his own.

Sheldon had nearly been involved with a former team member: Sabrina Townsend. Pendleton had recruited Townsend from the aerospace sector a couple of years before, and when she was called in to help with profiling Sheldon in an attempt to find him before he came to harm, it was Pendleton who took over the case. Whilst her insight didn't help to find Sheldon, it came to his attention of problems that she had had with Sheldon's team leader, Forbes. He decided to take her under his wing and pulled some strings to get her seconded into Psychiatric Metrics to give her a chance to shine again. Given that he got her into the Ordo Veritatis in the first place, it could be viewed that any failing on her part could reflect badly on him, so it's a case of helping to repair her reputation as much as his own.

IN THE LAST FEW HOURS

Always a light sleeper, the phone woke you easily. However, it left you feeling distinctly uneasy when they told you what had happened. Sheldon has been found, in Amsterdam, and his former team was being put together to bring him back in. Reports were sketchy at that time, but it was the first lead they'd had of his whereabouts, so they were going to jump on it. Seconded to Psychiatric Metrics, Sabrina Townsend would be joining you to help perform an evaluation in the field of his condition and see if he had turned or

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otherwise been compromised. Field operations in your line of work isn't unknown, but rather unusual nonetheless.

After quickly packing a few essentials, the driver took you to the private airfield after, and shortly after take-off you expected to go from your private cabin to the conference room for the briefing. However, the minutes passed and the unease grew. When the stewardess came by, you already knew what she was going to say. Something had gone wrong, the mission was being re-defined on route. Never a good sign... The others must no doubt be wondering what's happening too. Half an hour later, proceedings finally begin.

As you reach the door to the conference room with Pendleton, you can hear the voices inside. Mr Verity, Lucy, Caroline, Randall, Robert. Sabrina and Lucy together could be a volatile mix. Hopefully whatever 'went wrong' won't get in the way to make it worse...

THE TEAM

Under the leadership of Lucy Forbes, the team (otherwise comprised of Sheldon, Trenhaile and Martin) have been together for three years now, performing missions solely within the UK. They've primarily been an investigative team, although have helped with Veil Out procedures for other teams before. The following details the other members of the team and their roles in the group.

Lucy Forbes (Team Leader)

Having seen her file (like everyone else's on the team for that matter), you know her cover story is that she is a small-time crime writer from Cambridge. In fact, she is Rachel Miller from Oxford, and she is a private investigator in her free time. Her reaction over John's disappearance was concerning. She was a perfectionist who took his failure as her own. The potential for self-harm was definitely there, but thankfully never amounted to anything. As long as she stays in control of herself, she does a fine job of leading her team as well.

Caroline Sheldon (Field Operative, Second in Command)

Like her brother John, Caroline's cover story had her come from South London, working as a junior civil servant. In reality, Heather (Caroline) and Peter (John) Leighton came from North London, working for HM Customs and Excise. Caroline has growing anger management issues. She hates the Esterrorists for trying to kill her and her brother. Thankfully she doesn't know Trenhaile's past. As such, caution is needed with her in case the facts do eventually come to light.

Randall Trenhaile (Specialist Support - Occult Expert)

Adam Thorne, a former Esoterrorist, worked with cells in Amsterdam. His cover story has him as a research assistant into the occult working at several universities across the Southern United Kingdom. Control has moved around numerous teams under observation. Now he's Forbes' team. He's somewhat distant, and aware that he's being watched periodically by yourself. After vetting him yourself, you believe he's totally on board. The book says he has to be watched, being a former Esoterrorist, so he is watched for now.

Robert Martin (Interpersonal Specialist)

Supposedly a book reviewer for a magazine in Swindon, Wade Ainsworth is actually an investigative journalist from Reading. He was a concern at first. Psychiatric Metrics believed he was planning on publishing what he'd found in the Ordo Veritatis. It looks like he saw the error of his ways without Control's intervention. That said, he still has a healthy desire to discover more about the organisation and its higher levels. In time, he might even find them out, if deserving enough.

Sabrina Townsend (Former Team Member, Technical Specialist)

After Trenhaile, Townsend is the only other member of the team you've dealt with directly. Under the cover of being an engineer in the motor trade from Brighton, she is actually Brooke Southwell, an aerospace engineer in the Royal Air Force from Southampton whom you directly recruited. She used to be on Sheldon's team, but was kicked out by Forbes when they fought over ethical standpoints regarding the necessity of procedure. Forbes advocates a 100% by-the-book policy, whereas Sabrina is more flexible. Nonetheless, she's a bright and extraordinary person. She could go far, which will reflect well on you in turn having been the person to recruit her in the first place.

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THE ESOTERRORISTS



Character Name Geoffrey Pendleton

Off-duty Occupation _____

Weapons

Glock 9mm (Light Pistol - 0 Damage Mod.)

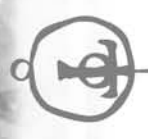
Baton (Police Issue) - -1 Damage Mod

Languages

English

Hit Threshold 3

Investigative Abilities



ACADEMIC	Rating	Pool	TECHNICAL	Rating	Pool
Anthropology			Astronomy		
Archaeology			Ballistics		
Architecture			Chemistry		
Art History			Cryptography	1	
Forensic Accounting	1		Data Retrieval	1	
Forensic Psychology	4		Document Analysis		
History			Electronic Surveillance		
Languages*			Forensic Entomology		
Law	2		Evidence Collection		
Linguistics			Explosive Devices		
Natural History			Forensic Anthropology	2	
Occult Studies	1		Fingerprinting		
Pathology	1		Photography		
Research					
Textual Analysis					
Trivia					

General Abilities



INTERPERSONAL	Rating	Pool		Rating	Pool
Bullshit Detector	2		Athletics†	3	
Bureaucracy	1		Driving	6	
Cop Talk			Filch		
Flattery			Health	20	
Flirting			Infiltration		
Impersonate			Mechanics		
Interrogation	2		Medic	8	
Intimidation			Preparedness		
Negotiation			Scuffling		
Reassurance	1		Shooting	5	
Streetwise			Shrink	10	
			Stability	8	
			Surveillance‡	1	

* 1 language per rating pt.
 † rating of 8+ increases Hit Threshold by 1
 ‡ rating of 8+ grants 1 pt Electronic Surveillance

DoD CHARACTER SHEET

Player Name : _____

EDDA VAN EKEN (DETECTIVE INSPECTOR AMSTERDAM POLICE)

DESCRIPTION

Caucasian. Mid 30's. Average build. Short brown hair. Blue eyes. Slightly untidy appearance. Speaks English fluently, but with a heavy accent.

BACKGROUND

Born and raised in Amsterdam, Edda is very much the odd-one out in her family. Whilst her father is an investment banker, and her brother went to work as an account handler for one of the numerous gemstone distributors in the city, she turned her attention elsewhere. Her family has long since had a presence in the industries that made the city great, and Edda was expected to carry on that tradition. However, it meant she had a relatively dull childhood. Her parents were always busy with business and family life always seemed to take second place. She wanted to have an exciting life when she grew up, to do something that would make the world a better place. She soon found herself enrolling into the police force.

She's been working in the force for the best part of the last ten years, starting off as a beat cop and working her way up quickly into homicide five years ago. Here, her analytical mind and observant eye lead her to cracking some of the most high profile cases the department has had in the last few years and as a result landed the promotion to Detective Inspector much quicker than other may have done. She strives to be a role model in the department, to be the best in the force. However, the time has started to approach where she feels that the next step up the chain might well not be something she can find in Amsterdam. So, she has set her sight on Interpol.

Having worked with Interpol on a couple of cases previously, she's determined that this is where she eventually wants to be. Tonight, she's hoping that she'll get the chance to get her foot in the door. A few hours ago, the call came through from Piet Vogel, the hotel manager at the Hotel de l'Europe. One of the room service maids been delivering a late night meal to one of the guests on the second floor when they noticed a door was slightly open. Going inside to investigate, she found the body and ran back out. Not wishing to alert the guests, the door was promptly closed and the police were called.

Vogel has made it very clear to Van Eken that the police presence is to be minimal in the hotel as they have a reputation to maintain and don't want to concern the guests still there. A couple of officers went up there to view the scene and call back what they had found to the station, Van Eken included. They gave a description of the man (as best they could, given the body has been torn apart and limbs scattered around the room, with various symbols painted on the wall in his blood) and then radioed in the name the room had been booked under (one Franklin Chase).

The forensic team been documenting and collecting preliminary evidence for coming up to an hour when the word came from on high that this had been flagged as a case for Interpol. Chase was someone that they were after. As such, they've waited, Vogel's waited and now Interpol are finally here (as far as they are concerned). Whilst Edda is happy to get the chance to show her skills off to the agency, she is little up-tight about the semi-hostile reception she's got from the hotel and then the wait that she's had to go through before the team finally show up. She knows it is not the agent's fault, but simply wants to vent some of her frustration.

However, Intepol are here now, and the scene is all theirs. When the agents are ready, Van Eken can take them back to the station where she has an office put aside for them to conduct their investigation from. She's prepared to tag along with them to act as their liaison in the city and be with them as much as she physically can, learning as much as she can about them, trying to get into their good books, and get her name known out there, as to increase her chances of eventually getting in to Interpol herself.

THE ESOTERRORISTS



Character Name Edda van Eken

Off-duty Occupation _____

Weapons

Glock 9mm (Light Pistol - 0 Damage Mod.

Baton (Police Issue) -
-1 Damage Mod

Languages

English, Dutch

Hit Threshold 3

Investigative Abilities



ACADEMIC	Rating	Pool	TECHNICAL	Rating	Pool
Anthropology			Astronomy		
Archaeology			Ballistics		
Architecture			Chemistry		
Art History			Cryptography		
Forensic Accounting			Data Retrieval		
Forensic Psychology			Document Analysis	1	
History			Electronic Surveillance		
Languages*	1		Forensic Entomology		
Law	1		Evidence Collection	2	
Linguistics			Explosive Devices		
Natural History			Forensic Anthropology		
Occult Studies			Fingerprinting	1	
Research	2		Photography	1	
Textual Analysis					
Trivia					

General Abilities



INTERPERSONAL	Rating	Pool		Rating	Pool
Bullshit Detector	2		Athletics†	5	
Bureaucracy			Driving	5	
Cop Talk	4		Filch		
Flattery			Health	20	
Flirting			Infiltration		
Impersonate			Mechanics		
Interrogation			Medic		
Intimidation			Preparedness	5	
Negotiation	2		Scuffling	5	
Reassurance	2		Shooting	10	
Streetwise			Shrink		
			Stability	10	
			Surveillance‡	2	

* 1 language per rating pt.
† rating of 8+ increases Hit Threshold by 1
‡ rating of 8+ grants 1 pt Electronic Surveillance

DoD CHARACTER SHEET

Player Name : _____