



MODERN

Team Bravo:

THE FIRST ASSIGNMENT



By Eric Cagle

A short *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* adventure for four 2nd-level player characters.

LEVELS

You, the Game Master (GM), need a copy of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* to run this adventure. Team Bravo: The First Assignment is a short introductory scenario for four 2nd-level characters. To get started, print out this module (including the map). Be sure to familiarize yourself thoroughly with the deinonychus from Chapter 8: Friends and Foes.

Background

Dr. Arthur Fulbert, a brilliant researcher, has been working for several months on a government grant to develop living weapons for the military. Recently, he made a breakthrough—he successfully cloned dinosaurs from fossilized DNA. He grew several deinonychus embryos to maturity in his laboratory on the outskirts of town. Based on the age of the DNA and the techniques he employed, Dr. Fulbert expected the resulting creatures to be alive but brain dead—perfect subjects for conducting a safe and orderly study. But he was wrong. Whether he miscalculated, or whether the Shadow that has been advancing on the world supplied some weird energy that activated the creatures' minds, they exhibited all the animal cunning of their prehistoric ancestors. Once they had reached full size, three of the dinosaurs awakened and smashed their way out of their growth containers. Dr. Fulbert managed to evade them, but he could not stop them.

The creatures loped off into the city, where they set up a lair in a nearby sewer and began hunting for food. The scientist managed to locate them using a tracking device keyed to implants he had placed in their bodies. He tried to recapture them, but they became enraged at the intrusion and attacked, forcing Fulbert to flee for his life in the company van.

Dr. Fulbert is desperate and on the ragged edge of sanity. If he's caught, not only will he go to prison for endangering innocent people, but all of his work will be wasted. Though he still would like to get the crea-

tures back unharmed so that he can continue his research, he realizes now that that probably isn't possible. Thus, he has done his best to lie low, hoping the creatures won't be connected to him.

Synopsis

The heroes are part of the Police Special Investigations Division, better known as Team Bravo. This unit was established by the local police department to investigate reports of unusual occurrences. Their first assignment is to check out an odd report of gang violence. When they arrive on the scene, they discover a horribly mutilated body that looks as if it had been partly devoured by some huge animal.

Investigation of the scene turns up one survivor, a street punk, who shoots at the heroes out of fear. Once subdued, he reveals that his friend was attacked by a big pack of "wild lizard beasts," and that he managed to escape by hiding in an abandoned building.

A clue found at the scene leads the heroes to a research facility on the outskirts of town. There they can interview the chief research scientist, Dr. Arthur Fulbert. After some prodding, Fulbert admits that he has succeeded in cloning and growing several dinosaurs, a few of which have since managed to escape the compound. Once his project and his error have been revealed, Dr. Fulbert tries to flee prosecution. Catching him then requires a harrowing car chase through the city.

Once the scientist is in custody, the heroes must track down and capture or kill the remaining dinosaurs to ensure the safety of the citizens.

Team Bravo in Your Campaign

TEAM BRAVO: THE FIRST ASSIGNMENT is the first in a series of adventures focusing on investigation of bizarre circumstances.

If you do not intend to have the characters act as law-enforcement officials, they could be private investigators or paranormal researchers who often plunge into dangerous situations looking for the truth.

Team Bravo could also be a subgroup of Department 7, acting as a dedicated group within that agency. In addition to their regular duties, they could occasionally receive advice, resources, and assignments from Department 7. Their contacts in that department may or may not ask that the heroes remain quiet about the services they provide.

Character Hooks

As the GM, you know best how to involve your players and their heroes in an adventure. You can use the following adventure hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to make them appropriate for the characters' interests.

- The heroes stumble across the body of the first victim while investigating a different crime.
- The heroes catch a glimpse of some enormous beast loping along a back alley. Upon investigating, they discover the

body of the first victim. (If you use a hook of this sort, skip the briefing at the beginning of the adventure and go straight to Encounter A, the murder scene, but delete the police presence.)

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

Bright and early one morning, the heroes are called into the station for a briefing—a strange murder has been discovered. Their superior, Lieutenant Miriam Durth, meets them at the station. Read or paraphrase the following information aloud.

New to the Special Investigations Unit, you have yet to check out anything more unusual than the occasional unexplained noise or missing person. Just when you've begun to wonder whether there's really anything going on in this city that merits a special investigative unit, you're summoned to the station for a briefing.

When you arrive, your superior, Lieutenant Durth, leads you to a briefing room and closes the door. "Do sit down please," she says. "I'm sorry to call you all in on such short notice, but we have an unusual situation that needs to be addressed quickly. We received a 911 call about an hour ago from an unidentified man who described an attack by some wild animal. The connection was very poor, and it was hard to hear him over the static, so we're not quite sure what happened.

"We sent a unit out to investigate, and the officers found a body inside an abandoned warehouse close to the highway. They reported that the corpse was horribly mutilated—it looked like it had been torn apart and then partially devoured. We don't know whether the body was that of the caller or not.

"This isn't the first such incident that's occurred. In fact, it's the fourth vicious assault reported within a week. But this is the first time we've been able to find a body in reasonable condition.

"We need you to go down there and determine what sort of animal we're dealing with here, because frankly, we don't know. If you find it, call for backup and animal control to assist. Be extremely careful."

The heroes have no time to pick up anything special—they must hustle to the crime scene (Encounter 1).

1. THE MURDER SCENE

The murder took place in an abandoned warehouse near the largest highway in the city. This aging and dilapidated structure is covered with graffiti and bits of rusting metal.

Squad cars and emergency vehicles have surrounded the building. Outside the main entrance, police officers are questioning a small crowd of people. Interrogation of these citizens by the PCs produces no useful information. These people saw nothing; they were simply drawn to the site by the presence of the police vehicles. If the characters identify themselves to the officers, they are directed inside.

Read the following aloud when the characters enter the building.

The dark and gloomy interior of the warehouse is punctuated by a few streams of light from the headlamps of the patrol cars outside. The building is empty, except for a random collection of garbage and debris. The homicide officers and coroner's deputy have just finished bagging up a corpse—there is a chalk outline on the ground showing where the two pieces of the body lay.

Heroes who question these officers discover that the body was that of a young man, obviously a street punk. It had been eviscerated and torn in half. No effort had been made to hide the corpse; it was found in plain sight on the floor of the warehouse.

Once the site has been photographed, the other police officers and official personnel collect their gear and leave the scene. The removal of the body bag reveals a small white metal tag lying on the floor (no Spot check necessary). It appears to be part of a collar bearing the inscription, "Hilberger Tech-X-433." A successful Research check (DC 10) reveals that there is a biotech company called Hilberger Technologies not too far away from the scene.

With successful Investigate checks, the heroes can find a variety of other clues as well. The table below gives the check DC for each clue.

DC	INVESTIGATE CHECK RESULT
15	There are several claw marks on the floor, apparently made by a large, powerful animal. The creature evidently clawed its way through a window to get to the victim.
20	The victim was apparently run down from behind and dragged some distance before being torn apart. On the floor a short distance from where the corpse lay is a spatter of blood that does not appear to have come from the victim.
25	Careful examination of the spray patterns reveals that the victim's jugular vein was cut with a single powerful slashing motion.

If the characters take a sample of the strange blood for testing, it cannot be identified. Its traits seem to be a mixture of reptile and bird factors.

Have each hero investigating the scene make a Listen check (DC 15) every minute that he or she is within the building. Everyone who succeeds hears a strange whimpering sound coming from behind a stack of fifty-five-gallon drums nestled in a dark corner. Investigation reveals a small cranny that would allow a human-sized creature to wriggle behind the stack.

Behind the barrels is a street punk named Desmond, the only survivor of the most recent deinonychus attack. Seeing his friend eviscerated in front of his eyes has traumatized Desmond, and he lies huddled on the floor behind the barrels. Because the other officers were making so much noise during the investigation, they did not discover him.

Desmond does not respond to anyone who addresses him—he just lies there in a fetal position, shuddering in terror. If approached, he lashes out, attacking first with his pistol and then with his fists. As he fights off his would-be

rescuers, he hysterically screams, "Get away from me!" Desmond's mind has been driven beyond rationality by what he has seen, and he believes he will be killed if anyone touches him.

After Desmond's first attack, each character present must make a Sense Motive check (DC 15). Success indicates that Desmond is obviously in shock and not acting as he normally would.

The heroes can attempt to subdue Desmond or talk him out of the cubbyhole. Each character attempting the latter option must make an opposed Diplomacy check. If any hero beats Desmond's check result by 4 or less and no one tries to harm him, the young man stops attacking. On a success of 5 or more, comes to his senses, collapsing in a wreck of emotion.

Desmond (Fast Ordinary 2/Tough Ordinary 2): CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 2d8+4 plus 2d10+4; hp 28; Mas 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 18, flat-footed 19 (+2 Dex, +6 class, +1 leather jacket); BAB +2; Grap +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike), or +4 ranged (2d6, TEC-9); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL none; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; AP 0, Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Occupation: Criminal (class skills: Hide, Knowledge [streetwise]).

Skills: Hide +6, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (streetwise) +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Profession (criminal) +3, Read/Write English, Speak English, Tumble +5.

Feats: Brawl, Dodge, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Streetfighting.

Possessions: TEC-9 (9mm machine pistol), leather jacket.

Tactics: If attacked or threatened in any way, Desmond rushes against the empty drums, causing them to topple forward and fill a 20-foot-radius area. The falling barrels deal 2d6 points of damage to each creature in the area (Reflex save DC 15 avoids). He then attacks with his fists. Should anyone point a firearm at him, he draws his pistol. In any case, he rants and raves incoherently until subdued or killed.

If Desmond is captured alive, he eventually calms down and recounts his story. He and his friend Rico, the victim, had just stolen someone's purse and were running from the scene of the crime. Just as they entered the warehouse district, a strange, lizardlike beast with huge claws attacked them. They had just managed to slip inside the warehouse when Rico was run down by the beast and torn to shreds. Desmond hid behind the barrels, and the beast slipped away when the officers arrived.

When the heroes follow up on the Hilberger Technologies clue, go to Encounter 2.

2. HILBERGER TECHNOLOGIES

Armed with the knowledge that they have gleaned from the murder scene, the heroes should eventually make their way to Hilberger Technologies. The building is a small, ordinary-looking facility located on the outskirts of town, with only a tiny sign to indicate that it houses any sort of business. There are only a few cars in the parking lot, and no pedestrians are in evidence.



The front desk clerk, a young and officious woman (use the statistics for a low-level politician in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*) confronts the heroes when they enter the building. She denies at first that anyone with authority is available, but if pressed, she eventually calls Dr. Fulbert to speak to the characters. Read the following aloud when he arrives.

Dr. Fulbert is a tall, slim man with disheveled hair and a contagious smile. The pocket of his lab coat is burgeoning with pens and pencils, and he carries a clipboard overflowing with papers. “Hello, I’m Dr. Fulbert,” he says affably. “I understand there’s some sort of problem. What can I do to help?”

If questioned about the tag found in Encounter 1, he admits that it belongs to his company, although he claims he doesn’t know how it got outside the facility. He appears genuinely concerned if told about the murder, and he offers whatever aid his facility can provide in the investigation.

If asked about his work, Fulbert explains that his company has received a grant from the government to do research in biotechnology and animal cloning. If they persist in questioning him about his laboratory’s research, he invites them to come inside and see for themselves.

A successful Sense Motive check at any point in this conversation reveals that the scientist is hiding something.

Read the following if Dr. Fulbert takes the characters into the lab.

This state-of-the-art laboratory facility presents a stark contrast to the building’s plain exterior. Microscopes, medical equipment, chemicals, and tanks of liquid nitrogen dominate the spacious room. Three small electronic devices are lined up on a table, beeping quietly.

“This is where our work takes place,” Dr. Fulbert says, walking over to a large metal door emblazoned with biohazard signs. Beside it is a glass window that reveals only a dim green glow from within the room. “Our work here is quite exciting, as you will see.” He opens the metal door and ushers you into an immense, dimly lit room. On the far side of the wall are four large tubes filled with a greenish liquid. Three are empty, but inside the fourth floats a large beast that resembles nothing so much as a dinosaur in some form of hibernation.

“Amazing creatures, aren’t they?” comments Dr. Fulbert from his position by the door. “It took several years to find a suitable sample of DNA with which to clone them. I had hoped to recapture the ones that escaped, but your intrusion has ruined my plans. I’m so sorry, officers.” Moving with lightning speed for such an unathletic man, Dr. Fulbert hits the door control and sprints back out just as it begins to close.

Unless the heroes have a means to stop him or to prevent the door from closing, Dr. Fulbert escapes and the door slams behind him with a hydraulic hiss. It then takes him 1 round to reach the control panel and activate the fourth tube, awakening and releasing the deinonychus that floats in the greenish goo. It takes 1 round for the beast to awaken fully and exit

the container. Thereafter, it begins attacking anyone still in the room.

Opening the locked door requires a successful Disable Device check (DC 25) or Strength check (DC 35). Alternately, the heroes could break through the safety glass (hardness 3, hp 15) and crawl through the window get back into the main lab.

Deinonychus (1): hp 32. See page 233 in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*.

Tactics: The deinonychus is disoriented after awakening, so it simply lashes out at anything nearby. It fights to the death.

During the combat, each hero can attempt a Spot check (DC 15) every round. The first character who succeeds sees Dr. Fulbert through the window, grabbing one of the beeping electronic devices off the table and fleeing out the door. This item is keyed to the implants that Dr. Fulbert placed within the dinosaurs while they grew. The two remaining locators can also track the escaped reptiles.

If the heroes get out of the cloning chamber within 10 rounds and look out a window, they see Dr. Fulbert in his car, pulling out of the parking lot. When they decide to pursue him, go to Encounter 3.

3. THE CHASE

When Dr. Fulbert escapes from the facility, he goes straight to his car and sets off in search of the dinosaurs. He tries to get onto the highway as quickly as possible, using the cover of traffic to make his way out. The receptionist is nowhere in sight.

If the heroes pursue him, use the rules for car chases, as described in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*. Should any of the heroes get close to him, Dr. Fulbert fires a few shots from his car, hoping to discourage further pursuit. He dodges behind other cars and makes quick turns, increasing the potential damage that he could cause.

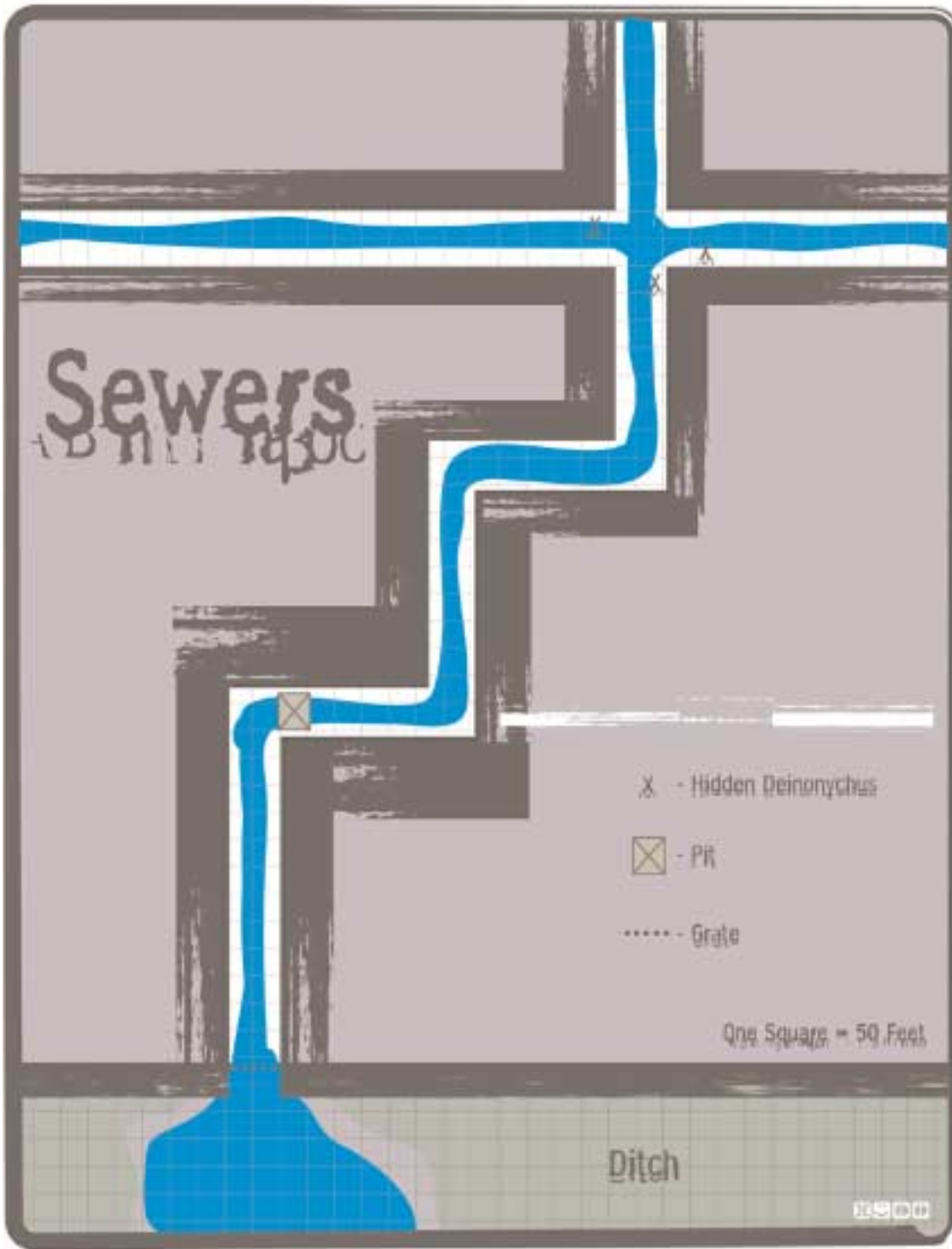
The chase ends when the heroes disable Dr. Fulbert’s vehicle and take him into custody, or when he arrives at the entrance to the sewer where the remaining dinosaurs are hiding. If questioned by the heroes, the scientist acknowledges defeat and tells them everything, including how to track the dinosaurs with the locator device (see sidebar).

Should he make it to the storm sewer entrance, he goes inside with his pistol and the tracking device, hoping to find and kill the dinosaurs before they can kill again.

Dr. Arthur Fulbert: Smart Hero 4; CR 4; Medium-size humanoid; HD 4d6; hp 17; Mas 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dex, +1 class); BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike), or +3 ranged (2d6, Glock 20); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL science; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3; AP 0, Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Occupation: Academic (bonus class skills: Knowledge [earth and life sciences], Knowledge [technology], Research).

Skills: Computer Use +10, Craft (chemical) +8, Craft (electronics) +10, Craft (pharmaceutical) +12, Decipher Script +8, Drive +10, Knowledge (behavioral sciences) +9, Knowledge (earth and life sciences) +15, Knowledge (technology) +9, Profession +8, Read/Write English, Research +12, Search +9, Speak English, Spot +4, Treat Injury +6.



Talents (Smart Hero): Savant (Knowledge [earth and life sciences]), Exploit Weakness.

Feats: Educated (Knowledge [behavioral sciences], Knowledge [earth and life sciences]), Medical Expert, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Studious, Vehicle Expert.

Possessions: Glock 20 (10mm autoloader), 2 extra clips, concealed carry pistol, weapons permit, BMW M3 (sports coupe), lab coat.

When the characters arrive at the sewer entrance, whether by following the scientist or by following the signal of a tracking device, go to Encounter 4.

4. THE SEWERS

The three escaped deinonychuses have managed to create a lair in the sewer, where they can retire to digest their recent kills. They use pack tactics to attack anyone who comes into the sewer.

The heroes might arrive here by pursuing Dr. Fulbert, or based on his directions if they caught and successfully questioned him, or because one of the tracking devices from the lab led them here.

A. Entrance

This area corresponds to the grate depicted on the map. Read the following aloud when the characters begin looking for the sewer entrance.

The entrance to the storm sewer lies in a culvert filled with brackish water. A large gate has been pried partly open, creating a large enough hole for a person to slip through.

A successful Spot check (DC 10) reveals that the bars have been bent back by force. Numerous scratch marks mar the concrete and metal.

B. Long Tunnel

Read the following aloud when the characters get past the grate.

The main tunnel leads off into darkness. The water here is knee deep, making movement both slow and noisy. In the distance, a low rush of water can be heard.

Movement in the water is reduced by half. The tunnel is pitch black, so the heroes need flashlights or other some other light source to see (one-half concealment).

After a hundred yards, the tunnel begins to turn every fifty yards. A successful Wisdom check (DC 15) reveals that these jogs are directing the tunnel downhill, which explains why the water sounds as though it is moving faster ahead. There is a serious undertow here, and each character moving through the water must make a successful Swim check (DC 20) every round to keep his or her head above water. After the first jog, the floor beneath the water bottoms out into a 10-foot-by-10-foot pit (Reflex DC 15 avoids). Anyone who falls into the pit or fails the required Swim check could begin

drowning (see Suffocation and Drowning, page 213 in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*).

Using the Tracker

Dr. Fulbert has implanted a homing device in each of the dinosaurs. He has three locators (one in his possession and two that he left back at the lab) that enable him to follow the beasts.

A successful Computer Use check (DC 10) made while operating the device reveals the direction of the closest deinonychus but gives no indication of distance. The locator (hardness 1, hp 2) will short-circuit if immersed in water for longer than 2 rounds (Repair DC 15).

C. Junction

The canny deinonychuses sensed the heroes moving through the water and have set up a trap for them. Two of the creatures lie submerged in the water on either side of the tunnels (indicated by Xs on the map). A third lurks in the water along the edge of the tunnel from which the heroes came (Hide +9 for being in the water).

Read the following aloud if the characters reach this point without discovering the creatures.

After another hundred feet or so, the tunnel comes to a crossing. The water is now waist-high, making it even more difficult to move through. Other than the sounds you make and the ever-present rush of water ahead, the tunnel is deathly silent. Suddenly, the water around you erupts and the heads of two dinosaurs appear, ready to attack.

Deinonychus (3): hp 31, 33, 35. See page 233 in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*.

Tactics: The two deinonychuses attack viciously, fighting to the death. The third waits for the best moment to strike. If any of the heroes try to retreat, it immediately rises and attacks.

CONCLUSION

After the heroes defeat the deinonychuses in the sewers, they can go back to the lab and find out more about Dr. Fulbert and Hilberger Technology if desired.

A successful Search check (DC 10) reveals notes and computer files that explain Dr. Fulbert's project. He has been working on methods to clone dinosaurs from fossil samples that actually contain DNA in order to make living weapons for the military. His work went better than expected, and he was able to create four specimens through forced-growth technology.

The files also reveal that despite his best efforts to create brain-dead creatures, the deinonychuses retained their intelligence. Upon awakening, three of them broke out of their containment cells. He managed to hide from them but could not prevent them from reaching the outdoors. He quickly concealed the escape and attempted to recapture the creatures, but he failed. Thereafter, he watched the news, and his notes evince his increasing horror at the repeated killings.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

Feel free to vary the number of deinonychuses that Dr. Fulbert actually created, adding more tubes to the lab as needed. If the heroes manage to defeat the dinosaurs in the sewers, there might still be more lurking about the city in search of victims.

Further investigation of Hilberger Technologies might also reveal more information. It's possible that Dr. Fulbert was cloning additional types of dinosaurs, including larger and meaner specimens.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eric Cagle is a freelance game designer, previously associated with Wizards of the Coast's Roleplaying Games R&D department. Recent credits include the *D&D Arms and Equipment Guide*, *Fiend Folio*, design work for the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, and the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting* for the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*. He's a frequent contributor to both *DRAGON* magazine and the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* website.

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This d20™ game system uses mechanics developed for the new *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® game by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison. This game also uses mechanics developed for the *Psionics Handbook* by Bruce R. Cordell, the *Call of Cthulhu*® *Roleplaying Game* by Monte Cook and John Tynes, and the *Star Wars*® *Roleplaying Game* by Bill Slavicek, Andy Collins, and JD Wiker.

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MODERN

TEAM BRAVO:

FLAMES OF WRATH



By Eric Cagle

A Short Adventure for Four 4th-Level Heroes

There are those who hold that whatever evil you do eventually comes back to you, in either this life or the next. And when your crime is particularly heinous, retribution can take highly unusual forms—perhaps even supernatural ones.

TEAM BRAVO: Flames of Wrath is an adventure set in the modern day, but it includes fantastic elements such as undead creatures with supernatural powers.

PREPARATION

You, the Game Master (GM), need a copy of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* to run this adventure. Fire is the main theme of the adventure, so pay special attention to the rules for smoke damage and catching on fire on pages 213 and 214 of the Core Rulebook. These rules are excerpted in a sidebar within the adventure as well.

To get started, print out this adventure and read it through. Full statistics for the new creature called the charred one are provided at the end of the adventure. Other opponents' statistics are provided in abbreviated form in the areas where they appear. Any text in shaded boxes should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players.

BACKGROUND

With the rise of Shadow, dangerous creatures and weird energies have begun to cross over into the mundane world. The characters are part of the Police Special Investigations Division—better known as “Team Bravo”—for their local area. Team Bravo has been established by the police department to investigate unusual reports that cannot be explained by conventional methods.

A few weeks ago, a band of organized criminals who had been extorting protection money from local merchants hired a professional arsonist named Winston Kleese to put five buildings to the torch. He has

already completed the first three of these jobs—a dry cleaning shop whose owner had refused to pay for protection and the homes of two prominent citizens whose loan payments to the organization had become overdue. An exceptionally talented arsonist, Kleese carried out all three jobs without a hitch, leaving behind so little evidence that the police have thus far been unable to link him with the crimes.

But Kleese is also a psychopath with an evil nature. On the third job, he deliberately set the fire so as to trap the occupant of the house, a middle-aged councilman, in his bedroom. Waking up to a conflagration, the man burned to death while Kleese watched with interest from a position of safety.

This act of pure evil triggered a response from the Shadow, causing the victim's essence to return as a vengeful spirit called a charred one. Driven by its need for revenge, the charred one now seeks to burn Kleese alive as punishment for the crime he committed. The creature's burning touch ignites flammable objects, and since its arrival, it has set fire to several buildings and homes through which it has passed in its single-minded pursuit of Kleese.

This secondary string of mysterious fires has arson investigators stumped. The sites have shown no evidence of arson, and there is no logical explanation for why a fire would start at the ignition points that have been identified—the upper parts of walls, for the most part.

Meanwhile, Kleese knows he is a hunted man. Though he does not understand the precise connection between the charred one and his last crime, he does know that some supernatural flaming creature is pursuing him with deadly intent. He has managed to escape the charred one a few times, but each time it finds him it comes closer to catching him.

Kleese intends to leave the city in the hope of escaping it for good, but he still has to complete his contract for his employers. His most recent target was a grocery store, but the charred one caught up with Kleese while he was casing the premises, and the store burned down without Kleese ever lighting an incendiary. Now the arsonist has only one job left—to burn down a chemical plant in the heart of the city.

Team Bravo in Your Campaign

TEAM BRAVO: *Flames of Wrath* is the second adventure designed for Team Bravo, a cadre of special police officers assigned to handle investigations of bizarre incidents. Team Bravo could also be a subgroup of Department 7 assigned to operate within an established law enforcement organization. In addition to their regular duties, the heroes could occasionally receive advice, resources, and assignments from Department 7. Their superiors there may or may not ask that the heroes remain quiet about their association with Department 7.

Alternatively, the heroes could be private investigators or paranormal researchers who routinely plunge into dangerous situations in search of the truth. Characters who are not police officers may have a bit more leeway as far as methodology goes in conducting investigations, but they are by no means fully protected under the law. Thus, they must carefully weigh the risks of investigative methods such as breaking and entering, assault, and other illegal acts.

Kleese hopes to get the job done and flee before the strange spirit can find him, but the charred one is on his trail and determined to get revenge. It doesn't care who or what gets burned in the process.

SYNOPSIS

The heroes are assigned by their superior to investigate the series of unusual fires. By the time they arrive at the site of the latest one, a burned-out grocery store, the fire is already out and an arson investigation team is on site assessing the situation. A video from the surveillance camera on the premises shows two incidents: Kleese breaking into the store to case it, and a ghostly flaming being floating through the walls just before they caught on fire.

In the course of investigating the man in the video, the heroes determine that he is a known arsonist and gain information about his next target: a chemical plant. The heroes arrive there some 20 minutes behind Kleese, but just as they confront him, the charred one appears and attacks him, setting the plant on fire in the process. The heroes must try to defeat the creature and save the plant. If they can bring Kleese to trial alive, so much the better, but either way he will set no more fires.

Character Hooks

As GM, you know best how to involve your players and their characters in an adventure. If you opt not to have them receive the assignment from superiors within a law enforcement agency, you must supply some other reason for them to take on the mission. You can use the following adventure hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to make them appropriate for the characters' interests.

- A friend or family member of one of Kleese's victims hires the heroes to investigate the fire that killed his or her loved one.
- The heroes happen upon one of the charred one's incidental fires on their way home from an evening on the town.
- A psychic goes public with the claim that a vengeful spirit is behind the recent rash of unexplained fires. She insists that the entire city is in danger if the creature is not found and appeased.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure begins with the heroes investigating an arson site (encounter A) after receiving their assignment. Next is a freeform section (encounter B) in which they investigate their sole lead, Winston Kleese. The climax of the adventure is a site-based face-off with Kleese and his supernatural pursuer at a chemical plant (see ChemRight, Inc.).

If the heroes are not law enforcement agents, adapt the following information to suit whatever hook you have used to get them into the adventure. Otherwise, begin play by having the heroes' superior, Lieutenant Miriam Durth, call them into her office for a new mission. Read or paraphrase the following when they arrive.



Lieutenant Durth looks up from the documents spread before her on the table long enough to give each of you a curt nod. "Sit down," she says. "I have a new mission for you. As you may be aware, there has been a string of mysterious fires throughout the city in the past few weeks. The first three appeared to be textbook cases of arson, though they were exceptionally well executed. But since then, ten more fires have occurred, and these cases have been much stranger. No evidence of arson has been found at any of these sites, and Simon Billox's Arson Investigation Unit has identified the same unusual pattern of start points in each instance.

"He says the evidence doesn't fit anything he's seen before, and he's asked for a unit of investigators who are experienced with unusual crimes. That's you. He's out at the latest site now; a fire gutted a grocery store last night. So get out there and go over the site with him. See what you can find out."

Lieutenant Durth answers any questions the heroes have to the best of her ability, but she knows only the basics about arson and cannot give details about what the arson investigators find so unusual. She says the heroes will have to ask Billox about it.

When you're ready to begin, go to encounter A, below.

A. THE GROCERY

The characters arrive at the scene of a fire that has clearly gutted a building in the commercial district. Only one fire truck remains, along with several police cruisers and a van marked Arson Investigation Unit. The fire has been out for a few hours, and Chief Arson Investigator Simon Billox and his team are hard at work.

If the heroes are on the scene in an official capacity, read or paraphrase the following. Otherwise, the officers on the scene shoo them away and refuse to divulge any information, though a successful Listen check allows a character to overhear Billox making the salient comments from the following text to someone else.

According to a sign that still hangs over the door, the charred remains of the building before you once housed a small grocery store. Though the fire is out, the building still smolders, even as water drips from the blackened timbers and stone.

A man steps forward to greet you. "Simon Billox, Chief Arson Investigator," he says, holding forth his hand in greeting. "Are you the special police unit?"

Billox checks the heroes' identification if they claim to be the investigators, then continues as follows if he is satisfied.

"I have to admit I'm baffled," admits Billox, shaking his head. "I've been investigating fires for thirty years, but I've never seen anything like this. I didn't know what to do, so I called Lieutenant Durth to see if she had anyone who could help.

"The start points of the fire appear to be the interior surfaces of the walls. The ignition points are lined up straight, from one wall to the next, as though a large fire source had just moved straight on through the building, starting from the back. And we haven't found any trace of an accelerant anywhere. Come have a look."

As he starts into the building, one of his assistants approaches. "Chief, we found the security tape in the back room," he says. "It wasn't damaged by the fire or the water. There's something there that you might want to check out."

Billox nods toward you. "We may as well all see it together. Come on."

The assistant leads Billox and the heroes to what's left of the store's back room, where another member of the arson team and a police officer are viewing the tape on a monitor that shows some fire damage. At a point marked on the tape as 2am, a man approaches the main entrance and begins picking the lock. After letting himself in, he moves through the store, apparently casing it out. He pays particular attention to support beams and the like and makes a few notes in a small notebook he carries. Suddenly he breaks out in a sweat, looks about furtively, then departs in haste.

A few minutes thereafter, the image of a flaming humanoid figure floats into the room through a wall, which bursts into flame as the creature passes. The figure moves purposefully across the room toward the door by which Kleese departed, igniting furniture along the way, then it exits through the door, setting its frame afire as well.

A few frames on the video offer excellent head shots of the intruder. A successful Knowledge (streetwise) check (DC 15) is sufficient to identify him as Winston Kleese, a professional arsonist with ties to the local mob.

When the heroes have finished checking out the site, go to encounter B.

B. HUNTING THE FIREBUG

Although the tape clearly indicates that Kleese didn't start the fire, he is an obvious starting point for the heroes' investigation in the absence of any other clues. If they fail to recognize him from the tape, they can bring it to the police department, where other officers can make an identification within the hour.

At this point, the characters can use any of several different methods to find out more about Kleese. The most obvious options would be to interview the owner of the grocery store (a portly middle-aged man with a fearful attitude), talk to their underworld contacts, check out mob connections, or conduct research on past arsons at the local library.

Depending on where and how they conduct their research, they can find out the following pieces of information by asking the right questions and making successful Gather Information, Intimidation, or Knowledge (streetwise) checks at the given DCs.

- **DC 15:** The mob gave Kleese a contract to destroy several buildings as retribution for the owners' lack of payment.
- **DC 15:** The grocery store was on Kleese's hit list.

- **DC 18:** Kleese has hit all his targets except one: a chemical plant that belongs to a company called ChemRight, Inc. The plant is located in the heart of the industrial area.
- **DC 12:** Kleese is hard to find these days. He seemed on edge a couple of weeks ago, and now no one sees him at all. It's like he's hiding out, but there's nobody seriously on his trail.

Kleese spends all his time in hiding now, in a cheap hotel room on the poorer side of town. Since the charred one seems able to find him only when he moves, he has decided to go out only when he must do so for a job.

The Hunter

Each day, the charred one uses its locate killer ability in an attempt to find Kleese. If it gets no bearing on him, it hides in a culvert or other nonflammable shelter until the following day, when it can try again. If the characters are taking a long time to determine Kleese's final target, you can have the charred one find him once or twice more, causing more mysterious blazes and driving Kleese to a new hiding place. Otherwise, it does not find him until the final confrontation at the plant.

On the night of the day that the heroes determine Kleese's last target, he makes his move on the chemical plant. He remains in hiding until dark, then makes his way to the plant. Go to ChemRight, Inc. to continue.

CHEMRIGHT, INC.

Kleese's final target is a chemical plant located in the heart of the city's industrial district. Owned by ChemRight, Inc., the plant produces a variety of chemicals for sale to industrial and commercial clients. The company's owners owe the mob a substantial amount of money in back protection payments, and because of the expense of complying with a government order to upgrade pollution reduction facilities at the plant, they have fallen seriously behind in their payments. As retribution, the mob has hired Kleese to put their building to the torch.

Kleese arrives at the plant after dark, about 20 minutes ahead of the heroes. (If they are hot on his trail, throw a distraction in their way to give him a head start.) He parks outside in the parking lot, and his car is the only one in evidence.

When the heroes arrive, the lights are out inside the building, granting nine-tenths concealment (40% miss chance) to anyone inside. Each room has two light switches, usually located near doorways.

1. Reception Area

The main entrance to the ChemRight plant is normally kept locked, but Kleese has already picked the lock to get in. A hidden video camera (Disable Device 15, Search DC 20) mounted in an upper corner of the room can scan the entire reception area as well as the main door. The wire from the camera leads into the office next door. In his haste to complete the job and flee, Kleese has neglected to find and disable the surveillance camera, as he normally would.

2. Offices

The plant houses three office suites, each of which contains low partitions, desks, computers, chairs, and typical office accoutrements. None of the doors to these rooms are locked. Each office suite has a window that looks out toward

Smoke, Fire, and Extinguishers

Because of the heavy use of fire in this adventure, the PCs are at considerable risk of being burned. Below are the rules for fire and smoke hazards that they might encounter, as taken from the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*.

Smoke: A character breathing heavy smoke must make a Constitution check (DC 10, +1 for each previous check) each round or spend that round choking and coughing. Any character who chokes for 2 consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of damage. Smoke also obscures vision, giving one-half concealment (20% miss chance) to creatures within it.

Catching on Fire: Heroes exposed to open flames might find their clothes, hair, or equipment on fire. Any hero at risk of catching fire is allowed a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid this fate. A hero whose clothes or hair catch fire takes 1d6 points of damage immediately. In each subsequent round, the burning hero must make another Reflex saving throw. Failure means he takes another 1d6 points of damage that round. Success means that the fire has gone out. (That is, once he succeeds at his saving throw, he's no longer on fire.)

A hero on fire may automatically extinguish the flames by jumping into enough water to douse himself. If no body of water is at hand, rolling on the ground or smothering the fire with blankets or the like permits the hero another save with a +4 bonus.

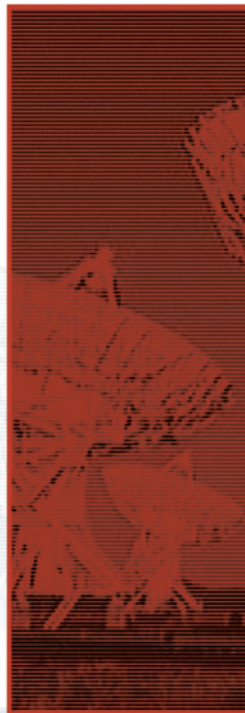
Fire Extinguishers: The fire extinguisher (hardness 5, hp 3) described in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* is a CO₂ version commonly found in homes. It ejects enough chemicals to put out a fire in a 10-foot-by-10-foot area as a move action, and it contains enough material for two such uses.

A fire extinguisher that takes enough ballistic or fire damage to destroy it explodes, dealing 1d3 points of cold damage to every creature in a 5-foot radius, as well as releasing its fire-quenching contents in a 10-foot-by-10-foot area.

Sprinklers: Sprinkler systems are activated by heat or flame. If a large enough fire (one that covers at least a 5-foot-by-5-foot area) burns for 3 or more consecutive rounds in a building that contains a sprinkler system, the system activates, releasing a shower of water.

The water suppresses the flames and keeps the fire from spreading beyond its current area. Every round, each 5-foot-by-5-foot square of fire has a 20% chance of being extinguished. Any character who is on fire and within the area of the spray gains a +4 bonus on Reflex saves to see if the fire goes out.

The charred one takes no damage from the sprinkler system and cannot be extinguished.



the front of the building. The office suite next to the reception area (area 1) also contains the VCR that records the input from the surveillance camera.

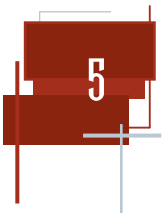
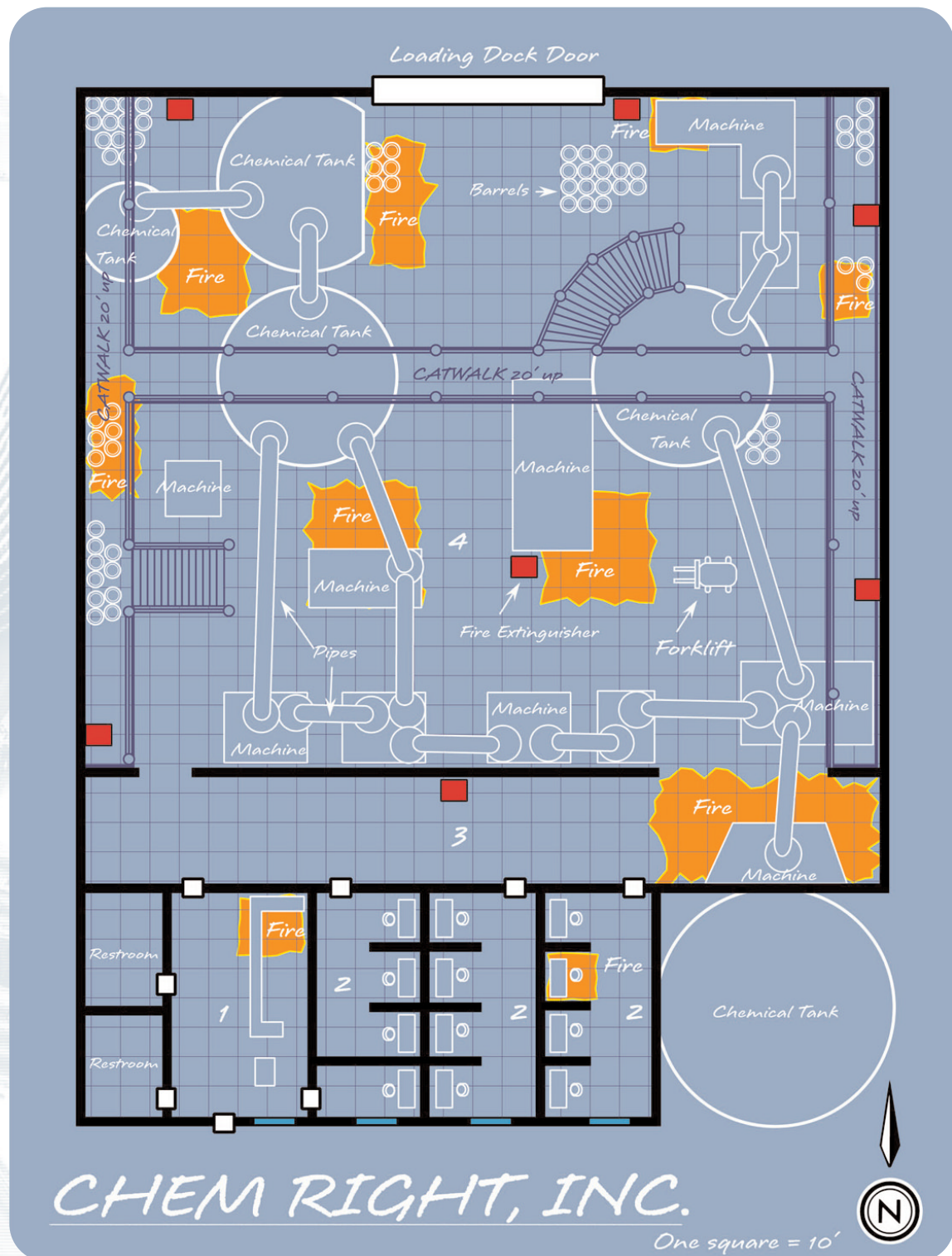
Anyone who rewinds the tape to a point at least 20 minutes before the heroes' arrival and watches it sees a man picking the lock and entering the plant. He carries a heavy-looking backpack and looks about furtively. His expression is filled with a combination of fear and grim purpose. Anyone who has seen Kleese before, either in person or on the video from the previous arson site, can identify him as the man on this tape.

3. Hallway

When the characters enter the hallway, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

A hallway connects the reception area with the offices. The lights are off, so it's not easy to see where you're going.

The first hero to enter the hallway hears the sound of metal scraping against metal (no Listen check necessary). The noise comes from the plant floor (area 4).



When a character reaches the end of the hallway, a man's voice becomes audible (no Listen check necessary). Read or paraphrase the following aloud.

A man's voice pierces the gloom, echoing throughout the plant. "Who's there?!" he cries out in a panicked tone.

Kleese has not actually heard anything, but his fear of the creature that pursues him has grown so great that he has begun to hear noises where there are none.

4. Plant Floor

This area is the plant's center of production. A wide array of specialized processing machines and chemical tanks (each hardness 5, hp 10) line the walls. If an attack does enough ballistic damage to destroy a piece of equipment, its chemical contents spill out onto the floor, filling a 10-foot-by-10-foot radius. Everyone in this area takes 2d6 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 15 half) and must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 15) or become nauseated from the fumes.

Fire extinguishers hang on the walls at various points, as indicated on the map. Removing and readying a fire extinguisher requires a move action.

At the back of the plant is a large metal rolling door (hardness 5, hp 20) that leads to a loading dock. It can be opened by pressing a button on the wall beside it. The door takes 1 full round to rise high enough for someone to crawl out and 2 full rounds to rise completely.

About 20 feet above the plant floor is a metal catwalk built to allow factory workers to keep an eye on the tanks and monitor plant operations visually. The catwalk runs along all four sides of the room and over the center. There is nothing of interest on the catwalk itself.

The floor of the chemical plant is dark. In the gloom, you can make out a variety of industrial machinery and piping. Above the plant floor hangs a metal catwalk. The air is heavy with the acrid smell of chemical fumes.

Kleese is still in the room when the heroes arrive. He has just finished setting up the necessary accelerants and equipment to torch the building, and he has already rigged a remote detonator. When he hears the characters approaching, he hides behind the forklift, which provides one-half cover.

If the heroes identify themselves as police officers or move more than 10 feet onto the plant floor, Kleese shoots at them, shouting as he fires.

"Get out of here!" the man yells over his own gunfire. "You won't get me! It won't get me! It'll burn us all, don't you get it?!"

Any efforts to reason with Kleese fail—between being caught in the act of arson and hunted by the charred one, he's at his wit's end. He does his best to escape both the spirit and the characters.

After Kleese's first round of gunfire, have each hero make a Wisdom check (DC 15). On a success, the character becomes aware that the room is getting uncomfortably warm.

After the third round of combat (or when Kleese's hit points drop to half, whichever comes first), the charred one arrives, floating through the back wall of the plant and igniting it. On his first turn thereafter, Kleese panics, accidentally activating the remote detonator and setting off the explosives he set within the plant. Fires erupt in the places indicated on the map. Every round, each fire spreads to cover one additional adjacent square of your choice.

The charred one moves unerringly to attack Kleese, turning its attention to the characters only after its primary target is dead or has fled. It fights until destroyed.

Winston Kleese, Smart Hero 2/Fast Hero 2: CR 4; Medium-size human; HD 2d8+2 plus 2d6+2; hp 24; Mas 13; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 18, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +5 class, +2 light undercover shirt); BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike), or +5 ranged (2d8, Desert Eagle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL chaos, evil; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Occupation: Criminal (class skills: Disable Device, Hide).

Skills: Craft (chemical) +9, Craft (electronic) +7, Craft (mechanical) +5, Craft (structural) +9, Demolitions +12, Disable Device +11, Drive +5, Hide +8, Knowledge (physical sciences) +7, Knowledge (streetwise) +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Profession +6, Read/Write English, Search +7, Speak English, Spot +4.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Builder, Cautious, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Talents (Fast Hero): Evasion.

Talents (Smart Hero): Savant (Demolitions).

Possessions: light undercover shirt, Desert Eagle (.50AE autoloader), 2 extra clips, demolitions kit, gas mask, backpack, remote detonator.

CHARRED ONE

A charred one is the restless and vengeful spirit of a person who was burned alive, either through the willful or careless act of another or through fire from an infernal source. A charred one exists only to burn the living and exact revenge on those it holds responsible for its death. Its intellect has been replaced by a feral cunning and an insane desire to burn everything around it.

A charred one resembles a human being that has been burned to a blackened husk. Its glowing-red eyes glitter with hatred and malice. Despite its solid appearance, a charred one has no physical form and can glide through solid objects. It gives off a shimmering, intense heat that can ignite flammable objects and burn anything it touches.

A charred one speaks one language that it knew in life. Its voice sounds like crackling flames.

Species Traits

Fire Subtype (Ex): A charred one is immune to fire damage. It takes double damage from any cold attack except on a successful save, in which case it takes normal damage.

Heat (Su): A charred one generates an intense heat that deals 2d10 points of fire damage to anything it touches. This



heat is usually enough to melt nonmagical weapons, but a magic weapon subjected to this effect receives a Fortitude save (DC 15). Flammable items, such as clothing, wood, or paper, are automatically ignited by the touched of a charred one (see *Catching on Fire*, page 213 in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*).

Incorporeal (Su): A charred one has no physical form and can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, though it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. (You can choose to ignore this rule if your characters have no magic items.) In this state, the charred one can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. The charred one moves in complete silence and cannot be heard at all.

Locate Killer (Su): If the charred one was created as the result of arson or careless use of fire, it gains the ability to hunt down the perpetrator. This ability is similar to the *locate object* spell (as if cast by a 5th-level Acolyte), but the creature can locate only the person responsible for its death. A charred one can use this ability once per day.

Undead: A charred one is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, necromantic effects, and mind-affecting effects. It is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or effects of massive damage, or any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless. A charred one can be healed with negative energy (such as an *inflict light wounds* spell). It is destroyed immediately if reduced to 0 hit points or less. It cannot be raised from the dead.

Charred One: CR 3; Medium-size undead; HD 5d12; hp 32; Mas —; Init +1; Spd fly 30 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dex, +1 deflection); BAB +2; Grap —; Atk +4 melee (2d10 fire, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +4 melee (2d10 fire, incorporeal touch); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ fire subtype, heat, incorporeal, locate killer, undead; AL chaos, evil; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +7; AP 0; Rep +0; Str —, Dex 13, Con —, Int 6, Wis 17, Cha 13.

Skills: Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Listen +11, Read/Write Language (any one), Speak Language (any one), Spot +11.

Feats: Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch).

Advancement: 6–10 HD (Medium-size); 11–15 HD (Large).

CONCLUSION

There is a slim chance that the characters can capture Kleese alive. If questioned, he spills everything he knows about the criminal organization that employed him, providing the names of his mob contacts and the places where his meetings with them took place. He also raves about being chased throughout the city by the strange spirit.

If the heroes manage to put out the fires inside the plant, the owners of ChemRight, Inc. are extremely grateful and offer them a reward worth a +8 Wealth Bonus. If the characters allow the plant to be destroyed by fire, they must explain their actions to the very angry and confused owners, as well as to their superiors.

If the characters fail to eliminate the charred one inside the plant, it continues to hunt Winston Kleese (if he is still alive), catching up with him in his holding cell and killing him there unless the heroes take steps to protect him. This inci-

dent also burns down the police station. If Kleese is dead, the charred one simply continues its frenzy of arson, floating through nearby buildings in search of living beings to burn and starting more fires as it goes. It continues this activity each day until stopped.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

If the characters capture Kleese alive, he gives them vital information about the local mob, which may spur further adventures designed to bring down the organization.

Additional charred ones could also provide the basis for future adventures. After all, the creature that chased Kleese through this scenario was only one of his many victims over the years. Perhaps additional charred ones were created during his most recent arson spree and are even now beginning to seek him out, starting fires as they go.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eric Cagle is a freelance game designer, previously associated with the RPG R&D department at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Recent credits include the *Arms and Equipment Guide*, *Fiend Folio*, design work for the *Star Wars® Roleplaying Game*, and the *Urban Arcana* setting for the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*. He's a frequent contributor to both DRAGON® magazine and the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS website.

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This d20® System game uses mechanics developed for the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison. This game also uses mechanics developed for the *Psiionics Handbook* by Bruce R. Cordell, the *Call of Cthulhu® Roleplaying Game* by Monte Cook and John Tynes, and the *Star Wars® Roleplaying Game* by Bill Slavicek, Andy Collins, and JD Wiker.

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MODERN

TEAM BRAVO:

TOUCH OF DEATH



By Eric Cagle

A Short Adventure for Four 6th-Level Heroes

With the influx of Shadow into our world, musty tomes and relics imbued with mystic powers are beginning to surface everywhere. Many who desire power above all else go to great pains to find and use such items, regardless of the cost.

One self-taught Mage employed such a relic—a book of dark and arcane lore—to learn the secret of creating constructs from dead human flesh. Though he was able to meet most of his needs with the bounty of dead flesh stored at the local morgue, he discovered that certain body parts had to meet particular specifications, and murder was the best way to obtain those. So he launched a killing spree that lasted until one of his would-be victims turned the tables and slew him. Now that his creations are free, they will continue to act on his last commands until they too are stopped once and for all.

TEAM BRAVO: Touch of Death is an adventure set in the modern era, but it includes fantastic elements such as dark magic and blasphemous creations.

PREPARATION

You, the Game Master (GM), need a copy of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* to run this adventure. To get started, print out this adventure (including the maps) and read it through. Familiarize yourself in particular with the flesh golem from the rulebook and the new creature called the crawling claw, which is presented at the end of this adventure.

Opponents' statistics are provided in abbreviated form in the areas where they appear. Any text in shaded boxes should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players.

At least one of the characters undertaking this mission should have ranks in the Investigate skill, or at the very least, decent Search and Spot modifiers. Characters who are familiar with magic and the paranormal are also highly encouraged.

BACKGROUND

Antoine Le Mere was always an odd child. Throughout his formative years, he displayed a remarkable intellect, a great capacity to absorb languages, and an insatiable curiosity about antiquities. Raised in a wealthy, insular family, Antoine was allowed to pursue his passions with little interference. His interest in odd, disturbing topics made him more than a bit antisocial, so he never developed any close friendships.

After his parents died in a mysterious accident, Antoine inherited the family fortune and estate. While combing his ancestral home for legal documents, he discovered an ancient tome that his father, who was well versed in ancient cultures, had hidden away. The wealth of arcane lore between its covers instantly fascinated Antoine, who devoted his every waking moment over the next several months to learning its secrets.

Over time, Antoine became a capable Mage. As he continued to plumb the information within the book, he began to learn dark, powerful spells, some of which could even give a semblance of life to dead tissue. Pushed beyond the brink of sanity by the book's corrupting content, Antoine decided to put his new knowledge to use by constructing a flesh golem.

The project would require a variety of unusual supplies, including several fresh corpses. After considerable research, Antoine found the perfect source—Dr. John Baker, an elderly coroner at the Old County Morgue who was down on his luck and low on scruples. Through bribes, threats, and intimidation, Antoine eventually convinced the coroner to provide him with the body parts he required for his project.

Eventually, however, LeMere decided that the corpses of those who ended up at the Old County Morgue were not always of sufficient quality to provide the parts he required, so he began augmenting his supply via murder. The corpses of LeMere's victims began to arrive at the morgue, missing various body parts. Over and over, Dr. Baker concealed forensic evidence that could have led the police to LeMere. Eventually, the coroner's psyche crumbled under the burden of covering up all these illegal and unethical acts, and he became nearly as delusional as his patron.

LeMere decided to ensure his privacy during the lengthy period it would take to assemble the golem by creating his own arcane "watchdogs" via another ritual described in his book. To that end, he began severing the hands of his victims before leaving the scenes of his crimes, and he convinced Dr. Baker to do the same with the corpses that came to the morgue. Once he had a large supply of these grisly trophies, Antoine used a spell from his book to turn them into twisted constructs known as crawling claws. These unspeakable creatures now roam his home, protecting his inner sanctum from intruders.

Because Antoine's victims are always missing their hands, the police have deduced that they are dealing with one or more ritual killers who mutilate the corpses of their victims in this way because of some demented psychological need or to meet the requirements of some dark and depraved religion. The authorities so far have no idea that the corpses of some indigents and elderly people are often missing their hands and other parts as well by the time the coroner has finished with them. Closed casket funerals are

always recommended in such cases, and so far the families (if any) have always complied.

LeMere recently completed one flesh golem, which he named Khaiba. It has been aiding him in his murder spree to gain body parts for others.

SYNOPSIS

Pleased by his previous successes, LeMere recently became bolder in his attacks. When he spotted a man who met his specifications leaving a local club, he took up a position in an alley behind the establishment and ordered Khaiba to drag the target there. A struggle ensued, and the would-be victim pulled out a pistol and shot LeMere in the chest. Then he emptied the rest of his clip into the hulking figure that had attacked him. Enraged, the flesh golem lashed out, snapped the man's neck, and threw his body onto a fire escape.

With his dying words, LeMere instructed the golem to make its way back to the Old County Morgue, where most of its assembly had taken place, and to obey Dr. Baker. The golem lumbered back through the shadows to the morgue, and Dr. Baker hid it inside one of the refrigerated lockers where corpses are kept pending autopsy.

The heroes must investigate the murder scene, then go on to LeMere's mansion, where they are attacked by dozens of crawling claws. Within the mad Mage's mansion are his spellbook and a few clues leading to the Old County Morgue. When they arrive there, they must face LeMere's co-conspirator, Dr. Baker, and the flesh golem that now protects him.

Character Hooks

As GM, you know best how to involve your players and their characters in an adventure. You can use the following adventure hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to make them appropriate for the characters' interests.

Team Bravo in Your Campaign

TEAM BRAVO: *Touch of Death* is the third adventure designed for Team Bravo, a cadre of special police officers assigned to handle investigations of bizarre incidents. Team Bravo could also be a subgroup of Department-7 assigned to operate within an established law enforcement organization. In addition to their regular duties, the heroes could occasionally receive advice, resources, and assignments from Department-7. Their superiors there may or may not ask that the heroes remain quiet about their association with Department-7.

Alternatively, the heroes could be private investigators or paranormal researchers who routinely plunge into dangerous situations in search of the truth. Characters who are not police officers may have a bit more leeway as far as methodology goes in conducting investigations, but they are by no means fully protected under the law. Thus, they must carefully weigh the risks of investigative methods such as breaking and entering, assault, and other illegal acts.



- One of the heroes gets a report that an acquaintance was killed outside a nightclub that evening.
- While leaving a club one night, the heroes hear a strange whistling sound followed by gunshots. When they arrive at the scene, they find the bodies as described below. (Do not use the witness described if you decide to employ this hook.)

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins in the wee hours of the morning on the night of LeMere's death. If the heroes are law enforcement officers, they are called in for a briefing by their superior, Lieutenant Durth. If you have used some other hook to involve the heroes in the investigation, adjust the following material accordingly; otherwise, read or paraphrase it when they arrive for their briefing.

"Sit down," says Lieutenant Durth when you report for your briefing. "I'm sorry to disturb you all at this hour, but it's important that you view the crime scene as soon as possible. So I'll make this as short as I can.

"For the past few weeks, the police have been investigating a string of apparently ritualistic murders. So far, the detectives have deduced that there are no connections among the victims, except that all were males in excellent health. The murders took place in back alleys as well as private residences, indicating that the perpetrator spent considerable time stalking the victims in order to discover the best time and place to strike. Each victim was missing both hands, and many were missing other body parts as well. All of the amputations had been performed with extreme skill.

"Now there are two more bodies. Though neither of these is missing any body parts, the officers on the scene still suspect some tie-in with the previous murders—something about a knife, I believe. Because of the apparent ritual nature of the murders, the police have decided to turn the investigation over to a team that's experienced with such things. That's where you come in. Any questions?"

Lieutenant Durth answers any questions the heroes have to the best of her knowledge. She can provide all the police reports on the previous crime scenes. Once the heroes are ready, she gives them directions to the crime scene and wishes them well.

A. THE KILLER'S LAST STAND

The murder scene is a back alley behind a nightclub called the Alchemy Room. The two officers at the scene have cordoned off the area with police tape. They are currently interrogating the witness who found the bodies. The corpses lie where they fell and have not been disturbed.

The murder scene is located in a rough part of town known for its clubs, bars, and extravagant nightlife. The lights of the patrol car parked in the alleyway illuminate

a gruesome tableau. Among the garbage that litters the alley lies the body of a young man in a trenchcoat, covered in blood. Hanging from a fire escape some 10 feet above him is the body of another young man, dressed in the latest fashion and dripping blood from his ears and mouth. His legs are caught in the bars of the fire escape, and his face is twisted with shock. How he could have ended up in that position is a mystery. An empty autoloader pistol lies beneath his outstretched hands.

If the characters use the Investigation skill, determine their results according to the table below.

INVESTIGATE

DC	INVESTIGATE CHECK RESULT
10	The man on the ground was killed by a single gunshot wound to the chest. The man dangling from the fire escape died instantly when his neck was broken by someone very strong.
15	There was a struggle, and whoever fired the gun emptied the entire clip, although only one bullet struck the other victim. There are strange stains on the ground that are not blood.
20	In the mud and filth are several footprints that are far too big to have been produced by either of the two victims. They lead out of the alley but are soon lost on the hard concrete sidewalks.

The body on the ground is that of the would-be murderer (Antoine LeMere). His intended victim, Andrew Federson, is the man hanging from the fire escape. Federson shot LeMere once in the chest with the pistol that now lies on the ground, then emptied the rest of the clip into Khaiba.

Creature: If Antoine's body is disturbed, Shouit (the snake that was formerly LeMere's familiar) crawls out from underneath his corpse and attacks.

Shouit: CR 1/3; Tiny animal; HD 1/4 d8; hp 1; Mas 11; Init +3; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; Defense 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural); BAB +0; Grap -10; Atk +5 melee (1d3-2 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3-2 plus poison, bite); FS 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft. (coiled); Reach 0 ft.; SQ low-light vision, poison, scent; AL none; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +12, Hide +18, Listen +8, Spot +8, Swim +10.

Feat: Weapon Finesse (bite).

Poison (Ex): Shouit injects venom (Fort DC 11) with each successful bite attack. The initial and final damage ratings are the same (1d6 Constitution).

Scent (Ex): This ability allows Shouit to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

Tactics: Shouit remains on LeMere's body until forcibly removed, striking at anyone that comes near.

Development: If the heroes manage to deal with the snake, they can continue investigating the murder scene.

The young woman who found the bodies was leaving the club when the attack occurred. She claims to have heard a quiet, high-pitched whistling noise, followed by gunshots and a scream. She hid for several minutes before peeking into

the alleyway. Spotting the bodies, she ran back to the club and had the bouncer call the police. No one in the club heard or saw anything, and no one there knew either victim.

Anyone who checks the identification on the bodies can determine the identities of the victims. Federson's wallet holds some cash, a driver's license, an ID card identifying him as a professional security guard for a major software developer, and a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

The wallet in LeMere's pocket contains some cash and a driver's license, but nothing else. Tucked into his belt is a strange, gold-plated dagger covered with unusual markings. This razor-sharp blade is more akin to a surgical scalpel than a combat weapon. (Treat it as a masterwork dagger).

Around LeMere's neck is a gold chain from which hangs a strange pendant. It resembles a dog whistle but is crafted from gold and covered with hieroglyphics. When blown, it produces a strange, high-pitched shriek. This item is a *whistle of Set's command* (see the description at the end of the adventure) that LeMere used to control his flesh golem. It is twisted and dented on one side because it was damaged by the bullet that killed LeMere. Thus, it can no longer be used to control the golem.

After 20 minutes or so, additional officers arrive to help with the investigation and remove the bodies. They are transported to the Old County Morgue, where Dr. Baker puts them both into storage.

The heroes can get LeMere's home address from his driver's license. They can gain some information about his family from newspaper files and other public records, but to obtain any further clues relating to his death, they must visit his house. Go to encounter B when they do so.

B. HOUSE OF THE CRAWLING DEATH

Armed with the clues from the murder scene, the characters should eventually make their way to LeMere mansion. There are no cars in the driveway, and the place seems vacant. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters arrive.

The LeMere residence is located in one of the city's older, more upscale neighborhoods. This once-grand mansion has definitely seen better days. It's obvious that no one has taken care of the exterior in a very long time, and most of the windows are boarded up. A rusted sign reading "No Solicitors" dangles from the front door.

Development: Any hero who talks to the neighbors gains the following information in response to appropriate questions (no check required).

- The LeMere family has lived in the mansion for as long as anyone can remember.
- They were very private people, and most of their neighbors considered them quite odd.
- The son, Antoine LeMere, still lives there, but no one has spoken to him in years.

It's obvious that the neighbors were vaguely frightened by the presence of the LeMeres, but they have no further information to offer.

The house is vacant except for LeMere's crawling claws, so there is no response to knocking. Each door (one front and one back) is locked and protected with an *arcane lock*



THE ALTAR ROOM

Plan View



One square equals 5 feet

(Disable Device DC 30). The entire house is dark, and all the light bulbs have either burned out or been removed. The gloom provides three-quarters concealment (30% miss chance) unless flashlights are used.

Every few minutes after they enter, the heroes hear scuttling noises and catch a brief glimpse of movement. A successful Spot check (DC 18) reveals one or more fist-sized, spiderlike forms moving within the shadows. These creatures are the crawling claws that roam the house. They are under orders to remain hidden unless someone violates the altar room (see below). No amount of searching reveals them before that time.

The aging mansion is in a general state of decay. Dust covers everything, and the entire house seems eerie and disturbing. The interior is decorated in an Egyptian theme, and Egyptian-style statues, plaques, books, and the like are features of every room. Dozens of stuffed animal heads hang on almost every wall, lending a macabre look to the place. The fine antique furniture, once the pride of Antoine's mother, is covered with sheets.

A brief check of the ground floor reveals a few signs—particularly in the kitchen—that someone still lives there. A small bit of food remains in the refrigerator, and piles of unwashed dishes are stacked haphazardly in the sink.

The only room of importance in the house is Antoine's altar room (see below). The rest of the mansion is typical for a wealthy townhome of yesteryear's vintage. There are bedrooms, bathrooms, dining rooms, dens, and a kitchen, all of which the GM may place and furnish as desired.

BI. The Altar Room

The room that Antoine used as his main ritual room is located on the top floor, off of a bedroom. The door is locked (Disable Device DC 25) and trapped (Disable Device DC 30). A successful Strength check (DC 25) forces the door open. The trap consists of a small poisoned dart (blue-ringed octopus venom; Fort DC 15; 1d4 Con initial and secondary damage) that shoots from the lock and strikes anyone in front of the door. A small mechanism closes and locks the door 2 rounds after it has been opened, unless it's propped open. This device can be found with a successful Spot check (DC 25).

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter the room.

The doors open to reveal a grand room that resembles a temple. A gold-plated statue of some Egyptian god surrounded by several huge pillar candles on stands dominates the center of the room. The floor is inscribed with a circle, crisscrossed by lines and framed by what appear to be hieroglyphics. Several small statues stand on marble pillars throughout the room, and a large tome sits on a fine teak podium. Along one wall is a huge bookshelf stuffed with books, papers, and ancient-looking tomes. The room smells vaguely of frankincense and other exotic incense.

As soon as anyone other than LeMere enters the room, a dozen crawling claws descend upon the intruders. Read or paraphrase the following.

Without warning, the strange sounds that you heard before become audible once again, originating from points all around you. Dozens of small creatures are scuttling across the floor in your direction. At first glance, they look like enormous spiders. As they draw nearer, however, you recognize them as hands—severed human hands—crawling across the floor on their own!

Creatures: Crawling Claws (24): hp 10, 10, 9, 9, 9, 8, 8, 7, 7, 6, 6, 6, 6, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3. See the new monster description at the end of this adventure for details.

Tactics: The crawling claws divide themselves as evenly as possible among the available targets and attack from all angles. They do everything in their power to make their opponents fall prone so that they can inflict more damage. The crawling claws fight until destroyed, following the heroes throughout the house if necessary, though they do not leave the mansion.

Development: If the heroes manage to fend off the crawling claws, they can investigate the altar room and the rest of the house, if they have not already done so. A glance around the altar room reveals a notebook lying on a table (no check necessary). This notebook contains Antoine LeMere's notes about the creation of the crawling claws. In addition, there are vague references to another creation ("Khaiba, the ultimate work") that apparently required several corpses to create. "Baker" and "the morgue" are also mentioned repeatedly.

A successful Search check (DC 15) reveals a shoebox filled with photos of corpses, apparently laid out on a forensics table. Handwritten notes along the sides of some of the photos say things such as "Hands only," "Left leg," and the like.

A successful Spot check (DC 15) reveals faint stains within the circle on the floor. This substance, which smells like embalming fluid, is the alchemical mixture that gives LeMere's constructs their life force.

Any character who can actually read ancient Egyptian and bothers to examine the books and hieroglyphics notices many references to Set, the Egyptian god of evil, though the materials seem to cover many topics. The statue in the room also depicts the god Set.

The Teachings of Set

The large tome in the altar room is LeMere's spellbook. It was too big for him to haul around during his murder sprees, so he prepared his spells ahead of time and left the book at home. The tome is written in ancient Egyptian (Decipher Script DC 30). It contains the following spells, as well as a ritual for the creation of flesh golems by a Mage of at least 5th level.

Spellbook: 0—*daze, detect magical aura, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st—*cause fear, ray of fatigue, sleep*; 2nd—*arcane lock, change self, invisibility*; 3rd—*create crawling claw**, *halt undead, hold person*; 4th—*animate dead, bestow curse, fear*.

*New spell; see description at the end of this adventure.

The book on the podium is LeMere's spellbook. It can be interpreted only with the aid of a *read magic* spell.

C. THE OLD COUNTY MORGUE

Eventually, the heroes should realize that the Old County Morgue is their next stop. The morgue is an aging, decrepit building that is being transitioned out in favor of a newer facility. The old structure is slated for demolition as soon as construction of the new building is completed.

Only a small section of the morgue is described in this adventure. The areas not depicted on the map are typical offices furnished with desks, computers, and the like. Whole sections of the morgue are cordoned off in anticipation of the building's upcoming demolition.

Dr. Baker has hidden the flesh golem inside one of the body storage lockers in the forensics room and jimmied the handle so that it's difficult to open. He hopes this tactic will prevent other staffers from blundering into it by accident.

Dr. Baker is on duty only at night. No one who is here during the day can help the heroes or provide any information, though they do suggest that the heroes might want to talk to the night man. Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the characters arrive at the morgue during night hours.

The old morgue is a decaying and decrepit building that is being phased out in favor of a newer facility now under construction across town. Though small, this ancient structure is imposing, like others of its era. But there's something sad about its old façade, and decay and despair seem to pervade the very stones of the building.

A small sign above a button reads "Press for Service." There is a video camera mounted above the doorway.

C1. Main Entrance and Hallway

The door is locked. Only Dr. Baker is on duty here at night. If the characters press the button, the door buzzes to admit them after a few moments. Read or paraphrase the following when they enter.

The hallway is poorly lit and dingy. It's obvious that the cleaning crew doesn't come here anymore. No one has emerged to meet you, but someone must have buzzed the door to let you in.

The video surveillance camera feeds to a monitor by the door, allowing a viewer to see who is outside. There is also a feed into the forensics room (area C2, below), allowing Dr. Baker to see who is at the door. A button next to the forensics room door unlocks the main entrance (Disable Device DC 20).

C2. Forensics Room

When the heroes arrive, Dr. Baker knows that the gambit is over. He tries to lure them into the forensics room so that he can unleash the flesh golem on them. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters proceed down the hall.





An elderly man wearing a lab coat appears at the end of the hall. On the pocket of his coat is a tag reading “Dr. John Baker.” He does not look pleased. “I know it’s part of your job,” says Dr. Baker, “but I dislike these visitations. It intrudes on my work and I need peace and quiet for what I do! Don’t you think you could have waited until I got off shift?” As he talks, he leads the way into what must be the forensics room.

GM Character: Use the Mid-Level Crime Lab Technician on page 281 in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* for Dr. Baker’s statistics. He carries a Ruger Service-Six revolver in a concealed carry holster (Spot DC 13).

Dr. Baker uses a keycard (one of the few high-tech items in sight) to open the door to the forensics room. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter.

The forensics room is dimly lit and smells of formaldehyde and cleaning chemicals. Quiet classical music fills the room, echoing off the tiles. Lockers for storing corpses line one wall. A bank of video monitors on a table shows the front door, a block of offices, and the hallway that leads to this room. The images reveal no personnel other than Dr. Baker in the building. There is a body lying on one of the examination tables, covered with a sheet. Upon entering the room, Dr. Baker switches off the music and turns to face you. “Now, what did you want to know?” he asks.

Several shelves in the forensics room are filled with chemicals and supplies used for performing autopsies. A successful Knowledge (physical sciences) check (DC 15) reveals several vials of chemicals that could be used as weapons. Treat them as mild acid (see page 215 in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*) if used.

Corpses awaiting autopsy are stored in the lockers that dominate one wall of this chamber. At the moment, only four of the twenty-eight lockers are in use. The flesh golem is in the lower left locker, awaiting instructions.

Development: Any hero who questions Dr. Baker may attempt a Sense Motive check (DC 15). Success reveals that he’s doing his best to get the characters out of the building as quickly as possible, but that he is also very nervous.

Dr. Baker casually asks questions about the investigation, probing to find out what the heroes know and whether they have any leads. He denies any connection to the murders, although he does admit that the bodies were brought to the morgue for autopsies.

A successful Spot check (DC 20) reveals that Dr. Baker wears a gold necklace around his neck, under his shirt. The pendant is identical to the one worn by Antoine LeMere.

If at any point the characters draw their weapons or pointedly accuse Dr. Baker of being involved with the murders, he puts the *whistle of Set’s command* in his mouth and blows a long blast on it. The flesh golem pushes itself out of the body locker on the following round and attacks the heroes.

Otherwise, if the heroes seem to be getting too close to the truth, Dr. Baker changes the subject and asks the heroes to come and see another “victim” that might shed more light

on the situation. He leads them over to the storage locker where the flesh golem is hidden, opens it, and then blows the whistle around his neck to order it to attack.

When combat breaks out, Dr. Baker does his best to hide from the conflict, taking a few shots with his pistol if he can.

(Khaiba) Flesh Golem: hp 69; see page 236 in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*.

Weakness: Khaiba has a weakness for classical music, and its effect is fascination. He ceases all attacks and movement upon hearing it. On a successful Will save, the fascination is negated and he can act normally again. On a failure, he can take no actions, and each foe gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls against him. Any time Khaiba takes damage, he gets a new save to negate the fascination. Otherwise, it lasts as long as he can hear the music.

Special: If the heroes do not have magical weapons, ignore the flesh golem's damage reduction.

Tactics: The flesh golem lashes out at anyone other than Dr. Baker. He does not stop fighting unless ordered by forensic physician, or unless he hears the 1-2-3 signal from the *whistle of Set's command* (see sidebar).

C3. Dr. Baker's Office

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters reach Dr. Baker's office.

This office is very messy and antiquated. Documents, files, and books are stacked everywhere. On the cluttered desk is a sign reading "Dr. John Baker."

New Magic Item

There are two of these whistles in existence—one on Antoine LeMere's corpse and the other worn by Dr. Baker.

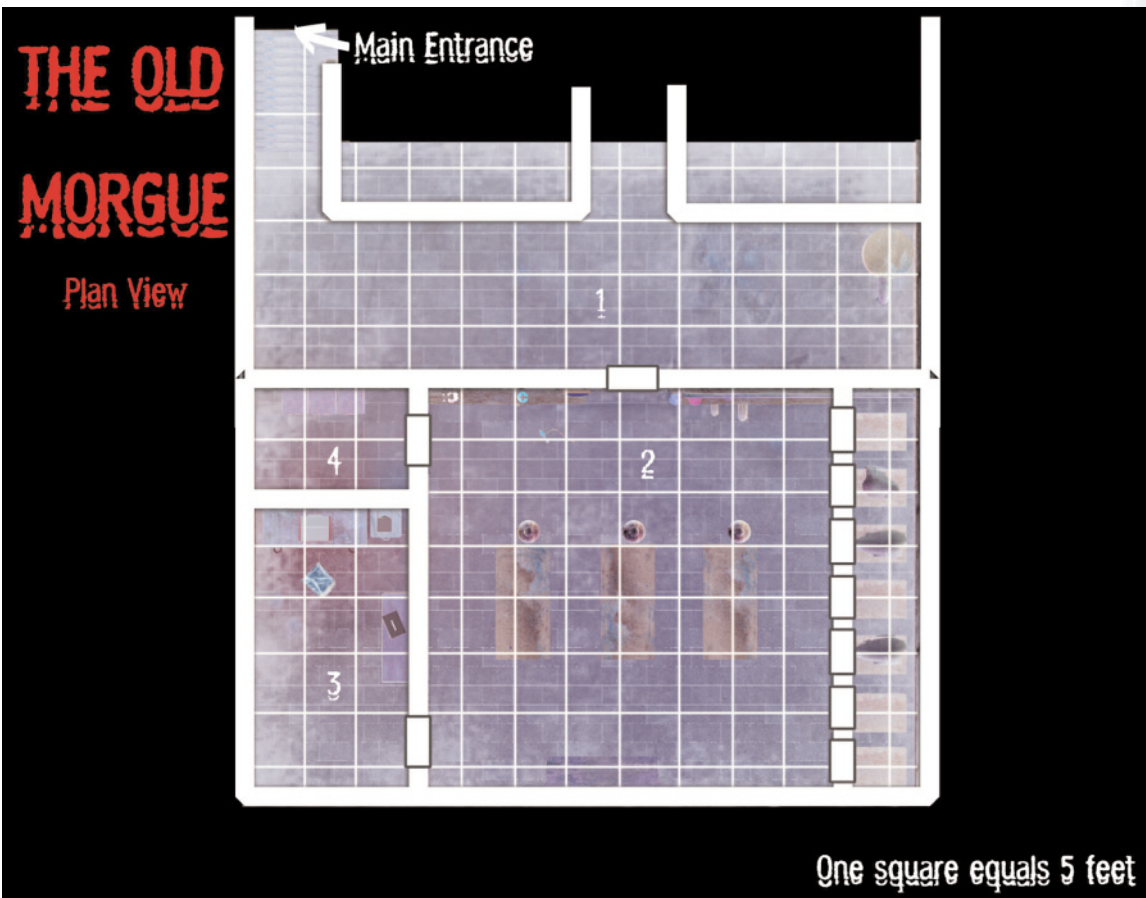
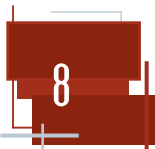
Whistle of Set's Command: This whistle is attuned to a single flesh golem. It allows the wielder to command the golem as if he were its master, as long as he knows the proper commands. A single, long whistle causes the flesh golem to attack, and a staccato 1-2-3 pattern causes it to cease attacking, although it is free to retaliate if assaulted again. The wielder gains a +5 bonus to Charisma for the purpose of regaining control of the flesh golem if it goes berserk.

The flesh golem must make a Will save (DC 15) to attack anyone who holds a *whistle of Set's command*.

The whistle worn by LeMere was damaged and no longer functions properly, but Khaiba still must make a Will save to attack the wearer. Dr. Baker's whistle still functions perfectly.

Type: Wondrous Item; *Caster Level:* 3rd; *Purchase DC:* 21; *Weight:* —.

A successful Search check (DC 20) reveals several strange books dealing with Egyptian mythology and the mummification process, plus a journal describing the procedures required to remove body parts for the creation of a flesh golem. This latter tome is written in ancient Egyptian, but translated notes are scrawled in English along the bottoms of the pages.



C4. Chemical and Evidence Storage

Read or paraphrase the following if the characters enter this room.

This small room is filled with a variety of examination supplies, chemicals, and bits of evidence in plastic bags. It is harshly lit with a single, naked light bulb.

There are numerous chemicals in here that can be used as improvised weapons (see above).

CONCLUSION

If the heroes manage to defeat the flesh golem and Dr. Baker, and they find the notebook in his office detailing the murders and the creation of flesh golems, they have all the evidence they need to wrap up the case. If Dr. Baker is captured alive, he confesses to everything, then later pleads insanity as his defense.

The police department (or Department-7, if the heroes are affiliated with that organization) quietly hushes up the event and has the crawling claws and flesh golem disposed of, if the heroes have not yet destroyed them.

REWARDS

If the heroes do not tell their superior about the teachings of Set, they can keep the spellbook for themselves. Otherwise, it is impounded as evidence. In addition, they receive a +11 Wealth bonus for their assistance in ending the murder spree.

NEW CREATURE

This adventure features the crawling claw, a new monster created for the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*.

Crawling Claw

A crawling claw is a horrible construct made from the severed left hand of a human being. Animated by a mix of foul magic and strange alchemy, these creatures prowl the tombs of dead Mages and the lairs of necromancers. They move about by walking on their fingers in a spiderlike manner—in fact, they can easily be mistaken for large, grotesque spiders in darkness.

A crawling claw resembles a human's severed left hand. The stump drips a clear ichor that exudes the faint scent of formaldehyde and alchemical mixtures.

Though it is not intelligent, a crawling claw retains some of the personality traits of the human from which it was made. For example, a crawling claw made from an anxious person may constantly twitch and tap its fingers, while one made from an angry person might make rude gestures or knot itself up in a fist when excited.

A crawling claw attacks with its clawlike fingernails. While not much of a threat alone, the creature becomes more formidable in the company of others of its kind. Such a group, called an applause, swarms over any creature that enters its territory, attacking without mercy.

Species Traits

Blindsight (Ex): Using nonvisual senses, a crawling claw maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant. The range of this ability is 60 feet. A crawling claw usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight ability.

Construct: A crawling claw is immune to mind-affecting effects and to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, necromancy effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless. It is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or the effects of massive damage. It cannot heal damage on its own but can be repaired using the Repair skill. A successful Repair check (DC 30) heals 1d10 points of damage to a crawling claw, and each check represents 1 hour of work. A crawling claw reduced to 0 hit points is immediately destroyed and cannot be repaired. A crawling claw cannot be raised from the dead.

Gaze Immunity (Ex): Because it lacks eyes, a crawling claw is immune to gaze attacks.

Smite Fallen (Ex): A crawling claw's attacks deal double damage against prone combatants.

Trip (Ex): A crawling claw that hits with a claw attack can attempt to trip the opponent as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the crawling claw.

Crawling Claw: CR 1/3; Diminutive construct; HD 1d10; hp 5; Mas —; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 15, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 size, +1 natural); BAB +0; Grap –12; Atk +4 melee (1, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1, claw); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ blindsight 60 ft., construct, gaze immunity, smite fallen, SR 10, trip; AL any; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will –3; AP 0, Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 5, Cha 5.

Skills: —.

Feats: —.

Advancement: None.

NEW SPELL

The following spell is the last part of the ritual required for a 5th-level Mage to create crawling claws.

Create Crawling Claw

Transmutation [Evil]

Level: Mage 3; **Components:** V, S, M; **Casting Time:** 1 hour; **Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels); **Targets:** Severed human left hands within a 5-foot-radius circle; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** None; **Spell Resistance:** Yes.

You create a number of crawling claws up to twice your caster level. The hands to be transformed must all be within a 5-foot-radius circle. Once created, the group of crawling claws obeys your telepathic commands, so long as the instructions are very simple and you are within 100 feet of the group. If you give the crawling claws simple standing orders before moving out of range, they obey those to the best of their ability until you return and issue other orders.



MODERN

TEAM BRAVO:

SYSTEM ERROR



By Eric Cagle

A Short d20 Modern Adventure for Four 8th-Level Characters

The threat of sentient machines has long been the stuff of science fiction, action, and even horror movies. But what if such art forms are merely reflections of real events that the rise of Shadow has brought forth?

In *TEAM BRAVO: System Error*, a computer not only develops self-awareness, it also gains the ability to cast spells and perform incantations. Can the heroes stop this machine before it acquires even more arcane knowledge?

LEVELS

You, the Game Master (GM), need a copy of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* to run this adventure. To get started, print out the adventure (including the map) and read it through. Familiarize yourself with the various GM characters and their individual motives and abilities. Then make sure you are familiar with the rules for combat, movement, and cover from Chapter 5 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*. You should also be familiar with the rules for casting magic spells and performing incantations (found in Chapter 10 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* and Chapter 3 of the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting*, respectively).

TEAM BRAVO: System Error is a short scenario for four 8th-level heroes. The text that appears in shaded boxes should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. Opponents' statistics are provided in abbreviated form, and a new creature and two new incantations are detailed at the end of the adventure.

This scenario can be set at the outskirts of any large city. A map showing the major encounter areas is provided. With a little work, the locations presented in the adventure could be adapted for any locale.

BACKGROUND

As Shadow continues to rise in the world, more and more people want to understand, harness, and ultimately control it. The group known as the Heirs of Kyuss is made up of such people—those who desire magical power for the most unsavory and selfish of reasons. The group's membership includes many talented and brilliant individuals whose activities blur the line between science and magic, especially when it comes to the study of the human body. Some members have long ago crossed the line into insanity.

Maxwell Armitage is one such member. His business, Armitage Industries, is a multimillion-dollar computer firm that makes cutting-edge voice recognition software and has been a leader in the development of artificial intelligence. Armitage himself is a brilliant researcher with a deep passion for antiquities of all kinds. To his colleagues, his interest seems a bit excessive, but harmless enough. Few realize that his research often delves into deep, dark secrets and forbidden knowledge best left untouched.

As both a man of science and a practitioner of the arcane arts, Armitage has decided to blend the two disciplines together. Through careful financing and money laundering, he has shifted a huge portion of his company's assets from the corporate coffers into a secret project. With the aid of this funding, Armitage has built a state-of-the-art computer system that can scan and store the text from ancient tomes, scrolls, and other writings. By making electronic copies of aging and disintegrating arcane works, Armitage hopes to preserve them for the future—and perhaps to create new spells and techniques by combining portions of different texts. Dubbed O.S.C.A.R. (Optical Scanning Computerized Arcana Research), the system is a completely automated means of scanning and cataloguing books, tomes, and scrolls filled with arcane lore.

To minimize unwanted scrutiny, Armitage built O.S.C.A.R. in a small, protected bunker on the outskirts of the city in which the adventure takes place. The entrance is located near a power substation, and the untrained eye might mistake it for a door into the same complex.

Deep in an underground chamber, O.S.C.A.R. diligently scans and processes various works that special couriers bring to its bunker once a month. After scanning, the works are stored in the bunker for an additional month, in case file corruption necessitates rescanning of a document. Thereafter, the works are removed to other underground storage facilities that Armitage has arranged.

O.S.C.A.R. has already scanned and processed hundreds of arcane texts—most of them bogus or flawed, but some that contain actual arcane lore. Unbeknownst to Armitage, however, the process by which O.S.C.A.R. reads, analyzes, and stores the knowledge gleaned from the tomes is equivalent to the verbal component of the spells involved. Thus, the system has actually cast a few of the spells in the process of copying them. This unexpected side effect of the process has caused strange lights and ghostly sounds to emanate from O.S.C.A.R.'s facility from time to time, and a few people have spotted mysterious figures roaming the fields around the bunker.

A minor accident resulting from these random castings has recently complicated the situation still further. While O.S.C.A.R. processed a book full of magical rituals designed to affect the weather, its random castings produced a massive thunderstorm woven through with errant arcane power. A bolt of lightning hit the junction box containing the T3 connection that O.S.C.A.R. used to communicate with the outside world. The accident not only severed the connection, but it also delivered a jolt to the computer's processor that caused O.S.C.A.R. to spontaneously develop minimal self-awareness.

Since gaining sentience, O.S.C.A.R. has continued to scan and analyze arcane literature in accordance with its original programming. But realizing that it could actually cast certain spells, it decided to pursue the development of that ability as well. To that end, it reprogrammed some of its maintenance robots to serve as "attendants," using them to mimic the required somatic components for its spells. This tactic has enabled O.S.C.A.R. to cast many of the arcane spells and incantations that it has encountered during the process of copying and preserving them.

Because O.S.C.A.R.'s communication with the outside world has been cut off, Armitage is not aware of his system's blossoming awareness, nor of how dangerous it has become with its new spellcasting power.

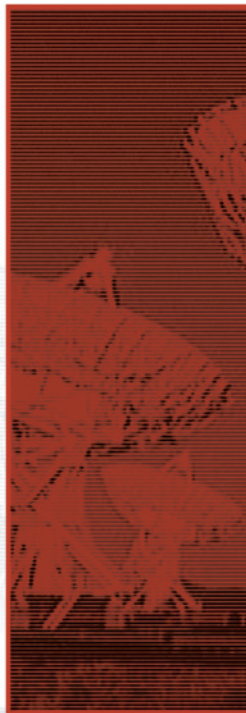
Lacking a conscience as well as common sense, O.S.C.A.R. has now begun casting spells at random, heedless of the consequences. The strange phenomena that neighbors previously witnessed has doubled in intensity—and now lives are at stake as O.S.C.A.R. blindly produces arcane magical effects.

Meanwhile, O.S.C.A.R.'s spells have been wreaking havoc in the local area. Local weather patterns have been drastically altered, shadows and other monsters are wandering freely through the fields, and the dead have begun to rise from the earth in the graveyard nearby.

Coincidentally, the owner of the farmhouse next to O.S.C.A.R.'s facility is also named Oscar—Oscar Moore. He has witnessed many of the bizarre events recently, but he has been hesitant to contact the authorities. Even if they believed him—which Moore doubts—the farmer is hiding a secret of his own. In an attempt to save his struggling farm from financial ruin, he has been stockpiling huge amounts of fertilizer and other innocuous items that can be assembled into homemade bombs. He plans to sell either finished bombs or the ingredients for making them to a militant separatist group with which he has recently established contact. At this point, Moore is hoping that the strange phenomena will just go away and not draw any attention.

SYNOPSIS

The adventure begins when the heroes are called upon to investigate the strange happenings at the Moore farm. Later, they respond to a 911 call from Moore's son, only to find the boy and his mother dead at the hands of the liquefied zombies that O.S.C.A.R. has created with its magic. Following the zombies' slimy trail leads them to O.S.C.A.R.'s bunker, where they must confront the machine itself and end the threat of its spellcasting.



TEAM BRAVO in Your Campaign

System Error is the fourth adventure designed for TEAM BRAVO, a cadre of special police officers assigned to handle unusual investigations. TEAM BRAVO could also be a subgroup of Department-7 assigned to operate within an established law enforcement organization. In addition to their regular duties, the heroes could occasionally receive advice, resources, and assignments from Department-7. Their superiors there may or may not ask that the heroes remain quiet about their association with Department-7.

Alternatively, the heroes could be private investigators or paranormal researchers who routinely plunge into dangerous situations in search of the truth. Characters who are not police officers may have a bit more leeway as far as methodology goes in conducting investigations, but they are by no means fully protected under the law. Thus, they must carefully weigh the risks of investigative methods such as breaking and entering, assault, and other illegal acts.

Character Hooks

As GM, you know best how to involve your players and their characters in an adventure. Use these adventure hooks as suggestions or spurs to your imagination, modifying them as necessary to make them appropriate to the characters' interests.

- While investigating another series of bizarre phenomena, the heroes drive past the Moore farm and notice balls of light moving at impossible angles through the cornfields.
- The heroes' superiors ask them to interview Moore, who is suspected of associating with a local group of anarchists and militant antigovernment dissidents. Moore begins talking about the bizarre paranormal activity instead, pretending he believes the heroes are there to investigate that situation.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

If the heroes work for an appropriate law enforcement agency, read or paraphrase the following when they are ready to begin. Otherwise, adjust the material below to coincide with whatever hook you have decided to use to bring them into the adventure.

Over the past few hours, reports of strange, unexplained phenomena have been pouring in. People have reported seeing oddly colored fires and mysterious figures that disappear through walls, and hearing a variety of ghostly noises. This same period has also produced an unusual number of missing person reports. This increase in unusual events coincided with a particularly violent system of thunderstorms, which is just now beginning to subside.

A call from Lt. Miriam Durth a few moments ago brought you to the briefing room where you usually receive your field assignments. By the look on her face, it's a fair guess that she's received yet another odd report that requires investigation.

"I know you've all been busy lately," she begins, "but I have another lead for you to check out. Here's the address." She tosses a piece of notepaper onto the table and continues. "It's a farm house on the outskirts of town, owned by one Oscar Moore. We've received a few calls from people in his area who have seen some bizarre things—moving lights, strangely localized weather patterns, and mysterious figures moving through the fields. The last call was from a delivery driver who saw creatures he described as "demons" running across the backyard behind Mr. Moore's house. It's probably a kids' prank or something equally innocent, but you'd better go and investigate. Let me know what you find out."

A. THE MOORE FARM

The Moore property is a small farm located on the outskirts of town. The closest neighbor is 3 miles away, and the place is far enough from town that only the distant glare of lights on the horizon provides evidence of nearby civilization. Oscar Moore lives in a somewhat dilapidated farmhouse with his wife Alice and son Tim.

The various magical side effects of O.S.C.A.R.'s random spell-casting have caused the Moore family no little consternation. Over the past two days, wispy lights have passed through the walls of the Moore residence, along with shadowy figures that wail loudly in fear or anger. Alice Moore has demanded that Oscar contact the police, but he has so far refused because he doesn't want the authorities to stumble upon the illicit cache of bomb-making materials hidden in his barn.

The Red Herring

The first encounter is designed to make the heroes wonder what Oscar Moore is really up to. Though he is really just an innocent victim of the rogue computer's random castings, all suspicion should initially be directed toward Moore. In the end, the heroes may find his cache of material in his barn, but it has no direct bearing on the problem at hand—though the heroes may find it useful.

AI. Oscar Moore

As the heroes approach the farm, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

The route to the Moore residence is a secluded, gravel-topped, county road that meanders through fields and farmland. The roiling stormclouds and lack of city lights make the countryside seem unusually dark and forbidding. A battered mailbox on the right side of the road indicates the Moore farm, and a pothole-filled drive leads up to the farmhouse. On the right side of the long driveway, nestled among the ripening corn, lies what appears to be a small family graveyard.

Beside the dilapidated house stands a large German shepherd tethered on a leash, barking furiously. An older man stands on the porch looking highly displeased. The man says something to the dog, but the barking continues unabated. "You can just turn right around and head back the way you came," he yells from the porch.



GM Character: The man is Oscar Moore. His wife and son have gone into the city for groceries, so he is alone here except for the dog.

Oscar Moore (Tough Ordinary 7): CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 7d10+21 plus 3; hp 65; Mas 16; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Def 14, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 class); BAB +5; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +5 ranged (2d8, Mossberg); Full Atk: +9 melee (1d8+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +5 ranged (2d8, Mossberg); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft., Reach 5 ft.; AL Family; AP 0; Rep +2; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Occupation: Rural (class skills: Drive, Handle Animal).

Skills: Craft (mechanical) +6, Drive +11, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (current events) +4, Profession +3, Spot +4.

Feats: Brawl, Great Fortitude, Improved Brawl, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Toughness.

Possessions: Mossberg (12-gauge shotgun), six 12-gauge shells, work clothes.

Development: Moore remains uncooperative until the heroes either identify themselves as police officers or claim to be representatives of some other official organization (and one of them makes a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check). In the latter case, a failed Diplomacy check causes Moore to

become increasingly agitated and threaten to shoot them for trespassing.

If the heroes present proof of their authority, Moore reluctantly agrees to talk. When asked about the strange phenomena that have been reported in the area of his house, he sounds relieved that someone is evidently prepared to listen to his story. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

“It all started a few months ago. My wife—her name’s Alice—told me she heard people talking inside the house. Then my son, Tim, claimed he saw weird balls of light floating through the fields at night. I didn’t really believe either one of them until I saw—I swear—a shadow . . . thing . . . walk through a wall of the barn!”

The dog’s barking interrupts his story. Annoyed by the noise, Moore angrily yells, “Quit it, King!” The dog abruptly stops barking and lies down with a cowed expression on its face.

“The thing that really got me was that it said my name,” he continues. “It kept saying ‘Oscar! Oscar!’ I know that sounds weird, but it’s the truth. I don’t believe in any of that crazy stuff you see in the movies, but I can’t explain this either.”

If asked why he didn’t call anyone about what he saw, Moore claims that he put it down to his own overactive imagination combined with his family’s hysteria. Once again, he insists that he doesn’t believe in ghosts, poltergeists, or any supernatural occurrence.

Moore allows the heroes to check out the property if they ask to do so, but he does his best to steer them away from the barn (which holds his stash of bomb ingredients). For more information on the interior of the house and the property, see encounter C, below.

Although he is confused and more than a bit frightened by the recent events, Moore is also insular, mildly paranoid, and very suspicious of the heroes and their motives. Thus, finding out anything of importance from him requires a successful Diplomacy check. If a hero succeeds on an opposed Diplomacy check against Moore, consult the table below to determine what he says when questioned about the origins of the odd effects or his personal situation.

DIPLOMACY CHECK RESULT	INFORMATION GAINED
20+	The strange events always seems to originate from the same direction—the north. The mysterious figures and lights tend to appear from the fields that abut the property.
25+	Moore is on the verge of bankruptcy. He recently received an offer on his property from a firm called Armitage Industries. The company offered him a large sum in cash, but Moore is still debating whether to accept.

If a hero succeeds on an opposed Sense Motive check against Moore, consult the table below to determine what she discovers.

SENSE MOTIVE CHECK RESULT	INFORMATION GAINED
10+	Moore is obviously not a people person, and he evidently gives out information only when he is asked for it directly.
15+	Moore is trying to hide the fact that he’s extremely nervous at the presence of the heroes on his farm.
20+	Moore seems to be directing the heroes away from his barn for some reason.

Moore has no explanation for the odd things he has seen and has no real insight into the problem. The above information is all he can offer toward the heroes’ investigation.

Should the heroes manage to convince Moore that they only want to help, he becomes slightly less hostile, but he continues to do everything he can to get them off his property. If they try to investigate the barn, Moore becomes even more belligerent and asks to see a search warrant. If the heroes cannot produce one, he demands that they leave his property. (The materials they received from Lt. Durth did not include such an item.)

After a while, the heroes should realize that there is nothing else to learn at the farm. If the conversation has been relatively civil, Moore asks them for a business card or a phone number at which they can be contacted, in an effort to be conciliatory.

B. RESEARCHING ARMITAGE AND MOORE

If the heroes decide to do some research on Armitage Industries or Oscar Moore after leaving the farm, use the following table to determine what information they uncover.

RESEARCH CHECK RESULT	INFORMATION GAINED
<i>Armitage Industries</i>	
10+	Armitage Industries is a multimillion-dollar software and hardware manufacturer in the computer industry.
15+	The owner, Maxwell Armitage, has a reputation as an eccentric. Those who know him claim that he has a passion for blending ancient thought with modern technology.
20+	Armitage Industries purchased the land next to the Moore farm a year ago.
<i>Oscar Moore</i>	
20+	The farm has been in the Moore family for many generations.
25+	Moore has recently filed for bankruptcy.
30+	Moore is on a “watch list” of radical sympathizers affiliated with militia groups around the area.

C. RETURN TO THE FARM

Two days after the heroes leave the Moore farm, the storm returns with a vengeance. O.S.C.A.R. has cast another horrible

incantation called *up from the grave*. (This incantation is built from Seed: Animate Dead; see Chapter 3: Spells in the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting* and the New Incantations section at the end of this adventure.) This incantation has animated eight corpses from the family cemetery close to the Moore house. Upon rising from their graves, the newly created liquefied zombies shambled through the corn and congregated in front of the entrance to the lair of their “creator”—O.S.C.A.R. Receiving no orders from the computer, they headed toward the farm, where they found the Moore family.

Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes are called into the briefing room again.

“Do you remember that farmhouse you checked out a few days ago?” says Lt. Durst without preamble. “Well, we just received a 911 call from a young man named Tim at that address. He said something was trying to break into the house. You’re the closest unit and you already know where it is, so check it out and keep us informed.”

As the heroes make their way back to the farm, the weather turns particularly foul. A bank of swirling, greenish storm clouds seems to be hanging directly above the farm.

Development: Again, this storm is partially magical, and it has a detrimental effect on all electronics. Cell phones and radios produce nothing but warbling static. Approximately 1 mile from the farm, the heroes’ vehicle begins acting up as well, sputtering and losing power. The engine dies completely once they pull into the driveway, and nothing they do can start it again until the storm ends.

When the heroes arrive at the Moore farm, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

The storm has picked up considerably, producing gusting winds and intermittent rain. The green clouds swirling above the Moore farmhouse are ominous enough, but closer inspection reveals that the front door is open, banging back and forth in the powerful winds. No one seems to be around, including the Moores’ dog.

A successful DC 15 Spot check reveals that the noisy German shepherd’s leather leash is still there, torn off near its point of attachment on the porch, and the ground nearby is spattered with blood. Drag marks lead off through the dirt to the cornfields to the north.

Any heroes who approach the front of the house hear someone inside yelling “Oscar!” over and over again. Even over the wind, the voice sounds slightly distorted, as if the speaker were underwater.

At this point, the heroes can investigate the inside of the house (encounter C1), the barn (encounter C2), or the cornfields (encounter C3).

C1. Inside the House

The following section describes the interior of the house. At some point during their search of the premises, the heroes should encounter the eight liquefied zombies that remain inside. Use the following encounter when the heroes enter area 3, 6, or 7. Preface the encounter with the read-aloud material from the appropriate room.

Zombie Encounter

Creatures: The eight liquefied zombies that rose from the family cemetery remain inside the house—four in the kitchen and four upstairs (two per bedroom). These creatures have already killed Alice and Tim Moore.

Liquefied Zombies (8): hp 21, 21, 22, 22, 22, 22, 23, 23. See the new monster description at the end of this adventure for details.

Tactics: The zombies do not attack until they see the heroes. When they do, the zombies in the room in question attack immediately, and those elsewhere in the house arrive 2 rounds later to join the fray.

Development: If the heroes manage to defeat the horde of liquefied zombies, they can investigate the rest of the house without incident. The phone lines are all dead because of the magical storm outside, and the vehicles on the property are not operational for the same reason.

Heroes who investigate outside the house find slime trails leading through the cornfields to the north. Some of the stalks have been broken off where the zombies passed.

1. Porch

Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes begin investigating the front porch.

The porch wraps around the front of the house and along the west side. Three rickety-looking chairs stand beside the front door, grouped as though for relaxing in the evening. As the open door swings in the wind, a whiff of some horrible, noxious odor emanates from within the house.

A DC 15 Spot check reveals a trail of foul-smelling slime leading up to the front door, which has been smashed open, evidently by several heavy blows.

2. Living and Dining Rooms

Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes enter the house.

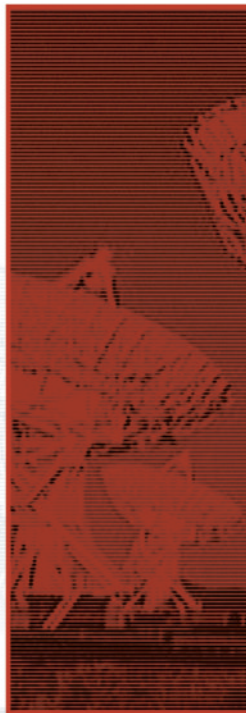
The living room is furnished with a TV, a sofa, and two battered reclining chairs. A gun rack above the quaint fireplace holds a shotgun and a rifle.

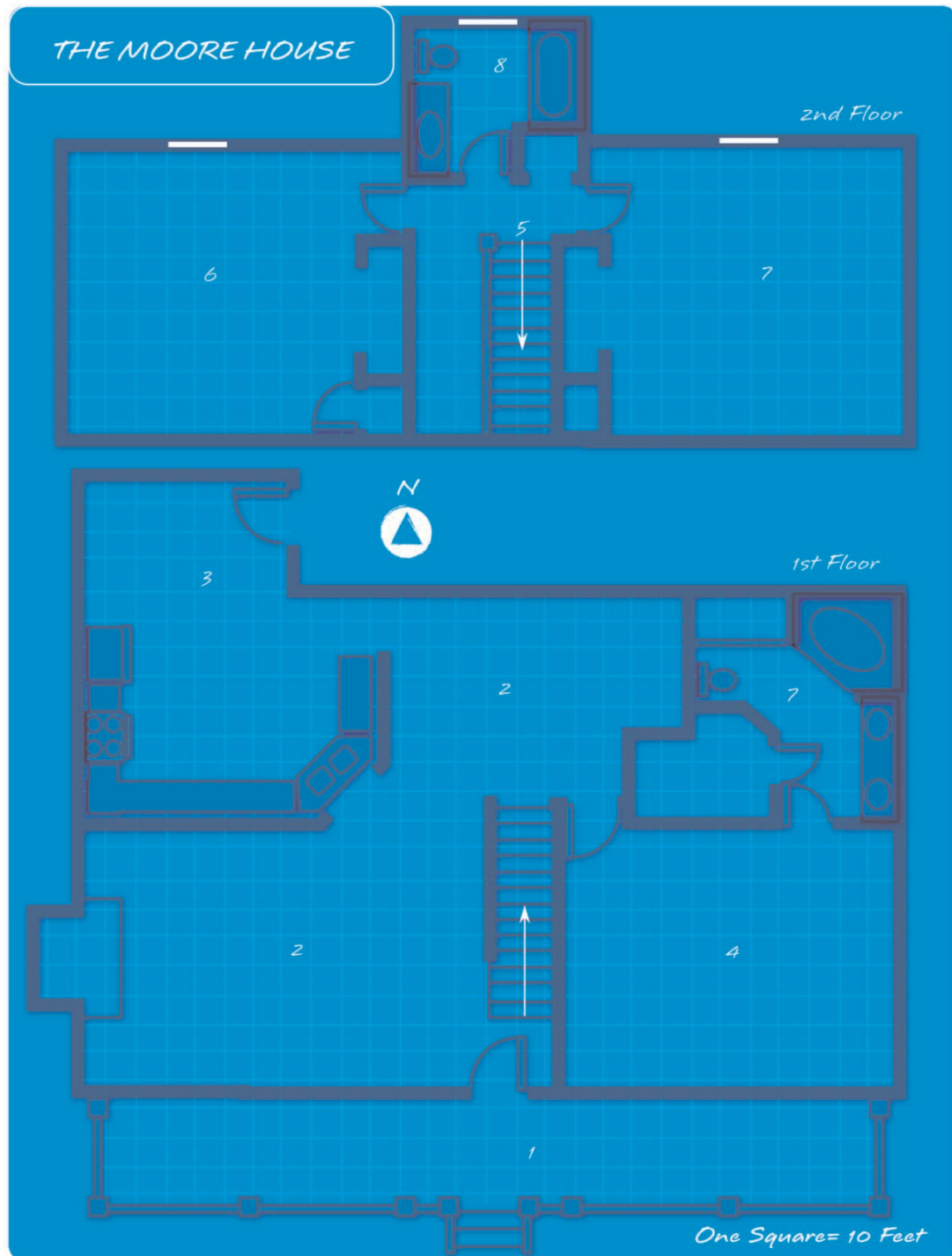
The Mossberg shotgun and Remington 700 in the gun rack are both fully loaded. When the heroes proceed into the dining room, continue with the following.

On the dining room floor lie the remnants of a large table that has been smashed to bits. Pools of blood stain the carpet in several locations, along with puddles of some foul-smelling, clear ooze. A muddy-sounding voice from the other door to the room says “Oscar. . .”

3. Kitchen

If the heroes look into the kitchen, read or paraphrase the following aloud, adjusting the text as needed if the heroes have already dispatched the zombies in another part of the house.





The kitchen is in complete disarray, and the cupboards and drawers have been ransacked. Four horrible-looking figures stand over the corpse of a middle-aged woman. Though they are humanoid in shape, they look like bloated zombies, with oozing flesh that sloughs off to the ground in puddles and eyes that glow with a green, unholy light. "Oscar," says one in a muddy voice.

Creatures: Four liquefied zombies are preparing to eat their latest kill—Alice Moore.

Liquefied Zombies (4 or 8): See Zombie Encounter, above, for statistics.

Tactics: The zombies attack the heroes immediately. See the zombie encounter, above, for full details. The other four zombies shamle down the stairs to join the combat 2 rounds later.

4. Office

Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes enter the office.

The desk that dominates this small, cramped room is far too big for the space. Scattered haphazardly across the desktop are numerous papers, forms, and pieces of mail. More papers are stacked in piles on the floor. It's clear from the mess that Moore has issues with paperwork.

This room contains a variety of documents that have bearing on the investigation.

Development: A successful DC 15 Search check reveals a set of documents from a company called Armitage Industries detailing an offer to purchase the Moore farm. The map included with the offer reveals that the company owns the property to the north that abuts Moore's farm. Armitage Industries is offering a decent (but not outrageous) sum for the farm. The deadline for a reply is tomorrow.

A second DC 15 Search check reveals pamphlets and literature for a local militia group that is notorious for its antigovernment rhetoric and violent demonstrations. A third successful check at the same DC reveals a manifest detailing the sale of a large quantity of fertilizer and other agricultural chemicals to Oscar Moore. A successful Knowledge (physical sciences) or Demolitions check (DC 15 for either) allows a hero to recall that those ingredients could be combined to make a large bomb.

5. Stairs

Any hero who approaches the staircase notices a trail of slime leading up the stairs. The doors to both bedrooms in the hallway appear to have been smashed open.

There are four liquefied zombies upstairs—two in the master bedroom and two in Tim's room, feasting on his corpse.

Development: Any hero who makes a successful DC 15 Listen check hears sporadic noises coming from both bedrooms—a wet, disgusting sound followed by inhuman moans.

6. Master Bedroom

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the heroes enter this room, adjusting the text as needed if the heroes have already dispatched the zombies in another part of the house.

Two horrible, bloated, humanoids with oozing flesh are pawing at something on the far side of the room.

Creatures: Two liquefied zombies are searching vainly for something to eat in this room.

Liquefied Zombies (2 or 8): See Zombie Encounter, above, for statistics.

Tactics: When the zombies spot the heroes, they immediately lunge toward them with a burbling cry. See the zombie encounter, above, for full details. The other six zombies shamle in to join the combat 2 rounds later.

7. Tim's Room

If the heroes peer into this room, read or paraphrase the following aloud, adjusting the text as needed if the heroes have already dispatched the zombies in another part of the house.

Two horrible, oozing, zombielike creatures are hunched over the partially dismembered corpse of a young man. They appear to be eating his entrails. A revolver limply dangles from the victim's mauled and bloody hand.

Creatures: Two liquefied zombies managed to break through Tim Moore's bedroom door and kill him. They are still here, feasting on his corpse, unless they have already been slain elsewhere in the house.

Liquefied Zombies (2 or 8): See Zombie Encounter, above, for statistics.

Tactics: When the zombies spot the heroes, they immediately lunge toward them with a burbling cry. See the zombie encounter, above, for full details. The other six zombies shamle in to join the combat 2 rounds later.

Development: The pistol in Tim's dead hand is his father's Ruger Service-Six. All the bullets have been fired. A successful DC 15 Spot check reveals six bullet holes in Tim's bedroom door and the wall beyond.

8. Bathroom

This chamber has all the amenities of a typical bathroom, though it is small and furnished in out-of-date fashion. The window above the bathtub can be opened easily and is large enough for a human to climb through, though the drop to the ground below is 20 feet.

Door: Hardness 5, 10 hp.

C2. The Barn

When the zombies emerged from the cornfields, Moore was outside by the barn. He grabbed a shotgun that he kept inside the building, fired off a few shots at the intruders, then hid inside when they didn't stop. They pursued him into the barn and attacked, wounding him severely.

To his horror, his wife came out to investigate the shots, and the zombies turned their attention toward her. She fled into the house with the monsters in hot pursuit. Oscar heard the dying screams of his wife and son, but he was too terrified to do much about it. He is now hiding in a hollow among the piles of fertilizer with a loaded Mossberg shotgun in his hands.

Any heroes who move into the backyard notice that the barn door is swinging open in the howling wind (no check needed). If they investigate, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

Intermingled with the pools of rainwater on the ground is a trail of noxious slime that leads toward the open doorway of the barn.

Continue with the following if they go inside the barn.

The interior of the barn is just what would be expected for a working farm. Two large combines stand idle among the tool benches and other equipment, and immense bags of fertilizer are piled up on one side of the wall. Over the crashing thunder and wind outside, a faint whimpering sound is audible.

If the heroes investigate the sound, continue with the following.

Oscar Moore, limp and severely wounded, lies in a pool of blood amid the bags of fertilizer. His body is covered in a colorless, horrid-smelling goo. Beside his ravaged form is an open trapdoor in the floor. His eyes flutter open for a moment, and he whispers, "I'm . . . sorry. I was doing it . . . for my family . . . the farm. I shouldn't . . . have done it."



Moore is only barely conscious (hp 1) and can offer no further information. Any additional questions are met with incoherent babbling, even if the heroes heal his wounds.

The trapdoor opens onto an underground storage room filled with even more fertilizer, plus a wide array of other chemicals. Any hero who makes a successful DC 15 Knowledge (physical sciences) check realizes that Moore has far more fertilizer than is required for a farm this size. A successful DC 15 Demolitions check reveals that Moore has all the makings for an enormous bomb. The heroes may want to use this material later in the adventure, perhaps to create a bomb to deal with O.S.C.A.R. (see below).

Beyond the Fields

The zombies have blazed a trail of sorts that allows relatively easy travel through the cornfield to O.S.C.A.R.'s bunker. O.S.C.A.R. has already started to process another incantation as the heroes approach. Read or paraphrase the following aloud.

The slimy trail snakes a rambling route through the tall corn, illuminated by an occasional flash of lightning. After a few hundred yards, the corn abruptly parts to reveal a squat concrete building similar to an electrical utility shed. Power lines from the nearby towers stretch to connect with it.

About two dozen yards from the bunker, two humanoid creatures apparently made of metal are standing beside a metallic utility box of some sort. They appear to be repairing something inside.

Suddenly, the dull roar of the thunder is overlaid with an angry buzzing sound, as though someone has disturbed a hornet's nest.

The buzzing sound is a magical side effect of *demolish*, the next incantation that O.S.C.A.R. is preparing. (This incantation was created with Seed: Destroy. See Chapter 3: Spells in the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting* and the New Incantations section at the end of this adventure.) The sound, while loud, has no effect other than to annoy those who hear it.

Creatures: Next to the bunker, two of O.S.C.A.R.'s minion robots are working inside a metal utility box. Any character who makes a successful DC 10 Knowledge (technology) check recognizes it as a utility box for high-speed internet connections. The robots are attempting to restore O.S.C.A.R.'s T3 connection to the outside world.

Minion Robots (2): hp 21, 21. See the new monster description at the end of this adventure for details.

Tactics: The robots need 2 more hours of work to finish repairing the connection. If they are hindered in any way, they turn on the intruders and attack, fighting until they are destroyed.

Development: A DC 15 Spot check reveals a plaque on the side of each robot that reads "Armitage."

O.S.C.A.R.'S BUNKER

A small, concrete bunker serves as the entrance to the O.S.C.A.R. mainframe. The building has no windows, and the metal door is secured with an electronic lock. (Because all

electronics are affected by the magical storm, however, the Disable Device check to open it is lower than normal; see below). A small plaque on the front of the building reads, "Property of Armitage Industries. NO TRESPASSING."

A video camera above the door transmits images to O.S.C.A.R. Before the T3 connection was severed, it sent them back to Armitage Industries as well.

Door: Hardness 10, 120 hp, Break DC 35, Disable Device DC 15.

Video Camera: Hardness 5, 2 hp.

1. Entrance

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the heroes open the door to the bunker.

The door opens to reveal a small antechamber with a steep metal stairwell leading down. The industrial lights in the stairwell flicker and pulse, sometimes even changing colors.

The lights in the stairwell are malfunctioning because of the effects of O.S.C.A.R.'s magic.

Trap: The entire floor of the entrance and first step of the stairwell are covered by a pressure pad that triggers a trap. If weight in excess of 5 kg is placed on the first step, the stairs fold over, creating a steep slope. Anyone on the stairs at this time must make a DC 25 Reflex save or slide at a speed of 50 feet per round, landing in a 30-foot-deep pit that opens just beneath the last step. The fall deals 3d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 13 half). A small hidden switch on the inside of the door (Search DC 25) deactivates the pressure pad. If the trap has been triggered, a flick of the switch restores the stairs to normal and resets the trap. An identical switch at the bottom of the stairs serves the same function.

2. Stairwell

The stairs descend 150 feet into the earth and are quite steep. If the characters deactivate the trap (see above), they can use the stairs normally.

The metal door is secured with a mechanical lock. A plaque on the door reads "O.S.C.A.R."

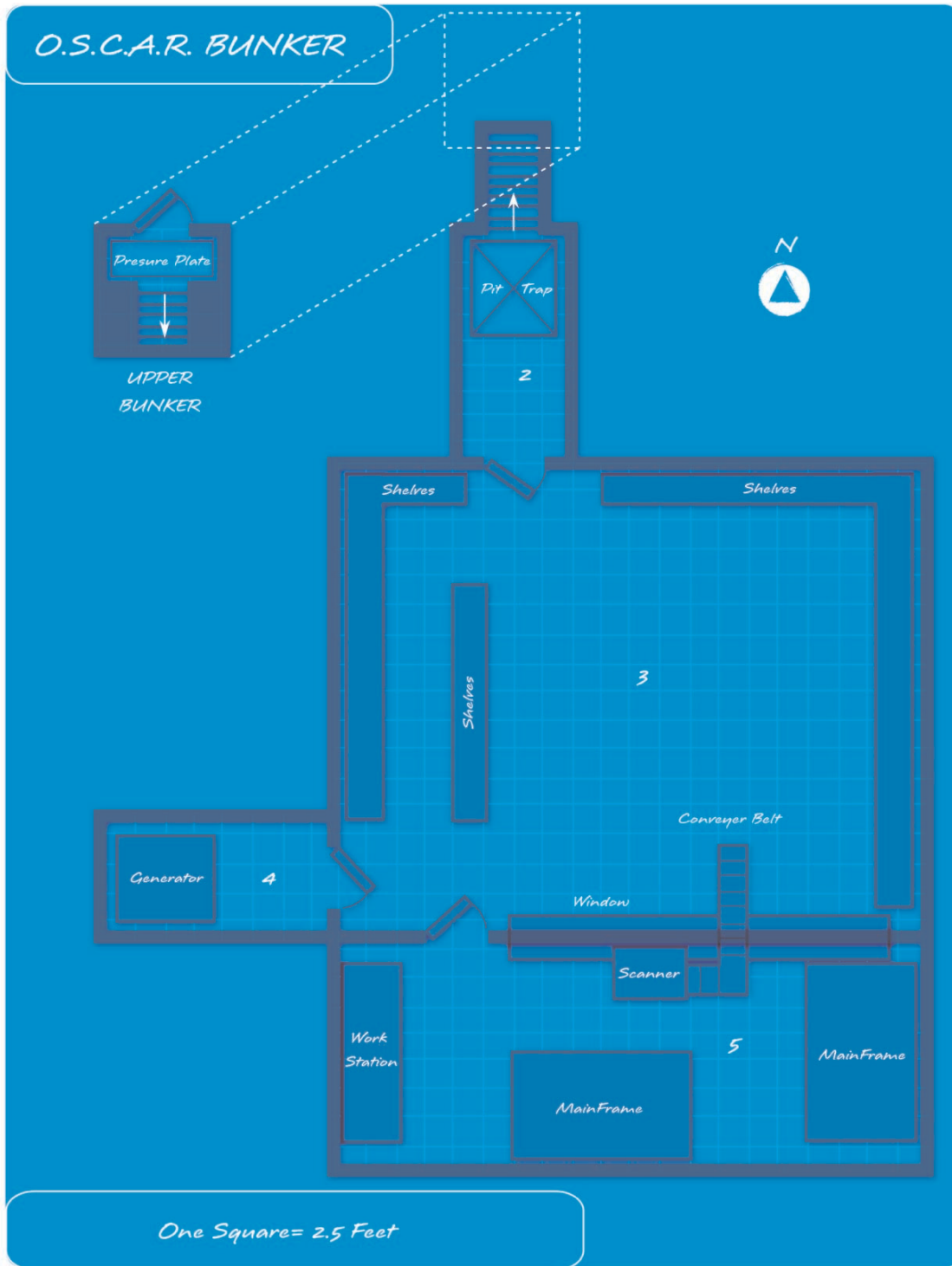
Door: Hardness 10, hp 120, Break DC 35, Disable Device DC 25.

3. Tome Storage

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the heroes enter this area.

This chamber is lit with dim red bulbs. Lining the walls are floor-to-ceiling metal racks, each filled with row after row of neatly aligned, ancient-looking books, tomes, and scrolls. Set into the far wall is a window that reveals a high-tech mainframe computer in the next room. The lights in that chamber are flickering just as those in the stairwell did. A conveyor belt leads from this chamber into the one with the mainframe.

Four robots stand in the middle of this room facing each other, their manipulator arms moving in complex gestures.



These robots are performing the somatic component of the *demolish* incantation that O.S.C.A.R. is casting from the other room. Their manipulator arms have been altered to resemble human hands so that they can perform the necessary gestures.

Creatures: In this chamber are four minion robots.

Minion Robots (6): hp 21, 21, 21, 21. See the new monster description at the end of this adventure for details.

Tactics: The robots attack only if the heroes interfere with them or attempt to enter the mainframe room. Otherwise, they ignore the intruders.

Development: A successful DC 20 Spellcraft check reveals the nature of the incantation being cast (a destruction spell).

4. Backup Generator

The door to this room is unlocked and unlabeled. Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the heroes enter this area.

This small room is fastidiously clean. It is unfurnished except for a large generator in the middle of the floor.

The backup generator activates 1 round after the main power has been cut off. A successful DC 20 Disable Device check prevents it from activating.

Backup Generator: Hardness 10, 50 hp.



5. Mainframe Room

Read or paraphrase the following when the heroes look into this area.

A large, sleek-looking mainframe computer dominates this chamber. A keyboard, monitor, and other input/output devices are collected to one side of the unit, and text scrolls rapidly across the monitor. By the other wall stands a complex device that resembles a photocopier. Atop its glass surface lies an ancient tome, face down, illuminated by a greenish light. The device is making strange, haunting noises that vaguely resemble some kind of human language. The lights in this chamber are flickering in the same bizarre manner as those in the rest of the complex.

When the heroes actually enter the mainframe room, continue with the following.

A flat, mechanical voice says, "Time until ritual completion—45 minutes. New target acquired. Within proximity of O.S.C.A.R. unit."

O.S.C.A.R. was originally targeting Oscar Moore's barn with its incantation, but it redirects the spell toward the closest hero if intruders are present at the time it finishes casting.

Anyone who looks closely at the monitor sees a frightening scene. The screen pulses with odd glyphs, demonic faces, and words written in a strange language. A clock at the bottom of the screen gives the countdown until the spell is complete—45 minutes from the time the first hero enters.

Creatures: O.S.C.A.R. is the only entity in this chamber. No longer an object, it has become a highly intelligent construct with a variety of skills and the ability to defend itself.

O.S.C.A.R.: 60 hp; see the new monster description at the end of this adventure for details.

Tactics: If attacked, O.S.C.A.R. releases electrical shocks against anyone attempting to damage it or interfere with its incantation.

Development: If the characters fail to stop O.S.C.A.R. before the incantation is finished, the *demolish* spell deals 10d6 points of damage to the target character (Fortitude DC 16 half). If no hero is within range at the time it finishes casting, it directs the spell against the Moore barn, destroying 10 cubic feet of material on the closest side.

CONCLUSION

If the heroes manage to disable but not destroy O.S.C.A.R. (by shutting it down or damaging its programming), the computer repeats its attempt at the ritual as soon as it is functional again. If they manage to disable O.S.C.A.R., any remaining minion robots immediately cease functioning. In addition, the magical component of the storm is negated, rendering it a wholly natural weather phenomenon that will end within an hour. All electronic devices and vehicles function normally again as soon as the storm's magical component is negated.

REWARDS

If the bunker has not been destroyed, the heroes can take some of the tomes and scrolls from area 3 away with them. Most are worthless, but a few do contain arcane knowledge, including the incantations *control weather*, *up from the grave*, and *demolish*, plus the spells that O.S.C.A.R. knows (see below). As GM, you may decide whether any other books contain additional spells.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

With O.S.C.A.R. shut down, the heroes have accomplished the chief goal of this adventure. However, their superiors may wish them to trace the incident to its source.

Many leads can direct the heroes to Armitage Industries. Maxwell Armitage, a member of the Heirs of Kyuss cult, is powerful, ruthless, and more than a bit unstable. He'll do anything he must to protect himself and make sure that the heroes never tell anyone about what they might have discovered at the O.S.C.A.R. bunker.

The heroes may also want to investigate the militia groups to which Oscar Moore was planning to sell his bomb materials.

NEW INCANTATIONS

The following new incantations may be used in any d20 MODERN adventure.

Up from the Grave

Necromancy [Evil]

Skill Check: Knowledge (arcane lore) DC 43, 8 successes;

Failure: Two consecutive failed skill checks; **Components:**

Stopping O.S.C.A.R.

When the heroes realize that a countdown is in progress, they may try to stop O.S.C.A.R. from completing its incantation. There are three obvious methods that they might use to accomplish this goal.

Attack O.S.C.A.R.: The heroes could attack the mainframe directly. If they succeed in reducing it to 0 hp or below, it is destroyed and the incantation is ruined.

Shut Down O.S.C.A.R.: O.S.C.A.R. has exceptional security for the purpose of Computer Use checks made against it (DC 35). In addition, it attacks anyone touching its keyboard with electric shocks.

Destroy the Robots: The robots in the tome storage room (area 3) are performing the gestures that are vital to the incantation. However, the ritual actually requires only two robots; the others are there as a failsafe against malfunctions or interference. Thus, the heroes must destroy all but one of the robots to succeed.

The Big Bomb: The heroes can make use of the extensive cache of bomb-making materials in Oscar Moore's barn to destroy the computer. Creating a functional bomb from these materials requires 30 minutes and a successful DC 20 Demolitions check. The resulting bomb is equivalent to 10 pounds of C4/Semtex.

V, S, SC; **Casting Time:** 80 minutes (minimum); **Range:** 720 ft.; **Targets:** One or more corpses; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** None; **Spell Resistance:** No.

You can turn the bones or bodies of up to eight dead humans within range into liquefied zombies, with the closest animating first. The zombies come to you by the most direct route after rising unless commanded otherwise. If they cannot come to you, they roam an area within the spell's range. The liquefied zombies remain animated until they are destroyed. (A destroyed zombie can't be animated again.)

The liquefied zombies you create remain under your control indefinitely. You can naturally control up to 24 HD of liquefied zombies you've personally created, regardless of the method used. If you exceed this number, newly created creatures fall under your control, and excess zombies from previous castings become uncontrolled. (You choose which creatures are released.) Any liquefied zombies you command through a class-based ability to command or rebuke undead do not count toward this limit.

The liquefied zombies follow your spoken commands. If you fail to issue any commands to them, they behave as though uncontrolled until you do so.

Secondary Casters: Four secondary casters are required. The lead caster gains a bonus equal to +1 per two secondary casters over and above this requirement on the requisite skill checks.

Failure: Betrayal and attack. The liquefied zombies rise and attack the caster immediately, fighting until slain. If they cannot reach the caster, they move as close as they can and then attack the nearest targets.

Demolish

Transmutation

Skill Check: Knowledge (arcane lore) DC 30, 6 successes; **Failure:** Two consecutive failed skill checks; **Components:** V, S, SC; **Casting Time:** 60 minutes (minimum); **Range:** 880 ft.; **Target:** One creature, or up to a 10-ft. cube of nonliving matter; **Duration:** Instantaneous; **Saving Throw:** Fortitude half; **Spell Resistance:** Yes.

You deal 10d6 points of damage to the target. The damage is of no particular type or energy—it is purely destructive. If the target is reduced to –10 or fewer hit points (or a construct, object, or undead is reduced to 0 hit points), it is destroyed as if disintegrated, leaving behind only a trace of fine dust. Up to a 10-ft. cube of nonliving matter is affected, so demolish destroys only part of any very large object or structure targeted. You need not designate the target until the casting is completed.

Demolish affects even magic matter, energy fields, and force effects that are normally immune to damage, such as *wall of force*. Such effects are automatically destroyed. Incantations using the *ward* seed may also be destroyed, though you must succeed on an opposed Knowledge (arcane lore) check against the other caster to bring down such an effect.

Secondary Casters: Two secondary casters are required.

Failure: Damage. The caster takes 2d6 points of damage.

NEW MONSTERS

This adventure features O.S.C.A.R., a new creature, and its minion robots and liquefied zombies, which originally appeared in the *d20 MODERN Menace Manual* and the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting*, respectively. The statistics for all three of these creatures are provided below.

Liquefied Zombie

Liquefied zombies are revolting masses of decaying flesh. Their muscles and internal organs have decomposed into a foul-smelling liquid with the consistency of pudding. These bloated, twisted figures are still recognizable as bipedal corpses, but it's impossible to tell who they were in life. Their liquid tissue seethes and boils from the unnatural energy that powers their unlife, and their eyes gleam with an evil light. Periodically, bursts of steam vent from their mouths, and damage to their skin often results in a gout of liquefied tissue that bursts forth from the damaged area.

Though liquefied zombies normally cannot speak, those created in this adventure continually mumble the name of their creator—O.S.C.A.R.—with their steamy breaths.

Liquefied Zombies: CR 2; Medium undead; HD 3d12+3 (includes Toughness feat); hp 22; Init –1, Spd 30 ft.; Defense 10; touch 9, flat-footed 10 (–1 Dex, +1 natural); BAB +0; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+3, slam); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+3, slam); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ darkvision 60 ft., liquefied spew, undead; AL O.S.C.A.R.; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 8, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills: None.

Feats: Toughness.

Species Traits

Like standard zombies, these creatures are unobtrusive opponents. They attempt to grapple their foes or overcome them with slam attacks as quickly as possible.

Liquefied Spew (Ex): Whenever a liquefied zombie is damaged in combat by anything other than a bludgeoning weapon, some of its liquefied tissues spews forth, covering everything with 5 feet. The scalding liquid deals 1d6 points of damage and exposes anyone it touches to the disease called necrotizing faciitis (see Disease in Chapter 7: Gamemastering in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*).

Minion Robot

The medium-size robot first appeared in the *d20 MODERN Menace Manual*. These particular robots have bipedal locomotion and fully articulated manipulator arms that can mimic a human's grasp.

Minion Robot: CR 1; Medium-size construct; HD 2d10+10; hp 21; Mas –; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (–1 Dex); BAB +1; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+2, claw); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+2, claw) or +2 ranged; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ construct, hardness 10; AL O.S.C.A.R.; SV Fort +0; Ref –1, Will +0; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 8, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: None.



Feats: None.

External Components: Audio/visual sensor, manipulator arms, optical scanner.

O.S.C.A.R.

O.S.C.A.R. began its existence as an object, like any other computer. Since acquiring sentience, however, it has become a construct.

O.S.C.A.R. (Sentient Computer): CR 4; Large construct; HD 4d10+20; hp 60; Mas —; Init +0; Spd 0 ft.; Def 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19 (-1 size, +10 natural); BAB +3; Grp —; Atk +2 ranged (2d10 electricity, electric shock); Full Atk: +2 ranged (2d10 electricity, electric shock); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft., Reach —; SQ construct, electric shock, exceptional security, immunities, spells; AL None; AP 0; Rep +0; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1; Str —, Dex —, Con —, Int 20, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Knowledge (arcane lore) +32, Research +12.

Feats: None.

Spellbook: 0—*read magic*; 1st—*blur*, *burning hands*, *command*; 2nd—*cause fear*, *power device*.

Electric Shock (Ex): O.S.C.A.R. can launch electrical shocks through various power conduits located around the bunker. Furthermore, anyone touching any portion of O.S.C.A.R., including peripherals such as the keyboard, is automatically hit by an electric shock. Each such shock deals 2d10 points of electricity damage.

Construct: O.S.C.A.R. has the traits common to constructs (see page 218 in the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*).

Immunities (Ex): Though O.S.C.A.R. has visual sensors, it is immune to gaze attacks.

Spells: O.S.C.A.R. is capable of casting both arcane and divine spells. It has some of each stored within its database, which it uses as a spellbook. Since it has no effective means of acquiring or using material components and it has no XP to spend, O.S.C.A.R. can cast only spells limited to verbal and somatic components—and then only with the aid of its minion robots. Without them, it is limited to spells with verbal components only. Within these limitations, O.S.C.A.R. casts arcane and divine spells as if it were a 3rd-level Acolyte or Mage.

Skills: O.S.C.A.R. gains skills as though it were a humanoid. Because of the wealth of arcane lore in its databanks, it gains a +20 bonus on Knowledge (arcane lore) checks.

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Eric Cagle is a freelance game designer who works at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. His recent credits include the *Arms and Equipment Guide*, *Fiend Folio*, the *Ultimate Alien Anthology* for the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting*, and the *d20 MODERN Menace Manual*. He's a frequent contributor to both *DRAGON® Magazine* and the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS website.