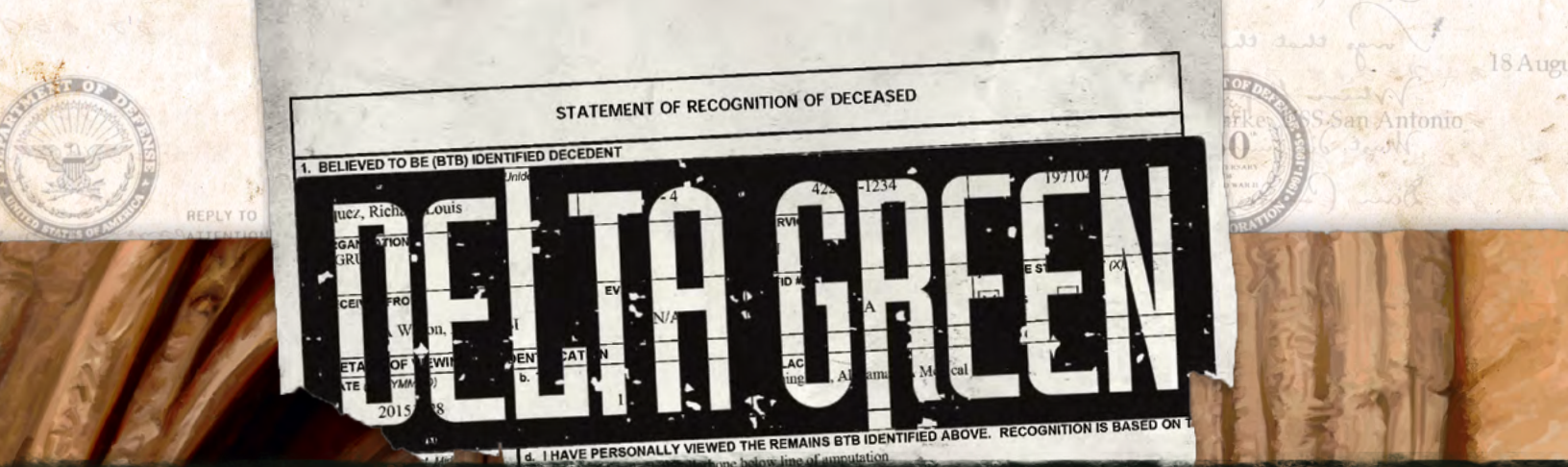




GOD'S TEETH



A Campaign of Unthinkable Horrors for *Delta Green*



CLAIMED BY THE GOD THAT FEEDS

In early 2001, a few Agents of Delta Green face an evil too cruel to ignore. They can never turn back from what they see or what they must do to stop it. A night of death leaves them scarred forever. But even as one terror fades, another awakens.

The Agents find themselves beset by a power more frightful than Delta Green itself, a force *beyond* that hungers for unnatural death. A force that hunts horrors like a cat stalking prey. A force that has made the Agents the instruments of its ceaseless devourings.

God's Teeth follows the Agents across nearly twenty years of dire history:

- » **GO FORTH (2001):** The Agents fall onto a long timeline of bitter choices and terrible repercussions.
- » **THE LONG YEARS (2001–2016):** The Agents are recruited into the new Delta Green, the official Program. Any number of scenarios might follow. The Agents are drawn to horrors.
- » **RED THOUGHTS (2016):** Repercussions from “Go Forth” swim to the surface of public awareness. The Agents must push them down again.
- » **WHITE TEETH (2016):** The Agents must seek victims who survived that awful night of “Go Forth” and became monstrous themselves, murderous youths who work to sharpen the Teeth.
- » **THE SPIRAL (2016–2020):** Terrors converge. The influence of the god that claims the Agents seems only to grow. An FBI tip signals another threat resurrected from the sins of the past.
- » **THE HIDDEN GOD (2020):** As the world embraces plague, the Agents must trace the consequences of their actions, confront impossible foes, and face the appalling force that cursed them.

A companion book, *Delta Green Evidence Kit: God's Teeth*, offers expanded handouts and resources. The collection *Delta Green: God's Hunt* presents further scenarios in the period of “The Spiral.” *God's Teeth* is played with *Delta Green: The Role-Playing Game*. Find fully-playable quickstart rules in the free download *Delta Green: Need to Know*.



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 This is a work of fiction.

Sredni Vashtar went forth,
 His thoughts were red thoughts and his teeth were white.
 His enemies called for peace, but he brought them death.
 Sredni Vashtar the beautiful.



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WARNING: This campaign confronts the horrors of violence against children. Such subject matter can be far more personal and awful than the cosmic terrors of Delta Green. Abuse of the helpless is all too present in our world and in the lives of many players. Read the entire campaign before you begin play.

DELTA GREEN

// GOD'S TEETH //

A CAMPAIGN OF UNTHINKABLE HORRORS FOR
DELTA GREEN: THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME

ARC DREAM PUBLISHING PRESENTS *GOD'S TEETH*
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Introduction

God's Teeth traces the evolution of Delta Green during the early years of the 21st century under the influence of a terrifying unnatural power. In “Go Forth,” “Red Thoughts,” “White Teeth,” and “The Hidden God,” that power claims a handful of Agents as its own. It uses them to prey on other unnatural threats. Through trauma and violence, it sharpens them into perfect teeth for its feeding.

The events span two decades.

GO FORTH (2001): As the campaign begins, most of the characters aren't even full Agents of the Delta Green conspiracy. As Delta Green itself shatters and rebuilds, the future Agents fall onto a timeline of bitter choices and mistakes. The Agents are marked as “Teeth” by a hungry, cosmic force. “Go Forth” could provide a transition point from a 1990s campaign built for *Delta Green: The Conspiracy*.

THE LONG YEARS (2001–2016): The Agents are recruited into the official Program. They find a place in the post-9/11 security state. The Handler could play out any number of scenarios, no matter how unlikely or disparate. Under the malign influence of an unimaginable power, the Agents gain the ability to sense unnatural energies. They are drawn to horrors. They are literally cursed to feed their god with death.

RED THOUGHTS (2016): Repercussions from “Go Forth” swim to the surface of public awareness. The Program orders the Agents to push them down again. The Agents gradually realize they have been touched by something Beyond.

WHITE TEETH (2016): With the horrors of “Go Forth” hidden once more from the public, the Agents seek victims who survived those horrors and became monstrous themselves. Murderous youths work to sharpen the Teeth as the Agents come to understand what they have become.

THE SPIRAL (2016–2020): Four more years pass. New Agents might join and be marked as Teeth. As terrors converge upon them, the Teeth find the influence of their god seems only to grow. An FBI tip signals another threat resurrected from the sins of the past.

THE HIDDEN GOD (2020): As the world embraces plague in mid-2020, the Agents must trace the consequences of their actions, confront the costs of intervention, suffer encounters with impossible foes, and succumb to the force that cursed them.

Be Warned

This campaign concerns and confronts violence against children. Such subject matter can be far worse, far more personal and awful, than the usual cosmic horrors of *Delta Green*. Abuse of the helpless is all too present in our world and in the lives of many players. Read the entire campaign before you begin play. Watch for descriptions, situations, and events that you may need to change or omit in order to care for your friends. Talk to your players, each individually. They may have limits that are unknown to you because the matter never came up. Tell them about this warning. Make sure they are comfortable with horror this particularly dark. If they are, then make sure they know they can tell you by word, gesture, note, or private message if the game goes too far. Promise to listen when they do. Always be ready to draw back from details that cross that line. Be your players' friend.

The God That Feeds

“Biological life may have come into existence solely to feed Bast more entropy. The universe itself is Bast’s factory farm.”



The God That Feeds

IN GOD'S TEETH, A NEAR-OMNISCIENT FORCE

beyond space and time takes an interest in the Agents. It seeks the Agents out. Mortal creatures that serve it find the Agents and present horrifying examples of servitude. The meaning of life as a tool. As teeth.

That alien force feeds upon expressions of unnatural power. Or perhaps the force *emerges* from the processes by which certain energies that we call “unnatural” move through dimensions: by which they move from state to state, from reality to unreality, from form to meaningless entropy. Or perhaps its origin is even stranger still.

No matter. The Agents experience it as intention. As manipulations of causality in service of overwhelming hunger. As the need to hunt and destroy.

This force has swept human beings into the service of its hungers many times. It is everywhere and invisible to all save those called to feed. A cult worshiped it at least five thousand years ago. They sacrificed and prayed to it as a sunlit guardian, a hunter, the ferocious lioness Bast. Their god's hunger eventually consumed its own cult. The power withdrew.

In forgetful temples, Bast lost her ferocity and became gentler. A protector against evil spirits and disease. The domesticated counterpart to blood-soaked Sekhmet, that terrifying lion-goddess of plagues and war. Goddess of house cats and healing.

In *God's Teeth*, we use the name Bast for the force that makes the Agents its weapons, its sharp and tearing teeth. That ancient force seeks out expressions of unnatural power. Power is its prey. Power sustains it.

Some say the fabled gods of Earth's myths are real but now hide in the land of dreams, no longer concerned with the doings of humanity. If they exist, they hide with good reason.

Secret Synchronicity

This force that we call Bast reshapes destinies to serve its appetites. It causes humans and other animals to fulfill its unknowable, alien goals. Its servants mostly have no idea that their lives serve this remote power.

Bast's manipulation of causality occurs in countless, tiny ways that emerge as strange synchronicities. *God's Teeth* highlights those in “Synchronicity” setting descriptions. Individually, they may seem superfluous if sometimes unsettling. Over time, the details add up. They gradually communicate the nature of the unnatural force that manipulates the Agents. Use them to reinforce each other until the players come to recognize and fear every uncanny moment.

The attention of Bast drifts and returns. The Agents are drawn back into its machinations and then might be left alone for years. Then, their god's interferences with causality suddenly and inexplicably become more active. In such a time, synchronicities accrete around them.

Fatal Agency

Agency and fatalism are among the most important themes in *God's Teeth*. The Agents come under the influence of an unnatural power that shapes their lives with the force of destiny. That influence, in turn, brings them under the closest scrutiny of Delta Green. Each views them as tools to be used until consumed or discarded. The heroism of the Agents comes from their struggle against these systems of control. Their horror is the realization that even resistance serves the Nameless God. The story that emerges from *God's Teeth* may be bleak even by the standards of *Delta Green*. Use these guidelines to get the most out of the campaign.

Fatalist Horror

God's Teeth provides Handlers many tools to reveal the intentions of Bast. Elements of the main plot, the Synchronicities included throughout, and information provided in **INVESTIGATING BAST** (page 11) all outline the malevolent intent behind their very existence.

While becoming one of the Teeth is a curse of predestination, it's not a prescription for players. Players hate feeling helpless; this campaign tells the story of *characters* struggling with the realization that destiny has already been written. Portraying Bast consistently helps keep the horror inside the game's fiction and prevents the players from feeling the same helplessness as their Agents.

COSMIC PATIENCE: Indications of Bast's attention are rare. Though peppered throughout an Agent's life, the manipulation began before the Earth formed. It may disappear out of an Agent's life for years, cruelly lulling Agents back into the illusion of control.

PREDATORY MOTIF: Handlers should use the Synchronicities as models for designing their own signs of Bast. To limited human senses, Bast's hunger manifests in images and instances of animal savagery. The force's hunger for the unnatural inscribes a theme of predation upon reality itself.

THERE ARE NO WORDS: Sign and signifier are beneath Bast. If it speaks to the Teeth, it employs means and methods determined through infinite simulation, willing reality toward probabilities where it enjoys greater unnatural consumption. People throughout history have grasped after explanations and constructed mythologies, but no one can fully explain what's happening to the Agents.

NO ESCAPE: It's impossible for an Agent to make a choice outside Bast's influence. If they could, they would not have been chosen as Teeth. When Agents become aware of their fate, it is because this awareness funnels their lives toward deeper purpose.

THE HUMAN ANIMAL: The present moment is a cage, its bars forged from countless intersecting histories. The Agents are forced to acknowledge this fact. The individual indications of cosmic conspiracy are personal, infrequent, and easily dismissed. It is

only through the accumulation of impossible coincidence over a lifetime that the Agents realize their immutable purpose.

General Guidelines

KNOW YOUR PLAYERS. If they cannot engage with the terror of fatalism, even as they control the lives of fictional characters, this campaign may not be for them.

WATCH YOUR PLAYERS. If players grow frustrated with the helplessness of their characters, reduce the emphasis on the forces that seek to control them. Zoom in and remind players of their personal agency. The illusion of freedom is a matter of scale, and the Handler adjusts the lens.

MOVE QUICKLY. Don't allow groups to get stuck in cycles of existential angst. Avoid dithering and ceaseless preparation by refocusing on more mundane duties to Delta Green and Bonds. End group paralysis by reasserting the immediacy of each Agent's life or the demands of the mission.

STAY IN CHARACTER. When the players pause to debate plans and theories, encourage them to do so in the voices of their characters. Focus their attention on portraying the emotions of the Agents even during tactical discussions.

REITERATE THE CLUES. *God's Teeth* presents Agents with a huge investigation spanning years. When a week or two passes between games, players may forget information. Generously remind players of important things Agents have learned.

THE PRICE

The Marks of Bast

Bast's manipulations of causality sooner or later physically mark those who serve as its Teeth. By these marks, the Teeth may be recognized by the faithful. See **CHIPPING THE TEETH** on page 38 for the moments when the Agents gain their scars.

New Teeth

The chosen of Bast are not protected from its hunger. Teeth break. New ones grow in their place. At any point after “Go Forth,” use the following method to replace fallen Agents with new characters. These fresh troops start the game as members of the Program.

Bureaucratic Phase: Moles

At any point after “Go Forth,” the events of *God's Teeth* provide Delta Green ample reason to become extremely interested in the Agents. The Program remains suspicious, fearful, and covetous all at once for the remainder of the campaign. Assign replacement Agents as “consultants” sent to assist the Teeth in investigations. In private, inform these Agents that their real mission is to spy on the Teeth and report suspicious behavior up the Program's chain of command. If more than one is assigned at once, they are tasked with spying on the Teeth and each other, ensuring their partners don't “turn.” The Program never tells the spies what it finds so concerning. A new Agent's knowledge of previous events depends on what (if anything) the Teeth wish to reveal, whatever they can piece together through observation, and what you share through uncanny coincidences.

Obscuring the exact motivation for the Program's surveillance allows the Handler to mold the rationale

to the group's choices. If the Teeth keep their condition a complete secret, the Outlaw activity in “Go Forth” is reason enough for close monitoring. If it's revealed that the Teeth possess supernatural powers? In that case, the replacement Agents are briefed as spies, but the Program is using them more like test subjects.

Syncretic Phase: Teeth

Play out a replacement Agent's role as a Program mole for as long as it remains interesting. Then scar the Agent with the Mark of Bast as described in **CHIPPING THE TEETH** on page 38. Reality itself serves the god that ensnared the original Teeth, and the newcomer has been caught in the tide of that fate. They don't work for the Program anymore, not really. They serve god. They always have.

If possible, mark the newbie in front of Agents that have already been selected as Teeth. Existing Teeth each lose 0/1 SAN from the unnatural as they watch their curse take on hosts. Reflect that SAN loss back on the freshly marked Agent if the old-timers reveal what this omen really means.

If multiple replacement Agents need initiation, immerse them into the world of Synchronicity one by one. Let those anticipating the mark sweat for a bit, waiting for the moment when their dread curdles into destiny. When they think they might have escaped it, another impossible confluence of chance brands them.

Powers of the Teeth

Bast does not manifest physically or even psychically except through its Teeth. They are its avatars. And so it confers certain powers to them. These powers emerge after “Go Forth.” They emphasize the terrible curse that comes with becoming proxy to an inscrutable force. They also lend a continuity of theme if the Handler runs scenarios between those of *God's Teeth*.

The abilities seem like advantages. They seem like sources of strength. Sometimes they are. But they only mean the Agents have themselves become the implements of some unnatural force. And the devil's tools won't ever tear down the devil's house.

Scent

When one of the Teeth encounters a person or place that they suspect has been affected by the unnatural, the Handler may make a secret **Sanity** test. Whether the **Scent** power manifests is always up to the Handler, and the Handler should never explain how the power works. Let Agents come up with their own explanations. Once they become aware of it, players may even ask to make this test. Let them call for their own **SAN** loss.

SUCCESS: The Agent recognizes whether the target person or environment has been affected by the unnatural. It may be stronger with particularly deep or repeated exposure, but there's nothing more specific than that. Recognition of some past unnatural contact manifests as a shifting, meaty smell that alternates between appetizing and nauseating. No **Scent** emanates

from targets that have not encountered higher-dimensional beings or their arts.

The **Scent** does not identify characters or places whose only exposure to the unnatural is the powers of Bast. But it does emanate from characters and creatures chosen of Bast who also had other unnatural exposure.

The sense in no way distinguishes between victims, practitioners, and unknowing bystanders. There is no indication as to what this ghost smell indicates, though the players may soon figure that out. No humans except Teeth can detect it.

Once the Agent catches the **Scent**, whether rightly or wrongly, it grows more powerful if the Agent remains in the presence of the source. It draws the Agent's mind toward bloody impulses. The urge to murder becomes a painful compulsion. The Agent knows instinctively that the distress can be alleviated by killing the source of the offending smell.

The smell and urges subside if the Agent is removed from the situation.

FAILURE: If the **SAN** test fails, there are two possible outcomes. If the Agent has never experienced the **Scent** before, nothing happens. The Agent loses no **SAN**. But if the Agent has succeeded in detecting the **Scent** at least once, describe the target as if they are covered in that taint...whether they are or not. This is a false positive for the weird sensations caused by interaction with Bast. Memory of this sensation is often indiscernible from present experience. The Agent loses 1 **SAN** for refusing the urge to attack the source of the stench or if the **SAN** test is a fumble.

Power	Function	Trigger	Secret SAN Roll Success	Secret SAN Roll Failure
Scent	Detection	Suspecting the unnatural	Recognition of past unnatural exposure and compulsion to kill the exposed	<i>If no past Scent success:</i> No effect. <i>Otherwise:</i> False positive and compulsion to kill; lose 1 SAN
Call	Understanding	SAN loss from the unnatural	No effect	Revelation of Bast's history or physics; lose 1 SAN or 1D8 with a fumble
Hunt	Feeding	Reduced to 1–2 HP	No effect	Gain 2D4 HP without healing injuries and lose that much SAN

Call

The Agents' exposure to such an alien power sometimes forms their dreams. The sleeping hippocampus twists the incomprehensibly Other into shapes that manifest in the visual cortex.

Occasionally, one of the Teeth who loses **SAN** to the unnatural wakes from nightmares of hunger and devouring unrestrained by human conscience or empathy. Draw one or two unique details from this section or from **INVESTIGATING BAST** on page 11.

Agents might seek more. They might try to **Call** their "patron" for answers. It requires a **Sanity** test.

SUCCESS: The veneer of reality holds. The Agent receives no guidance. No **SAN** loss.

FAILURE: Answer one question accurately in the form of a vision that makes little sense. Imagine if you asked a professor in another room to help you solve a complex math equation, but the only way the teacher can answer is by sending clips from nature documentaries with the sound cut out. That's what it is like trying to get a straight answer from Bast. Engineer as much poetic symbolism into the images as you can into largely inscrutable answers. The Agent loses 1 **SAN**.

FUMBLE: This syncretic force beneath reality has discovered, through eons of experimentation, a statistical ensemble and sequence of subatomic particle manipulations specific to the Agent's brain to communicate something of its nature. The Agent dreams of a universe made of a single organism, dying and racing to escape. They "see" dark matter between the circuits that make up the circulatory system of God. They feel a hunger of cosmic vastness. A chain around the neck that has choked them for eons. The experience is agonizing. Wide-scale manipulation of the molecules in the mind causes nosebleeds, dysphagia, seizures, and other symptoms of trauma. The Agent loses 1D8 **SAN** from the unnatural and half as many HP. Adjust the physical symptoms to match the severity of the damage. The Agent gains a number of points in the **Unnatural** skill equal to the **SAN** lost.

If another **Call** roll fumbles, replace this vision with something found in **INVESTIGATING BAST** on page 11.

Hunt

For any given Agent, this only ever happens once. An Agent reduced to 1 or 2 HP may find themselves driven to feats of superhuman endurance as they suffer the attention of Bast. It cannot prevent the Agent from being killed by a successful **Lethality** roll. The unfortunate Agent must make a **Sanity** roll.

SUCCESS: Nature takes its course. No effect. No **SAN** loss beyond what the Agent suffers from the injuries.

FAILURE: The Agent loses 2D4 **SAN** from the unnatural and immediately gains that many HP, despite their injuries. Teeth can keep fighting with gaping chest wounds, disembowelment, missing limbs, and other injuries that anatomy would suggest are impossible. This HP gain does not remove the need to roll for permanent injury. If the Agent suffers temporary insanity from the injury or the power of the **Hunt**, the Agent's reaction is always to struggle and fight. The Agent suffers homicidal rage, attacking every creature within reach who has the taint of the unnatural. There is no ability to discern friend from foe in this condition. Seeing the Agent up and moving after sustaining such terrible damage costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural. Bast disguises the effects of this power from the **Scent** of other Teeth.

AFTERMATH: If the Agent somehow survives the **Hunt**, the effect ends the moment the unnatural threat is eliminated or escapes. The Agent loses the HP that Bast's power granted. If that brings the Agent to 0 HP, the Agent can be saved only if treated with a successful **First Aid** test made within the next few minutes. The Agent suffers a permanent injury (see page 55 of the *Agent's Handbook*) and suffers amnesia regarding the battle. Actively trying to remember anything about the event costs 0/1 **SAN**. The only thing that the Agent can recall is a terrible, wonderful, bloodthirsty euphoria like nothing they have experienced before.

Investigating Bast

When the Agents learn of their nature, they might seek signs of the Nameless God in history, occultism, the sciences, and their own visions and dreams. Those who seek shall find.

The Worship of Bast

Agents can pursue the farthest origins of humanity's service to the Nameless by rolling **Anthropology**, **Archeology**, **History**, and **Occult**. The more of those four skills succeed, the more the Agents learn. Agents can work together, each trying to succeed, but each of those four skills counts no more than once toward what they learn.

An Agent who visits the Egyptian National Library and Archives in Cairo and knows an Ancient Egyptian **Foreign Language** skill at 50% or better gains a +20% bonus to each roll. The bonus is also available if they hire an academically skilled translator. An Agent wasting personal pursuit on a failed roll gets a +20% to the same skill if the pursuit is repeated. This bonus stacks until the first successful roll, but it costs 1 SAN from helplessness for each additional failure.

With each success, an Agent made aware of the new discoveries may attempt an **Occult** roll to find more details. There is no bonus available.

After you know how many of the four skills succeed, see **UNNATURAL REVELATIONS** on page 12.

First Success: The Lioness

Once the Teeth acknowledge the motifs of atavism and predation taking hold of their lives, search for a precedent in history leads to Ancient Egypt. In myths, Bast—or B'sst, Bastet, or Mau—was at first a more ferocious goddess than she is remembered today. She was hunter, predator, and defender. Her sister in the North, Sekhmet, bears similar characteristics, as do Sobek and Anubis. Bast and Sekhmet, the Eyes of Re, slew the water-serpent Apophis, a formless monstrosity of absolute evil and unnatural chaos. However, Bast's protection was not without price. Her hunger

for the blood of men was unquenchable, and priests were said to lull Bast to sleep by mixing her feast of blood with red wine. She hunted to the benefit of mankind even as she consumed it.

OCCULT BONUS—APOPHIS: Bast's battles with Apophis—whatever that name represents—reflects not order opposing chaos but predator feeding on prey.

Second Success: The Black Rites

Only correlative interpretation of scattered sources reveals the form and purpose of early worship of Bast. The Agents find records and remnants at Memphis and Bubastis; the archaeological work of Professor Enoch Bowen; dubious translations of Abd al-Hazred's accounts of Bastet and Sekhmet in *Al-Azif*; and certain discredited etchings of pictographs found in a now-destroyed tomb in southern Gebel Dosha.

The Black Rites of Bast began in southern Egypt in the late predynastic age, before 3000 BC. They were a codified regime of religious child abuse, sorcery, and torture. Priests of Bast enacted the “mysteries” of their cult on young orphans snatched from raided tribes or sold into slavery. Children were kept prelingual and carefully monitored to prolong their pain without reaching death.

The victims' animal pain called out to Bast. The goddess sent warriors called her “Teeth” to avenge the children. The Teeth followed the stench of sorcery and slaughtered the priests. The priests happily laid down their lives as sacrifices, offering their blood to “make drunk” their savior with the taint of magic so she might refrain from consuming the world. The Teeth sought new prey, inevitably destroying themselves in a helpless war against unnatural chaos.

Surviving victims of the Black Rites became the next generation of sorcerer-priests.

OCCULT BONUS—FERALS: The worship of Bast has at times been associated with bizarre behavior in animals and children. In fact, it's unclear whether Bast finds any distinction between the two.

Unnatural Revelations

Agents can understand the force driving their lives by delving into the forbidden knowledge of the unnatural, seeking answers deeper than human conceptions of history. An Agent studying the history of Bast in this way can piece together important realizations from trends only the Teeth can detect. With each successful roll for **THE WORSHIP OF BAST** (page 11), the Agent can attempt an **Unnatural** roll, gaining a +20% bonus with the second "Worship" success or +40% with the third. The first Agent to discover the complete Origins of Bast realizes the full scope of Unnatural knowledge all at once, an inevitable truth that washes over their mind like a great destroying wave.

FIRST SUCCESS: The Agent realizes simply this: Physics, indeed all of humanity's sciences, are a paltry attempt to explain away or deny an active and universal hunger at work in the cosmos. The Agent loses 1 **SAN** and gains +1% **Unnatural** skill. The Agent may attempt an **Unnatural** test with the same modifier to know the deeper secrets that follow.

SECOND SUCCESS (+20%): This cosmic hunger has intent. A nameless god, it feeds upon the processes of death and dissolution. It especially seeks as prey entities that have found ways to escape death. The Nameless God chooses and manipulates servants as metaphysical proxies in its hunt. The Agent loses 1 **SAN**, gains +1% **Unnatural** skill, and can attempt another **Unnatural** test at a further +20% to know the even direr secrets that follow.

THIRD SUCCESS (+40%): This cosmic hunger engineered and shaped the slow death of the universe itself. Both reality disgorged by the daemon sultan Azathoth and life sparked by eternal Shub-Niggurath feed the Nameless God. The Nameless God's servants supply its favorite kinds of sustenance while they slowly themselves become its prey. The Agent loses 1D8 **SAN** and gains +4% **Unnatural** skill.

Successes	'Worship of Bast' Discovery	Bonus Roll	Bonus Discovery
One	THE LIONESS , page 11	Occult	AOPHIS , page 11
Two	THE BLACK RITES , page 11	Occult	FERALS , page 11
Three	THE TAMING OF BAST , page 13	Occult	ABIOGENESIS , page 14
Four	THE ORIGINS OF BAST , page 14	Occult	LACUNAE , page 14



Third Success: The Taming of Bast

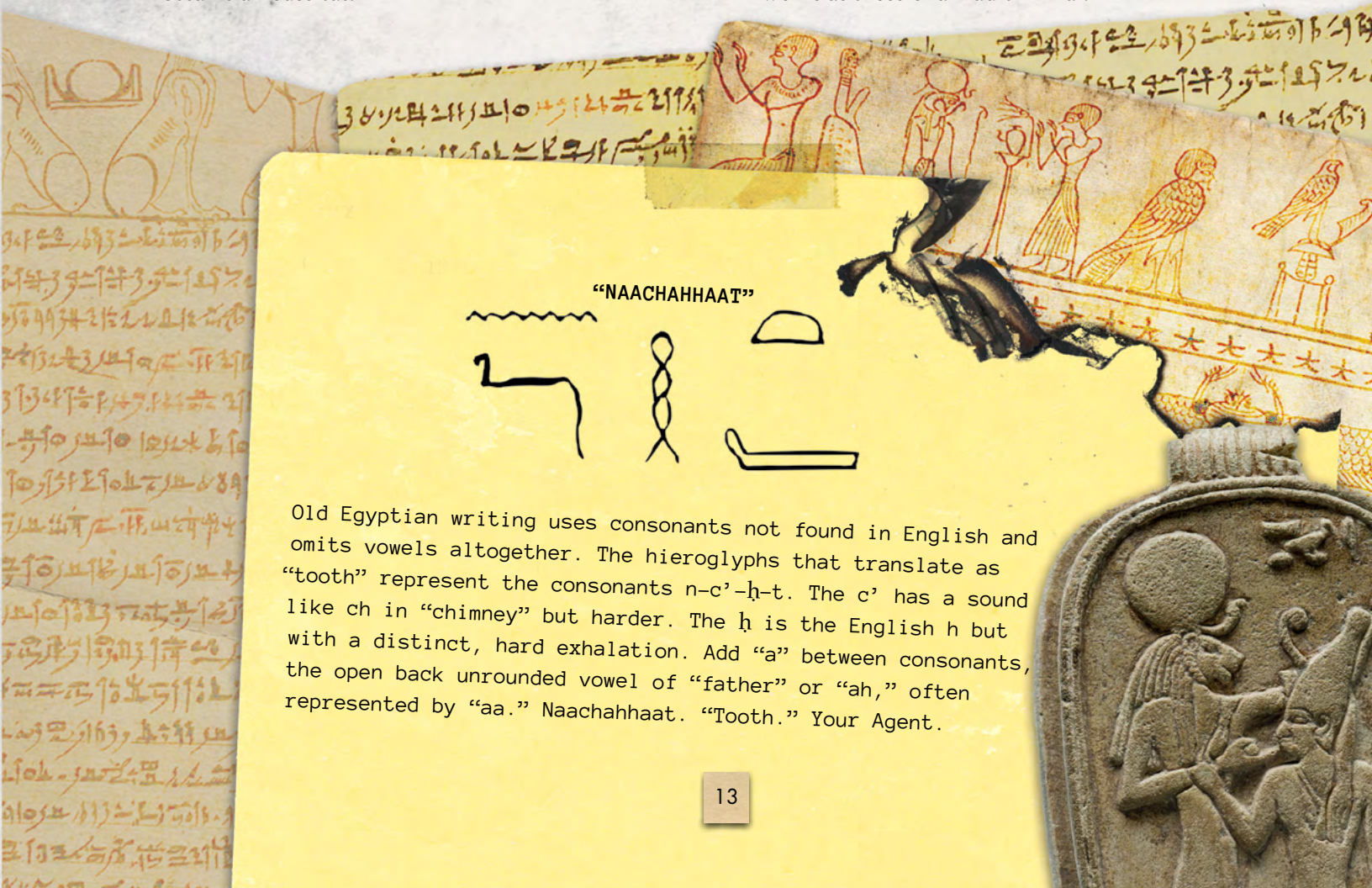
Continued pursuit of Bast in the ancient world requires deviant historical interpretations and questionable scholarship.

A statue of the Pharaoh Khasekhemwy, erected in the south of Egypt, commemorates a Second Dynasty civil war in which 47,000 rebels were killed. Owing to discarded endnotes from an early draft of archaeologist Enoch Bowen's thesis, certain crackpot historians regard this apocalyptic death count as literal rather than exaggeration. They support Bowen's initial claim that the battle's true instigator was the pharaoh's advisor, the priest Nephren-Ka.

The same discarded draft alludes to an entire force of Bast's fanatical "Teeth" lost amongst the slaughtered rebel army. Afterward—first from behind the throne of Khasekhemwy's son Djoser, and then as the Black Pharaoh—Nephren-Ka purged the sects of Bast and altered all records of them. The seat of Bast's cult moved north to Bubastis. Bast changed to a goddess of domesticity, revelry, and fertility. The blood-drunk lion became a house cat.

Ironically, the simultaneous softening of Bast's public image and perversion of her hidden rites spread her worship farther than ever. Bast's priests continued to war with the Black Pharaoh. New Teeth were summoned by torturous rituals performed deep in the wastes of the Sahara. Warriors of Bast allied with Sneferu in the revolt that drove Nephren-Ka from power, and the grateful new pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty turned a blind eye to the cult's cruelties.

The Pharaoh Nitocris resurrected worship of the Black Pharaoh in the Sixth Dynasty and Bast's warriors found their way back into battle. Some say they were instrumental in the drowning of Nitocris's subjects, and that fear of their goddess drove Nitocris to self-entombment. Some say the threat of their presence drove Akhenaten to suppress the worship of Nyarlathotep and, when it was clear that Bast cared nothing for worship, to abandon the many gods of Egypt altogether for monotheistic worship of Aten, the sun. Some say that Nyarlathotep had his revenge when Akhenaten's successors threw down all his works as those of a mad criminal.



Old Egyptian writing uses consonants not found in English and omits vowels altogether. The hieroglyphs that translate as "tooth" represent the consonants n-c'-h-t. The c' has a sound like ch in "chimney" but harder. The h is the English h but with a distinct, hard exhalation. Add "a" between consonants, the open back unrounded vowel of "father" or "ah," often represented by "aa." Naachahhaat. "Tooth." Your Agent.

OCCULT BONUS—ABIOGENESIS: Surviving accounts of the rites differ too much to belong to the same, continuous cult, not to mention their incongruity with a goddess of the household. But the original dark rites of Bast seemingly appeared multiple times throughout history, separated by centuries and despite active censorship.

Fourth Success: The Origins of Bast

Around the 130th century BC, worship of a lion-goddess first known in forgotten Lemuria became prominent in the Second Empire of Atlantis. Her priests warred on cults of a mighty sea god and monstrous peoples who came from beneath the waves. They must have failed: Atlantis sank. An Atlantean diaspora migrated to Africa and introduced their hungry goddess to prehistoric Egypt as Bast. She entered human history as an inherited weapon from a failed war against demons from beneath the sea.

OCCULT BONUS—LACUNAE: Details of the true cult of Bast were never recorded, leaving the work of Enoch Bowen and Abd al-Hazred full of disinformation and shoddy scholarship. (If the roll results in a fumble, the Agent discovers that Bast was said to be one of the thousand faces of Nyarlathotep, a little-known god that seemed to simultaneously represent revelation, access to the afterlife and to the gods, and invocation of the powers of chaos. An Agent who learns of this conclusion and makes an **Unnatural** test at +20% loses 1/1D4 SAN from helplessness at the terror of what god might now rule their lives.)

The Trail of Bast

Any Agent who seeks signs of Bast's influence in more recent human history can attempt a series of **History** rolls. With each success, the Agent learns the information in one of the following entries. Success with the listed bonus skill makes additional connections.

An Agent finds nothing on failed roll but gets a +20% to the next attempt. This bonus stacks until a roll succeeds, but each failure costs 1 SAN for helplessness.

Though the suffering of children is nothing new in human history, The Nameless God's trail in modern records revolves around instances of feral children that coincide with uncharacteristic animal behavior. Put simply, the thing sees pain like a beacon.

Myanmar, 1880

Seeking historical correlations with the events of Cornucopia House or an explanation for **THE BOOK IN THE WALL** (page 69), an Agent finds the following.

Charles Augustus Munro, Inspector General for the Imperial Indian Police stationed in British Burma, related in a letter to his sister Charlotte a strange occurrence in 1880. Officers under his supervision raided a village in the jungles of the modern-day Rakhine State suspected of supporting guerrilla activities. The village was easily pacified, but officers soon heard screaming from the outskirts of the village.

Munro ran to investigate and found what he described as "a sight fit to incite the hardest soul's gorge into rebellion: an elderly woman harried by a swarming horde of mongooses, rodents which young Hector can attest are similar in form to our polecat-ferret. The beasts tore into and through the woman with a savagery unfit for description, dear

Successes	'Trail of Bast' Discovery	Trained Bonus	Bonus Discovery
One	MYANMAR, 1880 , page 14	History	SAKI , page 15
Two	CORNWALL, 1952 , page 15	Bureaucracy	PROVOST , page 15
Three	KENYA, 1987 , page 16	Science (Any)	FAUNA , page 16

sister, and my nightmares are nightly haunted by the image of my men futilely trying to rip the rabid pests from where they clung so tenaciously to the woman's flesh. Her unbelievable demise and our futile attempts to forestall her fate were attended by a mute chorus of wide-eyed children, lined up on the floor of the hut and watching the attack as if they had paid to see one of the infamous cobra fights found in the less salubrious warrens of Arkady."

The British could not elicit any response from the children. Prisoners from the village called the woman Ma Phae Wah, or "Yellow-Ribbon Woman." They lived in fear of her and resigned sickly children to her care lest she visit her wrath on the village. The letter ends with a screed of colonialist complaints about local superstition, as many of Munro's native officers soon "went hunting" and never returned.

The incident exists only in the family correspondence and has no other record in surviving documents of the British Raj, though Munro's raid does appear to have been sanctioned for the date and time alleged in the letter.

HISTORY BONUS—SAKI: Inspector General Munro was the father of Hector Hugh Munro, the author more famous under the pen-name Saki. Saki wrote the story "Sredni Vashtar," inspired in part by his father's Burmese correspondence. The reference to ferrets is enough to concern any survivor of Cornucopia House. If Agents found Condradin's book (see **THE BOOK IN THE WALL** on page 69), the impossible connection costs 0/1 SAN from the unnatural as they realize there is no way language could have been used to reproduce these events in history.

Cornwall, 1952

An Agent starts finding other intersections of strange animal behavior and child abuse.

In 1952, a massive bird attack and die off in Cornwall's Port Isaac resulted in the death of one Willis Emerson. The fisherman was driven off a cliff as he was assaulted by an unprecedented flock of cormorants, all of which dropped dead from the sky moments after the attack.

In the following week, a local news article recounts the discovery of a twelve-year-old girl named Iris Belford in Emerson's cellar. Identified by a filthy embroidered blanket that appeared to be the girl's only possession, Belford had been reported missing by her aunt during the blitz of '41. Long thought dead in the blast that killed her parents, the mute child appeared to have been living the entire time in the home of Emerson, a life-long bachelor who came from Brichester in '44.

The paper reports the unnamed constable who discovered Iris Belford traveling to London to reunite her with surviving family members. There is no record of their arrival, nor any other mention of them in the historical record.

BUREAUCRACY BONUS—PROVOST: While the surviving Belford family never received Iris, her escort—Constable Donald Provost—was reported missing by his wife. Contacting the Provosts in the modern day finds that much has been forgotten, but a descendant of Melanie Hagen (formerly Provost) remembers one thing their grandmother used to say about her first husband. Before he left to escort the mute child to London, he gravely told her, "the birds in the sky done their duty, and now I must do mine." She never saw Donald again.



Kenya, 1987

The village of Dhuusasaso, near Kenya's northern border, was wiped out by a baboon troop numbering in the thousands. By the time army officials responded to panicked reports, the village was abandoned, its residents torn limb from limb.

Official records claim the primates were driven by extreme drought. Though it was a dry year, worse conditions have been seen across the continent before and since without such an incident.

Witness accounts found buried in records offices at Nairobi contain a different narrative, dismissed as hysteria at the time. Survivors claimed the attack was preceded by the arrival of a few desperate soldiers of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) fleeing the Second Sudanese Civil War. The men hardly stopped in the village at all, pressing on in desperate flight and warning of "the beast child." That night, the baboons attacked. One fleeing journalist described a naked boy walking at their head.

A few Kenyan soldiers were dispatched to investigate the claims of SPLM incursion, but most returned without having made contact with the enemy. A few who never checked in were thought deserters and never heard from again. Officials dismissed the SPLM reports as clever lies concocted to secure a faster military response than would come for a mere natural disaster.

SCIENCE (ANY) BONUS—FAUNA: Humans are, in fact, just animals. If Bast can bend the entire animal kingdom under its will, that includes children and the Agents. An Agent who realizes that adulthood protects them only from understanding, not control, loses 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

The Physics of Bast

An Agent who has **Science (Physics)** at 50% or higher can search for the influence of Bast on probability at the subatomic level. It requires arrangements to work with the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in Switzerland, which requires a **Bureaucracy** test and a wait of 4D6 months. Timing is important; the LHC is closed for repairs from 2019 to 2022.

Access to the LHC allows a series of **Science (Physics)** tests. Before the first test, the Agent or an assistant can attempt a **Science (Mathematics)** test to gain a +20% bonus. Each success reveals more revelations, and further **Science (Mathematics)** tests can provide deeper insights.

First Success: The Bast Particle

The researcher hypothesizes a subatomic particle that lurks in higher dimensions suggested by string theory, yet interacts with known particles that our tools perceive. The researcher can name this new particle. We'll call it the Bast Particle. Changes to the particle can cause changes to other subatomic particles: nudging their masses, toggling their charges, altering their spins, mixing the colors and flavors of quarks and neutrinos.

The implications, if published, set the field of quantum physics aflame for a time, but ultimately as no more than a controversial hypothesis. Any of Bast's Teeth who conduct or study this research gain +1% **Unnatural** and lose 1 SAN from the unnatural based on their own weird experiences with causality.

MATHEMATICS BONUS—HEISENBERG: The collapse of probabilistic wave functions during experiments with the Bast Particle proves reproducible in the work of other physicists. However, while the split between occurrences of particle and wave remains the same in every reproducibility study, it is always slightly different in experiments run by the Agent. This is true for every experiment, even studies repeated by different scientists on the same equipment. The act of observation is enough to collapse the wave form in a subatomic particle, but the probability of either wave or particle should in no way be affected by the identity of the observer. Though the mathematical deviations are small enough to be beneath statistical significance,

Successes	'Physics of Bast' Discovery	Trained Bonus	Bonus Discovery
One	THE BAST PARTICLE , page 16	Science (Mathematics)	HEISENBERG , page 16
Two	QUANTUM ENGINEERING , page 17	Science (Mathematics)	COMPUTRONIUM , page 17
Three	ENTROPIC CONSUMPTION , page 17	Science (Mathematics)	FACTORY FARM , page 18
Four+	FURTHER STUDIES , page 18	N/A	N/A

there is some evidence to suggest physics behaves differently around the Teeth. Gain an additional +1% **Unnatural** and lose another 1 SAN.

Second Success: Quantum Engineering

Enough alterations to charge and mass, facilitated by enough Bast Particles, could ripple upwards until they altered the macroscopic world. The laws of entropy limit the scope of such changes sharply, but the implications are profound. For example, it should be possible to use the Bast Particle to alter the function of neurons in order to shape behavior.

Extrapolating from base principles, it's possible to imagine the wide-scale quantum manipulation of entire evolutionary timelines and even physics itself. The limitations of such wide-scale engineering would depend on energy consumption, perceptive capabilities, and the existence of a consciousness capable of enacting so many complex calculations; however, it seems theoretically possible. No one in the scientific community entertains the idea, but any of Bast's Teeth who conduct or study this research gain +1% **Unnatural** and lose 1 SAN from the unnatural based on their own experiences with behavior and language warped by their god.

MATHEMATICS BONUS—COMPUTRONIUM: The possibility that Bast Particles are the tool of a single consciousness carries shattering implications. A being existing in the 0-dimensional quantum foam would essentially

exist outside time, but it would still need to expend energy to perceive and shape the reality detectable by human tools. Calculating the energy requirements would require processing capabilities only guessed at by humanity, such as the inexhaustible computing power of hypothetical computronium. The form and appetites of such a system would occupy most matter in the known universe, perhaps the 68% of total universal energy expenditure currently explained away as mysterious "dark energy." If true, it would be more accurate to say the universe is part of Bast rather than the other way around. Gain an additional +1% **Unnatural** and lose another 1 SAN.

Third Success: Entropic Consumption

The manifestation of the Bast Particle in dimensions our tools can perceive seems to correlate with rising entropy. There are hints that it is affected by entropic processes and that it in turn affects or facilitates them.

The role of entropy in the evolution of organic life, hypothesized by Jeremy England, would seem to tie the Bast Particle to the existence of life. (Give the player the **ENTROPY** handout on page 18.) Any of Bast's Teeth who conduct or study this research gain +1D4% **Unnatural** and lose 1D4 SAN from the unnatural due to a creeping certainty that their life is all but predetermined by some malign power that operates outside time, manipulating events with levers smaller than femtometers to feed on entropy and death.

MATHEMATICS BONUS—FACTORY FARM: Considering the manipulative capabilities of the Bast Particle and its energy requirements, a disturbing question of causality arises. If it fuels itself by embezzling energy from every subatomic interaction in the universe, it wouldn't be beyond the force's power to rewrite fundamental physical laws to better satiate its demands. Depending on how long Bast has existed, biological life may have come into existence solely to feed Bast more entropy. The universe itself is Bast's factory farm. Gain an additional +1D4% **Unnatural** and lose another 1D4 SAN.

Further Studies

The researcher, if one of the Teeth, can continue to study the implications of their findings. For each home pursuit spent on it, they can attempt one **Science (Physics)** or **Science (Mathematics)** test. Failure gains +1% **Unnatural** at the cost of 1 SAN. Success gains +1D4% **Unnatural** at the cost of 1D4 SAN.

OBSESSION: An Agent driven to the Breaking Point in any stage of Bast Particle research gains an obsession disorder that compels them to continue these

studies. Devoting a home pursuit to anything else requires a successful **Sanity** roll.

GOD'S MIND: An Agent reduced to 0 SAN as a result of studying the Bast Particle loses all language function, but gains an ability never before enjoyed by mankind. By reverse-engineering downwards from the level of their own cognition, they can collapse the wave function of the Bast Particle and instantiate it on the subatomic level using nothing but the power of thought. The afflicted researcher does this compulsively to no immediately discernible effect, appearing to outsiders to be stuck in a catatonic stupor. This might reveal astonishing things back at the LHC, should the deranged researcher return.

The Bast Particles' coalescence has a secondary effect of creating the Lightest Kaluza-Klein Particle, or LKP, a theoretical exotic radiation specific to the universal extra dimensions theorem. Unshielded and undetectable, enormous concentrations of LKPs gather around the afflicted researcher, eventually killing them and a wide swath of biological life around them with invisible, traceless radiation sickness.

Entropy

Entropy is the measure of disorder in a system. A system with more possible states of matter—water molecules vibrating in a liquid form as compared to water frozen at absolute zero—has more entropy. Since the movement of molecules causes heat, humans often think of entropy as the dissipation of heat energy, but entropy increases across every possible measurement and at every possible opportunity. The universe moves constantly toward disorder.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that the total entropy in an isolated system can only increase. A system evolves spontaneously toward a state of thermodynamic equilibrium, a state of maximal entropy. On the scale of the largest known isolated system, maximal entropy occurs at the theorized "heat death of the universe."

The hypothesis of dissipation-driven adaptation regards life through the lens of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Lifeforms are volatile, chaotic objects. A stone merely absorbs heat; a plant absorbs light and creates complex sugars and gases. Those countless processes each contribute to rising entropy. The stone cannot match the plant's volatility without heat strong enough to melt it. Life, in contrast, requires low energy to create high entropy. Atoms arranged into the unlikely structure of a lifeform tend to maintain that state because it increases the system's entropy.

Fires go out. Cold creeps in. The universe thins and dissipates until only stillness and death remain. Life only hastens the process.

Killing

Delta Green sometimes expects even Agents with no training in violence to kill. Bast demands it. Agents who feel unprepared have many creative possibilities.

CAT'S PAWS

America is haunted by guns and people who daydream about using them. Agents in trouble can easily get armed men on the scene. Roll Luck to see how they respond to danger. As far as Delta Green is concerned, the real challenge is explaining away the unnatural so the outsiders go home with only a killing to concern them.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Mixing bleach and vinegar yields chlorine gas. Chlorine in a typical mix has 5% lethality with a Speed of 24 hours, and it stuns victims as effectively as pepper spray. More potent phosgene can be purchased from industrial suppliers or synthesized with a Science (Chemistry) test by using carbon monoxide and bleach. The same skill could synthesize hydrogen cyanide gas from propane and ammonia. See page 61 of the Agent's Handbook for their effects.

EXPLOSIVES

Propane, gasoline, the right kind of fertilizer, and a little Demolitions skill can go a long way. See page 98 of the Agent's Handbook.

FIRE

Trapping a victim inside a burning building inflicts 2D6 damage per turn. A particularly brilliant blaze inflicts Lethality 10%. Demolitions or Forensics can obscure the cause.

HIT AND RUN

Ramming someone at moderate speed inflicts half the vehicle's HP as a Lethality rating: 12% for an ordinary car. It requires a Drive test only if the victim knows you're coming.

OVERDOSE

A good, stiff injection of fentanyl leaves a victim unconscious in seconds and causes Lethality 15% at a Speed of 1D6 minutes. Getting it may require burglarizing or robbing a pharmacy or using Criminology to find an illicit dealer. Administering it to an unwilling victim requires a Medicine or Pharmacy test. Even a failed test may get enough into their system to knock them out. Keep naloxone on hand in case you fumble and inject the wrong target.

SABOTAGE

An Agent can use Drive or an appropriate Craft skill to damage a car's brake lines. Make a Luck roll for the severity of the crash.

SURPRISE ATTACKS

See page 53 of the Agent's Handbook. Attacks against an active but unaware target are at +20%, and any hit is a critical hit. Take a turn to aim and gain +20%. Use a targeting laser for +20%. Use a shotgun for +20%. No roll is needed to kill a sleeping or helpless victim.

Part One: Go Forth

“Take hope from the heart of man
and you make him a beast of prey.”

—Ouida



Part One: Go Forth

IT IS 3 FEB 2001, AND AGENT CLOVE OF C-CELL tasks her only Delta Green cross-cell contact with a wetwork mission at Cornucopia House, an orphanage located on a remote hobby farm near Zion, Maryland.

There is only one Delta Green agent among the player characters. That is Clove's contact. That agent is to gather the rest, all Friendlies, enter the orphanage at night, and kill every adult there. Clove tells the Agent it is a recruitment test.

Clove does not say that A-cell does not support or even know about her mission. The rest of C-cell was wiped out in an ill-planned action against a strange Russian cult called the Skoptsi a month ago. Clove is desperate. She can't stomach the idea of leaving alive those who killed her cell, or leaving at-risk children in their clutches. The targets *have* to die.

Neither Clove, the Agent, nor the Friendlies making up the wet-work team have any idea their mission is manipulated by the unnatural force we call Bast. (See **THE GOD THAT FEEDS** on page 6 and **CONRADIN'S EXERCISE BOOK** on page 231 for information.)

Those Who Serve

The events of the game and organization can be trusted to bring the most disparate Agents together. Work with the players to create characters from the days of the old conspiracy, before the Program. The campaign begins around the turn of the millennium and ends 20 years later. Set the initial ages of characters with that time frame in mind.

One plays an Agent. The rest are Friendlies. Even so, no one character is in charge. At the time of the first scenario, Delta Green has no command structure that can be enforced on Friendlies. And after the first scenario, all of them join the Program with equal standing.

They come together out of desperation. They aren't the best for the job. They're the only ones available.

From the Beltway

The initial reason for the Agents' gathering is proximity to the mission area, not fitness or synergy. The preponderance of government agencies, academic institutions, and military institutions in and around Maryland make almost any *Delta Green* character concept fair game.

The Lost Agent

At the start of the campaign, the Agents have only the most threadbare connections to Delta Green. Only one of them is in fact an "Agent" at all, and that Agent has lost their old cellmates and fallen out of the conspiracy's attention. The conspiracy itself is undergoing a transformation that leaves many important things forgotten. Someone can volunteer for the role of lone, veteran Agent, or the players can decide randomly.

The lone Agent is part of a recent version of D-cell. D-cell was rebuilt in 1998 after some catastrophe overtook its prior members. Let the player choose a code name that starts with "D" such as Davis or Dina, along with the names, code names, and personalities of their two dead partners.

That Agent starts with one "damaged veteran" option from page 38 of the *Agent's Handbook* and can start with another if the player wishes. This represents past operations that caused the loss of the Agent's two partners in D-cell. Work with the player to name those lost Agents and describe one or two salient details from the horrors that claimed them.

It's up to the Handler whether the player's Agent knows D-cell's history before the Agent joined. Its previous leader was Agent Darren, a longtime Delta Green veteran who went to prison in 1997 and escaped in 1999. Rumors say he led a raid on a U.S. government facility in Puerto Rico and has been underground ever since. The player's Agent was not involved in those events. See *Delta Green: The Rules of Engagement* for details.

DISINFORMATION

YELLOW CARD

THE SKOPTSI

The inciting incident of *God's Teeth* deals with a dying cult. Within the Russian Orthodox sect called the Skoptsi is a cult devoted to Shub-Niggurath. The cultists castrate themselves not to atone for sins but in a bid to gain immortality. The cult relies on orphans to propagate throughout the generations. This branch of the Skoptsi live in an unincorporated community on the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay. The heart of the community is the Basilica of Our Virgin Mother, a Russian Orthodox cathedral with grim secrets beneath. The Skoptsi largely work as taxi drivers and in construction and plumbing. They are aided and protected by 80-year-old Fedor Berezhkov, a former Soviet assassin who defected in the 1950s and is still under the protection of the CIA. Berezhkov, alias Vasilii Karpov, in turn relies on a Russian gang led by former KGB officer Natalia Chermeninko. Further details are laid out in *Delta Green: Countdown* and *Delta Green: The Millennium*, but those details are unnecessary to play *God's Teeth*.

Skoptsi cultist Yelena Kalamatiano long helped the Skoptsi rejuvenate itself by maintaining a home for orphaned children, a constant source of new cultists. Kalamatiano has grown estranged from her cult. Denied the promise of immortality by cult leaders, she seeks unnatural salvation as a denomination of one, burning through the cult's recruitment of children to do it. The Skoptsi essentially have their hands tied regarding the way she runs her side of the organization. She is a powerful sorcerer in her own right, and she knows where all the bodies are buried. Literally.

The Skoptsi are lying as low as possible owing to casualties taken during their first interaction with Delta Green. They have no idea Yelena has been exposed, and they might be thankful if she dies...so long as her death cannot be traced back to their lair.

All this is to say that after the urgency of "Go Forth," pursuit of the Skoptsi can become its own scenario or even its own campaign. The Agents might be the instrument of the Skoptsi's final extinction: See **FINDING THE SKOPTSI** on page 88. Or the Handler may have the cult go into hiding, avoiding inevitable fallout by severing themselves from Cornucopia House.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

Baffled Friendlies

The other Agents start as Friendlies. Either together or separately, they helped FBI agent Gary Hall and his partner Lena Garner, a retired naval intelligence officer, on the fringes of a handful of strange investigations over the last few years. They know Hall by his real name and job title, and Garner too as far as they know. Give each Friendly player the information from **GARNER AND HALL** on this page.

The Friendlies have never heard of “C-cell,” Delta Green, or C-cell’s code names. They never met Clove or anyone else from C-cell. None of the Friendlies have had substantial contact with the unnatural, nothing that harmed them or cost them SAN. None have “damaged veteran” status from the *Agent’s Handbook*. They have only enough experience to know there is more to the world than the news lets on.

Backstories and Bonds

It is always tempting in a *Delta Green* game to gloss over the Agents’ histories, motivations, and Bonds. Resist that temptation. Start by brainstorming the basics. Whom does the Agent live with? Give them names. Where does the Agent work? Who are the Agent’s most regular colleagues or superiors? Does the Agent like the job? How does the employer regard the Agent?

Encourage the players to work together to give every NPC one or two unique personality signatures. Make each distinctive and relatable.

Most important of all, make sure each Agent emerges from the process with some crucial, powerful connection to one or two children. It could be the Agent’s own children. Or nieces or nephews. Or children the Agent saved or protected, whose memory stuck so the Agent still feels responsible.

TOP SECRET

DISINFORMATION

YELLOW CARD

GARNER AND HALL

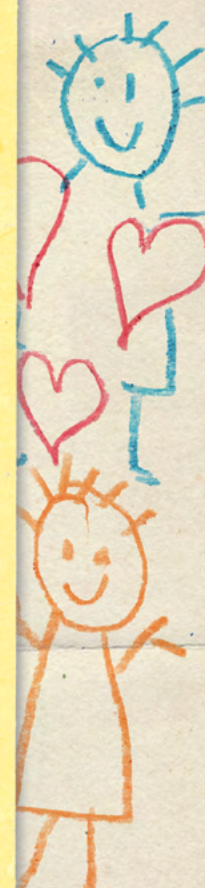
The Friendlies helped FBI Special Agent Gary Hall and his partner Lena Garner on the fringes of a few strange investigations since 1996. Most of those cases had supernatural overtones, but the Friendlies never experienced anything definitively unnatural.

Gary Hall, age 37, is a 10-year veteran of the FBI. He works on the organized crime desk in Baltimore. His caseload is background research on possible remnants of the Gambino crime family still operating in Maryland. That is deep background intel performed behind a desk. It gives him the flexibility to pursue weirder cases from time to time.

Lena Garner, age 47, is a retired naval intelligence officer and something of a cipher. She is friendly and outgoing without ever actually communicating anything personal about herself. On Hall’s strange cases she is technically a consultant, but she and Hall have a much deeper history together.

The most recent contact was a few months ago.

LONG THIS LINE



An Old Dark Age

The year 2001 is a distant and strange time to many players today. No phone is smart. Cellphones themselves are not exactly rare but hardly omnipresent. More common are cellphone-size pocket radios, miniature walkie-talkies with range typically limited to 1D4 kilometers. Text chats happen on computers that sluggishly dial in to the Internet. Broadband is uncommon. Internet video and audio rarely stream and must be tracked down and downloaded. Payphones and pagers are still useful. Phone books contain phone numbers, the white pages for individuals and the yellow pages for businesses. Hotels are more likely to use keys than key cards. Business websites are a novelty and rarely have any useful information. For most, the only portable maps are paper. Getting anything more than the most cursory information requires at least calling and speaking to someone with a source of information—files, library books, personal experience—or going in person to pick through documents. Information is scarce, contents rarely correlated, and each Agent is a placid island of ignorance.

Background

Agent Clove is Dr. Marie Noella, a criminologist at Wilmington University under contract as an FBI adviser. Her work focuses on international sex trafficking that funds global terror networks.

Her initial consultations regarding the Italian mafia in the early 1990s were a ruse by her recruiter, FBI agent and Delta Green member Gary Hall, to test her field work. Noella was approached by Delta Green in 1995. Each “consultation” since has been a cover for Delta Green operations with C-cell.

C-cell was extraordinarily active in the late 1990s. Its most senior member, Agent Charlie (former commando and FBI Special Agent Donald Poe), recruited Agent Clyde (FBI Special Agent Gary Hall) and Agent Cerise (retired naval intelligence officer Lena Garner) when he suspected his old partner Agent Cyrus (FBI Special Agent Curtis McRay) might be too shaken to

continue the fight. Noella acted in an occasional support capacity as Agent Clove. Agent Charlie became Delta Green’s point of contact for Clyde, Cerise, and Clove, feeding them information and operations without joining them.

The Karpov Catastrophe

While investigating international trade in occult artifacts, Noella cultivated sources among the staff at small airports. She learned of off-the-book overseas flights at Smyrna Airport, a rural Delaware airfield, that were chartered by Natalia Chermeninko, a member of the Russian mafia listed as an Interpol person of interest. Baggage handlers saw Chermeninko meeting near Smyrna’s private hangars with an elderly man named Vasili Karpov and handing him a box.

Her interest piqued, Noella received permission from A-cell to surveil Chermeninko and Karpov. She hoped to recover Cambodian artifacts with possible unnatural properties, thought to have been smuggled through Smyrna Airport.

On 14 JAN 2001, after Karpov had a short meeting at the hangar, C-cell tracked him to Coachman Taxi Garage in Perry Point, Maryland. Gary Hall—Agent Clyde—decided it was time to interrogate Karpov. Agent Clyde and Agent Cerise entered the garage while Agent Clove remained outside as lookout.

No one entered the garage from the street save the elderly Karpov. Noella has no idea what happened inside. There was a flurry of gunshots. By the time she reached the door, the garage was already on fire. Agent Clyde, suffering from multiple gunshot wounds, met her at the door. He passed her a black book of addresses and a half-burnt cartoon cat folder, sputtered “Run,” and stumbled back into the building, firing into the smoke. Agent Clove ran.

The FBI noticed Hall’s disappearance, but a gasoline pump was determined to have caused the conflagration. The roof had collapsed. That buried the bodies in a charred sinkhole of cracked concrete where they remained hidden and were never discovered by the authorities.

Gone Dark

Noella's panicked attempts to contact anyone in C-cell or A-cell were fruitless. Overnight, Noella's ability to contact Delta Green had vanished. She had no one to turn to but her sole contact with another cell: an anonymous agent, unknown to her and to be approached only in case of emergency. That's the lone Agent in the players' team.

Noella plans to trick that Agent into carrying out her revenge against the cult without A-cell's approval. Noella plans to leave the country as an emergency replacement teacher at Xiamen University, Wilmington's sister university in China. Her limited exposure to the horrors of Delta Green allowed her to maintain healthy relationships with her husband Charles and her four-year-old son Timothy. She means to keep herself and her family as far from Cornucopia House as possible.

Take care of your Friendlies!

- The less they know the better.
- They never hear code names.
- They meet nobody outside your cell.
- They never learn the Group exists.
- If they learn the Group exists, they never learn its real name.
- If they learn the Group exists, they never learn its real nature.
- Tell them it's official. Tell them anything but the truth.
- If they learn the Group's real name or real nature, tell A-Cell. That turns the Friendly into an Agent.

DISINFORMATION

YELLOW CARD

THE AGENT OF D-CELL

Agent Clove's meeting request came via the encrypted email system used by Delta Green. The player Agent is sole survivor and leader by default of D-cell. That Agent knows Agent Charlie and Agent Ernie, leaders of C-cell and E-cell, by code name only, and has addresses to reach them by encrypted email. The Agent does not know any other C-cell or E-cell code names and does not know the real identities of anyone in C-cell or E-cell.

The Agent, Noella's contact among the player characters, does not know Agent Clove's real name or recognize her. They have never worked together or, as far as the Agent knows, ever heard of each other. All the Agent knows is that Clove is using the Delta Green communications system.

In-person meetings between cells are supposed to be arranged between cell leaders. And no one possesses the Agent's contact information or codes save the leader of C-cell. That must now be Clove.

What's more, operations with multiple cells are not supposed to involve cells adjacent to each other in the alphabet structure. A lot about the meeting is strange.

Neither Agent Charlie nor Agent Ernie, whoever they are, respond to any communications.

If this makes the Agent uncomfortable, good. It's only going to get worse.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

The Meet

This first briefing involves only the full Agent of D-cell. At 2 a.m. on Saturday, 3 FEB 2001, the Agent pulls into a rural gas station off Interstate 95 in Maryland. A hidden beeper, plugged in at all times and concealed in a closet, had alerted the Agent to a message from Delta Green. That means the Agent had to jump through some hoops to log in secretly and read it.

It's snowing. There are two cars in the lot. One is a battered 1990 Toyota Corolla belonging to the attendant. The other is a sensible 1995 Honda Civic. Investigation into its license plate and VIN show it is owned by Slim's Sedans in Baltimore, a used-car dealer with high volume. It sold recently for \$5,000 cash. The paperwork for the sale was filled out incompletely. Slim says he fired that employee recently for just that kind of negligence. There is no way to tell who bought the car.

If the Agent comes early, they can watch until Clove pulls up in the 1995 Civic. She goes inside, slips the attendant a \$20 bill to buy an hour for a meeting and his silence, and goes to the back. Whether the Agent follows or confronts her outside, the briefing goes the same way.

The attendant nods as the Agent enters, indicating the small, closed kitchen in the rear by the restrooms, next to a shuttered counter. The only lights visible from the side door glow from three security monitors displaying the station's exterior. Switching on the lights reveals a middle-aged Black woman, standing still in the dark among the scattering roaches. Arrayed in front of her on an unlit stove are a pistol, a manila folder, and a filthy pink folder illustrated with a cartoon cat.

SYNCHRONICITY

THE GAS STATION

A cardboard advertisement for pizza sits near the kitchen's entrance. It's a large photo of a young girl's face, tilted back to bite into a slice of pizza. The image has been vandalized: the eyes blacked out, a stitched scar added to the cheek, and the phrase TOO WHITE written across the girl's enormous teeth. Each pepperoni slice has the word MEAT written across it in all caps.

The squeaking of the gas station's hot dog machine obscures possible attempts to record conversations. The stench of burned meat accompanies the dental-drill squeal of the metal rollers.



Briefing

Agent Clove is middle-aged, 1.5 meters tall and weighing 70 kg (barely five feet and 154 lbs). She looks sleep-deprived but still alert. Her position in the room is tactical, with clear lines of sight to the fire exit, kitchen entrance, and security monitors. She greets the Agent by code name and wastes no time.

"A-cell tasked me with contacting you. You've been given a list of Friendlies to vet for entrance into the group. They've already had a credential review. Your mission is a loyalty test. Their names are in the manila folder. You've got a conference room set up at the Holiday Inn Express in Sykesville for tomorrow morning. A criminology lecture. You're supposedly training law enforcement and government personnel on domestic abuse."

The Holiday Inn Express conference room is where the Agent can brief the recruits.

Clove says intel from a recent operation indicates Cornucopia House, a children's residential facility located on a farm near Zion, Maryland, is a threat. It must be neutralized. This job needs to be done. The Agent is to finish it while vetting potential talent. Two birds with one stone.

She tensely walks the Agent through instructions:

- » Secure unregistered firearms, mask up, and go to Cornucopia House at night, after the kids are asleep.
- » *Kill every adult.* Don't let the targets speak.
- » Dispose of the bodies and evidence.
- » When it's done, call Clove on the burner phone.
- » Tell the recruits whatever will get them to cooperate. If they need a push, show them what's in the cartoon cat folder. It'll get them all on message.
- » Do not let the recruits call for help or permission from anyone at their day jobs. This must remain compartmentalized.
- » Most of all, do it fast. There are kids being harmed and killed right now.

Despite all that, Clove says she cannot help. She has her own situation to deal with.

Questions

It is likely the Agent has several questions. Clove's scant answers are as follows, along with relevant rolls players may request for additional information. Unless the player asks to check a statement with a roll, leave it. Clove's delivery is matter-of-fact.

Why the unusual cross-cell contact?

"The situation is fluid and above your pay grade."

HUMINT: On a failure, she's telling the truth about some sort of danger to the group. A success gets the same result as a failure, plus the suspicion that Clove's lying via omission.

What situation?

"If you don't already know, you aren't supposed to. Let that suffice."

HUMINT: On a failure, she honestly believes there is a credible danger to the group. On a success, the same results, but it's clear that she has no idea what the threat actually is.

My cell is just me. Why don't you get another?

"You're what's available. Use the Friendlies. If all goes well, they're your new cell."

BUREAUCRACY AT +20%: On a failure, it's clear to the Agent that none of this makes a lot of sense. Why test the loyalty of all these Friendlies on a single, critical mission, where they can cross-contaminate? Why not have whoever vetted them in the first place run the op? This is reckless even for a black operation. On a success, the Agent realizes these Friendlies were chosen without any consideration for the gravity of the task.

Where will you be?

"I'm out of the country on a mission of my own. I'll tell you where to start. Call and tell me how it ends."

PSYCHOTHERAPY AT +20% OR HUMINT: On a failure, this work appears to demoralize Clove. She seems to crave the field work rather than serving as a messenger. On a success, the Agent realizes that the sorrow in her voice hovers around the words "a mission of my own."

What did the targets do?

"They did enough." If the Agent pushes, Clove adds, "You don't have to believe me. The cat folder is there for you, too. But don't say I didn't warn you."

NO ROLL REQUIRED: She *absolutely* means it. She is certain of the justice of her cause.

Why can't we allow the targets to speak?

"Because you want to stay alive. Fuck knows what's rattling around in their heads. Put a bullet in them. Vent the poison before they can spit it at you."

PSYCHOTHERAPY AT +20% OR HUMINT: On a failure, it sounds like she knows enough to know that nobody wants to understand more. On a success, the Agent realizes that she has no knowledge of what the targets are capable of, but she's seen other operations go bad.

How do I get the Friendlies on board?

"Say whatever it takes. And there's always the cat folder. If that doesn't get you off your ass, you probably are the mission."

ANY SKILL: Again, she *absolutely* means it.

How long do we have?

"This needs to happen now. The targets are dangerous. They suspect an investigation is coming. Deal with this before it kills some social worker."

PSYCHOTHERAPY AT +20% OR HUMINT: On a failure, she sounds quite certain. On a success, the Agent can tell she is certain that it needs to happen quickly, but she may be lying about the targets expecting trouble.

Do you have photos and background information for the targets? So we can track them down if they're not home.

"No. Our intelligence puts a small number of targets on site. This is as far as we've gotten."

What do we do with the kids?

"Don't let them see you well enough to identify you. Call me when it's done. We'll figure it out then."

The Manila Folder

The manila folder contains the names and contact information of the Friendlies to be used for the operation. They're everyone Clove managed to scrounge together from Gary Hall's little black book.

The folder also contains email printouts between the Friendlies and cut-out email identities that Clove used to arrange to meet on 3 FEB 2001, at 10 a.m. in the small conference room of a Holiday Inn Express in Sykesville, Maryland. For those in law enforcement or adjacent fields, the conference is called "Domestic Abuse Intervention and Response Professional Development Seminar 2B" and supervisors are making them go. For others, the emails refer to previous work the Friendly did for Hall and Garner and openly says the seminar is a cover for a clandestine briefing.

Having **Criminology** or **Bureaucracy** at 30% or more or rolling either at +20% makes it clear that including these emails is terrible operational security. A success with either skill also reveals that the people on the list have almost nothing to do with one another. There is no telling what the criteria was for selecting them for the mission. Or whether there was any criteria at all.

The Agent finds a MapQuest printout of Cornucopia House and the surrounding area. There are copies of the employer identification number (EIN) and 501(c)(3) tax forms for a nonprofit charity called

Domestic Abuse In
Saturday, Feb
Holiday Inn F
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Families Without Frontiers, which owns and operates Cornucopia House.

Finally, there is a blocky Nokia cellphone. It has twenty minutes of call time and one number in its contacts, presumably Clove's burner.

The Cartoon Cat Folder

The cover of the folder is pink and has a cartoon cat from Japan. The cover is sticky from specks of blood and something black that looks like oil. It smells of gasoline.

Viewing the cartoon cat folder is not necessary. Clove has provided all the intel she has managed to gain from it. But looking inside removes all doubt about the motivation of the mission.

Clove instructs the Agent to keep the folder until at least after briefing the Friendlies. They may need to see it themselves to be convinced.

The Agent does not perceive the contents so much as *experience* a disembodied reaction to it. This should be described by the Handler regardless of the success or failure of the **Sanity** test.



First Viewing: Consuming Sorrow

The Agent's first viewing costs 1/1D4 SAN from the unnatural. These details apply to the Agent who meets Clove. For Friendlies, see REACTIONS TO THE FOLDER on page 34.

Where are you? Your car? Your hotel room? The folder lays next to you, alongside the bottle. You don't remember buying the bottle. The bottle is almost empty, and the sun is starting to crest over the horizon. Clove is gone. Trying to conjure what you saw, you can only imagine flipping the folder open, curious as to why you can't hold a memory of doing it before. You are certain that, if you did that, you would find nothing inside except a rectangular portal to a huge, sucking void that draws your body and soul into it like a collapsing star. The pages will eat you if you open the folder again. The only thing more absolute than your terror is the knowledge that she was right. They all have to die.

Second Viewing: The Gist

Anyone who looks again gets the gist of the physical contents. Linger over the images with any close attention to detail causes the mind to reel away in disgust, costing 1/1D4 SAN from violence.

You didn't notice before that the top-left corner of the folder is scorched where a flame was hastily put out. You regret that the flame was extinguished. Inside are the remains of Polaroid photos. They are tacky and worn from handling. The images depict men, women, children, and...things. Their forms combine in ways that are a compelling argument against the existence of God. The lighting is amateurish and inadequate for the night in which the scene was filmed. It took place somewhere in the woods or on a farm. The first picture shows a cottage with a sign in the distance. Clove must have used a magnifying glass to read "Cornucopia House" on it. You cannot imagine how she managed to look at the images for so long without going mad. Perhaps she already has. You couldn't blame her.

IN THE FIELD

Describing the Folder

Never—**NEVER**—describe the specific contents of the cartoon cat folder.

Doing so risks real harm. Actual child abuse is as close to sanity-blasting unnatural knowledge as we get in the real world. Keep everyone safe at the table with the provided indirect descriptions. That way, players stay in control of their Agents' actions while acknowledging the fact that they cannot control what their Agents feel when confronted by such nightmares.

Furthermore, keeping the exact contents at a remove serves a vital purpose for the campaign: the folder is a Pandora's box of motivation. The operation looks wrong from the start because it *is* wrong. The Agent and the Friendlies have good reason to be uncomfortable with the situation. The cartoon cat folder is why they're going to shut up and plow ahead anyway.

Close Viewing: The Pictures

Closer study costs 1/1D4 SAN from helplessness. That is the Agent's last SAN loss from the folder.

Foolish Agents may want to inspect the photographs in the cartoon cat folder for more details. Keep in mind the rules for handling the folder and the general guideline that the contents should never be described explicitly.

An Agent with **Art (Photography)** at 20% or higher or **Computer Science** or **SIGINT** at 40% or above realizes that the photographs *can't* be fake. Technology capable of simulating the poor lighting conditions of the photographs does not exist. The quality is consistent in every Polaroid. The scene depicted is the same from multiple angles.

The photos carefully avoid the faces of adult participants. Some seem young, some elderly. Some fit, some decrepit or obese. Some men, some women. A few tattoos are visible, as is a penchant for the adults to be castrated. The tattoos clearly come from the Russian prison tradition, though they skew closer to Eastern Orthodox symbols. Castration, on the other hand, isn't common in even the hardest gulags. Men and women alike show those terrible scars. An Agent who succeeds on a **Forensics** or **Medicine** test studying anatomical features suspects no more than half a dozen in all.

Agents with **History** 80% or higher or **Occult** 60% or higher, or who succeed at either test at -20%, can correlate the symbols and the tendency toward genital mutilation to legends of a group known as the Skoptsi, a Russian Orthodox splinter sect that began in the 18th century and was reduced under constant persecution to a few rumored communities by the 1990s. The Skoptsi are well documented as preaching the holiness of castration and sexual mutilation. Interested players can find information on them online. Vague and sourceless rumors accused some Skoptsi communities of darker pursuits, gaining life and power from devils. Agents with **History** or **Occult** skills higher than base but who fail the test still realize something is there to be investigated further.

Sykesville Seminar

The full team meets for the first time at the Holiday Inn Express in Sykesville, Maryland, on 3 FEB 2001 at 10 a.m. Clove used a false identity to book a small conference room for a meeting she listed as "Domestic Abuse Intervention and Response Professional Development Seminar 2B." There was no seminar 1 or A, and no conference. She hopes that the topic is repugnant enough to deter anyone from looking too hard. To sell the lie, Clove has paid to cater the room with a small tray of bagels, a coffee pot, and a projector running a dispiriting PowerPoint on the limitations of public response to domestic violence. She registered it all under the name Cecilia Sands. Investigating "Cecilia Sands" quickly reveals it as a false identity; however, the trail soon stops cold.

If the Agent investigates Agent Clove or the name on the Holiday Inn Express booking, see **INVESTIGATING CLOVE** on page 42.

The Friendlies arrive before the Agent and are free to discuss things as they wish. Those in law enforcement may think the conference is genuine and constitutes just another hoop their job requires them to jump through. Those who couldn't be lured under false pretenses might mention working for whatever group they misunderstand Delta Green to be. The Friendlies might discuss their limited interactions with the group. They definitely shouldn't be discussing such matters, but then that's why they are only considered Friendlies.

OPINT

IF THE AGENT BALKS

If the player's Agent is too paranoid to meet Clove under these circumstances, adapt and improvise. Maybe Clove agrees to a new venue. What's important is not the site but the awfulness that Clove communicates.

The cross-cell contact Agent arrives, probably sleep-deprived and still shaken. The Agent had to get the briefing from Clove. Now the Agent has to inflict it on the Friendlies.

The briefing can go however the Agent wishes, using whatever lies, bribes, or coercion they choose. Other players are free to make HUMINT rolls or other tests to spot lies. If they succeed, it's on the Agent to respond.

If a Friendly has had enough and is ready to leave, the Agent can resort to the cartoon cat folder. Seeing what's in the folder reaches into people's brains and *changes* them. It *always* works.

Players of the Friendlies should role-play their characters' reactions to the contents, making it clear to everyone in the room that they've changed their mind and must complete the mission.

SYNCHRONICITY

RED THOUGHTS IN THE SLIDESHOW

A PowerPoint presentation entitled "A Call for Peace" runs on a projector in the room. It depicts a variety of evidence photos from domestic abuse cases along with relevant citations in the realm of psychology from the early 1990s. The computer in the corner running the presentation freezes on a slide entitled "Red Thoughts." Clip art of a red-tinted brain sits slightly off center, surrounded by a bulleted list of motives given by perpetrators who committed domestic abuse, listed in order of frequency.

RED THOUGHTS

Reasons for Domestic Violence Perpetration

- Power/Control
- To feel more powerful
- To get control over your partner
- To get your way

- # Domestic Violence Perpetration
- 
- To feel more powerful
 - To get control over your partner (e.g., show that you're boss)
 - To get your partner to do something or to stop your partner from doing something (e.g., going to work)
 - Because you needed to make your partner agree with you
 - To show your partner that you were right
 - To make your partner leave you alone
 - To have sex and your partner didn't want to



Reactions to the Folder

Depending on how the briefing goes, the Agent may need to show the cartoon cat folder to the Friendlies. Every Friendly has a unique reaction. Let the player pick a defense mechanism for the Friendly—outrage, sorrow, vengeance, and so on—or roll 1D10 to assign one randomly.

Print or copy the pages and hand the reaction's card to that Friendly. Tell the players to keep the cards to themselves. They should role-play their participation as an actor's secret, letting it color their decisions without ever revealing the terrible insight that changed their mind. They can share the cards after the scenario.

	Reaction	Mechanism	Page
1	The Act of Self-Defense	<i>outrage</i>	34
2	The Drought of Tears	<i>sorrow</i>	34
3	The Insistent Details	<i>revenge</i>	35
4	The Joke	<i>humor</i>	35
5	The Narrative Shield	<i>precision</i>	35
6	The Relief of an Expected Call	<i>purpose</i>	36
7	The Religion of Revenge	<i>acceptance</i>	36
8	The Romance of Becoming Broken	<i>isolation</i>	36
9	The Sound of Colors	<i>denial</i>	37
10	The Theater of Strength	<i>excess</i>	37

The Act of Self-Defense

That's all that runs through your mind. You never asked to see that. You're angry at those who saw it first, but you can understand why they showed you. Who would want to be the only person to have seen those pictures? The weight of it...it would kill you. You can understand spreading the fucking misery around...forgive it, even. But creating it? How dare they? What they've stolen...what seeing those images stole? That alone would be worth the killing.

That could be it, and the blood would be justified. But that's not it, is it? They did that to people, and then made sure the blasphemy could worm its way through the world on millipede legs and burrow into your eyes and make a nest in your mind and you can't get it OUT because it bites at you as you reach in to yank it free. It lives there now, inside you, forever.

The Drought of Tears

You used to cry. Not often, and always in secret. A weak moment in an airport bathroom. A diversion into the garage to "get more drinks" at that friend's party. It was just general stress or, on even rarer occasions, sorrows that would make anyone weep. Understandable breakdowns. But no longer. Not after looking in that folder. The embarrassment of your periodic, secretive tears burns like an ember compared to the total, forest-fire rage you feel toward yourself at the blind privilege that allowed you to believe anything in your life has been worth tears.

All the world's sorrow should have been saved and expended in the moment that camera flashed. Like the amputee, you can sense the phantom pain of your severed melancholy. It will never return. Tears will never seem worthy again. But the ghostly sensation of the drops streaming down your cheeks refuses to stop.

The Insistent Details

You need guns. Guns without registrations. But then again, maybe a gun isn't the right way to go. A blade would be quieter. Quieter is good. Plus, you get to see the looks in their eyes. The haunting realization that the tables have turned. There's something bigger and crueler than them, now. So, yeah, blades, but also ropes, because fuck it. Let them scream. Let's get poetic. So, we'll need a location. Something sound-proof and isolated. Somewhere we can take our time.

You're not exactly sure when, but somewhere along your mental checklist on how to murder these people, you realize you never once stopped to consider whether you should. This oversight is, worryingly, not that distressing. You find yourself eager to get back to the logistics.

The Joke

You want to laugh. Holding it in is actually painful. It's hilarious, in a surreal sort of way that you couldn't explain to anyone, so you have to keep it together. Still, the joke is obvious, right? Someone saw those... those things, and those kids, and a camera...and their first thought was, "Let's do this with them." If that insane leap of logic isn't humor, what is? What could be? Of course, you hope it's all fake, but doesn't that make it even more hilarious? Some über-weirdo, working on a computer to concoct these fantasies as if any human on the Earth would want to see them? What an idiot! What an alien.

Can you imagine being those kids? You're born into the world just so you can leave it? Like this? It's absurd in its cruelty. You have to laugh. You just have to laugh when you see shit like this. What's the alternative?

The Narrative Shield

You remember reading or seeing something about the NASA Glenn Hypersonic Test Facility. They use it to test aircraft traveling faster than the speed of sound. You think it's in Ohio, right? If you could get in with the people who made that folder, you could strap them to a fuselage or piece of test scaffolding. You could retreat to the control room and set the engine to full blast. You could watch the skin cut away by knives of atmosphere. You could watch as the blood and fat aerosol in winds faster than Mach 5. You could watch the structural integrity of the bodies decay until the meat goes flying against the safety grating and gets instantly cubed.

You know it's impractical. You know that's not how this goes down. You'll help however you can, no matter what is decided. Still, you keep imagining. It's the only story horrible enough to keep the insistent reality of what you've just seen from springing to the front of your mind.

The Relief of an Expected Call

Your whole life, you haven't been sure what to do. You feigned confidence, but deep in your heart—in that space that could only speak on the worst nights, staring at the ceiling in despair—you knew you were fake. You did things because you were supposed to do them, or you did things because you weren't supposed to do them. No difference. It's been a life of checking other people's boxes. Of denying the uncertainty that constitutes every waking moment. Your life exists only to bounce off uncontrollable circumstances. You are a pinball that pretends itself a player.

But that's okay. Those moments brought you here. You never had control, but that doesn't mean you didn't have a purpose. This has to be it. These people must die. It is a crusade that will wipe away all sins and uncertainty. There is not one iota of doubt in its monstrous order. Finally knowing your purpose relieves a pain you just now realize you've always felt.

The Religion of Revenge

It is not necessary to relish the bloodshed to come. It's not even necessary to believe the killing can do any good. When that folder opened, you were converted to a religion deeper than faith, a spirituality that requires swift, bloody action as worship. The new faith's God won't grant you any boon. It doesn't have to bribe you. It's real, and everywhere, and hears no argument. You must see the devils in those photos dead if you're not to live with the sin of a life where you did nothing. The punishment for staying blind to these crimes is a curse that would haunt you to the grave. The images before you are a commandment, a prophecy written into your flesh before you were born.

You understand now that your heart always carried murder. The children in those photos reached into your chest, ripped it out, and showed it to you. Their pleading eyes look down at the blackness pulled from you. They ask, "Why have you not put this to use? Why did you not save us?"

The Romance of Becoming Broken

You suspect two fantasies haunt the mind of every American: winning the lottery and going to prison. They are flip sides of the same coin. *What if I could live in a world composed of nothing but myself?* On good days, you imagine being granted the ability to escape your responsibilities, with a deus ex machina lotto ticket, one capable of building a personal heaven on Earth. More often, you imagine securing isolation through punishment, by snapping and destroying your life in a single act of rage. On the worst days, you imagine being locked up wrongfully, a dream to satisfy your self-pity.

After having seen the folder, it's more than a fantasy. You know that you could be happy enough, locked in a cell. It wouldn't be ideal, but if given the choice between life in prison and doing nothing...it's not a choice. You will do what it takes and get your wish. Think of all the reading you'll get done in there. Many great books have been written in prison.

The Sound of Colors

You had a friend in school who claimed she could taste words, but you never gave it much thought. After seeing the folder, you must reconsider. You realize that you've always been able to hear pictures and photographs. If it was the cartoonish scribble of a child's imaginary friend, your brain provided a little chirp of what the creature must sound like. Seeing your friends' vacation pictures, you ever so briefly heard the waves drowning out their whispered conversations on the beach. The sensations were so brief and obviously confabulated that you didn't even register them. You certainly never thought you suffered from synesthesia.

What's in that folder is disturbing for many reasons, but the one you can't help but fixate on is the sound. The sound of those images plays a symphony of madness. You would stab out your eardrums if that would make it stop. Perhaps if the ones responsible are put down and burned with this blasphemous folder, you can return to blissful silence.

The Theater of Strength

You've seen worse. Yep. Must have. This isn't your first clownfuck. That's why the Group shows interest. They know talent when they see it. For those who deal with the stuff in that folder, the only skill that matters is being able to look without blinking. And that's exactly what you're going to do. Because you've seen worse. You've definitely seen worse. You must have, right? Certainly?

You search your memory for horrors. You stack them to blot out the one you just witnessed, bricks of scar tissue to fortify your soul. You stack and stack, but the folder still looms impossibly large against the narrow parapet of all the suffering in your life. No matter how high you stack the other traumas, you can't seem to levee the despair that flooded the room when the folder opened. But you keep stacking. You keep focusing on everything awful in the world except...except that. You have seen worse. You will repeat this lie as long as it takes to believe it.

Chipping the Teeth

During "Go Forth," the Handler must find ways to isolate and physically scar the Agent and each Friendly. The Agent and the Friendlies have not been selected by Clove so much as by fate, and the climax of "Go Forth" involves realizing this incomprehensible truth. The strange and terrible force that has made them its Teeth marks them.

Each marking should be accomplished before they enter the guest bedroom of the cottage at Cornucopia House, described on page 64.

It is always an animal or some remnant of an animal that does the marking. It could be the bite of a frightened dog or a splinter of bone sent flying by a falling brick.

Call for a scene with each Agent in which:

- The Agent is isolated from their peers.
- An animal behaves strangely or the remains are distinctly strange.
- The Agent is harmed in some way, losing at least 1 HP.

Let the player describe the permanent mark.

The steps are vague so the Handler can adapt them to fit the game. The point is to make the Agents realize that their choices have already been accounted for in the grand and secret plan.

In every case, an animal that scars an Agent is completely, improbably friendly and submissive before and after the attack. An especially unlikely chipping might cost the Agent 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

Circumstance	Possibilities
<i>Armament</i>	An otherwise docile service dog. An exotic animal in an evidence lockup.
<i>Preparation</i>	A wayward bird. A raccoon hiding under a car. A friendly stray dog or cat.
<i>Research</i>	A beloved and harmless pet. A rare spider or vampire moth lurking in an old book or file folder.
<i>Transportation</i>	Rats or wasps nesting in a car engine, even a car parked only overnight
<i>At Cornucopia House</i>	A guard dog, surprisingly friendly. A child's pet loosed from a cage. A bat. A meandering cow.



IN THE FIELD

Fleeing Fate

After the first few "chipping" encounters, Agents might take measures to avoid animals. It's the Handler's job to ensure that the chipping still occurs. In fact, the further Agents go to avoid animals, the more unlikely the encounter that scars them becomes. SAN losses due to these increasingly improbable situations should be increased accordingly.

During a playtest, one of the players went to extreme lengths to avoid animal contact until the raid on Cornucopia House. That was effective until, during a firefight, the Agent found himself staring down the barrel of a shotgun. The shell went off, but as the flash cleared, the Agent saw the cultist writhing on the ground, her face blown off due to catastrophic firearm failure. The Agent found he had only suffered 1 HP of damage. That was from the severed head of a mouse, lodged teeth first into his cheek by the force of the shotgun blast. The mouse had nested in the shotgun barrel. Its nest acted as a squib load, saving the Agent's life. The Agent now had a scar on his cheek from a mouse "bite" as well as the unshakable certainty that he was marked by fate.



Investigations

Clove emphasized speed during the briefing, but Agents may seek to investigate the *why* before the *how*. This is fine so long as it doesn't become a grind. Preliminary investigations provide the Handler time to "Chip the Teeth," and let the players get into the heads of their Agents before roleplaying those personalities in extreme conditions. But remind the players during every preliminary investigation of one miserable truth: They know what's happening in the meantime at Cornucopia House.

Families Without Frontiers

Clove's limited security clearance allowed her to pull basic information about Cornucopia House's parent company, Families Without Frontiers, a non-profit organization dating back to 1948. The EIN and 501(c)(3) status of Families Without Frontiers are included with the documents.

Access to a government database and **Accounting** at 30% or higher or a roll at +20% reveals details. According to an inconclusive audit in the 1980s, the organization's focus is the adoption, acculturation, and placement of orphans from Eastern Europe in the U.S. The property is listed as a hobby dairy farm, but its profits are not enough to even pay property taxes. In 2000, less than a year ago, the farm sold 150 acres of its property to Maryland for development of a new state prison.

The organization was founded by and remains run solely by Yelena Kalamatiano. According to the records, she is the only employee of Families Without Frontiers. It's almost certain that Kalamatiano has other employees off the books based on the sheer amount of work required to maintain a hobby dairy farm and orphanage.

Taking a few days to make calls and study records with a successful **Accounting** test reveals more perplexing findings. The organization is supported almost entirely by businesses around northeast Chesapeake Bay, mostly jewelers, plumbers, contractors, and taxi companies. Almost all are run by Russian immigrants

or the near descendants of Russian immigrants who live in an unincorporated part of Cecil County. (See **FINDING THE SKOPTSI** on page 88 if the Agents make a deeper investigation.) These businesses have made donations like clockwork every year for decades, sometimes donating over 50% of their annual reported profit. Whenever one of these corporate supporters folds, it is replaced by another company owned by the same persons.

Over the years the list of donors has dwindled. Families Without Frontiers appears to be in financial distress. According to its expense report, flights from Eastern Europe stopped in 1997 after years of decreasing frequency. The organization appears to have pivoted to local adoptions.

Evidence From the Folder

The Agents might look for fingerprints on the cartoon cat folder or try to analyze the blood and other residue on it.

Fingerprints

A few partial fingerprint matches are smudged on the folder and photos. Two match prints in the FBI's database: FBI agent Gary Hall and a disabled 80-year-old named Vasilii Karpov. See **SEEKING THE DEAD** on page 43 for Hall's details.

Vasilii Karpov, born in New York in 1921, was a U.S.-born child of Russians who immigrated to the U.S. in 1920. He joined the Navy in March 1942, was a radio technician on the cruiser *Astoria*, and suffered a severe back injury when *Astoria* sank in August 1942 at the Battle of Savo Island. He lives on a U.S. Navy disability pension. He has lived in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Baltimore over the years. His parents died long ago, and he has no family. Agents might investigate Vasilii Karpov further after "Go Forth." There is not likely to be time during the scenario. See **INVESTIGATING KARPOV** on page 86 for details.

The Blood

A successful **Forensics** test in a lab indicates that the blood drops on the folder come from multiple individuals, male and female, dating to a variety of periods. The freshest can be dated to about a month previous. It appears that the folder had droplets of blood on it before Agent Clove gained possession of it.

Identifying the different DNA strands takes months. The results come in long after this scenario ends. If the Agents are using local law enforcement databases, no genetic matches are found. If they have access to FBI labs and information, Agents must succeed on a **Bureaucracy** test to obscure the provenance of the information request. If that fails, the results could get them into deep trouble.

One DNA match is found in federal databases: the Friendlies' old partner in paranormal investigations, FBI Special Agent Gary Hall. See **SEEKING THE DEAD** on page 43 if they investigate him further.

The Residue

A successful **Forensics** test allows Agents to separate the charring on the paper from a black organic fluid that the charring obscured. It is an anomalous genetic material, too damaged by fire to recognize.

A critical success on **Forensics** or a regular success with **Medicine** or a relevant **Science** skill finds that the cells lack telltale signs of heat damage. Their abnormal shape comes from two factors. First, they are cancerous. Misshapen cell walls still bear enough resemblance to their neighbors to suggest malignant growth. Second, the cells are all of different types. Cancerous marrow cells reside next to corrupted red blood cells, next to misshapen semen and tumorous muscle cells. Human cells of these type have no cause being connected to each other in this black stew, nor is there anything to explain their uniformly cancerous nature.

Prolonged investigation of the black ichor on the folder discovers dead and cancerous animal cells mixed in among the roughly human biology. Studying this genetic slurry costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural as the Agent struggles to grasp where something so horrible might come from.

Tracing the Folder

An Agent with **Criminology** 60% or higher, or who succeeds on a roll, thinks to look for unusual fires reported in the region within a few days of the meeting with Clove. There are a lot to sift but most have obvious and mundane explanations. Three vehicle fires, a stove-top fire out of control, an apartment that burned when a drunk idiot set off a smoke grenade, two apartment electrical fires, one house electrical fire that killed an elderly woman who lived alone, a taxi garage that burned down, and a pair of neighboring bakeries that burned down four days apart. Agents with any law enforcement credentials or who succeed on a **Criminology**, **Law**, or **Persuasion** test can talk fire marshals into giving details off the record. None of the fires are in any way unusual or mysterious except the taxi garage.

Coachman Taxi Garage was in Perry Point, Maryland, an unincorporated stretch of the north end of Chesapeake Bay mostly dedicated to a U.S. Health and Human Services office and a Veterans Affairs medical complex. Fire marshals found enough accelerants where the fires began—more spilled gasoline than you would expect, even in a taxi garage—to suspect arson. But the authorities did not commit resources to excavating.

Agents who seek correlations between Coachman Taxi Garage and Families Without Frontiers find Coachman among the donors that spent much of their income supporting the adoption service.

Agents can physically dig up the burnt-out wreckage of Coachman Taxi Garage if they bring in construction equipment and don't mind attracting tremendous noise and attention. They find the bodies of Gary Hall, Lena Garner, and five others who may have been Russian mobsters from what remains of their tattoos, as well as a lot of scorched guns and a huge pile of unanswered questions that nobody—not the FBI, not state fire marshals, not the police—wanted to have to ask.

Investigating Clove

Agents may wish to investigate Agent Clove. It would not be hard for them to find her real identity. But sooner or later, they run into some strange brick walls.

Attempts to get information from Delta Green about Agent Clove don't work. No amount of emailing, calling, or dead dropping rouses A-cell. The more emphasis the Agent puts into reporting Clove, the more deafening the silence.

An Agent with **Criminology** at 70% or higher, or who makes a roll at -20%, can quickly identify Dr. Marie Noella by journal photos from her academic work and her consultations with the FBI. Deliberately searching FBI databases with **Criminology** at 50% or a successful test likewise finds her photograph and identifying information.

They could follow her until she buys gas and convince a clerk to show the receipt. Digging up her details in a financial database with an **Accounting** test certainly reveals her identity.

Nothing in Noella's background or records indicates her role in Delta Green. Reading her work does reveal an under-appreciated mind. She has a husband, Charles Noella, and young son, four-year-old Timothy. They live in a nice house in Bethesda, Maryland. She teaches at Wilmington University. The morning after Noella briefs the Agent, she and her family move to China, where she has joined the faculty of Xiamen University under an arrangement with her regular employer.

The Agent cannot catch up with Clove in person. Nor can they stop her from moving to China. Bast has other urges. If the Agent takes heroic efforts to tail Clove that night and rolls nothing but critical successes, an animal leaps in front of their car and forces it off the road. It could be a large dog or a full-grown deer. It throws itself deliberately in the Agent's path as if trying to be run down and killed. This is a fine opportunity to scar the Agent as described in **CHIPPING THE TEETH** on page 38.

If the Agent and Friendlies book an international flight and follow Noella to her new home or place of work in China, birds slam into the plane's turbines,

forcing it down. The passengers disembark into a weird flocking of gulls that swoop and caw. This is another good chance to Chip the Teeth.

If they try again, they make it all the way to China only to have local intelligence officers take a keen interest in them. Are any of them federal agents? Are they conducting an investigation on foreign soil without permission? Claiming it's a personal trip convinces no one. The American embassy gets involved. The harder the Agent and Friendlies fight, the more interference they get and the more it threatens to become news. If they elude Chinese officers, that only makes their suspicions more concrete.

Do the players find the coincidences ridiculous? They're right. It's ridiculous. Every chance interference gets worse and worse for their characters' health, families, and careers. Causality itself is stacked unbreachably against the Agent and Friendlies confronting Agent Clove. Depending on the players' reactions, inexplicable obstacles may cost 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

Seeking the Dead

See **BAFFLED FRIENDLIES** on page 24 for the Friendlies' knowledge of Gary Hall and Lena Garner, aka Delta Green agents Clyde and Cerise.

Special Agent Gary Hall has not reported to work since 13 JAN 2001. His wife reported him missing on 17 JAN 2001. Interviewed by the Agent or Friendlies, she says Hall suffers from PTSD and terrible mood swings and often leaves home for days or weeks at a time on last-minute work trips. But never without telling her beforehand.

There is shockingly little information to be found on Lena Garner, age 47. The Office of Naval Intelligence says no one by that name ever worked there. Searching for her in public records is a dead end. She may as well be a ghost. The Friendlies have not seen her for months.

Once the Friendlies become Agents, Delta Green may make it their job to explain away Hall's disappearance so the FBI stops looking. That's up to the Handler.

Cornucopia House Finances

Knowledge of Cornucopia House's finances can be combined with an INT×5 roll. Success suggests something odd about the dairy farm's expenses. Unless they are throwing out all their milk, they purchase far too many cows to report dairy earnings so low. Live-stock makes up the majority of the adoption agency's expenses. Furthermore, a few receipts suggest some of the cattle aren't from milking breeds, and the farm reports no earnings from their slaughter.

Agents can also attempt a **Bureaucracy** test at the public records office to locate survey records of the land, including a basic map of the property.

Human Services

All adoption agencies, group homes, and juvenile residential facilities in Maryland answer to the Department of Human Services (Maryland DHS). The Department of Human Services works out of a ten-story building in downtown Baltimore.

Maryland DHS tracks the placement of children in permanent homes, residential facilities, and foster homes. Budgeting and staffing issues often mean that after a child's placement, follow-ups get outsourced to private companies. Many of these organizations are accredited through recognized medical institutions, but, as private entities, anyone an insurance company is willing to rubber-stamp (read: the lowest bidder) can be contracted. This has led to states delegating the work of child welfare to questionable or harmful organizations: teen boot camps, evangelical conversion therapy, and juvenile detention centers. This situation is not unique to Maryland; it is the norm for most states in 2001. In short, Maryland DHS is likely to have records of all Maryland adoptions carried out by Families Without Frontiers, but those documents may not reflect what is actually happening.

SYNCHRONICITY

EVERY CHILD WANTS A PET

In the Maryland DHS lobby in Baltimore, a public service poster dominates a wall. It reads, "Every child wants a pet, but toxoplasmosis is no fun! Cats can spread disease that infect your child in the womb! (Paid for by the Baltimore Department of Animal Services.)" The photo depicts a young boy and a puppy huddling in fear as they face an enormous, frightening house cat with giant green bacteria crawling amongst its slavering fangs.

Records on Families Without Frontiers

There are significant obstacles to gaining access to Maryland DHS records on Families Without Frontiers. The confidentiality of adoption records is one of the most legally binding protections provided under federal law, and since 1947 all Maryland adoption records are sealed by state law. To unseal these documents, a judge must pass down a warrant finding that officials have good cause to unseal it. Failing that, what is needed is the signed consent of all involved parties: the adopted child, the adoptive parents, the birth parents, and the agency.

Going to the Maryland DHS headquarters in Baltimore allows an Agent or Friendly a **Law** or **Bureaucracy** roll to see the legal paperwork ordering the records sealed. This courtesy is provided only to characters with law enforcement backgrounds. Private citizens are told Maryland DHS can neither confirm nor deny the existence of any adopted children. They are then politely asked to leave.

Confidentiality documents refer only to the adoption agency by name. All other parties are referred to by case numbers kept in a protected ledger. According to the seal, Families Without Frontiers has taken additional steps to protect its records. In the case of many international adoptions, the consent requirement for unsealing is waived for birth parents since they are located in other countries. However, in every instance, this common waiver for international adoption has

been rejected by Families Without Frontiers. This means the records can never be unsealed without a court order, and the Agents are unlikely to get that warrant without an elaborate deception that would take far more time than they have. An Agent who succeeds at a **Law** roll can forge the warrant as long as they know the name of at least one child involved, but such a tactic likely results in legal blowback.

The safest way to gain access to the records is to break into the Maryland DHS basement archives. Maryland DHS headquarters is a government building with a basic alarm system and CCTV. Agents that manage to sneak in undetected may roll **Search**. On a success, they glimpse a horrifying clue only visible across multiple files: In addition to adhering to the required paperwork for international adoptions in only the most minimal capacity, Families Without Frontiers appears to be laundering the origin of children in their care. Every adopted family listed is one of the donors responsible for the charity's finances. All live in the "Moscow on the Chesapeake" neighborhood on Eastern Chesapeake Bay. (See **FINDING THE SKOPTSI** on page 88 if the Agents follow that lead.)

In recent years, families that have adopted children from Cornucopia House have given up custody of their *own* children to the agency, just so those children can be adopted by *different* Russian immigrant families that have also given up children in the past. There appear to be thirty families trading possession of their kids.

Immigration paperwork requires copies of the birth records from the parent country. Until 1995, Families Without Frontiers provided this information. After that, an increasing number of Delayed Certificates of Birth were granted without indication of former citizenship. These forms are provided to U.S. natives only if they are born to communities from isolated religious sects, such as the Amish.

The records suggest nearly every child currently housed in Cornucopia House was born to some isolated community and never received a Social Security number. That, or Families Without Frontiers is stealing these children and getting them new identity documents after the fact.

Follow-Ups

Maryland DHS employs accredited social workers to do follow-ups on adoption placements. However, social workers remain heinously underpaid and understaffed despite having to record, process, and investigate every report of child abuse across the state. Cases related to adoption constitute a fraction of their responsibilities. The result is a small stable of overworked professionals carrying impossible caseloads at poverty wages.

Turnover among social workers is extremely high. Furthermore, Maryland DHS has no law enforcement arm. Upon discovering impropriety in a household, social workers can, at best, advise local law enforcement. Regardless of the severity of the crime and action advised by social workers, local law enforcement retains prosecutorial discretion and has little to no legal responsibility to follow through on Maryland DHS recommendations.

Using *Persuade* to chat up the administrative assistant at Maryland DHS reveals the following: The Families Without Frontiers caseload was, for a time,

considered cursed. The last social worker assigned to the case retired with early-onset Alzheimer's. The one before that hanged herself. The one before that quit after a month. The current social worker for Families Without Frontiers is Kerry Houghton.

Social Worker Kerry Houghton

Kerry Houghton has been assigned to Families Without Frontiers for about three years. The receptionist says she appears to be doing fine, "as fine as any of us are doing."

Kerry Houghton is in her office when Agents arrive. She is 25 but looks ten years older. She is unmarried. Photos on her desk show a woman who a few years previous was young, vibrant, attractive, and about half her current weight. Now her eyes are sunken and her hair hangs limp. She rarely gets a good night's sleep, haunted as she is by soon-forgotten nightmares of helpless, abused children crammed into filthy rooms. Her office is in such disarray as to make sitting impossible due to stacked file folders. Despite her appearance, Houghton is happy to talk to anyone with a reasonable explanation as to why they might be interested in her work.



She is careful to maintain confidentiality and asserts that, according to federal law, she can't reveal any information about her cases without a court order. The only exception is when she believes the welfare of a child is under direct threat, at which point she must coordinate with local law enforcement. Of course, she says, if that were the case, she would be at the police station now.

Straws and Camels' Backs

A successful HUMINT test during conversation with Houghton reveals that, though she is honest about what she can and cannot share, every mention of the name Families Without Frontiers causes a wrinkle of stress across her forehead. Agents that pick up on this discomfort can hammer on the name, at which point Houghton assures them that not only can't she reveal anything legally, it's not even her case to manage.

At this point, Houghton offers to get the Agents in touch with the person they need to talk to. She knocks on doors, asking if they handle case #121. The response is the same from everyone she asks: "I thought that was your case." An Agent with **Psychotherapy** at 30% or higher, or who succeeds on a roll at +20%, detects increasing mania as Houghton discovers the entire office believes the case to be hers.

Agents can attempt to **Persuade** Houghton to check into the filings for Families Without Frontiers. They don't have to look directly; she can just check and tell them what she sees. If pressed, Houghton breaks confidentiality to perform this check, if only because she is desperate. Suddenly, she demands that the Agents leave. She's feeling ill. She abruptly goes home, causing a stir in the office as she passes through it in tears. During this commotion, it is easy to swipe the Families Without Frontiers file on her desk unobserved.

Houghton's Reviews

For the past three years, Houghton's home-visit notes for Cornucopia House have given it a score of 3 out of 4 in every category. The notes read: "Sanitary conditions and chore load for children are acceptable and adhere to the rigors of farm life. Children appear happy, playing often and engaging in many educationally enriching activities. Interviews reveal that the children love their 'Babushka.' Much to do was made about her homemade cookies." Every report contains that exact statement, in a variety of handwritings, since 1982. Since 1998, it is Kerry Houghton's writing. Visits are sporadic. The next is not yet on anyone's schedule.

IN THE FIELD

Showing Houghton the Folder

Even inexperienced Friendlies should know this is a terrible idea, but that's never stopped Delta Green before. Houghton finds the atrocities depicted in the folder familiar with a bone-deep sensation of déjà vu but has no ability to recall when she would have seen such awful abuse or why she wouldn't have reported it. This slowly provokes a 1D20 **SAN** loss in her, likely sending her into some sort of psychotic break. Depending on how the Agents deal with the raving social worker, showing Houghton the folder may provoke a **Luck** test later in the game. If it fails, Houghton shows up at Cornucopia House while the Agents are there. She has broken through. She remembers. She has no plan beyond a vague deliberation to confront the abusers with their crimes. Without the Agents' intervention, it is certainly suicide, which is by now what Houghton really has in mind.

Houghton at Home

If Agents follow Houghton home, she remains too distraught to let them in, calling the police if pressed. If they gain access to the duplex when she isn't there, they find that her home is a hoarding nightmare. Years-old trash lies in corners. A dead cat can be found beneath the sofa. The kitchen is filled with filthy dishes, and the stove is singed. The stench of all of this appears not to have bothered Kerry, and her life appears to be restricted to narrow space devoid of trash around one side of her bed.

Succeeding at **Search** at -20%, or having the skill at 70% or higher, finds Houghton's diaries. They reveal nightmarish conditions at Cornucopia House reminiscent of the photos contained in the cartoon cat folder. Later entries depict Houghton's worry about her failure to remember making such entries or visiting Cornucopia House. This distress continues until, one day, the entries begin parroting the text from the Families Without Frontiers home visit reports. Verbatim. Day after day. A little more than a year ago, Houghton appears to have lost the diary in the chaos of her filthy duplex and stopped recording her thoughts altogether.

Preparation

The first priority of Delta Green is always *don't get caught*. Agents with law enforcement backgrounds know that anything brought to the scene of a murder needs to be securely discarded after the fact. That means drop pieces, unregistered vehicles, and clear entrance and exit plans.

Some Delta Green teams spend a great deal of time in preparation. Give strict attention to how long each step takes for the Agents. Every 24 hours, each Agent loses 0/1 SAN from helplessness from the knowledge, the absolute certainty, of what children are suffering at Cornucopia House while the Agents delay.

Weather

The first week of February 2001 in northeast Maryland runs from freezing at night to very cold by day, no higher than about 7° C (44° F). February 3–4 are especially cold, with freezing temperatures well into the day.

Cloud cover is mostly clear the nights of February 3–4 and 7–8 and mostly overcast otherwise. A slushy rain fell January 30. A heavy snow falls February 5. There is usually a moderate westerly wind coming cold off the Atlantic.

The sun rises about 7 a.m. and sets about 5:30 p.m. The moon rises in the early afternoons and sets well after midnight. It's waxing gibbous on February 3 and is full on February 8.

Asking Around

If the Agent and Friendlies think to ask Cornucopia House's neighbors what the place is like, remind them that those people are likely to become witnesses after the murder spree that the team is planning. Neighbors at nearby farms and small residential neighborhoods know little about Cornucopia House. No one reports ever going there. The front gate is closed at all times. Some think it's a shame the place doesn't have tours come through so the orphans have more kids to play with and potential parents to meet. Local kids wander into the woods surrounding the place from time to time but never go far, never stay long, and never have anything to report. Service workers take the utility road from the south to read meters but say they never see anything interesting. The farm never hires locals for construction work, repairs, or even medical treatment, instead bringing in people from other nearby places. No one local knows where.

The more detail the neighbors provide, the clearer their memories of the Agent and Friendlies will be when the police come knocking. The Handler can determine the results in the aftermath of "Go Forth."

Planning a Murder

Agent Clove's recruitment of the Agent and Friendlies calls on them to plan a series of killings. Let players come up with their own ideas. If they get stuck or dither about details, skills can provide guidance.

An Agent with **Criminology**, **Firearms**, or **Law** at 40% or better knows that a good murder weapon requires two out of three things: a lack of trace evidence, a broken chain of custody, and/or an inability to find the weapon at all. If authorities can prove you owned the gun (chain of custody) and that gun was used in the crime (found weapon), it's still possible to get you into court, or perhaps even secure a conviction, even without physical evidence. Even if the authorities find a mystery gun with no DNA or fingerprints, you won't be drawn into a courtroom. Worst-case scenario, forensic evidence puts you at the scene, but a murder weapon of unknown origin tanks the case before trial. The best option involves ditching a clean weapon you never owned in the first place.

In Maryland, this likely means a private purchase of firearms under fake credentials. Failing that, a riskier option involves stealing a weapon or falsifying firearms transaction records at a gun show.

Once a gun is sourced, if possible, a completely separate person should buy the ammunition. As little time as possible should be spent handling the weapon, and then only with gloves after the weapon has been wiped down. Tape should be wound around points of contact so it may be removed after the fact and make trace evidence more difficult to lift. Used weapons should be destroyed, if possible, or hidden in a place impossible to find: buried or sunk in locations far from typical routes.

An Agent with at least 10% in **Forensics** or 20% in **Criminology** understands that criminals who pull off successful crimes quarantine the scene. Clothes, weapons, and equipment should be bought with cash for the sole purpose of the act, across the widest possible time span and geographic area. Criminals should be clad in masks, gloves, hairnets, and long-sleeved clothing, all of which should be burned with the rest of the equipment afterwards at a separate location.

This includes phones, though it is best to leave all electronics behind while the deed is done.

The longer it takes to turn a missing persons investigation into a homicide investigation, the better. Bodies should be removed from the scene and bloodstains bleached or obscured. It's preferable to sink a dead body rather than to bury it, though doing so requires opening the thoracic cavity and weighing down the corpse. If it's impossible to move the bodies, they should be burned at the scene. Cars used in the crime should, ideally, be stolen and unreported. Afterwards, they should be burned or sunk, preferably at a separate location from the body or other evidence.

Perfect crimes only have victims, no witnesses. Failing that, bystanders should never be allowed to see the suspect's face or one iota of skin; even a glimpse of eye color can be used in identification. Bystanders' vision should be obscured, and they should be corralled in a central location. Criminals should use no names, no accents, and no unique diction. Preferably, no speaking at all.

Finally, organizing all the above requires tactical and logistical awareness. Successful **Navigation** rolls can allow characters to find local, remote locations for the removal of evidence. An Agent or Friendly with **Military Science (Land)** at 40% or higher, or a successful roll, can plan tactically optimal entrances, exits, and rendezvous points, provided the area of operations is scouted beforehand.

Armaments

Agents can use any personal armaments they wish, though they should be prepared to answer for the loss of valuable property or, worse, service weapons. If they take the time to acquire weapons safely, here are their options.

Gun Shops

Maryland requires a permit, seven-day waiting period, and police background check for the sale of handguns and some other firearms, but most shotguns and rifles require only an instant FBI background check by phone. Unless the buyer is on an FBI list of individuals prohibited from owning firearms, they can leave the

store with the weapon. An Agent looking for a shop likely to have lax attention to paperwork and to storing security camera footage—or the kind of pawnshop that doesn't bother with paperwork at all—can find one with a **Criminology** roll. A fumble might mean stumbling into an ATF sting. Repercussions are up to the Handler. Delaware and Pennsylvania laws are generally a little looser. New Jersey laws are generally a little tighter.

Personal Sale

Leon Chapman is a Maryland firearms collector. He has been under investigation by the ATF on multiple occasions, but charges have yet to stick. Chapman owns a chain of successful gunshops and pawnshops and has every historical gunsmith license available. In the past, these credentials have been enough to justify his armory. Chapman was an early adopter of eBay and now makes much of his money selling parts and accessories online. He lives alone in a gaudy McMan- sion outside Baltimore. The tasteless decor waffles between suburban blandness and hunting parapher- nalia, while the basement is nothing but gun safe after gun safe. He wears a plaid shirt tucked into high-wa- ter corduroys. His Sig Sauer pistol and cellphone bulge from where his gut pushes them out.

At home, Chapman flies his true colors with enough decorations on the wall to fill a casual restau- rant...provided the eatery was dedicated to libertari- anism, misogyny, and Nazism.

It would not take much imagination for the Agents to strong-arm Chapman with threats of in- vestigation and prosecution. If they show badges and say they will leave him alone if he helps them out, he gladly gives them each a firearm or two of their choice. He never bothers to report the trouble. Police corrup- tion is something he understands.

If the Agents browbeat and threaten Chapman without showing badges, he plays along in order to keep himself safe. Then he calls some dangerous friends of his, well-armed outlaw bikers, who inves- tigate the Agents with an eye toward robbing them back or killing them all. The Handler can improvise those details.

When purchasing guns from Chapman, only the lightest deception is necessary. He makes the Agents fill out background forms but has no intention of checking them. It's a man's God-given right to do what he likes with his property. The Agent or Friend- ly making the purchase must make a **Firearms** test reflecting their knowledge. On a success, they get whatever legal weapon they ask for: anything from the *Agent's Handbook* that is not labeled "restricted." On a failure, choose one of the following results. On a fumble, both occur.

OPTION 1—LOSER: The Agent lost badly in nego- tiations with Chapman and paid way too much for the weapons. The expense costs 1 from a Bond as the excessive spending is noticed and difficult to explain.

OPTION 2—UPSELL: Chapman convinced the Agent to purchase something wildly impractical for the task: a crossbow, a speargun, a claymore mine, "dragon's breath" incendiary shotgun shells, etc.

Gun Show

The Rosaryville Annual Gun Show is being held at the Rosaryville Community Center. Falsifying firearm transaction records is a federal crime, and any Agents in attendance can expect to be recorded by CCTV. However, so long as no weapons purchased there are connected to crimes, little chance of discovery exists. An Agent making a purchase should make a **Firearms** test to gauge the quality of purchased weapons. The Agent also needs a successful **Criminology**, **Law**, or **Bureaucracy** test to convincingly forge or steal iden- tification documents required to be copied during the purchase. Failure means that the sale is refused. A fumble might mean the law becomes involved.

SYNCHRONICITY

CHAPMAN OR A PAWNSHOP

A firearm purchased from Leon Chapman or at a pawn- shop was personalized by a former owner. Along the barrel, an etching reads, "Bring Only Death."

SYNCHRONICITY

THE GUN SHOW

In addition to firearms, gun shows often include booths devoted to products appealing to the hunting and fishing crowd. In one such booth, an emaciated old man sells exotic jerky from a table of cheap Tupperware, each labeled in an illegible hand. The shoddy, hand-painted banner above the table reads APEX PREDATOR MEATS in red paint. The man barks at each passerby, asking them "Are you truly an apex predator? Do you know the taste of a feast at the top of the food chain?" The jerky ranges from the typical to the truly questionable: lion, elephant, wolverine, and a number of other protected species. The jerky can be a sneaky method to "chip" one of the Teeth. See **CHIPPING THE TEETH** on page 38 for details.

SYNCHRONICITY

BURGLARIES

HOME INVASION: The owner of the house has a ball python that escaped from its terrarium and roams free. Note the opportunity here for **CHIPPING THE TEETH** as described on page 38. Otherwise, the snake is remarkably passive, observing the crime in progress or perhaps playfully curling itself around an Agent's leg.

RETAIL BURGLARY: A giant banner advertises a sale in the firearms section, proudly announcing "The Hunt Begins!"

EVIDENCE ROOM: A failed **Stealth** test means the Agent is seen by a police officer or federal agent on duty. Rather than trouble, though, the observer helps. It's someone the Agent knows to be bad news, always accused or suspected of abuse. This is a fellow predator. Later, they'll surely involve the Agent in far worse crimes of their own.

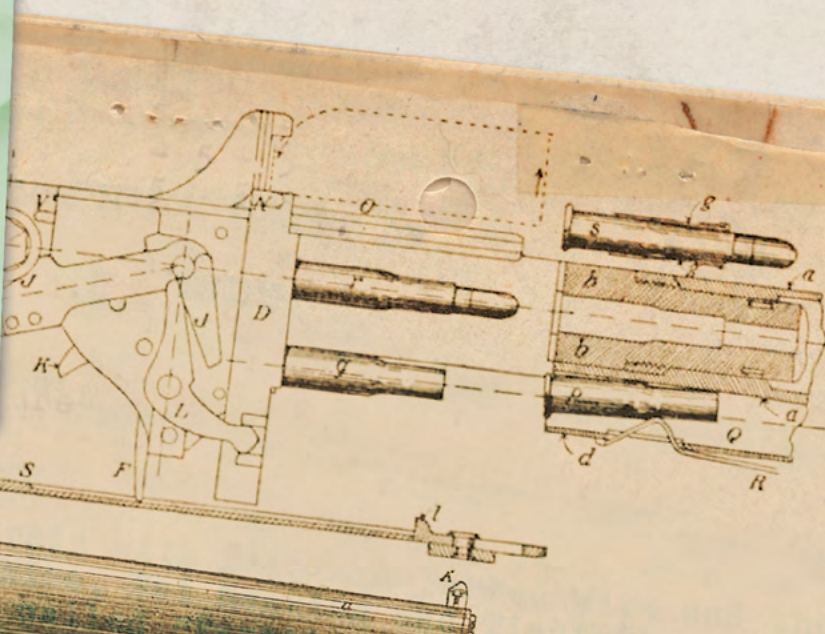
Stealing Weapons

This is risky. If the Agents get arrested, the mission is over. Even if they succeed, the weapons get reported as missing. Still, it may be all the Agents can think of under stress.

FROM CARS: The easiest option is to prowl parking lots for cars and pickup trucks that have NRA stickers and break into them looking for guns. The details and risks are up to the Handler. The less thought the players put into the Agents' plan, the riskier it becomes: car alarms can bring angry gun nuts running, and security cameras can record the theft for investigation by detectives. Roll 1D6 for what the thieving produces: (1) a light pistol, (2–3) a medium pistol, (4) a heavy pistol, (5) a shotgun, or (6) a hunting rifle.

FROM SHOPS: Stealing from a retail shop requires **Stealth** to get in unseen and **SIGINT** or **Craft (Electrician)** to bypass alarms and CCTV. Failure of either means the Agent could not approach safely and must try again. A fumble alerts the authorities. Once inside, the criminals have access to any firearms and ammunition a store could legally carry.

FROM AN EVIDENCE LOCKER: Stealing from an evidence locker requires a **Law** or **Bureaucracy** roll to concoct a legitimate excuse for adding the Agent to the chain of custody. Once the guns are removed from the locker, **Stealth** is needed to remove them from the premises and then again to bring them back unnoticed. Success means any discovery that can be traced to firearms used in crimes might result in the wrongful conviction of others. Failure likely means suspension and internal investigation.



FROM A HOME: Stealing from a private residence without being seen or triggering an alarm system requires a **Criminology** test. Roll for the players in secret and decide the details accordingly. A failure or fumble could bring the Agents face to face with a resident, a guard dog, or a neighbor, or trigger a silent alarm that brings a police car in 1D12×5 minutes.

Once inside, the Agents can attempt **Search** tests, one Agent at a time. Each takes 10 minutes. The player who rolls gets a +10% bonus with one helper or +20% with two or more. If the **Search** test succeeds, the Agents must make a **Luck** roll. On a failure, they realize there are no guns after all. On a fumble, the residents or a neighbor comes to investigate before they get out. On a success or a critical success, they find 2D6 guns. Invent the details or roll 1D100 for each on the **STOLEN GUNS** table.

>> Stolen Guns

1D100	Firearm Stolen
01–20	Light pistol
21–45	Medium pistol
46–50	Heavy pistol
51–65	Light rifle or carbine
66–80	Heavy rifle
81–95	Shotgun
96–97	Very heavy rifle
98	Submachine gun, fully automatic (usually illegal)
99	Light machine gun (usually illegal)
100	Grenade launcher (illegal) with 1D20 grenades (illegal)

Transportation

In the year 2000, nearly 30,000 vehicles were stolen in Maryland.

Agents with **Criminology** 30% or higher know neighborhoods where the theft of a vehicle is likely to go unreported. If the Agent wishes to try, they can roll that skill and find a seldom used vehicle unlikely to be reported in the next few days. Failure on the roll, however, means alarms, bystanders, or police.

Having **Drive** at 50% or higher means the Agent knows how to hotwire a car. So does rolling a success on an equivalent skill test, such as **Heavy Machinery** or an applicable **Craft** or **Science** skill. Write it down as special training for that Agent.

Changing the license plate for one taken from another vehicle or from an impound lot usually forestalls trouble, but if the Agents get pulled over while driving the stolen car, the officer is likely to routinely call in the plates and discover the deception.

SYNCHRONICITY

CAR THEFT

On the road, a murder of crows circles a dead possum. They do not move when approached by cars. If Agents investigate, the crows take flight...only to later land in another circle with the Agent at the center.

Cornucopia House

*All Agents should be marked by Bast before they come to Cornucopia House, or while they are sneaking around the property, planning to move in, or engaged with the occupants. See **CHIPPING THE TEETH** on page 38 for details.*

Including the large portion recently sold but unused, the Cornucopia House property covers some two hundred acres of green Maryland dairy farmland. The easy access is a lengthy gravel road off Carruthers Road, between County Road 272 to the northeast and County Road 274 to the southwest. The property the government purchased from Families Without Frontiers takes up three quarters of the surrounding woodland, but it sits undeveloped due to funding shortages and a campaign by local farmers against the proposed prison. Someone parked on the road could walk about a kilometer through the unkempt forest and approach the house unobserved from the rear.

Because a daylight assault would be foolish, these descriptions presume a nighttime operation. Going in late at night increases the likelihood of finding people asleep and allows for more preemptive measures, such as cutting the phone lines. Handlers and common sense should encourage this course of action. If, for some reason, Agents choose to assault during the day or try to infiltrate the facility in disguise, adjust the details accordingly. Broad daylight attacks are likely to end in the targets' escape, collateral damage, and arrests. Subtle infiltrations are even more doomed, as the cultists meet even scheduled visitations from social services with supernatural violence and do not take kindly to strangers.

The locations and nighttime routines of the four adult occupants of Cornucopia House are described in **NIGHTLY ROUTINES** on page 58.



OPINT

NINETEEN

The number of children at Cornucopia House is up to the Handler. The Agents are unlikely to get a reliable count. Assume there are nineteen. That number can grow if the Handler wants to build new operations around previously unreported survivors.

INFESTATION

Cornucopia House exists to prepare children to join the Skoptsi community at Moscow on the Chesapeake as willing worshipers of the "Magna Mater." Yelena Kalamatiano has subjected the Cornucopia House "caretakers" and some of its older children to the mutagenic attentions of Shub-Niggurath. An Agent who gets a good, lingering look at the inner organs of one of these unfortunates may see black growths and fluids similar to those found throughout Kalamatiano herself. The sight costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

Watch Your Players

The events and circumstances of Cornucopia House can be particularly hard for some players to take. Pay attention. Tone down the details if that's necessary to protect your friends.

The Grounds

Outwardly, Cornucopia House projects the image of pastoral serenity: whitewashed wood buildings, green rolling hills, split-rail fences, docile dairy cows. The dairy cows are sometimes used in Skoptsi ceremonies involving Shub-Niggurath and its spawn.

The main house sits atop a small hill, but out-buildings and trees prevent casual observation from the north. Agents wanting to engage in surveillance must approach from the rear, lest they be seen on the winding road leading from the highway.

The orphans live in a large farmhouse with adult caretakers. By day, the children take turns in eerily silent, tense playtime outdoors, occasionally subject to random beatings by their attendants. By night, the children are locked inside, and hulking Rottweilers patrol the grounds, well trained to kill fleeing children as swiftly as intruders.

Driveway

The driveway leading to Cornucopia House cuts through trees separating the property from onlookers. Since much of the southern and eastern acreage has been sold to the state, the intersection of the two roads remains the closest street access.

Lines of sight down the hill are excellent, especially under the half moon. The gravel driveway and snow make approach toward the property very noticeable.

Shed

A windowless prefabricated shed faces the house. It contains the lawn maintenance equipment, a weight-bench with barbell and dumbbells, materials for disposing of bodies, and a large stash of child pornography and snuff films.

The zero-turn mower, weed-eaters, and gasoline cans are located on the left-hand side of the shed upon entering. The plastic buckets of caustic lye soda and shovels are stacked on the right.

At the right side also stands an odd contraption made of PVC pipe, used to arrange a cobbled together assortment of hair-dryers into a rectangular shape roughly 2 meters long and one across. It has a spool

of extension cord rigged to the back end and plugged into the shed's outlet. Alexi Arseni built it to thaw the winter ground for easier digging. Space heaters would have been more effective, but Arseni is obsessively proud of his invention.

A standing workbench holding a JVC JX-C7 Multi Color Editing Processing Unit and JVC9U CRT monitor dominates the back of the shed. The equipment is flanked by two shelves of wood-grain VHS drawers, one labeled "Blanks" and the other "Ready."

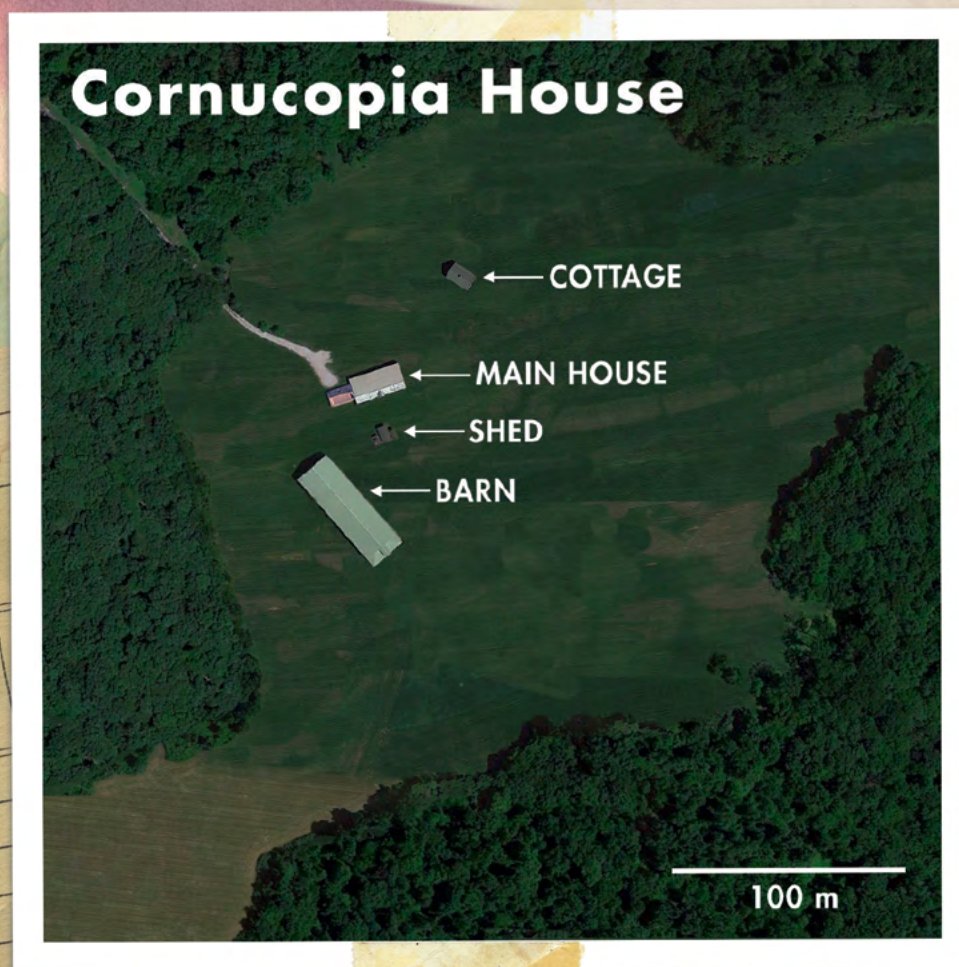
Viewing the tapes should never be described to the players aside from the following.

- » Viewing the tapes costs 0/1D4 SAN due to helplessness.
- » If the Agent has been inside, they recognize that the abuse takes place inside the main house and

involves its "caretakers" wearing a variety of animal masks to hide their identities.

- » If the Agent looked in the folder, the abuse seems more...terrestrial than what was photographed there, though this is little comfort. Tattoos and personal features in the photos match the Cornucopia House caretakers.

A small black ledger on the table includes a long list of P.O. boxes, code names, quantities, and dollar amounts. The drawers in the worktable contain numerous stamps, boxes, and empty sleeves for popular VHS movies such as *Lethal Weapon 2* and *Troop Beverly Hills*. It appears the operations in the shed were making up the budget shortfalls in Families Without Frontiers. A poorly maintained, bolt-action .30-06 hunting rifle is mounted above the workstation. It appears to have been fired frequently and rarely cleaned.



Barn

The barn looms larger than any other building on the property. There are no lights save the faint red glow of a radiator at the south of the building. Anyone with a background in agriculture or with **Anthropology** or **History** at 30% or better, or who succeeds at a roll at +20%, can tell the interior initially favored a large cattle operation. Much of it seems disused. The remainder of the feed sits a meter deep in a trough, and it's so mildewed it's hard to believe the cattle on the property can survive much longer. A tractor is parked in an abandoned corner with other neglected equipment.

The only activity in the benighted barn comes from a set of metal shelves erected in the space that once held cattle chutes, their remains hastily dismantled and left in a rusty stack. The shelves hold small metal cages containing a stupefying array of pets: rabbits, rats, cats, dogs, ferrets, birds, sugar-gliders, and anything else a child might call a companion. There are even a few reptile terrariums containing snakes and turtles, their lamps plugged into an overcrowded power strip in the back. It's a two-meter testament

to animal neglect. Dogs strain against cages barely large enough to contain them. Cats gnaw away at their own skin, the fur long since gone to mange, fleas, and neurosis. Each animal rains its waste down on those beneath. The piles of filth collect at the bottom of the stack of cages, mixing amongst the haphazard spray. Every creature looks malnourished and cold. Two of the three cheap space heaters set in a triangle around the stack have stopped working. Some animals have stretched through the bars to kill incompatible creatures placed next to them. Others appear to have starved or frozen. At least a quarter are dead. Each animal's cage has a name tag on it.

If the Agents managed to obtain the adoption records for Families Without Frontiers, they recognize some of the names from the name tags as children listed in the documents. Searching the house can confirm that the name tag on the child's pet's cage is the complete extent of the paperwork Yelena Kalamatiano keeps for her charges. The cages equal the number of children on the property.

The barn also contains two larger, cleaner kennels for the guard dogs. They are conspicuously empty.



Watching Cornucopia House

Visitors are uncommon. One of the live-in attendants drives out once a week to collect mail from a post office box and to buy supplies. Handymen and plumbers from the Skoptsi community handle repairs. A social worker comes every few months and takes a tour under the unnatural hypnosis of Yelena Kalamatiano, blind and deaf to every child's cry of terror or pain or unfounded hope.

"Guard" Dogs

No matter how carefully the Agents approach the home from the backwoods, they are found by one of the Rottweilers guarding the property. The Agents are not the only ones influenced by Bast.

The guard dog looks vicious but shows no aggressive behavior. In fact, it sits next to the intruder and appears to watch the property with the Agent, doing nothing to alert its owners. Its collar reads "Mr. Throbb."

It doesn't take much to realize this behavior is bizarre for what appears to be a trained attack animal. It grows stranger when the animal refuses to leave, no matter how hostile the Agent becomes. Even if it must retreat some distance, the animal remains silently near. When the Agent leaves, the animal lays in the snow as if waiting for the Agent to return.

Mr. Throbb may return later in the campaign. Give him a moment to make an impression on the players.

Playtime

Observing the farm for any length of time reveals the basic layout of the property. A dozen children are released in the late afternoon for something resembling recess. The sight of this "playtime" costs an observer 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

The children don't play so much as exercise. They make no sound while outside. The silence during a game of tetherball is especially eerie. Their toys are old, broken, and half-buried from where they were abandoned in the snow. The games seem more robotic than spontaneous. Many children are obviously happy to be in the sun, but they take care to restrain

their joy, their fleeting smiles never, ever pointed toward the house.

The rear and flanks of the main building are patrolled by aggressive guard dogs that bark and snarl when children appear. The kids give them a wide berth. The eastern side of the main house is flanked by a small, idyllic cottage. Though it is unguarded, children cut a wider path away from that than from the snarling animals.

An obese man and a young woman monitor the outing. He patrols among the children. She watches from the back steps, smoking a cigarette. The man gives a hard shove to any child caught standing too still or associating with one clutch of kids too long. The woman appears to suggest worse things to come with a glance and gets the kids moving again out of fear.

The violence is not exclusive to the adults. Some of the older children bully others, beating them to the point of drawing blood. The adults do nothing. The other children do nothing to help. They focus on bouncing a ball or whatever perfunctory game they are supposed to perform.

Agents with binoculars or other surveillance equipment note many of the children bear bruises and scrapes. Anyone with **Medicine** or **Pharmacy** can recognize the sallow skin and patchy hair on some of the children as a sign of malnutrition. None of the children wear adequate cold weather gear.

One child in particular, a white boy with clumps of blond hair, stands with his back to the house and furiously scratches something into the side of a white poplar that rots at the edge of the yard. Periodically, the boy glances around the side of the trunk and into the woods. Though the Agents are obscured, the boy appears to be staring directly into the eyes of an Agent surveilling the scene.

Eventually, the obese man yells. The children drop their toys quickly and assemble into a line to be led back inside. The boy at the tree does not listen. He continues to scratch into the tree with a stone.

The woman sitting on the step storms across the lawn, grabs the child's wrist, and drags him angrily back into the house. Her venomous glare portends

violence. All the while, the young boy stares blankly toward where the Agents hide.

If the Agents continue this grisly surveillance over the course of days, the same events occur at the same time. However, it's clear through glimpses when the doors are open that there are children who never get to leave the house.

The child scratching the tree does not come out again while the Agents watch Cornucopia House. Studying the pattern he was scratching into the tree requires approaching the tree from the west, leaving Agents exposed to the line of sight from the house.

SYNCHRONICITY

THE TREE CARVING

Carved into the poplar is a crude image. The bark is stripped away to form a gaping mouth. The top line of bark obviously represents the teeth of some predatory animal, but the bottom jaw is lined with figures in human shapes. In shape and number, the silhouettes mirror the Agents with eerie accuracy. There are even chips in the bark around where they received the marks of Bast. (See **CHIPPING THE TEETH** on page 38.) Examining the carving costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural. It instead costs 1/1D4 **SAN** from the unnatural if that Agent also witnessed the image being carved, hours before the child could have possibly known the Agents were there.



Nightly Routines

The night the Agents arrive, Cornucopia House goes through the following routine. Events are listed in linear order, rather than with time stamps, to allow Handlers to ensure Agents intersect the actions of their targets at inopportune and terrifying moments.

Evening

INNOKENTY AT THE BARN: Ryan Innokenty finishes his day shift by escorting the children down to the barn to care for their pets. He berates them into completing the night's chores and then puts them to bed. Innokenty, a maladjusted pedophile loser, stays at the main house rather than going home. He wants to spend his night among "friends." He sits in the family room chair, watching the news and a rerun Baltimore Ravens game. He has a view of the bathroom and seems to enjoy his "job" monitoring children who get up to use it. Children try to wait while he is on duty.

KALAMATIANO'S RITUAL: Shortly before sunset, Yelena Kalamatiano tortures a young girl named Clem in an attempt to re-create sorcerous rites to summon Shub-Niggurath. The ritual fails as the child dies. Discouraged and drained, Kalamatiano notes the failure in her records. She summons Alexi Arseni to get rid of the body of her last guest and to fetch another child for a "sleepover."

ARSENI WAITS: Alexi Arseni spends most of the night reading on the porch, as it's his turn to attend to Babushka while Sabina "watches" the children and Ryan takes the night off. He spends the evening smoking and reading cheap paperbacks until informed that Yelena "needs another one."

ARSENI AND INNOKENTY: Before leaving the cottage, Alexi Arseni calls from the kitchen phone into the main house for Ryan Innokenty. He alludes to the fact that he caught Innokenty skimming from the take on videos last month and didn't tell Babushka. Arseni demands Innokenty take over his disposal duties because he would prefer not freezing his ass off. Innokenty, in fear of his life, agrees.

THE EARTH WARMER: Innokenty trudges out to the shed, unlocks it, and goes inside. There, he retrieves a PVC frame lined with hair dryers and drags the

contraption out into the snow. He places it near the edge of the woods on the eastern side of the hill and plugs the extension cord into the shed. The blare of ten salon-quality hair dryers fills the outside of the compound as they melt a small rectangle of frost.

APPOLONOV AWAKENS: Sabina Appolonov comes out of the master bedroom where she had been sleeping and takes over for the night. Confident that Arseni won't snitch to Babushka, she begins drinking vodka. She watches her old figure skating tryout video. Unable to stomach the mistakes in her ice-skating performance—she still bears many of those scars—she vindictively flips potato peelings at the children trying to sleep on the kitchen floor. She occasionally looks down at them, hoping one will flinch, complain, or try to pick the vegetable scraps from their hair. They long ago learned to feign sleep, though, so she usually returns to her video and mindless peeling, disappointed. This nightly ritual consumes far more of Sabina's time than seems reasonable, but she's within easy reach of the curtains to view the driveway, and she always carries the keys to the kitchen's shotgun cupboard. If she hears the tires of someone driving toward the main house, she ceases her chores and calls someone to investigate.

ARSENI AT THE BARN: Arseni leaves the cottage and goes down to the barn. He reaches into a cage labeled "Clem," snaps the neck of the sickly diamond dove therein, throwing the cage and corpse into a pile. Clem was Kalamatiano's most recent victim. Arseni removes a cage containing a ferret, this one labeled "Conradin." He fishes around in some landscaping chemicals until he finds a can of roach-killer, then returns with the cage to the main property.

INNOKENTY FETCHES THE BODY: Innokenty takes a pair of large trash bags from the shed and walks to the cottage. After a few minutes inside the guest bedroom, he exits the cottage dragging a small bundle behind him toward the hair dryers. He unceremoniously drops it, checks the ground temperature with his hand, and returns to the shed to wait a bit longer. He loads a shovel, pick, and bag of lye into a wheelbarrow.

ARSENI PICKS A VICTIM: Arseni enters the main house from the metal security door on the south side,

banging the cage and screaming “Conradin!” There is much wailing and whimpering inside from the children. Those who make noise get enthusiastic kicks from Sabina Appolonov. Arseni grabs the young blond boy seen at the poplar tree, presumably Conradin. He drags the boy off his mattress and down the hallway. The other children, cowed by kicks, pretend to go back to sleep.

TORMENTING CONRADIN: Arseni loses grip on Conradin’s hand halfway across the yard to the cottage. The shoeless, shirtless boy makes a desperate run into the snow. Arseni screams after him and rattles the ferret cage. The boy turns in time to see Arseni begin emptying the can of roach-killer into the eyes of the trapped animal. The ferret screams in pain. The boy, attached to the pet, comes running to Arseni, who promptly smacks him in the face with the aerosol can. Arseni drags the cowed and disoriented boy into the cottage. He chains the boy inside one of the bedrooms.

Midnight

INNOKENTY DIGS: Innokenty goes out into the cold, steps inside the PVC frame, and begins the laborious task of digging a grave in the middle of winter. It takes him several hours to get it a meter deep. He notices approaching cars only if they have their lights on.

ARSENI LAUGHS: Arseni returns from the cottage and throws the cage holding the ferret out into the snow. Its eyes nearly melted, the thing won’t stop screaming. He closes off the porch door and returns to his book, occasionally smoking and laughing at Innokenty struggling in the snow.

BABUSHKA PREPARES: Convinced her work goes best when the victim is left to season a bit, Babushka empties one of her tumorous teats into a tea cup. She takes it to the room where Conradin has been chained and leaves it within his reach. She leaves him there in the dark. When he becomes so desperate for water that he drinks from the cup, she will begin her next experiment. In the meantime, she returns to the cottage living room and begins cross-stitching while listening to records.

APPOLONOV SLEEPS: In the main house, Sabina Appolonov passes out next to her bottle of vodka on the

kitchen table around the third time her figure skating tape runs through. She sleeps in front of the small television until morning.

Before Dawn

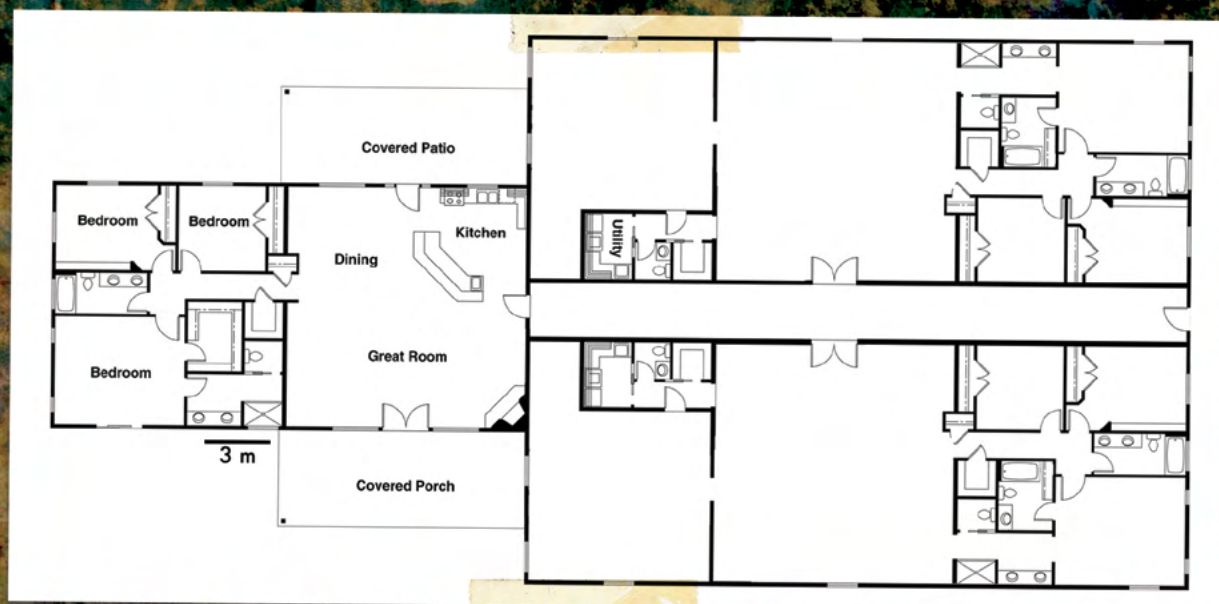
INNOKENTY LASHES OUT: Finally finished digging the small grave, Innokenty moves the hair dryers, dumps the trashbag-wrapped corpse into the hole, and empties a bucket of lye on top. He hurriedly covers the mound in mud. With the hair dryers off, the sounds of Conradin’s dying ferret can be heard. Innokenty goes to the cage and angrily hits it with a shovel while Arseni laughs from the porch. The creature’s cage protects it. Innokenty kicks the cage further across the yard. He can’t be bothered to finish the job. He dumps the tools back in the shed and returns to the main house. He takes a hot shower, doses himself with stolen oxycodone, and falls asleep in the master bedroom.

ARSENI DEPARTS: After listening to ensure Babushka has gone to bed, Arseni makes his way to the parking lot. He puts his car in neutral and lets it roll down the hill before starting the engine near the road and skipping out of work early.

The Main House

Cornucopia House is a small, single-level ranch house whose former garage was demolished to make room for a large expansion. Three cars are in the gravel parking lot. The barracks-like construction looks clean enough aside from some mildew on the siding. No windows are visible from the front of the house. Living room and kitchen windows are obscured by blackout curtains. There are windows to another room visible from the backyard, but these are boarded shut.

The porch light and a security light illuminate the parking lot and front door all night. The lights reflect off dirty snow churned by the footprints of children and dogs. The front door is equipped with a peep-hole and festooned in “Do Not Disturb” signs. Some signs claim that this is for the good of special needs children contained within.



The only opening in the newer, barracks-like wing of the house faces south. It's a heavy metal security door with a worn path between it and the cottage.

Kitchen

The kitchen of Cornucopia House would be filthy by any standards. It's unforgivable in a children's home. The taps run red with rust. Crumbs litter the grimy counters and floor. Stained and poorly-washed dishes are piled haphazardly in cupboards.

The cracked linoleum flooring could cut a bare foot, but the floor is nearly blanketed in worn, smelly, mattresses at haphazard angles, each bare of bedding. Children ranging in age from three to twelve sleep on these mattresses: some with single blankets and pillows, some with nothing at all. They are bathed in florescent lights at all hours.

An old, 12-inch television plays a grainy VHS tape showing an unskilled teen girl figure skating to Mily Balakirev's *Islamey*. The tape is labeled "Appolonov Qualifier 91," if anyone takes the time to eject it from the built-in VCR. It's set on a rickety TV tray next to the door to the back porch.

One small kitchen table sits near the window to the front porch, flanked by two folding chairs.

A locked cupboard holds a loaded, double-barreled shotgun and a box of shells. Sabina Appolonov keeps the key.

Family Room

The front door opens into the family room. The burgundy shag carpet and wood-panel walls are horribly dated, but both appear to have been recently cleaned. The eastern wall is lined with a dusty, empty bookcase, set low to the ground. The thick layer of dust appears completely undisturbed, as if the shelves are carefully avoided by all who live in the house. There is no furniture save a single armchair. As in the kitchen, the floor is littered with thin, bare mattresses where children shiver and try to sleep under the house lights.

The television is on but plays no sound. The speakers have been disabled. A wire taped to the wall and across the ceiling runs over the room and down to the recliner, where a pair of headphones dangle from the end. Whoever is on duty can listen to the TV without letting anyone else hear.

SYNCHRONICITY

THE FAMILY ROOM

If an Agent is the only adult in the room, the silent television inexplicably switches channels. The first channel shows an episode of *The Crocodile Hunter*. Steve Irwin inspects the teeth of a croc before the channel switches again, this time to *When Animals Attack!* and a photographer being mauled by a lioness. Then it's Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* and the teeth of the disappearing Cheshire Cat, followed by the assault on Tippi Hedren in *The Birds*. The television continues accelerating through images of animal savagery until it is turned off. Any children awake in the room find nothing odd about the experience.

SYNCHRONICITY

THE MASTER BEDROOM

A cardboard box in the corner reads "Punishment" and is filled with dolls, action figures, and stuffed animals. Toys near the top of the pile have been modified by the former owners. Every cartoon animal appears to have been retrofitted with marker to bear bloody teeth and claws.

An unlabeled cardboard box contains a variety of plastic face masks intended to make the wearers look like animals. They are sized for adults and smell of sweat.

Bathroom

The bathroom sits in the northeast corner. The door has been removed. Chores to clean the bathroom appear to be taken very seriously. It's the cleanest part of the home by far. The shower curtain is transparent. Anyone doing their business does so in full view of whomever sits in the recliner at the head of the family room.

Bedrooms

The bedrooms are behind locked doors. All employees have keys, but it's easy enough to kick through the ancient lock. It's clear by the mixed spray of bras and boxer shorts that no bedroom houses any one resident. The beds seem to be for whomever is working late at Cornucopia House. The decor is similar to that in the family room, but the end-tables are littered with condoms, pornographic magazines, and camera equipment that provide a startling contrast to the confiscated dolls and stuffed animals piled in one corner. (This

costs 0/1 SAN from helplessness.) The filth is mixed with drug paraphernalia. Aside from taking turns resting off-shift without having to go home, it's clear what the employees use the bedrooms for.

Hallway

The late addition to the house is constructed of newer materials, but somehow appears in worse repair than the rest. The construction is simple. A single hallway bisects two long wings running on either side of the corridor, accessible only through a pair of doors for the girls' and boys' dormitories. The carpet is newer than in the living room but more stained. Splashes of old vomit and piss dot the walls. Holes in the plaster and fingernail marks down the corridor give the impression that multiple victims have been dragged down this hallway from the occupied main house toward the heavy-duty security door at the end. It opens to the side of the property facing the cottage.

Girls' Dormitory

The door to the girls' dormitory is locked. It needs to be broken down or unlocked using a key from one of the employees.

The dorm is immaculate and empty. Each bed is pristinely made with pink comforters. An elaborate wallpaper mural dominates one side of the main room, depicting cartoon animals that cavort around a maypole as a small girl holds a tea party with fantasy creatures. Dressers brim with neatly folded, donated clothing. New dolls and stuffed animals, some still in the original wrapping, flank every pillow. The closet holds nothing except the cleaning supplies used to maintain this facade.

It's uncertain if the purpose of the dormitory was to taunt the children or concoct some illusion necessary to keep authorities from investigating Cornucopia House. What is clear is that no child has slept in this room. Ever.

Boys' Dormitory

The door to the boys' dormitory is locked. It needs to be broken down or unlocked using a key from one of the employees. It's immediately clear that no boy has ever lived here. Blue comforters, far superior to anything in use by the shivering children sleeping on the floors outside, adorn two rows of double beds that have enough space for everyone in the house, boy or girl. Drawers are stuffed with moth-eaten clothes that appear to be never worn. Closets are packed full of dusty, unused sports equipment. Walls are lined with posters of sports stars from years ago: Ken Griffey Jr., Hulk Hogan, Bo Jackson. They peel from the walls where ancient sticky tack has gone dry, but their colors remain bright from so little exposure to light.

SYNCHRONICITY

THE GIRLS' DORMITORY

On a successful **Search**, an Agent notices something odd about the tea party. The girl having brunch with animal friends has a small arched line surrounding her head, barely noticeable. Picking at the line reveals that an incision has been cut into the wallpaper. Folding the heads of the painted creatures back and down at the neck reveals something written on the sticky side of the paper. The symbol drawn on the other side is a birthmark, located somewhere not easily visible on that Agent's body, inscribed in exact detail as if it were some inscrutable glyph copied from memory. This costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

SYNCHRONICITY

THE BOYS' DORMITORY

On a successful **Search**, an Agent notices something odd about an air vent shared with the hallway. A piece of paper slaps against the grating and rustles with the airflow. Upon removing the grate, the Agent discovers a series of crude children's drawings that depict the wounds Agents received before reaching Cornucopia House. The body parts and wounds depicted are in close-up and in as much detail as a child's hand could render. The wounds repeat, over and over, each drawing seemingly done by multiple artists. Anyone with 30% or better in **Psychotherapy** understands that the lack of narrative in the drawings of young children suggests extremely maladaptive development. Anyone with knowledge of injuries received prior to the raid other than their own recognizes that this can be no coincidence and loses 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

The Cottage

The building sticks out like it was stabbed into the Maryland hillside: a one-story, traditional Russian cottage like something from a storybook. Unlike the windows from the main house, the ornate case-ments shimmer with a warm, inviting firelight. The only remotely mundane part of the quaint house is a cheap-looking enclosed porch tacked on to the front door.

Porch

The cottage porch is enclosed in cheap windows and furnished with metal folding chairs, a space heater, and a cheap TV stand that holds ashtrays. It only exists as a place to corral visitors while Yelena Kalamatiano prepares to “greet” them. Oddly, the front window, while it has its curtains drawn back, reveals nothing about the building’s interior. Though it is lit with a warm glow inside, the glass is obscured by some sort of frost. With the heater blasting inside the porch, however, there’s no way ice could have formed on the window’s exterior, and the opaqueness doesn’t seem to be part of the treatment.

Living Room/Kitchen

There are two versions of the cottage’s interior. The first occurs if the Agent entering the cottage fails a POW×5 test opposed by Yelena Kalamatiano’s POW×5. If so, the Agent is overcome by Yelena’s **Obscure Memory** ritual, disguising all they see from second to second and all they might recall of it. (See the *Handler’s Guide*, page 182.) The small, open-concept living room and kitchen of the cottage couldn’t possibly be more idyllic. Its well-maintained, antique sitting room tastefully invites guests to sit on a U-shaped arrangement of matching love seats facing a grand and worn fauteuil where Yelena Kalamatiano sits, with a cup of steaming tea sitting on the adjacent end-table. The kitchen appears clean and organized. The oven is on and floods the room with the smell of gingerbread. The walls are covered in crosses and painted with ornate illuminated scenes in the Russian Orthodox style. Yelena sits as if awaiting guests, wrapped in a cozy shawl. She’s startled at intruders but is still welcoming. She offers them tea, strong but delicious, while they talk.



If the Agent succeeds against the spell, they see an ancient hag wearing nothing but a filthy bathrobe. The room stinks like a slaughterhouse, and the furniture is stained so badly that any self-respecting thrift store would set it on fire. The murals on the wall are profane, sadistic images in the Russian Orthodox style. The crosses hang upside down.

If one Agent succumbs to the spell but another resists, the one who resisted finds the other not sipping tea from a cup but suckling at the grotesque, inhuman flesh of Babushka. See her description on page 79 for details.

The illusion of the cozy cottage only appears if Agents investigate the cottage without creating any commotion to draw Yelena outside. If the threshold of the door is breached while she is dead or elsewhere, the enchantment used to convince years of social workers that Cornucopia House was a good place for children collapses, and the inviting firelight shining through the windows fizzles just as the doorknob turns. Witnessing a storybook cottage turn horrific while passing between the frame of a door costs 0/1D4 SAN from the unnatural.

SYNCHRONICITY

THE GUEST BEDROOM

If Agents **Search** the room with a successful test or with skill at 40% or higher, they find a notebook among the few belongings in the room. The notebook contains four drawings. In the first, several stick figures equal to the number of Agents sit at a table watching a red square. In the second, the child's drawing depicts how the first Agent to view the drawings was "chipped" (see **CHIPPING THE TEETH** on page 38). The third shows the Agent, a red slash across where the wound sits on their body, reading a book next to a smaller stick figure, laid out with childish X's over the eyes to signal death. Finally, the fourth shows the same small figure, curled into a ball, floating in the center of the page and surrounded by jagged, black teeth all around the margins.

Guest Bedroom

The other bedroom in the house serves as a cell, padded, sound-proofed, and filthy. The only furnishings are a tray holding implements of torture, a filthy bucket, and chains looped through boltholes in the far wall. The corner near the restraints has some battered dolls, papers, and crayons scattered about.

Seeing the room by itself costs 0/1 SAN from helplessness. If the Agents arrive before Ryan Innokenty begins disposing of the body of the girl known as Clem, Kalamatiano's most recent victim, the cost is 0/1D4 SAN from violence.

Babushka's Bedroom

The illusion of comfort is never necessary in Yelena Kalamatiano's bedroom...or lair, as it may be more appropriately called. Seeing the room costs 0/1 SAN from the unnatural. Aside from an ancient bed, chest of drawers, and a small chamber pot, the room is entirely dedicated to grotesque blasphemy. Bones and desiccated body parts lay splayed on the floor in arcane shapes. The walls hold more smeared bodily fluids than paint. A roll-top desk sags under the weight of frantically scrawled notes in Cyrillic next to obscene drawings and photographs similar to those found in the cartoon cat folder.

SYNCHRONICITY

IN HER ROOM

In one corner lies a pile of dead rats with the words *Смерть шпионам* scrawled on the wall above the corpses in blood. An Agent who successfully rolls for either **History** or **Foreign Language (Russian)**, whichever is worse, recognizes the infamous slogan "Death to Spies." The collection of slain rodents appears to have been going on for some time. Upon its discovery, a living rat wiggles out from beneath the pile and seems to regard an Agent. The rat has blood around its mouth from cannibalizing its peers. It stares at the Agents as long as they are in the room, unflinching even if harmed or killed.



OPINT

VIOLATION

Depicting so intimate an assault as Kalamatiano “nursing” a hypnotized Agent can be unexpectedly traumatic to some players. Be absolutely certain that it is not out of bounds. If you’re not sure, have the victim only on the verge of violation as Babushka exposes her terrible flesh and croons, “Have some nice, warm tea, my dear.”

ASSET

Yelena's Notes

In Russian. Study time: months. Occult +5%, Unnatural +5%, SAN loss 2D6.

A disorganized jumble of papers contains Yelena Kalamatiano's journals, experimental logs, enemies list, and recipes. These documents represent a lifetime spent pursuing the mysteries of Shub-Niggurath, called the Magna Mater or Great Mother, as part of a patriarchal subculture unappreciative of her gifts: a horrifying subset of the Skoptsi.

Though far from a complete history, the documents provide a basic outline of Skoptsi theology as well as the location of the Basilica of Our Virgin Mother and the names of prominent cult members in the unincorporated community called "Moscow on the Chesapeake." (See **FINDING THE SKOPTSI** on page 88 for details.) At the Handler's discretion, long-term study could slowly reveal bits of information about the cult and its history. For each such revelation, summarize for the Agents a few lines from the history of the Skoptsi in *Countdown* or *The Millennium*. Further research in other sources could piece details together and reveal the full picture.

As Yelena grew older, the loss of Skoptsi treasures called the Black Icons and the cult's refusal to grant her immortality made her bitter toward the group's elders. Meanwhile, the boys in the Skoptsi spent their time occupied by their "diversions." The papers are part coup and part fantasy of what she would do if given sufficient power.

Using her already considerable skills as a sorcerer, Kalamatiano began experimenting with a way to recontact Shub-Niggurath's spawn, such as the haedi nigritiae, and grant herself immortality. The efforts were fruitless, resulting in nothing save the accelerated depletion of the cult's already dwindling stable of child victims. However, Kalamatiano did stumble onto a new ritual she calls Estrus of the Mother. It did not grant her immortality, but it transformed her and provided a grotesque tool for enhancing her sorcerous power.

If this book is provided to Delta Green, it might well be the intel responsible for the 2006 raid responsible for ending the Skoptsi for good. (See the *Handler's Guide*, page 105.)

RECOMMENDED RITUALS: Call Forth Haedi Nigritiae, The Closing of the Breach (Haedi Nigritiae), Estrus of the Mother, Exchange Personalities, Infallible Suggestion, Healing Balm, Obscure Memory.

IN THE FIELD

Decisions and Deviations

Agents are free to approach the Cornucopia House killings as they choose. That is essential to *God's Teeth*. They need to feel the shame of their own agency even as they draw inexorably toward a destiny outside their control. However, it remains the responsibility of the Handler to provide the most terrifying story possible. Don't treat this outline of events as an absolute itinerary. Let Agents choose where to go, but make sure they arrive there at the most disturbing and inopportune possible moment.

Furthermore, let Agents struggle and suffer, but try not to kill them just yet. Remember, though they don't know it, they have been *chosen*. If they fail a test and end up ensnared by Yelena Kalamatiano's sorcery, wake them up with one of the children's pets tearing into their flesh. Distract attackers from the killing blow by having the guard dogs inexplicably turn on their masters. The force that chose the Agents can manipulate causality to save them. But they should never be comforted by the method in which it happens.

Aftermath

Clove sent the Agents to kill cultists. When they finish, there should be at least four bodies on the grounds, evidence of a child-trafficking cult scattered everywhere, and so many instances of synchronicity that whole operation feels like a setup. There's much to do and likely very little time.

Saving all the children gains the Agent and each Friendly 1 SAN. Destroying Yelena Kalamatiano gains the Agent and each Friendly who glimpsed her true nature 1D4 SAN.

Child Welfare

Some liberated children sob over the bodies of their captors, indoctrinated by their torturers, overwhelmed by emotion, or despairing of being reunited with older friends who already joined the Skoptsi. Some cling to the Agents, recognizing salvation and desperate for human contact. Most sit mutely and avoid eye contact, recognizing that those capable of the most violence are always the ones in charge. The odd part is how eerily silent and obedient they all remain. If directly addressed, even the most inconsolable child shuts up, avoids eye contact, and cowers.

An Agent with **Psychotherapy** at 20% or above, or who successfully rolls for **HUMINT** or **Anthropology**, recognize the operant condition of extreme abuse. Any sound, no matter how understandable, causes the children to distance themselves from whoever made it. Most of the children of Cornucopia House have been educationally neglected past the point of speech. The TV is muted without captions. Books and all signage have been removed from spaces visible by children. All text is reserved for spaces exclusively accessible by adults. The sole communication between captor and prisoner seems to have been pain. The Agents know of rare cases of extreme neglect, where the ability to speak has been denied to children in an attempt to make it impossible for them to testify against their caretakers. But with a dozen or more children housed at Cornucopia, no Agents have ever seen anything on this scale.

The younger kids, the majority of the children, can only wait to be physically directed toward whatever task is required. They seem to imbue the sound of the fluorescent lights humming and heaters kicking on with more meaning than the hooting of the new adults in the room. If compelled to speak, anyone beneath the age of eight speaks gibberish. The effect is similar to children born deaf or hard of hearing, but these children lack any recognizable system of sign or symptoms of hearing loss.

The Older Children

A few of the kids, coy as their gestures may be, appear to understand when Agents give direct instructions (such as "Go over there" or "Sit down"). This implies silence is a recent strategy, but the price of speaking and comprehending must have been very high for those already cursed with language.

Convincing one of the older children to answer questions requires a **Psychotherapy** test at -20%. If it fails, the child sobs, cowers, or defiantly waits for the blow they are certain must be coming. If it succeeds with an even roll, the child still speaks some English acquired before the hush fell over Cornucopia House. If it succeeds with an odd roll, the kid the Agent interrogates is old enough that they were pulled from the crumbling Eastern Bloc. They remember snatches of their original Slavic languages and remain inscrutable to any who don't speak them.

Agents capable of communicating find the children recognize only the simplest vocabulary. For instance, the word "abuse" receives blank stares, but they might understand "hit," "ouchie," or "hurt." Answers return with equal simplicity, the child's voice often cracking and raspy with disuse. They provide what little they know to those patient enough to make them believe their voice is no longer a sin, but they don't know much.

The people in the house "loved the thing in the woods" or "were pets to the big god." Asking for details leads to rapidly spiraling terror and a dead silence broken only by inconsolable shrieks.

The other children can't speak because "Mama Sabina says 'quiet' and means it."

The children were allowed to keep pet animals because "pets have to love you, and you make them safe, like mamas and papas. You make safe by doing what mamas and papas say. You have to love them too, even though it hurts. They have to love the big god and do what he says, even though it hurts."

If asked about the artwork and the other disturbing coincidences around the house, the questioned child merely points at younger kids. If pressed, they make the Agent promise not to tell anyone before whispering: "Pets to other god. The secret god. The god with no name. Love hurts too much. The small ones want a god that hates with them."

If asked how they know about the other god, the older children just point to their younger peers again, implying the answer is plain to see. No one who can speak claims this other god as their own. "We're too loud. He doesn't talk to us."

The younger children say nothing, no matter how they are questioned.

Saving the Animals

If left to their own devices by Agents distracted in the wake of the attack, the children follow a predictable agenda.

First, some of the mute children try the door to the kitchen cabinet. If it's still locked, they know that Sabina has the key, but no one dares approach her, alive or dead. The taboo is broken by the young boy called Conradin, if he has been released. He fishes the keys from the former caretakers, unlocks the cabinet, and distributes food. While the older children fight and hoard the contents of the cupboard, Conradin and the mute children, even down to the toddlers, take little and distribute it fairly.

The true implications of the removal of their caretakers begins to sink in. Children begin trying the front and back doors. If asked where they want to go, they can only point down the hill toward the barn. They grow increasingly desperate to get there. Children begin to shake, cry, lash out, and bite in an attempt to get out the door. Allowed to leave, they run

down the hill in a pack toward the barn through the snow. Once there, each child frees their pet. Even the dead ones are retrieved from cages and clutched by sniffing owners. The abused animals remain remarkably calm, and the children treat their charges with care uncharacteristic for their age. If not already clear, the emotional companionship and blackmail practiced through the Cornucopia House pet program becomes apparent. When things went beyond the point where pain and death were a threat, they threatened the pet, the child's only lifeline to love.

With their pets rescued, the children return to the house. They're fascinated by the TV if it is on. Unplugging the headphone jack, many are startled to learn the machine makes noise. The programming, however, remains disturbing. (See **FAMILY ROOM** on page 60.)

Meeting Conradin

If Conradin is killed in the fighting or by Babushka, this scene doesn't take place. Another child assumes Conradin's role and background, even his name.

Conradin is a small blond child six years of age, but his malnourished frame makes him look four. His first priority upon being released is to check on his ferret. He goes to it if the creature is still injured in its cage and desperately tears at the wire until his hands bleed. If it got out, it runs to him as soon as he is free. Despite being starved, blinded by chemicals, and half-crushed, the ferret lovingly curls itself around the boy's neck and through his hands. Conradin doesn't smile at this, nor is he distressed by the pet's injuries. His facial expression is aware but distant. The muted gaze of trauma masks everything.

With ferret in hand, Conradin sees to the other children, getting them food or leading them to their own charges. He is a natural leader among the group. Young kids crowd around him, eager to make physical contact. Older kids twice his size defer to him, though he says nothing.

Conradin doesn't respond to questions or attempt to speak. It's obvious he can hear, but it's plain he regards words as gibberish. If Agents think they know his name from the guard's yelling, he instinctively cringes and wraps his body protectively around the

SYNCHRONICITY

THE BOOK IN THE WALL

If pressed for explanations, Conradin seems to consult his ferret, pressing his head to it. He goes back across the snowy fields unsteadily, as if dowsing. Though not direct, his determination is clear. He steps over the bodies of his abusers matter-of-factly as if his sight were fixed on a distant point only he can see. He eventually reaches a stretch of wall in the cottage kitchen. He kicks at a spot on the plaster, trying to tear through the drywall. Given time to succeed, he reaches into the wall, pulls out a book, and throws it on the floor. He doesn't even look into the hole or where the book falls. With the book on the floor, Conradin attempts to return to the other children. If detained, he dispassionately waits.

He has no answers about what he pulled from the wall, why he did it, or anything else. To him, it's plain that kicking open the wall and throwing a wad of papers on the ground was the ultimate answer to any further queries.

The book was one of thousands in the walls. Older houses sometimes used books as insulation. They are stacked between studs, dating back to the late 1930s. This is a 1911 first edition of *The Chronicles of Clovis* by Saki. The pages are water warped and moldy. The book has fallen open to the short story "Sredni Vashtar." The poem is still legible.

*Sredni Vashtar went forth,
His thoughts were red thoughts and his teeth were white.
His enemies called for peace, but he brought them death.
Sredni Vashtar the Beautiful.*

The story describes a sick child, Conradin, whose pet polecat kills his evil aunt. He comes to worship it as a god.

Whether discovered later or by a student of literature on site, an illiterate child with a ferret pulling a story about a boy saved by a ferret he made into a god, from behind a wall where it was entombed over seventy years before he was born, costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

THE CHRONICLES OF CLOVIS



SAKI

*Sredni Vashtar went forth,
His thoughts were red thoughts
and his teeth were white.
His enemies called for peace, but
brought them death.
Sredni Vashtar the Beautiful.*

then, of a sudden he stopped his
new closer to the window pane. The
still... as it had...
we slipped...
ning and...
counted...
He knew that the
athred so well on her face, and that in an
the garden would carry...
long...

animal. It's clear he only recognizes the sound as a signal that someone is about to hurt the only thing he cares about.

Conradin has no time for talk. Agents that physically stop him and insist on asking questions can get his attention, but the boy can only answer their questions through gestures. His only response as to what is going on involves leading the Agents through the backyard, pointing to the picture he carved in the tree (see **THE TREE CARVING** on page 57), then pointing at the Agents. This seems to be explanation enough.

Those Who Have Seen Shall Seek

As a campaign, *God's Teeth* makes Agents suffer decades of punishment for a single night of mercy. The old saying "if even one life was saved, it was worth it" will be put to the test here.

A few of the older children rescued from Cornucopia House might approach something like a normal adulthood, with a lifetime of struggle and recovery. The majority of the children do not thrive.

Most can only look forward to newer, more mundane abuses heaped upon them by a welfare system ignorant of how to help and, in many cases, incentivized against trying. Their lives bloom into the predictably rancid crops that often grow from the seeds of childhood trauma: violence, incarceration, sexual abuse, suicide.

The youngest children are all lost, caught between the dual misfortunes of Sabina Appolonov's policy of absolute silence and Babushka's ritual sorcery. The daily tortures lit the very essences of their beings aflame with agony and drew the attention of the being that lives between all things, the being that has claimed the Agents themselves. This power used their eyes to see and their hands to prophesy. The mute children remain forever in thrall to their nameless, atavistic savior. They dedicate their whole beings to ensuring that their guardian angels, the Teeth of God, remain well fed.

Worst of all are those that partially recover. Those too corrupted by language to be understood by the power beyond but too corrupted by what they've seen in Cornucopia House to face the outside world. These

children are what Clove feared most. They use their recovery to seek the dark truths behind the world. Some rediscover the faith of the Skoptsi or the worship of Shub-Niggurath. Others find other powers living behind the veil because they know to look. Some are bound to turn into vectors of unnatural infection, though it's impossible to say who.

Those that felt the touch of the otherworldly power, through the love and patience of caring adults, end up acculturated back into human society. Even these "cured" victims feel the absence of their god like an amputation. They resent their loving caretakers as kidnappers who removed them from a place of total understanding. Nothing is more dangerous than a worshiper cut off from the comforting actuality of a god. Stranded on an island of language, and unable to communicate with this primal force, the former child communes the only way available: through the creation of new children and the growth of their god's Teeth.

Calling Clove

Clove asked to be called when the mission was done. If the lead Agent doesn't remember, don't remind them. If no one calls, Clove assumes all participants are dead and flees the country with her family. Calling the next day receives no answer. Let the uncertainty caused by a failure to debrief haunt the Agents if they don't recall their orders.

If they do remember, Clove answers after too many rings for comfort, whispering and audibly shaken. She only speaks to the Agent she briefed in the gas station, hanging up and ditching the phone if anyone else calls. She answers with a hissed, "What happened?"

Agents that relate the success of the mission, no matter the details, hear audible weeping. It doesn't require any skill to understand this behavior is unprofessional, even for Delta Green. Nothing about a sanctioned op should have made her quite this nervous. Either something is very wrong on her current operation, or she just got away with something.

Confronted about her strange behavior, Clove refuses to respond. Through tears, she tries to steer

the conversation back to business. She's slurring her words enough that anyone with a law enforcement background would suspect she's on something.

She says there's no justice coming to the Cornucopia House cultists beyond what the Agents gave them. The world has to think they just disappeared or died of an accident. She gives two key instructions to make sure the Agents do it right:

- » Get rid of all the bodies.
- » Burn every document and every audio and video recording.

If asked what to do about the children, Clove responds initially with a long pause. Then through tears she stumbles through a mix of orders, questions, assumptions, and apologies:

- » The Agents know what they have to do.
- » Everyone who comes into contact with this evil, these powers, is corrupted and becomes a poison. "Them. You. Even me."

- » Children are always learning. The Agents saw what these children learned. They saw what these children will carry out to the rest of the world.
- » The Agents know what Delta Green would want them to do.
- » The Agents know now why she had to get them to help. She could not do it herself. Not this.

If pressed, Clove begins screaming through the line. "Do it! You want to end up like the rest? Cut it off and walk away!" The screamed orders are cut short by the crash of glass, followed by a knock and a muffled voice. Clove responds with false cheer to someone, "Sorry, honey. Just dropped something! I'll be out soon." Then, whispered, "I'm out. Do what you want. Don't try to find me."

The phone goes dead. There is no further response to calls.

Inform the caller that it's now very clear that nothing about their mission was ever sanctioned by Delta Green. Each Agent or Friendly on the phone or informed of the conversation loses 0/1 SAN due to helplessness.



The Impossible Request

If the Agents spoke to Clove, she told them to murder all the children they just rescued from Cornucopia House. Let's hope they refuse. After all, she made it clear that they were not sent by Delta Green but by a rogue Agent.

Make it clear that the disappearance of four adults in the wake of, say, a mysterious fire and the abandonment of a dozen or so children, has any number of explanations. They died in a house fire and the children escaped. They fled after getting in too deep in their foster operation and running out of patience. They were abusive and killed by some vigilante. They killed themselves in a weird suicide pact but spared the kids. They got in trouble with another criminal faction for competing in their rackets. All those explanations might take up a news cycle, or they might not even be reported on at all. The murder of dozens of orphans and their caretakers? That's a federal case that consumes the news cycle of an entire nation.

If the Agents decide to murder the children, the first killing costs 1/1D10 SAN from violence. The SAN test is at -20% for any Agent who has a Bond involving children. Give the player a chance to change their mind before doing the deed and having to lose the SAN. Just going along with it but not pulling the trigger costs 1/1D8 SAN from helplessness. If they proceed, the next costs the same amount. And the next. And so on, until every Agent has lost the maximum possible of 10 SAN from violence or 8 from helplessness. Temporary insanity is likely along the way. A "struggle" response turns the violence against their fellow murderers.

We must hope they refuse. Should they massacre the children, kids scatter in panic and a few vanish into the woods. They'll return in "Red Thoughts."

Traces of Murder

Evidence in need of attention at Cornucopia House comes in three types. Take notes on how well the Agents obscure what happened along these three axes. It will play a factor in future scenarios.

Violent Crime

Shell casings, weapons, bloody snow, bodies: foul play leaves more clues than the Agents can handle. Every corpse needs to be hidden at a separate location or staged in some sort of easy-to-dismiss accident. In the case of adults, missing person cases receive far fewer resources than multiple homicides, especially if some of those missing were of questionable citizenship. Weapons and vehicles need to be dumped, especially those of the victims. In the case of any deceased children, their bodies must be completely disposed of. Nothing motivates a cop to go above and beyond like a murdered child. The Agents can't afford any crusaders looking into Cornucopia House one second longer than they have to.

Sexual Abuse

Oddly enough, leaving the remnants of the snuff operation in the shed actually helps to cover the Agents' tracks. The nightmares depicted in the VHS tapes are of the strictly human variety, and they are clearly perpetrated by the caretakers of Cornucopia House.

Discovery of the abuse leads state police to Maryland Human Services (described on page 43), where they find a paper trail that can only be explained by unforgivable neglect. Since the crime involves victims without extended families, and dead or missing as-sailants from the Russian immigrant community, it is clear to state officials that no one will profit from investigating the crime. In fact, avoiding an investigation would save the state from a huge scandal. Detectives pursue the case for a few months, but officials soon make it clear that no prosecutor is allowed near the evidence. The surviving kids are placed in new homes and have their records sealed by the state.

If the evidence of abuse is destroyed, events turn out the same way. Unable to explain why an entire orphanage of children was found unsupervised, no official wants to look closer when the only person left to blame is the state of Maryland. Officials fire Cornucopia House social worker Kerry Houghton, shuffle the kids to other group homes, and seize Cornucopia House under probate when no heirs to

Yelena Kalamatiano can be found. Unwilling to draw attention to themselves, the Skoptsi don't contest the seizure. After years sitting abandoned while the state tries to process probate, the remains of the property are bulldozed in 2008 when the land is ceded to the state for a new prison planned and delayed for a decade.

The Unnatural

Without evidence of foul play or crimes on the part of the caretakers, leaving Yelena Kalamatiano's notes (see page 66) on the scene only confuses things. State police can't make sense of them. They're eventually used as evidence of the old woman's declining mental state, which is used to justify the faulty premise that she just "ran off" and that her off-the-books employees quit when their paychecks stopped. The notes are crammed into a box and shuffled off to a state records warehouse to be promptly forgotten.

If Agents hide evidence of the murders but leave the remnants of Cornucopia's video operation, Yelena's notes get tied up in the investigation before it's quashed by Maryland officials. The stink made by the original detectives is large enough that, later, Delta Green catches a whiff of it. In 2003, the box of Yelena's notes goes missing from the garage of one of the detectives assigned to the forgotten case. They are used by Delta Green Outlaws to track down the location of the Basilica of Our Virgin Mother and end the Skoptsi for good in 2006.

Calling in the Authorities

If the Agent and Friendlies make no attempt at all to clean up the evidence, Maryland launches a massive but brief and surprisingly shallow investigation into the night of the attack. The governor, desperate for control over potential blowback, pressures local authorities for the Maryland State Police's Criminal Investigation Bureau to take over.

State detectives Keith Baswell and Bob Dale investigate. They likely interview the Agent and Friendlies. They're assisted by a very young state trooper, Almudena Velasquez. See **STATE POLICE: VELASQUEZ** on page 104 for details.

Baswell and Dale fixate on "devil worship" at Cornucopia House. Based on the bizarre documents and disturbing iconography found in the cottage and random trees, the official narrative is that at some point, Yelena Kalamatiano converted to some sort of cult worship and began hiring staff for her orphanage based on the tenets of her beliefs. No coherent ideology can be gleaned, but it was clearly related to the ritual abuse of children. Rising cult activity led to mass hysteria among children and caretakers. Considering the many successful inspections by CPS, the shift must have occurred within the span of a few months. The motives of dead caretakers remain a mystery.

The mute children and tawdry details draw media attention. Local and national papers run a few stories about the "child sex cult," but a lack of witness testimony keeps the story small. With 9/11 coming in a few months, then the D.C. sniper attacks a year later, then the Iraq invasion the year after that, the investigation is soon completely forgotten. That suits political figures well. Nobody wants memories of this very local horror to linger in the public consciousness.

What if the Agent and Friendlies remain in the middle of everything, claiming self-defense or defense of others for all the killings? Unless they called 911, it takes hours for an investigation to begin. They have plenty of time to review the scene and hear Clove's horrifying instructions. Then they become part of that investigation.

Refer to the guidelines for **PROSECUTION** on page 80 of the *Agent's Handbook* for possible repercussions. Refer as well to **GETTING FIRED** on that page if it seems appropriate for an Agent's or Friendly's background. If the Agent and Friendlies concoct a plausible explanation for their sudden vigilante raid, grant each of them a bonus to the **Luck** roll. After all, no prosecutor wants to come down in public against people who saved kids from abusive pedophiles. If the rolls go poorly, the district attorney fixes on something in the Agent's and Friendlies' individual backgrounds to blame, along with the catastrophic "all is well" reports by social services, for the county and state failing for years to notice and stop the horrors of Cornucopia House.

Survivors

After Agents leave the crime scene behind, the scenario has ended. The campaign continues only after many years. Ask the players questions about their characters. As most played Friendlies at the start of the campaign, this is a chance to “grow” them into full-blown Agents of the Program.

How Did You Cope?

Try to get some idea of each Agent's home life as they come back from their ordeal. Do they obsessively watch the news, seeking clues about the abandoned kids? Do they flee town in a panic and try to obscure their identities? Do they quietly sob in the shower, crawl into bed, and mumble something about a late shift to a spouse before staring into the shadows of the ceiling?

What Is the New Normal?

Make it clear that nothing in the Agents' lives approaches the madness of that night at Cornucopia House in early 2001, which makes the memory of it stick out all the more. What is the new normal for the Agent? Where do they live? Who do they work for?

Where Were You on 9/11?

The 9/11 attacks changed everything. The Agents will always remember where they were when they heard the news. They can narrate how their jobs changed, or how the expansion of the security state led to promotion and advancement.

What Did It Take to Recruit You?

For everyone, that night at Cornucopia House was the last contact they had with the old Delta Green conspiracy. Even the full Agent never hears from A-cell or any old DG contacts again.

However, sometime in the 2000s, each is approached by a recruiter working for the newly official Program. They don't identify themselves with the name Delta Green, but it's clear they got the character's name from somewhere before. The recruiter doesn't know about Clove or anything that happened in Maryland.

How does the Program approach them? Most importantly for the campaign to continue, why does each character say yes?

How Did You Make Yourself Useful?

The *Handler's Guide* describes the workings of the Program. The Agents see only a very narrow part of that. Much of their work for the Program is alone.

See **THE LONG YEARS** on page 84 for the most likely pattern. Every month or two, they are contacted by a lone officer using a false name. The Agent investigates rumors to see whether a supposed incident is actually worth investigation by a team. Describe long years where the Agents only occasionally receive calls for help, and most of those turn out to be completely bogus, and the ones that matter are handed off to someone else while the Agent is sent home. Without knowing they are intelligence assets, they may assume they are being treated as second-rate Agents. In fact, they are working with officers of the intelligence directorate, but they never hear that term.

How does each Agent approach this work? How do they respond to it? Ask each player to describe their Agent's slow slide into obscurity.



Characters

Some characters' backgrounds include an opening paragraph with information the Agents could uncover if they spend a few hours investigating. At the Handler's discretion, that may require a **Bureaucracy**, **Criminology**, **Law**, or **Persuade** test, depending on the Agents' approach. The Agents could learn the rest of each character's details if they take time to question them.

Agent Clove

Clove's background is detailed in **BACKGROUND** on page 25. Agents can uncover more, after "Go Forth," as described in **FOLLOWING CLOVE** on page 85.

Agent Clove aka Dr. Marie Noella

Terrified criminologist and agent on the run, age 34

STR 10 **CON** 10 **DEX** 10 **INT** 15 **POW** 14 **CHA** 13

HP 10 **WP** 14 **SAN** 41 **BREAKING POINT** 40

DISORDERS: Post-traumatic stress disorder.

SKILLS: Alertness 55%, Anthropology 20%, Bureaucracy 50%, Criminology 70%, Dodge 35%, Firearms 35%, History 40%, HUMINT 60%, Law 50%, Occult 20%, Persuade 40%, Unnatural 2%.

ATTACKS: Glock 17 pistol 35%, damage 1D10.

SCENT: None.



Sabina Appolonov

Background investigation: *Twenty-five-year-old Sabina Appolonov, born in Romania, was adopted by Yelena Kalamatiano in 1979. She has never moved out of Cornucopia House or worked anywhere else. No criminal record.*

Appolonov is Yelena Kalamatiano's most loyal follower. The abuse she suffered at the hands of Babushka evoked unshakable devotion. She quickly earned a place of trust at Cornucopia House, tormenting her fellow children with such zeal that Kalamatiano gave her such rare privileges as figure-skating in a nearby town.

Appolonov has fully bought into the worship of Shub-Niggurath. She actively abuses the children of Cornucopia House, treating them so cruelly that they gladly turn to smiling Kalamatiano, their Babushka, for comfort. Babushka then prepares them for exposure to the secrets of their cult.

She has noticed Kalamatiano's increasing distance from the church, but it was fear of her Babushka that first transformed her misery into awe. As far as Appolonov is concerned, Babushka is the dark mother. In fact, Appolonov's loyalty has only deepened with Kalamatiano's increasing withdrawal from the Skoptsi.

Appolonov initially worried about Babushka's new policy of taking children from stateside and the house's increasing reliance on sex trafficking and pornography for securing funds. Babushka appreciated her input on how to make the operations safer. Rather than realizing her increased responsibility was the result of her leader spiraling out of control, Appolonov deluded herself into thinking she's being groomed to eventually take Kalamatiano's place.

Babushka let Appolonov remove the kids from the bedrooms and force them to sleep on the floor, where she can watch them all at once and ensure they aren't conspiring to take her place as grandmother's favorite. Appolonov's jealousy is wasted. Babushka is no longer picking favorites for recruitment. She culls indiscriminately. Babushka's disinterest means Appolonov can freely exercise her sadism on the children. Now that Babushka is focused on getting what she's

always deserved, her favorite daughter is free to do whatever she wants to the little brats in her care. Even as the cult disintegrates, Appolonov's delusion is that she and Babushka are growing closer by ignoring the distraction of children less worthy of love than herself.

Appolonov is short, stout, and healthy, with olive skin and black hair and eyes. She bears the profound genital scars of her commitment to the Skoptsi. If the house is threatened, Appolonov throws herself fanatically into its defense. If challenged, she rushes to retrieve and use the shotgun in the kitchen.

Sabina Appolonov

Sadistic daycare manager and Skoptsi cultist, age 25

STR 12 CON 16 DEX 13 INT 12 POW 8 CHA 11
HP 14 WP 8 SAN 0

SKILLS: Alertness 40%, Athletics 40%, Craft (Animal Husbandry) 60%, First Aid 80%, Foreign Language (Romanian) 20%, HUMINT 45%, Medicine 40%, Melee Weapons 50%, Pharmacy 40%, Unarmed Combat 60%, Unnatural 30%.

ATTACKS: Double-barreled shotgun 40%, damage 2D8. Whip 50%, damage 1D4-1.

Butcher knife 50%, damage 1D6, Armor Piercing 3.

Unarmed 60%, damage 1D4-1.

SCENT: Strong.

Alexi Arseni

Background investigation: *Born in 1980. A Romanian orphan who spent his youth running with gangs. They had exploded in number after Decree 770, a push by the Romanian government to expand the population by restricting abortion and contraception. Arseni spent his childhood picking pockets and dealing drugs in exchange for food and liquor smuggled from the West. When the Berlin Wall fell, he was surprised to be rounded up in 1990 and adopted by Yelena Kalamatiano. No U.S. criminal record.*

Arseni thought it would be a few months of easy living in America before he had broken Yelena Kalamatiano into letting him have his way. He could not have been more wrong. But his life on the streets of Vaslui had taught him how to survive. When the

Skoptsi began initiating the children into the worship of Shub-Niggurath, Arseni was able to swallow his disgust long enough to realize that those who didn't assimilate would be next on the menu. He quickly acclimated to the cult.

Arseni is unsure whether he's convinced Babushka and the rest that he truly loves the disgusting thing that they call from the woods. Their humoring him as he debases himself may just be the next level of torture. Either way, Arseni knows when he is beat. He's absolutely certain that there's nowhere he can run where Kalamatiano won't find him. He places his hopes of survival on being loyal to the strongest predator around, just like he did as a child. When given the opportunity to join the Skoptsi, Arseni begged off and kept to his duties at Cornucopia House.

A few years ago, Arseni had the idea to let the children pick a pet upon arrival, and to then torture the animal instead of the child to gain control of their behavior. He still had hope, then. Perhaps even a little empathy. He advocated for the change because he thought it would make the children more pliable. Kalamatiano remarked how much more effective it was as a means of torment and praised him as her "sensitive son." She keeps him closer than ever. He takes every opportunity to distance himself from the increasingly insane, mutated old hag, and would gladly seize the chance to flee, but he never hesitates to execute her orders.

When not allowed to go into town or on babysitting duty, Arseni spends night shifts attending to Babushka's needs. He claims his need to sit outside next to the space heater is due to his love of smoking, but he only took up the habit as an excuse to get away from the monster that owns him.

Alexi Arseni

Renegade Skoptsi cultist, age 21

STR 11 CON 12 DEX 16 INT 12 POW 7 CHA 12
HP 12 WP 7 SAN 15

DISORDERS: Adapted to helplessness; adapted to violence; dissociative disorder; fugues; sleep disorder.

SKILLS: Alertness 50%, Athletics 35%, Dodge 50%, Drive 40%, Firearms 35%, Melee Weapons 60%, Occult

16%, Persuade 40%, Stealth 60%, Unarmed Combat 50%, Unnatural 5%.

ATTACKS: Baseball bat (in shed) 60%, damage 1D8.

Unarmed 50%, damage 1D4-1.

Can of bug spray 80%, stuns target and imposes -20% to all actions for an hour.

Improvised flamethrower using bug spray and a lighter 80%, damage 1D6.

SCENT: Strong.

Ryan Innokenty

Background investigation: Born in 1967 to middle-class parents in the New York suburbs. His parents divorced and shared custody. Low grades throughout school and frequent discipline problems and counseling due to fighting and drug use. Occasional menial jobs and frequent changes of address from 1987 to 1997. A series of minor drug and public intoxication convictions in New York state, but no serious jail time.

Though of Russian heritage, Ryan Innokenty is pure-blooded American trash. He was born to middle-class parents in the New York suburbs in the late Sixties, and there's nothing in his past to explain or excuse what a repugnant piece of shit he grew into. His folks divorced a couple of times each, but they never hit him, and they were careful to let him know their problems weren't his fault. He got in fights at school and never did his homework, and their first impulse was to blame themselves, a narrative young Innokenty was all too happy to reinforce in endless parent-teacher conferences and counseling sessions.

He bounced between his parents' houses as they struggled to keep him in the middle-class lifestyle to which he'd grown accustomed. Innokenty was left to his devices. He didn't really notice their absences and was typically annoyed when they insisted on spending "quality time" with him. As far as he was concerned, it was better when they were at work. It meant he got more presents to buy his love, and it was easier to get kids at school to like you when you had the newest stuff.

When Innokenty was thirteen, Dad caught him sneaking into his seven-year-old stepsister's room one night. The bastard threw him out of the house,

but they kept it from the police to avoid a scandal. He went to live with Mom and got put into therapy, which taught him how to hide it better. Fast-forward a bit and he dropped out of high school, but all he had to tell his Mom was that he had gotten his GED (he didn't) and that he was using the money she was giving him for community college (he wasn't). That fueled about a decade of drugs and fun times in the city until Mom went and died on him.

Times got rough for a while. He ended up as a dishwasher in a restaurant down by Brighton Beach to try to keep up with his habit. One of the waitresses kept bringing in her son to work because she was too cheap to hire a sitter. The little guy got curious about what Innokenty was sneaking back into the walk-in to do every shift. Ryan showed him, gave him a taste, and one thing led to another. The owner of the restaurant walked in mid-way through and caught them in the act. Ryan thought he was done for, but it turns out no one wanted a scandal. The bearded old man just laughed and said he had a job better suited to Innokenty's personality.

That's how he ended up at Cornucopia House. He instantly knew something was fishy about the place, but who was he to complain? He tested the waters, got a little bolder, and eventually realized he had free rein. It was a dream job. The only time he ever got in trouble was when the old bitch in the cottage appeared over his bed one night while he was sleeping. He thought he was a goner. But she just asked him if he knew anything about camera equipment. She said it was about time he earned his keep.

Honestly, after years there, Cornucopia House has kind of stolen Innokenty's love of the game. Whatever shit the others are getting up to with the kids makes them glassy-eyed dolls. They don't love them like he does, and there's no romance when he has to share. When he has to perform on command to fill orders, it cheapens the experience. Maybe he's just getting old. When the Skoptsi finally invite him to join them in rejecting sexual pleasures for the maiming that connects them to their goddess, he may be ready.

In the meantime, he prefers the house to his shitty apartment. He can be himself. He sticks around to watch TV, even if he has the night off. Besides, the kids are his friends. They've always understood him better than anyone else.

Ryan Innokenty

Skoptsi cultist and child pornographer, age 34

STR 17 CON 16 DEX 12 INT 7 POW 7 CHA 9

HP 17 WP 7 SAN 0

SKILLS: Alertness 50%, Criminology 15%, Dodge 40%, Firearms 40%, HUMINT 25%, Melee Weapons 60%, Persuade 40%, Pharmacy 55%, Psychotherapy 30%, Stealth 50%, Unarmed Combat 60%.

ATTACKS: .30-06 hunting rifle (in the shed) 40%, damage 1D12+2, Armor Piercing 3.

Shovel (in shed) 60%, damage 1D8+2.

Unarmed 60%, damage 1D4+1.

SCENT: Strong.



Yelena Kalamatiano, aka Babushka

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION: *Born in 1925 in Los Angeles, California, an American daughter of Russian immigrants. No surviving family. She has spent decades caring for children through the Cornucopia House children's home and its parent company, Family Without Frontiers. No criminal record.*

Yelena Kalamatiano is a 76-year-old grandmotherly figure, fat and vital, with thinning silver hair and a smile that breaks her face into a thousand wrinkles. She is a Shub-Niggurath cultist in charge of the ritualized child abuse and cult indoctrination for the Skoptsi. In light of funding struggles, continued resistance to expansions of her power in the organization, and the “waste” of young children in the perverted torture perpetrated by male members of the church, her dedication to the Skoptsi has declined over the last couple of years. She has begun abusing cult assets to her own ends, using the children as fuel for arcane research.

Seeking immortality, Kalamatiano uncovered a ritual she calls Estrus of the Mother. She arranged a sigil from the corpses of her ritually tortured victims and did—once—manage to summon a “root” of the Magna Mater. Unsure what she was supposed to do with the putrid frond that burst forth from the remains, she ripped the black root from the ground and ingested it. The ritual failed to grant immortality,

but it transformed her wizened body into something closer to the church's god than anything achieved by other members of the cult. Hidden under voluminous black robes, she now sports asymmetrical, tumorous “udders” on the front of her body. They lactate out of pulsing sores that resemble a madman's mockery of genitalia. Those that ingest the filth that drips from her body become easier to control, suffering a -10% penalty to rolls to resist her sorceries after the first dose, -20% after the second, and so on. Her first order of business when outsiders enter her kingdom is to offer them “tea” tainted with this unnatural milk.

Though Kalamatiano could use this to expand the dwindling influence of the sterile Skoptsi, the fluid she excretes seems to be derived from her own blood and draining too much of it leaves her physically weak. Her time on Earth is running out, and she would rather not spend the rest of her waning power on others. She prefers to continue her experiments using her new “beauty” until she can achieve immortality. She has reduced the staff at Cornucopia House to only those most loyal to her.

If threatened or surprised, Babushka resorts to the tactics she's used with every outside authority figure for decades. She casts Infallible Suggestion to bend them to her will. Whereas in the past she would use Obscure Memory and send the stupefied outsider away, she now demands that the victim suckle from her grotesque bosom, making the drinker permanently susceptible to her power.



Yelena Kalamatiano

Disgruntled Skoptsi sorceress, age 76

STR 11 CON 17 DEX 7 INT 13 POW 19 CHA 12

HP 14 WP 19 SAN 0

SKILLS: First Aid 53%, HUMINT 87%, Law 33%, Medicine 27%, Melee Weapons 55%, Occult 51%, Persuade 88%, Pharmacy 82%, Science (Botany) 82%, Unnatural 53%.

LANGUAGES: Bulgarian 21%, English 42%, Romanian 23%, Russian (native), Serbian 26%.

ATTACKS: *Ceremonial knife* 55%, damage 1D6, Armor Piercing 3.

RITUALS: Call Forth Haedi Nigritiae, Estrus of the Mother, Exchange Personalities, Infallible Suggestion, Healing Balm, Obscure Memory, Revelation, Seal of the Goddess, the Voorish Sign, Withering, Wrath of the Mother.

CALL FORTH HAEDI NIGRITIAE: This long ritual involving gruesome sex, torment, and murder attracts one of the spawn of Shub-Niggurath from the deep woods for communion and worship of their hideous mother. The *Handler's Guide* details haedi nigritiae in case the Agents are unfortunate enough to let this ritual take place.

ESTRUS OF THE MOTHER: Kalamatiano has yet to perfect this variation on the Call Forth Haedi Nigritiae ritual. She views her even more blasphemous alterations to the process as a rediscovery of ancient tradition, one that will allow her to live forever in the glory of Shub-Niggurath. Thus far, it has only managed to mutate her body into a sick reflection of the Magna Mater. At all times, she incontinently leaks a degraded variant of the narcotic milk that the cult enjoys in their most carnal rites. She may no longer leave her place of sorcerous power without risk of exposure.

REVELATION: Over two turns, Kalamatiano spends 10 WP and attempts to beat the target in an opposed POW test. If she succeeds, the ritual invokes intolerable truths of Shub-Niggurath in the living mind of the victim, who loses 5 **SAN** from the unnatural and suffers temporary insanity. The victim cannot project any of the loss onto bonds.

SEAL OF THE GODDESS: Ritual mutilation in the presence of Shub-Niggurath. See *Delta Green: Countdown* or *Delta Green: The Millennium* for details. It grants +6 POW, permanently, and makes it far easier to summon Shub-Niggurath and its spawn. At the Handler's discretion, killing Kalamatiano, or reducing her to

1–2 HP, may awaken a latent power in the Seal of the Goddess, arousing the power of Shub-Niggurath within her flesh as described in **UNNATURAL DAUGHTER**.

The Handler should awaken that power only if Kalamatiano's death would be anticlimactic and too easy, too free of consequences.

UNNATURAL DAUGHTER: If transformed by violence and the Seal of the Goddess, Kalamatiano becomes a minimally human blackish green ropy thing that stinks of decay, covered in orifices and snaky arms that grasp and birth and feed. Witnessing the transformation—glimpsing the truth at the rotting heart of the Skoptsi—costs Agents 1/1D10 **SAN** from the unnatural. Her Strength and Dexterity double (to STR 22 and DEX 14). Gaining 11 STR increases her HP by 6, which may allow her to act despite injuries. In this state, the Kalamatiano-thing takes minimum damage from any unarmed attack, melee weapon, firearm, explosive, fire, corrosive, electricity, or toxin. Any Lethality roll lower than 20% fails automatically. It takes full damage from hypergeometry. It can attempt a **DEX×5** test to pin a victim and in the next turn suck blood voraciously. The drained victim loses 1D6 STR, and the Kalamatiano-thing gains the same amount in HP or WP, whichever it prefers. The Agents can attempt a group **Luck** roll once every 1D4 turns. If it succeeds, the Kalamatiano-thing retreats into the turgid and fecund earth as if in a months-long process of putrefaction seen over seconds, never to be encountered again. If cut down or burned to death at Cornucopia House, no remains are later found. She absorbs back into the living earth.

WITHERING: The Skoptsi practice a peculiar version of this ritual. If it reduces the victim to 2 HP or fewer, it permanently blasts their reproductive organs. The Skoptsi regard this as the ultimate curse because it prevents the victim from ever taking the Seal of the Goddess.

WRATH OF THE MOTHER: Kalamatiano can activate this ritual in one turn with a cost of 4 WP. If she overcomes the target in an opposed POW test, the target is stunned with screaming agony and instantaneously overwhelmed by pustules that mar flesh and blind the target for 1D6 turns. The target mostly recovers in about 15 minutes, losing 1/1D8 **SAN** from the unnatural. The sores heal in about 24 hours.

SCENT: Overwhelming.

SANITY LOSS: 0/1D6 from the unnatural for seeing her tumescent sores leaking black ichor.



The Long Years 2001-2016

“Agents spotted investigating the Skoptsi come under investigation themselves by Chermininko’s gangsters, many of them former Russian police or soldiers.”



The Long Years: 2001–2016

WE KNOW MANY THINGS ABOUT THE LONG YEARS.

We already know the choices that the Agents make in the aftershocks of “Go Forth.” We already know how they respond to further exposure to Delta Green. We know these things because we can see their history and their future written in these pages.

When Delta Green’s newly official “Program” comes recruiting in the early or mid-2000s, each Agent agrees to join, unaware that the others have done the same. They sign on with various case officers. Perhaps in their own ways they each mask guilt with enthusiasm.

They may have seen joining the Program as a chance to get at Agent Clove and the people behind Cornucopia House. It soon becomes clear that the War on Terror leaves Delta Green little time to investigate Clove’s extracurricular activities. Nor does anyone in the Program know to push for it. The Agents’ names were found in the back of some filing cabinet. The details of their histories were lost in the bureaucratic shuffle. The officers who recruit them do not refer to the details of unnatural incidents the Agents might already have experienced. Nor do they ask for any. Those first case officers soon are cycled off to other assignments. Their replacements know better than to ask details of prior operations without first clearing it with unsympathetic and suspicious supervisors. Better to leave the past alone.

The Agents make themselves useful in the Program but keep their heads down. The dread drains away with the years. There may be time to heal, to rationalize, and to forget.

Agents at Home

Treat this long gap as a special home scene. Each Agent chooses three home pursuits. Work with the players to summarize the outcomes.

Crafting an Agent’s entire personal life in these short scenes differs from the more procedural

elements of play. It might call for large time skips and parallel narratives. Keep these tips in mind.

A FAMILY TABLE. Everyone at the table should share the duty of roleplaying each other’s Bonds. This keeps the Handler from having to remember a dozen different names, mannerisms, and voices. It engages more of the table in each vignette and enriches depictions of each Agent’s personal life.

PLAY TO THE SCORE. Players should accept some limitations when playing as other people’s Bonds. Don’t divorce the Agent and inflict 1D4 SAN loss as a joke. When projection and neglect reduces that number by half, play up the drama of a relationship deteriorating so profoundly.

MOVE FAST; GIVE FREELY. In addition to increased character advancement rewards, Handlers should be generous when allowing players narrate big changes in their Agent’s life. Career changes, new bonds, promotion—allow it. If the dice demand, there is nothing a human can build that is so large that Bast cannot tear it down.

Scenarios in the Long Years

That’s hardly all the Agent did in the intervening years. Players should feel free to jump in and annotate the Handler’s descriptions with brief anecdotes. The players may wish to give their reasons for agreeing to join the Program. To represent the traumas of serving Delta Green, each Agent may (if they wish) take one new “damaged veteran” option (as described on page 36 of the *Agent’s Handbook*) if the player wants.

What if the Agents don’t keep their heads down all this time? It’s possible to play a full *Delta Green* campaign from the 2000s to 2016. Once Agents discover that a force from outside time is steering their lives, it might become clear that “fate” has conspired to throw the same group of cursed Agents at every monster imaginable. The “Powers of the Teeth” (see **POWERS OF THE TEETH** on page 9) only escalate.

One thing is sure: The Teeth do not die. At least, not all of them. At least two or three should still be around fifteen years later, when “Red Thoughts” begins. When circumstances look like sure death for an Agent and you want to keep them around, engineer survival. Perhaps the Agent has a blackout and awakens in horror and gore. Perhaps probability skews around the endangered Agent, costing SAN every turn until the crisis ends. Perhaps nightmare visions of the future lead them astray at just the right time. If you have to be heavy-handed keeping an Agent alive, make the survival itself a source of misery and horror. Their Sanity scores, their stats, their Bonds, their careers, all are up for grabs. But their mortality belongs to something else.

Special Vignettes

Each player experiences a special vignette related to their Agent's unique history. Assign the vignettes according to the qualifiers at the beginning of each entry, or the next highest if the same Agent qualifies for two vignettes. These vignettes can take place at any time between the events of “Go Forth” (2001) and the start of “Red Thoughts,” fifteen years later (2016).

Following Clove

*For the Agent that made first contact with Agent Clove, or, failing that, the Agent with the highest **Bureaucracy** skill.*

This vignette only applies if the Agents discovered Clove's real identity (see **AGENT CLOVE** on page 77) in

“Go Forth” and pursue her. If they don't know who Marie Noella is, she wasn't identified after the fact. If they *did* discover the identity of Dr. Noella, the Agent can try to reconstruct events around the Cornucopia raid to get a better a sense of what went wrong.

Career and Family

With contacts within the Program, an Agent with **Bureaucracy** at 20% or higher discovers that Marie Noella spent two years at Xiamen University on a faculty exchange program funded by Wilmington University. Ask the Agent to roll. Failures and fumbles still provide information, but the Agent's investigation has left a paper trail that the Program later questions.

THE DIVORCE: After Noella's two-year placement in China, her husband and son, Charles and Timothy, returned to the U.S. Charles began divorce proceedings immediately upon return. Without a legal fight or even securing counsel, Marie signed off on all asset splits and surrendered all visitation rights to her son. She only interacted with the family court through recorded depositions. In transcripts, Noella readily admits to distancing herself from her husband, to substance abuse problems, and to the neglect of her son. Though she provides no explanation, she insists the separation is a mutual decision for the good of the family.

EMPLOYMENT RECORDS: About a year after the divorce was finalized, Wilmington University fired Noella, citing a dereliction of duties and refusal to return from her post in Xiamen. Xiamen University did not continue employing her, as Wilmington had paid her salary.

'Long Years' Vignette	Qualifications	Page
Following Clove	Highest Bureaucracy or Clove's first contact	85
Investigating Karpov	Highest Criminology , Forensics , or Foreign Language (Russian)	86
Finding the Skoptsi	Highest POW or having Yelena's book	88
Hiding the Trail	Lost the most SAN	90
Tracing the Signs	Highest Anthropology , Archeology , Occult , or History	91
Hearing the Call	Highest Unnatural	91
Smelling the Scent	Highest Alertness	91

THE EX AND THE SON: During this period, Charles Noella contacted the Department of State asking for help finding his ex-wife, fearing for her safety and mental health. He later rescinded the request, claiming that Marie had contacted him and convinced him she was safe, though she refused to provide her location. There is no indication she ever returned to the United States. She has not filed U.S. taxes since 2006. Charles Noella married a real-estate agent in 2009. Their child, Timothy Noella, now 19, attends the University of Colorado. They have not heard from Noella in years. Every contact before the last was more and more brief and superficial.

The Hall Case

The Agent investigating Clove can roll **Criminology** if they have access to federal criminal databases. Failure locks the Agent out of the following information. A fumble leaves a record of their unnecessary access attempt.

Dr. Marie Noella is listed in a 2001 FBI SIOC case file as a person of interest in the disappearance of one Special Investigator Gary Hall in early 2001. Hall worked on an organized crime task force and consulted Dr. Noella on multiple occasions, though exact records of her participation remain suspiciously scarce. Members of Hall's task force also reported the bizarre trail of records requests made by Hall in the days before his disappearance.

Hall was focused on Italian organized crime, but his investigations were recently looking into Russian mafia and ex-KGB figures, including Natalia Cheremeninko. Noella visited Hall's Baltimore office shortly before his disappearance. She later told investigators that she had yet to begin work or even been briefed on the latest case before Hall vanished. The team found that this was a lie by cross-referencing a sign-in by her at the Baltimore office.

This lead was never followed up on because Noella and her family expatriated only weeks later. Attempts to serve warrants and subpoenas for the person of interest were also mysteriously denied. Agents in charge of investigating Special Agent Hall note their displeasure with the "bureaucratic interference

sabotaging their work." As of July 2001, the case was listed as cold. Formal complaints were filed by the investigation team but were lost after 9/11. In March 2003, the disappearance of Special Agent Gary Hall was ruled a suicide with an addendum referenced as evidence. Notably, this addendum is missing from the file.

Investigating Karpov

*For the Agent with the highest skills in **Criminology** or **Forensics**.*

Agents might pursue Vasilii Karpov, whose fingerprints were found on the cartoon cat folder. Karpov is an 80-year-old (in 2001) U.S. citizen born to Russian immigrants. He lives on a disability pension for a back injury suffered in the Navy in WWII.

When they track him down, he has not lived at his current address, an apartment in the Fell's Point neighborhood of Baltimore, for seven months. His rent and utilities are up to date.

At all his past residences, where records can be found, he was a scrupulously good tenant. But he kept to himself and never became a happy part of émigré communities.

Family

Looking more deeply into Karpov, by combing through his military records or interviewing people whose parents or grandparents would have been his childhood neighbors, requires a **HUMINT** test. Success finds that his name is false. There was a Karpov family of immigrants in 1920 New York: a young married couple whose first child, Vasilii, died of flu as an infant in 1921. This "Vasilii Karpov" has no connection with that family.

Community

Visiting Russian communities to ask about Karpov, the Agents occasionally meet elderly immigrants who abruptly stop answering questions, their faces going blank as boards. A successful **HUMINT** test recognizes a kind of deep-seated, deathly fear that is alien to most Americans. Only a **Persuade** test gets one of them to open up, and only to say that Karpov was

born in Russia, not America, and that his name almost certainly was not Karpov when he was born. Critical success or a second **Persuade** test uncovers that “Karpov” was in fact an NKVD officer named Berezhkov. Years ago, a survivor recognized him from the 1940 Katyn Forest massacre in Poland.

Classified Records

An Agent who has Top Secret clearance (not uncommon among federal agents and government contractors) and who searches ancient FBI or CIA files about Russian immigrants can attempt a **Bureaucracy** or **Criminology** test. Success turns up a Fedor Berezhkov, born in Russia in 1921, who defected to the U.S. in 1953 and provided information to the CIA and FBI valuable enough to earn him a new identity and safe harbor in America beginning in 1955. Berezhkov's details and the details of his testimony have been missing for decades, but a follow-up **Criminology** test can allow an Agent to find connections with other sources and cases in the same period that were handled by the same personnel. Those all deal with the NKVD, the Great Purge before WWII, massacres in Poland in early WWII, Stalin's murderous wartime counter-intelligence organization SMERSH, and the purge of SMERSH and Lavrentiy Beria's faction after Stalin's death in 1953.

Blowback

Getting that far earns the Agents a visit from Special Agent Bill Dorian of FBI foreign counterintelligence, one of the Bureau's liaisons with the CIA. Dorian asks as a professional courtesy that the Agents stop digging around in the histories of Vasilii Karpov and Fedor Berezhkov. Dorian says Karpov is a disabled retiree and Berezhkov died decades ago. He sticks to that line steadfastly and ignores the Agent's most compelling evidence linking the two men.

That assumes the Agents include FBI personnel. If none are in the FBI, Dorian's visit is much more heavy-handed, threatening them with investigation and prosecution for espionage without saying explicitly what espionage they might have been committing. If any Agents are in the CIA or the military, it's not

Dorian who comes down on them but an assistant deputy director or a flag officer who offers them one chance to stand down before ruining their careers and lives.

One thing can put an end to the official threats: prosecutable evidence that Karpov was engaged in a serious crime. It may require a **Law** test to make that case. If so, the officials leave Berezhkov to his fate. That's as far as they'll go to protect him.

Finding Karpov

Agents who ask around aggressively in Russian communities soon come under surveillance by Russian mobsters. They turn out to mostly be recent immigrants from the Republic of Georgia, a few of them children of Ukrainian and Russian immigrants, flashy and arrogant. Confronted with someone they can't bully into submission, they withdraw, gather allies, and strike from ambush to make their point. About half have military training but few are especially good at tailing in secrecy or evading tails. Followed carefully, they eventually lead the Agents to Karpov's house in “Moscow on the Chesapeake.”

At the Skoptsi community, Karpov is attended by several burly Skoptsi—high Strength, low skills—who sometimes act out sadistic cruelties on runaways and prostitutes that Karpov is too weak to perform himself. Agents might identify some of their tattoos or features from the horrors of the cartoon cat folder. Karpov, a tiny, wizened wisp of a man with a violent cough from constant smoking, is described in detail in *Countdown* and *The Millennium*. See **FINDING THE SKOPTSI** on page 88 for more on attacking Moscow on the Chesapeake.

Karpov occasionally meets with Natalia Chermeninko, a dangerous Russian mafia gangster who runs the mobsters who may have led the Agents to Berezhkov's door. She oversees his hunt for Skoptsi relics. She is detailed in *Countdown* and *The Millennium* and could open a whole new series of horrifying investigations for the Agents.

Finding the Skoptsi

For the Agent that discovered Yelena Kalamatiano's journal (see **ASSET: YELENA'S NOTES** on page 66) or, failing that, the Agent with the highest POW.

It's a foolish Agent that believes Cornucopia House existed in a vacuum. Investigating Families Without Frontiers (see **RECORDS ON FAMILIES WITHOUT FRONTIERS** on page 44), or using Yelena Kalamatiano's notes and an increasingly distraught translator, they can connect Kalamatiano and Cornucopia House to an unnatural cult hiding within the immigrant community called "Moscow on the Chesapeake." See **THE SKOPTSI** on page 23 for more details.

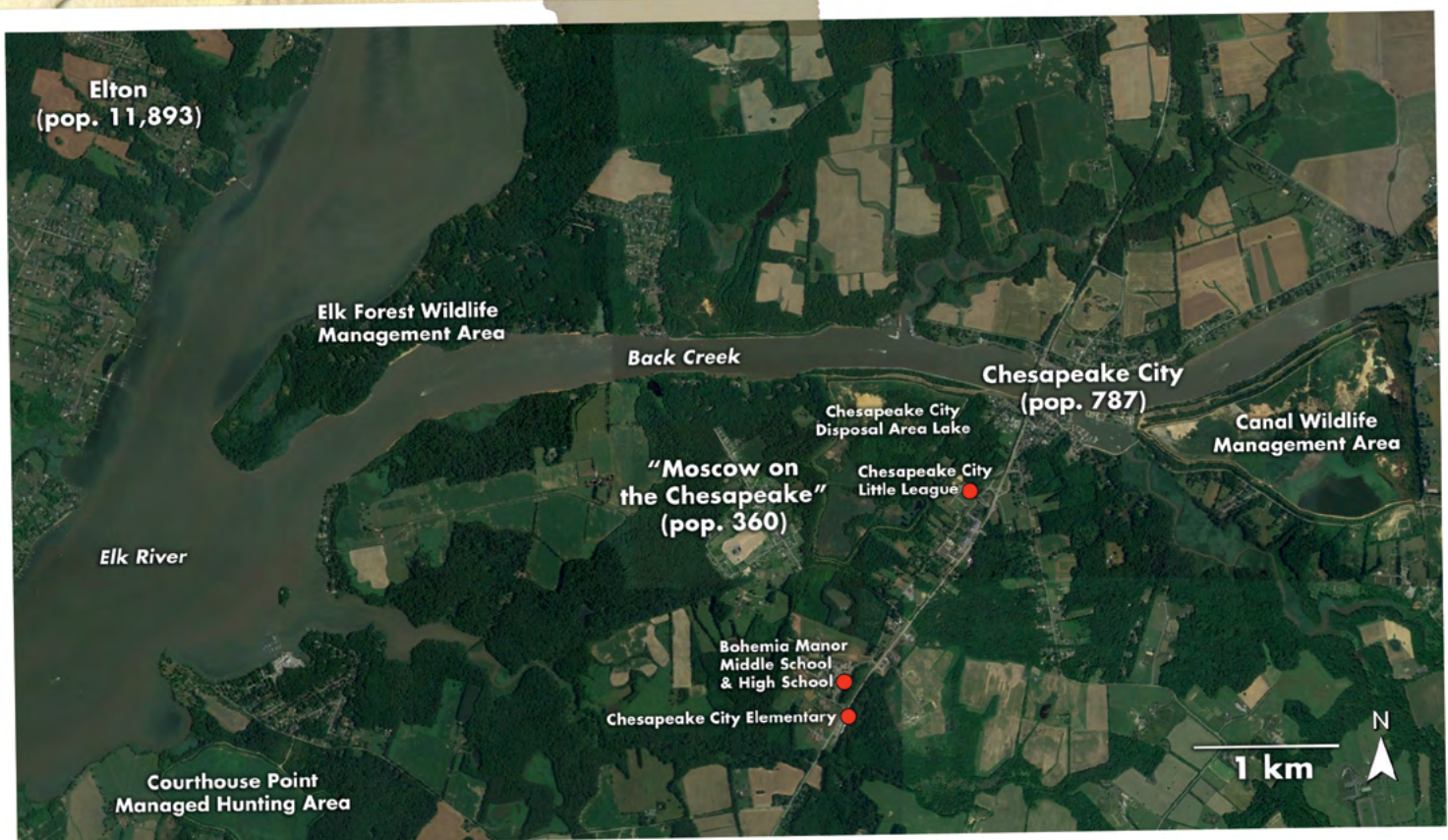
Moscow on the Chesapeake an unincorporated district at the far northeast of Chesapeake Bay, only a mile or so from tiny Chesapeake City. Its heart is a traditionally-built Russian Orthodox cathedral, the Basilica of Our Virgin Mother, built in 1938. Tourists and school excursions come to admire the church and the community's highly skilled goldsmiths,

silversmiths, and jewelers. Residents from Moscow on the Chesapeake work in construction and as taxi drivers in cities throughout the region. It is secretly home to a profoundly twisted and evil branch of the Skoptsi sect.

What does the Agent do with this information? Broadly speaking, there are three likely courses: take it to the Program, take it to the Outlaws, or investigate it themselves.

Going to the Program

Taking a report to the Program proves disappointing. A cult of castrated Russian pedophiles with no ability to procreate is low on the threat list. Furthermore, the Agent's case officer and the Program's security officers seem more concerned about what led the Agent to the Skoptsi, particularly if it reveals events of "Go Forth" that the Agent never told the Program. It makes for tense exchanges and much-belated debriefing before things return to normal.



Going to the Outlaws

Having **Criminology** at 50% or better, or succeeding at a roll, means the Agent eventually contacts someone who can get the evidence to A-cell. If the Agent in this vignette was the already active Agent in "Go Forth," a +20% bonus applies. A fumble means the effort is picked up by the Program's Office of Security. The Agent gets the same grilling as if they had gone to the Program.

If the information gets to the Outlaws, the Agent is indirectly responsible for the 2006 operation that eliminates the Skoptsi cult (see the *Handler's Guide*, page 105). The mission was a success in that the cult was wholly eliminated, and it was a violent clusterfuck that killed nearly everyone involved. The Agent eventually learns that from their Outlaw contacts and loses 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

On the plus side, getting information to the Delta Green Outlaws lets the Agent create a new Bond. Its score equals half the Agent's Charisma. This is their contact with the Outlaws. They don't exactly trust each other, but each finds the other useful. This Bond could become a major resource throughout *God's Teeth*.

The contact can relay information about the destruction of C-cell as a result of the Skoptsi but demands a price for their cooperation. If used carelessly, the broken Bond could end with the Delta Green Outlaws trying to clear the Delta Green Program liability off the board, or the Program could exploit the Agent to get a double-agent into the organization of those Delta Green Outlaws that refuse to come in from the cold.



Dealing With It Themselves

"9 JUL 2006: A team of Delta Green Outlaws track down the headquarters of the Skoptsi, an obscene cult of Shub-Niggurath, destroy its leaders, and free dozens of eastern European orphans the cult had been indoctrinating."

That's how it goes down in the *Handler's Guide*. Were the Teeth that team?

The Agents could use the information in Kalamiano's notes to pursue the Skoptsi themselves. If that happens before they join the Program in the early to mid-2000s, they act on their own, a sort of Delta Green in microcosm. If it happens after they join the Program, the Program places it on low priority and does not authorize the action. It is up to the Agents to either pursue it anyway or wait. If they wait, the Outlaws take the Skoptsi down in 2006. If they go after the Skoptsi anyway, play it out.

A full campaign against the Skoptsi is beyond the scope of this book. Build it using the details described in *Countdown* or *The Millennium*.

The Skoptsi occupy a community of their own in unincorporated land on the east shore of Chesapeake Bay. That means their property is part of the state of Maryland and part of Cecil county but not part of a municipality. They are not subject to any police except county sheriff's deputies and state police. The county and state police have a great deal of ground to cover. "Moscow on the Chesapeake" does not give them trouble. Nor is it home to wealthy constituents who demand a heavy police presence. The state and county police rarely go there.

Agents spotted investigating the Skoptsi come under investigation themselves by the cult's own gangsters, many of them former Russian police or soldiers. The Skoptsi occasionally have dealings with elderly Vasilii Karpov and his Russian mafia contacts led by Natalia Chermeninko, but not often enough for local police to notice.

The Basilica of Our Virgin Mother holds the worst of the Skoptsi's secrets. The cult's leaders summon haedi nigraetia in important ceremonies and as a last measure to protect themselves from outsiders

who must vanish completely from the world. Pursuit by those horrors might mark the final confrontation with the Skoptsi, perhaps with the basilica burning or exploding all around according to the Agents' final designs. Especially thorough Agents might find means to banish the monstrosities in cultists' libraries. The guidelines for replacing dead Agents in **NEW TEETH**, on page 8, may become relevant.

Hiding the Trail

For the Agent that lost the most SAN, or second-most if that Agent already played a special vignette, or third, etc.

Rational paranoia demands the aftermath of Cornucopia House must be monitored. Using the resources of their jobs, professional networks, and the Delta Green Program, it's possible to get information on what happened after the Agents left the crime scene. Agents can roll **HUMINT** if they're from a profession that would know people involved in state police activity in Maryland. They can roll **Bureaucracy** if their job grants them access to federal databases. The records of the children and their placements are sealed, but it's possible to get the gist of how things shook out. Handlers should base their description on the factors listed in Part 1's **AFTERMATH** on page 67.

On a success, the Agent learns the basics of the official narrative. Successful Agents gain 1 **SAN** for their trouble. On a failure, the Agent is left fearing every knock on the door. The only other way to get information would be to contact co-conspirators, which the Agent would be a fool to try...even if they knew how.

Regardless of success or failure, the Handler should make an opposed roll at 40% against whatever skill the Agent rolled. If the roll beats the Agent's, someone noticed the Agent's curiosity (**HUMINT**: the person the Agent asked remembers the odd request for information; **Bureaucracy**: the Agent left a paper trail) and tells the Program when questioned during the initial investigation into the events of "Red Thoughts."

Tracing the Signs

*For the Agent with the highest combined **Anthropology**, **Archeology**, **Occult**, and **History** skills. If tied, player that experienced the most Synchronicity in "Go Forth."*

The bizarre events of that night must have precedence. The Agent spends time over the next 15 years trying to figure out where they fit in the bizarre web of coincidence that drew them to Cornucopia House. The Agent uses the skill of their choice: **Anthropology**, **Archeology**, **Occult**, or **History**. If the test succeeds, the Agent gets some clue of the Handler's choice as to the history of the force sometimes called Bast (see **INVESTIGATING BAST** on page 11 and **CONRADIN'S EXERCISE BOOK** on page 231 for possibilities). The Agent may try with another skill to gain more information. After two failures, the Agent finds no more.

Hearing the Call

*For the Agent with the highest **Unnatural** skill, or second-highest if that Agent already played a special vignette.*

Ask the Agent to describe an unremarkable bedtime in their household, at some point long after the events of Cornucopia House but before the start of the upcoming adventure 15 years later. After the player sets the scene, make the Agent suffer the effects of a fumbled test on the **Call** power (see **CALL** on page 10). The Agent will be able to heal 1D6 SAN and all lost HP before the start of "Red Thoughts," but memories of the vision, the terror, and the physical consequences stick with them and any Bonds that witnesses their fit.

Smelling the Scent

*For the Agent with the highest skill in **Alertness**, or second-highest if that Agent already played a special vignette.*

Ask the Agent to describe their successful participation in an official Program operation a year or two after "Go Forth." The Agent can describe whatever operation they wish, so long as it is unrelated to "Go Forth" and involves contact with the unnatural. Their description can be as detailed as the Agent's participation...perhaps they led the team and possess the full story, or they might have been an entirely compartmentalized consultant.

Regardless of what is described, when the Agent mentions contact with an unnatural entity, a human connected to an unnatural entity, or a human affected by or in proximity to unnatural science, the Handler should ask the Agent to stop and describe that interaction in detail. The Handler treats the scene as if the Agent succeeded in a test to use the **Scent** power (see **SCENT** on page 9).

Fully describe the confusing aroma and its persistence until the unnatural taint is destroyed. Make clear that, though the experience doesn't repeat itself between that case and the beginning of "Red Thoughts," the Agent is haunted by recollection of the event and—specifically—the smell.

For the remainder of the campaign, treat this Agent as having already been exposed to the **Scent** power.

TOP SECRET

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FROM: Director,

SUBJECT: (TS/)/NF) Eff

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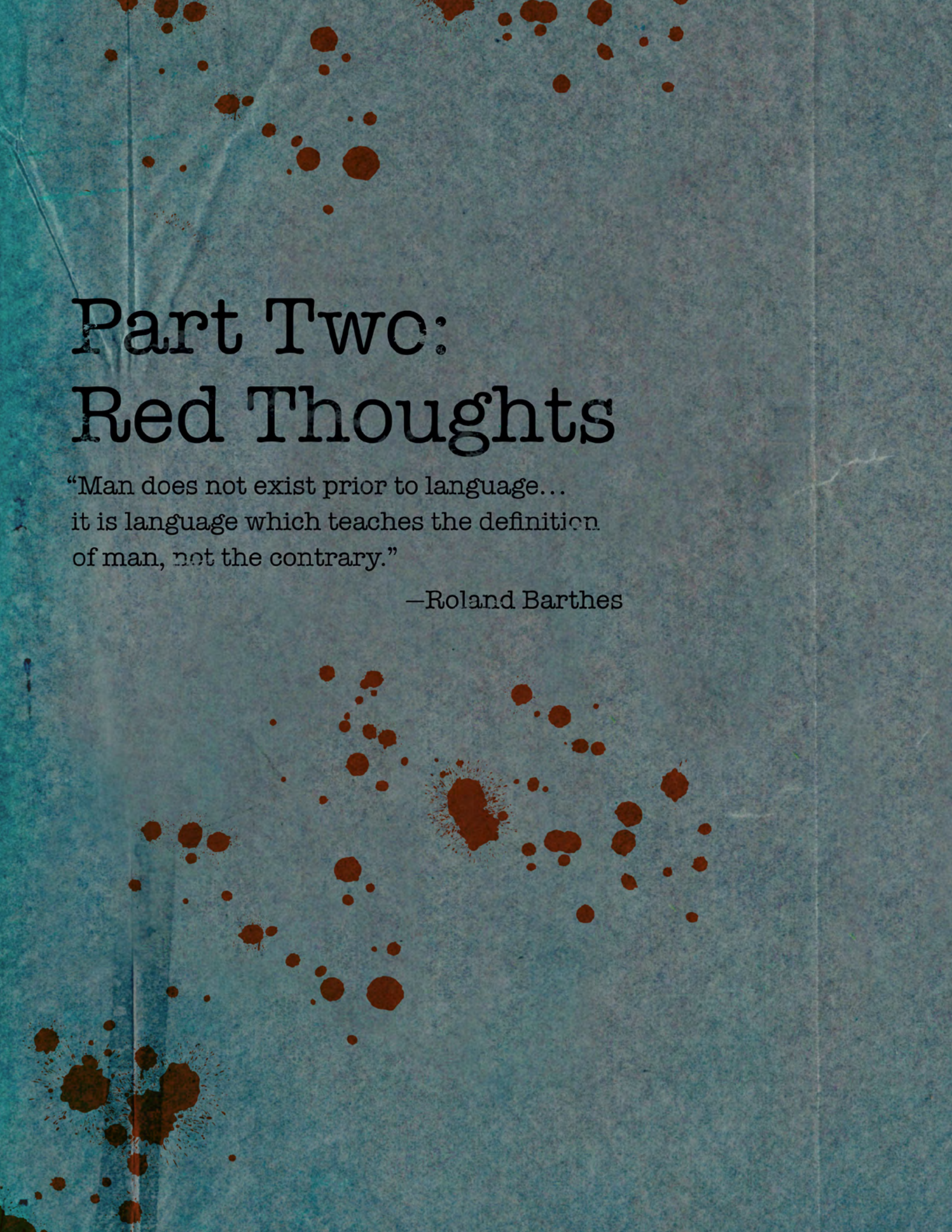
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Part Two: Red Thoughts

“Man does not exist prior to language...
it is language which teaches the definition
of man, not the contrary.”

—Roland Barthes



Part Two: Red Thoughts

TERROR IS NEVER ROUTINE, BUT MANAGING IT?

That's a job like any other.

It is summer 2016. Fifteen years after the events of Cornucopia House, the Agents have gotten away with their crimes. But what is fifteen years to the beast that wrote their fates in the screams of tortured children? The Agents have not escaped. Fate conspires to put them back on the hunt. While they led their lives and helped the Program, the children of the force that *truly* controls them have become its willing predators.

Survivors' Guilt

The surviving victims of the Skoptsi at Cornucopia House have grown up. Their status as orphans, immigrants, and shameful reminders of neglect did them no favors as they were reintegrated into the foster care system. Most traded active abuse for systemic neglect. A few recovered due to the efforts of supremely patient and loving individuals. They acquired language and grew less afraid of adults as they slowly acculturated. The voice of the thing beyond faded within them. They were, by far, in the minority.

Without parents or politicians to hold their caretakers accountable, most of the children rescued from Cornucopia had their severe language disability "managed" by a system only too happy to pass the buck. Some acquired language in spite of their practiced neglect. They were not grateful. Most, once able to attach a narrative of their woeful lives through a force beyond this world, merely found language to be an anchor that sank them into the predictable tragedies of childhood trauma: despair, addiction, prison, or suicide.

Others—fueled by deep, justified rage—resented the monkey grunts that infected their minds. Words did nothing except destroy their communion with their brothers, their sisters, and their god. They were cut off but remembered the warm safety of its wrath. They longed to feel *certainty* again.

Thus, the children slipped through the cracks and aged out of the system. Those too young when the silence fell still commune with the force beyond all things. They read its signs carved into the flesh of reality, follow the scent of synchronicity, and effortlessly flow through trails of probability cut by their god. Those cursed with language still assist their silent siblings, yearning to serve out of a desperation to stay with the only real family they've ever known. Together, they have heard the call. The timelines are assembled. The quantum states collapse into a final, finite future where the thing beyond is served. All have roles to play.

Three children gather: Elle Gable, Samuel Ball, and Thomas Perez. It begins with the murder of a woman in Florida. She is the one responsible for bringing the Teeth together, but how could the children know this? How could they care? There is no need for trust when one's thoughts lay in perfect alignment with the mind of God. The children find her when the time is right.

Then they find the social worker who abandoned them to Babushka all those years before. She dies, too. And at last, the Teeth awaken to the taste of blood.

The children are calling God's Teeth out to the great hunt. They must join the slaughter, and the death they sow shall be reaped to feed the god of them all.

OPINT**COVER-UP TO MANHUNT**

"Red Thoughts" opens with the Program and the Agents desperate to cover up all traces of the unnatural events of "Go Forth" and the Agents' involvement. The mission is damage control. The result is exposure to the fact that the Agents have changed. Some unnatural force haunts them and drives them to kill, especially to kill unnatural things.

As the risks to the Program subside, the mission begins to change. That leads to the next scenario, "White Teeth," in which the Teeth pursue Kerry Houghton's killers and are pursued by them.

Working Group MASTICATE

Inform each Agent that, on a Thursday morning, the Program arranged for travel and time off so they could attend a meeting in Washington, D.C. on Thursday. Reassignments and adjustments in the mission aren't unusual in the Program, and the instruction is almost always provided in person, with as little paper trail as possible. The Agent is informed that they don't need to prepare any briefing, so it's likely an adjustment in procedure before they head back to hurry up and wait for the Program's next call.

The Agents are told nothing else about the meeting.

Ask the players to describe what their Agents' lives look like as they prepare for the trip and say goodbye to their Bonds. Then ask each to roll 1d100.

The Agent that rolls highest is the first to arrive at the appointment. It's on the fifth floor of a nondescript D.C. office complex. The building is leased to WeWork, and the floor is empty, its rooms stripped of all signifiers beyond the beanbags, exercise balls, and free-standing bars of a late twenty-teens "hip" office. The conference room is equally devoid of life. It houses only the plastic table, rolling chairs, and a flat screen TV. It isn't even carpeted.

Then the Agent who rolled second highest enters. This is the first time the Agents have seen each other since that night in 2001. Neither had any idea the other was in the Program. Each loses 0/1 SAN due to helplessness as the implications sink in. Let the moment linger. Encourage players to stay in character and react as their Agents would. Do they play it cool and hope it's a coincidence? Lament what they suspect is coming?

If there are remaining Agents, they meet in the elevator on the way to the fifth floor. They lose the same 0/1 SAN due to helplessness. Again, encourage everyone to stay in character. What do the Agents say to each other?

DISINFORMATION

YELLOW CARD

WORKING GROUP? TASK FORCE? OPS TEAM? CELL?

When briefing Agents on an operation, the Program's case officers use whatever terminology they think best fits a situation. The case officer invents a name for the operation and a name for the team. Some case officers call their teams task forces. Some call them working groups. Those labels are the case officer's only. They have nothing to do with the Program's internal nomenclature and records. Handlers running *Delta Green* can make up whatever terminology they want.



After some time letting them stew (and yes, the room is bugged), Antony Pitzerelli enters the room. He's an assistant U.S. attorney with the District of Maryland. His suit would be really nice if he hadn't slept in it. He carries a plastic water bottle that's full to the brim with cold-brew coffee. He doesn't greet anyone. He sits on the end of the conference table, grabs the remote, and turns on cable news, muted. He is waiting for the 7:00 a.m. news cycle to start. If no one speaks, he sits there in silence, back to the Agents, until the report "56 Bodies Found at Site of Maryland Youth Home" begins to air.

Opening Arguments

If the Agents wait politely until the news story plays, skip ahead and let the reporting do the job explaining why Pitzerelli is there. If someone dares to speak, Pitzerelli can't contain his anger. He interrupts.

"Can anyone tell me why we're here?"

If no one answers, or if someone spouts bullshit, he continues.

"I'll explain why I'm here. I'm here because, 10 days ago, some Florida shut-in ends up dead in her trailer, half-eaten by swamp vermin. And the intrepid first responder somehow finds a bloody slip of paper containing all your names and that address."

He points at the horrors on the screen.

Run through Pitzerelli's summary and his questions for the Agents. He is angry and afraid, and that fear makes him even angrier. He is caustic, sarcastic, and short-tempered as he gives a quick overview.

- » Seven days ago, a Florida deputy called Maryland state police and social services, asking about the Agents by name.
- » Three days ago, a Maryland state trooper drove to the site of the defunct children's home. It had piqued her interest because she drives by that site often and never saw a children's home.
- » The children's home is long gone. A storage facility stands there now, adjacent to a Maryland prison.

- » The state trooper found a dead woman nailed to a storage facility door with screwdrivers, with her head smashed open, and a dog chewing on an old skull.
- » Two days ago, intelligence analysts with the Program noticed the Agents being flagged by name in the death investigations in Florida and Maryland.
- » Yesterday, the Director himself called Pitzerelli with three instructions: To keep the Agents' names out of official reports and the news. To find out from the Agents exactly what they and anyone else from Delta Green had to do with the mass grave of 56 children in Maryland. And to determine what threat the Agents and their activities pose to the Program.

Pitzerelli wraps it up with three questions.

"Question one: What the hell happened?"

"Question two: Now that every news outlet, politician, and law enforcement agency is braying for blood, why the fuck shouldn't I just feed you to them?"

"Question three: Whatever happened, why would you be so stupid as to not bring it up when you were read into the Program?"

There's no need to roleplay a full recounting of the events in "Go Forth"—the Agents could not forget that night with fifteen years trying—but make sure to establish anything they choose to leave out of the story.

Answers and Orders

The Agents may reasonably object that their recruiters never brought up what happened before the Agents joined and, in fact, seemed most interested in not knowing. Pitzerelli scoffs, not mollified in the least even if it is entirely true. There are 56 dead kids being pulled out of the ground. America is looking for people to blame. Social workers turned a blind eye. County and state authorities turned a blind eye. Every agency involved is looking for scapegoats. And the Agents are in the mix by name. Linked by a completely separate murder. *Someone* is going down for this, and they're leading the race.

SYNCHRONICITY

FRIENDS WITH PITZERELLI

Pick a random Agent. Tell their player that the scenario demands their Agent be selected for the following scene as a result of their previous actions. Never reveal to the player what the so-called actions were or that the selection was random. They can discover that only if they read this book for themselves.

The Agent had some interaction with Antony Pitzerelli in the distant past, long before they ever joined Delta Green. Perhaps before government work.

Ask the player to describe how their Agent had a positive but brief relationship in their childhood, adolescence, or post-secondary days with Antony Pitzerelli ("Tony" at that time). How do they know each other? Were they classmates? Co-workers? Lovers?

How did that brief relationship end? Did they move apart? Did a conference end? Did things just sort of fade out, like so many adult friendships?

What was the best part of the relationship? How did the Agent leave a positive impression on Pitzerelli, and vice versa? Did they do favors for each other or go through some remarkable ordeal?

Now that the coincidental relationship is established, have the Agent make an **INTx5** test. If it fails, the Agent has a nagging doubt in the back of their head that an important idea was missed. If the **INTx5** test succeeds, inform the Agent that, logically—considering the severity of the situation just described—the only reason the Agents aren't dead or in jail is that Pitzerelli harbors some benefit of the doubt for an old friend. His fury masks the fact that he went to bat against superiors for someone who used to be close. He resents them for putting him in such a bind. It was the last gasp of a distant obligation. That Agent loses 0/1 **SAN** due to helplessness.

Once he has the gist of the story of Cornucopia House, Pitzerelli has only one priority: **Protect Delta Green**. Like it or not, the Agents have been tied to the Program through their work over the years. Their implication in a crime of this magnitude could expose multiple operations to follow-up investigations, perhaps even tracing back to the crimes and cover-ups of the Cowboy Years. Pitzerelli is not about to risk exposing additional personnel to this radioactive liability. It's up to the Agents to clean up their mess.

If they can't erase their own involvement, Pitzerelli assures the team, their fumbling attempts are going to be the first evidence used against them. Failure to sanitize the evidence will be used to implicate the group as co-conspirators. Attempts to obstruct the investigation will be explained as a group of depraved sex criminals within the government trying to cover up evidence of their crimes. If it comes to that, the lawyer assures Agents they won't live to contradict the charges in court.

"As your lawyer, my advice is this," Pitzerelli concludes, "Bury this, or get buried with it."

- » **PAST INVESTIGATIONS:** What state and local investigations were conducted in 2001? Are there any loose ends that put the Program at risk of exposure? Agents need to find this information and scrub their involvement before outside investigators discover it.
- » **THE CHILDREN:** What became of the kids the Agents freed in 2001? Not all were toddlers. Did any report details about the Agents that put the Program at risk of exposure? The Agents need to destroy any paper trail leading to the survivors before someone starts asking questions.
- » **CONTINUED EXPOSURE:** How did a deputy in Florida get the Agents' names and details of the Maryland debacle in the first place? Was the death in Maryland related or a coincidence? The Program needs to find the perpetrators of these recent killings before their violence draws more attention.

Pitzerelli urges Agents to hold off on going to Florida. National attention is already focused on the

Maryland crime scene and represents the greatest threat to operational security. As important as it is to get the source of the problem, the Program needs to move assets into the area and discover what local law enforcement already knows before moving forward. Agents should focus on keeping their names out of the press first. Pursuing justice is a secondary priority.

The attorney produces a false identity packet for each Agent: Maryland driver's license, Social Security number, fictional tax records for the past seven years, fictional work and educational history. Let the players choose their false names.

On public records, the Agents are investigators working under contract with Pitzerelli's office. That does not make them federal agents or police of any kind unless they already are in law enforcement. They are private investigators and consultants working under contract for the federal government. Each packet has a few business cards with the false name showing them as investigators with the U.S. Attorney's office in the District of Maryland. Agents who are already federal agents get false FBI badges and ID cards instead in case they need to obscure their real names.

Pitzerelli warns the Agents that the false IDs will fall apart under any in-depth scrutiny. Furthermore, an Agent with Law at 30% or higher or who makes a successful roll at +20% suspects that the justifications of authority are intentionally flimsy. That could make it all the easier, later, to scapegoat the Agents as trying to cover up their own involvement with all 56 homicide charges.

Finally, a team of specialists is coming from Harvard to help the Agents process and study the remains. The team leaders have worked with Delta Green and the unnatural before. But they are not fully briefed, so the Agents must take care not to reveal anything new to them.

Their Options

The Agents may resent Pitzerelli's antagonism. He maintains that his severity matches the situation. He is merely there as the Program's messenger. He's the alternative to the assassins on standby if Agents don't listen. Pitzerelli doesn't care whether the Agents admit

everything, pin it all on somebody else, or come up with some ingenious plan to make it all go away.

He sees this going one of three ways.

- » **IF THEY RUN:** He expects the Agents know better than to try that.
- » **IF THEY LIE:** At that point, the Agents become a threat to the Program itself. Depending on how much of a threat, that can mean anything from imprisonment to flat-out disappearing. He expects they do not want that.
- » **IF THEY MAKE IT RIGHT:** The Agents tell the full truth and help the Program shape the narrative. Regardless of the past, that makes them useful assets in pursuit of the Program's goals.

He says the Agents have a future in option three.

Keep It Quiet

Assuming the Agents agree to the one option that does not mean immediate catastrophe, Pitzerelli says that they have been assigned to Working Group MASTICATE, reporting to him as case officer. If they need resources, they call him. If they go AWOL, he tells his bosses and the Program's security office takes it from there.

The name Working Group MASTICATE does not exist anywhere except within the Program. It should never pass the Agents' lips except when talking to someone from the Program.

They are to do everything in their power to avoid attracting further attention.

At that, Pitzerelli leaves the conference room.

SYNCHRONICITY

IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM

After Pitzerelli leaves, a few birds of different species fly into the window of the fifth-floor conference room in rapid succession, killing themselves instantly and leaving bloody streaks on the glass. There is one impact for each Agent in the room.

To Agents that succeed at **Survival** or relevant **Science** tests, there's no natural reason those birds should be flocking in such proximity, as some of them had predator and prey relationships. The streaks of crimson down the glass resemble tally marks, as if their attendance were being counted. Realizing this costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

Timeline

Pitzerelli leaves a document on the table detailing a timeline of events that led up to this meeting. Print or copy it for the players' use.

8-15 AUG 2016

HENDRY COUNTY, FLORIDA

Glenda Czyzniejewski, an elderly resident of the Myers Point Trailer Park, repeatedly calls the Hendry County Sheriff's Office to report that her cats have been stolen.

MON 16 AUG 2016, 1030 EST

HENDRY COUNTY, FLORIDA

The Hendry County Sheriff's Office dispatches Deputy Casey Eckstein to drive through Myers Point Trailer Park in response to the complaints of resident Glenda Czyzniejewski. Eckstein notices graffiti and a kicked-in door on a trailer near the end of the lot. Investigating, he finds the badly mutilated and decayed body of an unidentified woman in one of the bedrooms. Deputy Eckstein calls it in.

MON 16 AUG 2016, 1145 EST

HENDRY COUNTY, FLORIDA

More investigators arrive at Myers Point Trailer Park. The body is determined to be the trailer's owner, Crystal Killian, a 34-year-old single woman. Documentation and evidence collection proceed.

WED 18 AUG 2016

HENDRY COUNTY, FLORIDA

Deputy Casey Eckstein calls Wilmington University, the FBI office in Baltimore, and the Maryland State Police. He inquires as to existence of a "Cornucopia House" located outside Zion, Maryland. He asks for the Agents' contact information and any associations they have with the property located in state records. He says the requests are in pursuit of an active homicide investigation.

WED 18 AUG 2016, 1414 EST

FORT MEADE, MARYLAND

Eckstein's calls to Maryland trip a Program-run algorithm in the NSA's MAINWAY database when voice recognition software picks up the names of the Agents. The finding is labeled high priority, pulled from the cache, and sent to the Program's analysis team.

THURS 19 AUG 2016, 1900 EST

CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Maryland State Trooper Vivian Sawyer drives to the old site of Cornucopia House that Deputy Eckstein asked about. It is now Maryland Corrections Storage Unit 3. Sawyer discovers a dead, mutilated woman pinned to the garage door of the facility. She immediately calls for backup. While securing the crime scene, Sawyer discovers a stray dog digging in the rear of the warehouse. She observes that the animal has exposed a human skull. Sawyer amends her call for backup with a request for a K-9 unit.

THURS-FRI 19-20 AUG 2016**CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Search-and-rescue dogs hit on human remains buried in the area of Maryland Corrections Storage Unit 3. The Cecil County forensics team begins investigation. The coroners contact the Forensic Sciences Division of the Maryland State Police almost immediately, requesting a consultation. The scene is further secured by state troopers while investigators are en route. The MSP lieutenant colonel for the region is briefed. He informs the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services of the developments. He refuses their offer of assistance until the nature of the investigation can be ascertained.

MON 22 AUG 2016, 0920 EST**CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND**

A Maryland State Police Forensics Sciences Division consultant arrives at Maryland Corrections Storage Unit 3 with an equipment truck, joining the Cecil County forensics team already cataloging the scene. The consultant's ground-penetrating radar finds multiple buried bodies. The consultant calls in a request for all possible personnel and equipment to process evidence, immediately. The Forensic Sciences Division director is pulled from a breakfast meeting and goes to brief the governor.

MON 22 AUG 2016, 1300 EST**HENDRY COUNTY, FLORIDA**

An FBI agent from the Miami office meets Deputy Eckstein to offer logistical assistance to Hendry County as a professional courtesy. The agent's real mission is to question Eckstein about the mention of Program operatives. Sheriff Deacon Benson has closed active homicide investigation and insists the body at Myers Point died from natural causes. Hungry house pets are suspected of mutilating the remains postmortem. The report indicates the sheriff is not pleased to see the FBI, nor to learn that Eckstein called them. Eckstein divulges to the FBI consultant that he still suspects foul play, but attempts to share more details are shut down by Benson. The source of the names remains unclear. The Agent conveys this information to the Program and returns to Miami to monitor the situation.

MON 22 AUG 2016, 1550-2359 EST**ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Excavations thus far have produced 17 juvenile corpses and counting. Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, Jr. puts in an urgent request to the FBI for assistance processing a crime scene. In separate calls, the governor and other Maryland elected officials emphasize the need for swift response to mitigate the imminent media scandal.

TUE 23 AUG 2016, 0800 EST
LOCATION UNDISCLOSED

The Program's analysts realize that the Maryland site mentioned in the Eckstein calls has become the site of a mass grave about to become international news. The Program scrambles to contain the situation.

TUE 23 AUG 2016, 0801-2359 EST
CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

The U.S. Attorney's office, under the guidance of agents from the Program, claims jurisdiction over the mass-grave investigation under the FBI's Crimes Against Children program. The governor orders Maryland State Police to cease all evidence collection. Delta Green assets in the FBI recruit friendly consultants from Harvard Medical School to control the flow of information.

TUE 23 AUG 2016, 1959 EST
LOCATION UNDISCLOSED

The Program forms Working Group MASTICATE under the leadership of Assistant U.S. Attorney Antony Pitzerelli. All Agents mentioned in the Eckstein calls are removed from current assignments, assigned to Working Group MASTICATE, and ordered to report to a D.C. office complex on Thursday, 25 AUG 2016.

WED 24 AUG 2016, 0700-1100 EST
CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Assistant U.S. Attorney Antony Pitzerelli arrives at the crime scene. His mission is to slow evidence processing by fomenting jurisdictional bickering between the FBI, Maryland State Police, and local law enforcement. New procedures that require the removal and repositioning of current equipment are implemented. DOJ staffers compose legal briefs to seal any conceivable paperwork regarding the history of the penitentiary, Cornucopia House, the backgrounds of the Agents, and activity at the location. Documents pertaining to the area are claimed as vital to national security and insulated from FOIA requests.

THURS 25 AUG 2016, 0645 EST
CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Pitzerelli meets the Agents. The Harvard team awaits the Agents' instructions on site. Local and national journalists have begun seeking government sources to go on record about reports of 50 dead children discovered on a site belonging to Maryland Corrections. The story is running at the beginning of the news cycle, with or without further confirmation.

The Cover-Up

A large number of courses are available to the Agents. Break them down on a whiteboard or shared online document to help orient the players. Remind them of the Program's first priority: secure any remaining evidence about Cornucopia's past so that it may not be used to implicate the Agents and, by extension, Delta Green. The best way to gain that information is to control the investigation firsthand, but they are only cleared to pursue suspects after the Program's secrecy is secure.

Marching Orders

Pitzerelli explicitly outlines the Program's areas of concern. They fall under the following headers later in the book.

THE BLAME GAME: No organization wants to accept responsibility for missing this. Everyone is trying to pass the buck. Ensure it lands nowhere near the Program. See page 104.

THE OLD INVESTIGATION: Did the police in 2001 turn up anything that puts the Agents at risk today? See page 106.

THE CORNUCOPIA EXCAVATIONS: Strange things have turned up in the Cornucopia House mass grave, now on the property where a horrific murder just took place. Make them disappear. See page 109.

THE DEATH OF KERRY HOUGHTON: The victim of the savage murder at the prison site once was responsible for county services' rubber-stamp approvals of Cornucopia House. Something led the killers to her. Find it before it leads back to the Agents. See page 117.

THE CHILDREN OF CORNUCOPIA HOUSE: What became of the children after Cornucopia House shut down in 2001? The Program needs their trail obscured so they can't be questioned. See page 128.

Throughout the investigation, Agents are encouraged to find the killers who started this chain of events. MASTICATE can expect to be dispatched to eliminate them the moment the current crisis is resolved.

Legal Fictions

In every instance, Agents first must assess risk to the Program. If evidence suggests the existence of Delta Green or the unnatural, MASTICATE's orders are to **reinterpret** and/or **remove** that evidence. Luckily, Delta Green regards signs of each Agent's criminal involvement in 2001 as mission-critical intel in need of the same treatment.

Assigning **THE BLAME GAME** comes last and under Pitzerelli's direct supervision. See **BURYING THE PAST** on page 134. If Agents struggle to decide on a course of action, the Handler may describe a basic procedure for covering the remaining sectors of the investigation.

1. **ASSESS:** The Program has no problem with evidence that helps solve the murders...provided none of it can be traced back to the Agents or the unnatural. Therefore, MASTICATE's first priority is thorough, competent investigation. Before any of that evidence enters the public consciousness, however, the Agents must launder identifying characteristics out of the information using one of two methods.
2. **REINTERPRET:** Branding a piece of evidence with a false narrative requires manipulating the three factions with stakes in the Cornucopia House investigation: Maryland State Police, Cecil County Sheriff, and the press. Manipulating these factions into "safe" interpretations of events provides the most seamless cover to the Agents and Delta Green, especially if multiple sanitized narratives contradict and compete with one another. This is ideal for counter-intelligence.
3. **REMOVE:** Dangerous facts that cannot be reinterpreted must disappear. Records can be altered with **Craft (Forgery)** or **Computer Science**. Paperwork can be stolen with **Criminology** and **Stealth**. Pitzerelli and trained Agents can use **Law** and **Bureaucracy** to redact information under sweeping national security laws. The Program finds reinterpretation preferable, but Agents have been named lead investigators precisely because it becomes easier to engineer innocuous "filing errors." These methods can be risky, criminal, and

obvious. Even in the event of success, the deletion of evidence arouses suspicion and possible subsequent investigations, but it's better than answering questions in court.

4. **SANCTION:** If perception management and evidence tampering fails, the Program employs terminal options. Owing to compartmentalization, Agents themselves are required to perform these tasks. The Agents can make threats, sabotage reputations, or outright disappear people. Assign SAN losses appropriately. If it comes to extremes, Pitzerelli makes one thing clear—any such methods that draw too much attention threaten to put the Agents next on the list.

The Blame Game

Even as they take charge of the investigations of the mass graves and recent murder at the old site of Cornucopia House, the Agents must keep every trace of Delta Green and its mission out of the public eye.

The public eye has its own needs. State and local officials, represented by detectives Almudena Velasquez and Mike Costa, are desperate to pass the blame for overlooking these forgotten atrocities. Reporters and their audiences, represented by Olivia Centrell Toomey of the *Baltimore Sun*, are hungry for horrors.

As Agents unravel the legacy of their past actions, these forces challenge and hinder their efforts at the Handler's discretion. Success at meeting each complication makes the overall cover-up more effective. Failure means Agents may have to take more extreme measures to conceal their true involvement.

State Police: Velasquez

Detective Sergeant Almudena Velasquez of the Maryland State Police, age 38, is the state's lead investigator on this case. Velasquez usually supervises organized crime investigations, but she got this case because she's the only person still alive from the 2001 case. See **THE OLD INVESTIGATION** on page 106 for how that investigation turned out and what Velasquez thinks about it. That also affects how she interacts with the Agents.

The governor himself is calling Velasquez for updates, in addition to her every senior officer. She's chaffing under the unprecedented political pressure. Velasquez was just a rookie when first assigned to assist senior detectives in 2001. She possessed little-to-no authority to shape the investigation, but the stakes are too high for that to matter. She recognizes it's all too possible that the state, county, and federal officials might burn her for failing to find the bodies in the first investigation.

Velasquez's instinct is to do the job well on behalf of those dead kids. She's genuinely disgusted and wants justice. But keeping the governor's office happy is the only way she's going to get enough time to find the real culprits and permanently pull her ass out of this fire. If she finds any sign that the Agents were involved in 2001, she seizes on it and won't let go. It only gets worse if she suspects they did anything illegal.

DOJ meddling on the scene has everyone nervous that the feds are looking to push this shitshow downhill. Velasquez needs all the friends she can get, and she's secured the cooperation of Deputy Michael Costa from the Cecil County Sheriff's Office. Both strive mightily to stay involved in the case and protect their organizations. They interpret the Agents' secrecy as preparation to cast all the evidence in a light that blames the state and county.

County Police: Costa

The Cecil County coroner handled preliminary work on the remains before the feds intervened. Deputy Michael Costa, age 33, serves as liaison for the Criminal Investigations Division of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office. Since state investigators handled Cornucopia House 15 years ago, Costa coordinated early with state officials and passed the case up the chain before the third body was even found. For that contribution alone, he expects a promotion after this.

In truth, Cecil County bears the least blame. Aside from the first responders sent to the scene in 2001, the presence of an adoption facility jumped **THE OLD INVESTIGATION** (page 106) to the state level immediately. The county couldn't handle an investigation of this size if

OPINT

HANDLING THE BLAME GAME

Each section in “Red Thoughts” begins with suggested police (Almudena Velasquez, Michael Costa, or an alliance of the two) and press complications. It’s up to the Handler which, if any, of these challenges to insert into each stage of the investigation. What skills the Agents might use to keep these outside investigators at arm’s length should be decided according to the situation. The only rule is that the encounters should never be inconsequential. The detectives and the reporter are canny. After using a skill successfully to thwart one of them, another use of the same skill on that character is at -20%. The Agents must be alert and creative.

DECIDING BLAME

There’s no ultimate roll to determine whether the Agents succeed at the cover-up. That’s not how federal authority works. Once they’ve collected any potentially contradictory evidence, the story MASTICATE crafts about what *really* happened at Cornucopia House becomes the only story the Program allows on record. Do not tell the Agents this.

What the group roleplays to discover is how natural they can make their conspiracy appear. Ideally, another story of tragedy slips noiselessly into the stream of news and every fearful organization washes their hands clean of the matter. However, failure to manage the perception of other factions requires much work and many SAN rolls. Failure to keep evidence out of the hands of a dedicated detective might see MASTICATE retasked from counter-espionage to network. Agents may have to plant damning files on a computer to destroy the reputation of a responsible journalist. They might make soul-destroying deals to buy betrayals and bury the truth in new injustice.

WHEN TO USE COMPLICATIONS

“Red Thoughts” forces Agents to take inventory of the past whilst reasserting the influence of Bast in their lives. The goal is to make the last fifteen years (*The Long Years* on page 84) seem a mere prelude to the destiny fulfilled on that night in 2001. Introducing the Teeth to this realization is the purpose of the scenario, and the Handler shouldn’t let too many bureaucratic obstacles distract from that. After all, with the Program on their side, MASTICATE has ultimate authority in most matters.

However, being official has its drawbacks. The Blame Game exists to remind Agents how woefully inadequate even Delta Green remains in the face of such a threat. Everyone is playing “cover your ass.” Law, duty, saving the world—all of it is secondary to institutional survival in the immediate political present. While sorting through the trauma of the past and unnatural dread of the future, the Handler can use the complications to mire Agents in the petty, insistent *now*.

they wanted to, and they do not want to. However, as the sheriff knows, their small size also means they lack the clout necessary to fight back if feds decide to drop responsibility for more than fifty unsolvable murders in their lap. Though he makes a good show of “helping” Velasquez, Costa’s sole purpose is to ensure this doesn’t happen.

Costa is a company man. He has long-term ambitions in the sheriff’s office. He happily lets the state investigators, and Velasquez in particular, take the fall for mishandling the 2001 case if that protects the sheriff. That makes him useful to the Agents.

Media: Toomey

Olivia Centrell Toomey, age 42, is a *Baltimore Sun* reporter assigned to the Cornucopia House story. Banished to low-impact county stories for nearly ten years after conflicts with management, Toomey was only recently assigned to criminal justice reporting. An international story of this size could launch her career out of this rural dead-end, above and beyond her useless editors. The thought has her salivating. She visits the site daily to be denied permission to come inside. She scoffs at the meaningless press releases Pitzerelli keeps dropping to distract her less experienced competition. She probes the perimeter of the scene, undeterred by threats of aggressive prosecution if she tries to sneak through again. She’s hired a cameraman to keep a drone up and as close to the restricted airspace as allowed, looking for license plates and faces she can pursue outside the lockdown of the crime scene.

Toomey takes every opportunity to intercept and interview officials leaving the property. If the Agents decide to throw Velasquez or Costa to the wolves, giving off-the-record tips to Toomey is an easy way to do it.

The Old Investigation

According to Pitzerelli, the Agents’ first priority is preventing the investigation of Cornucopia House from exposing the Program. That includes learning what the first investigations uncovered fifteen years ago. Nothing on Cornucopia House comes up on any database searches. Officially, Cecil County and Maryland State Police investigators have determined that the lack of meaningful information in case records means that the site’s previous history is unrelated to the death of Kerry Houghton. Amongst the field of graves, investigators are starting to wonder.

Detective Sergeant Almudena Velasquez holds the keys to the 2001 investigation. She was a young state trooper at the time, assigned to assist two older troopers, Keith Baswell and Bob Dale of the Criminal Investigations Bureau. Baswell died in an RV accident in 2009. Bob Dale died in 2012 of a heart attack.

The narrative of the cold case, Velasquez’s memory of it, the usefulness of the file, and the difficulty in obtaining it all change depending on what was left on the scene in 2001.

COMPLICATIONS

ASSURANCES REQUIRED

Police: Velasquez requires promises of cooperation before volunteering anything but the official narrative on the 2001 case. She wants assurances that MSP remain in the loop on all investigative decisions. She wants sign-off on any press releases related to the case. If she learns members of the DOJ consultancy team come from anything besides federal LEO backgrounds, she asks to be assigned to the group herself as a cross-departmental liaison for the state of Maryland. Agents may use **Persuade** to achieve concessions on her demands or **HUMINT** to realize that Costa could probably secure and betray the same info at a cheaper price.

Press: If Agents discuss details of the old investigation outside a precinct or secured crime scene, Toomey tails them from the crime scene and attempts to overhear the conversation. Agents may use **Alertness** to spot her. Failure means Toomey works both official and unofficial narratives about the 2001 case in her story.



Cornucopia House as a Scam

If the Agents left little behind. Detective Velasquez has little reason to suspect foul play in the past and is eager to help. The official narrative is available without a roll. Agents can attempt a **Law, Bureaucracy, or Persuade** test to coax out Velasquez's personal recollections.

OFFICIAL NARRATIVE: The more children were placed in the care of Cornucopia House, the greater its monthly assistance check. The disappearance of the caretakers at Cornucopia House was blamed on the adults getting in too far over their heads in a scheme to scam state welfare. The deteriorating condition of the facilities, the abundance of foster children, and the age of the owner were all seen as motivators to abandon the facility when the scam got out of hand. Caring for the kids grew too expensive and difficult. It's presumed the adults fled for Eastern Europe. Any damage to the site was dismissed as an attempt by the caretakers to fake their deaths. An APB on Yelena Kalamatiano and all known employees was issued, urging arrest on suspicion of child neglect. No one was ever found. Questioning the children proved fruitless, but one child was questioned based on a fingerprint match in the missing persons database (See **FBI CASE 07-195121** on page 109.) That case was federal, so the state case closed without follow-up.

VELASQUEZ'S MEMORY: Detectives Baswell and Dale remained skeptical of many details of the case, such as the fact that the adults apparently fled with nothing but the clothes on their backs. However, without other evidence of foul play, the administration refused to hear pleas to keep the case open when it was easy enough to blame the caretakers rather than the state. The lack of any parent, community, or administrative pressure eventually quelled the dissent of the two partners. Velasquez was assigned back to her normal duties and the detectives moved on.

Cornucopia House as a Drug Hit

If the Agents left criminal evidence. Detective Velasquez knows the case is related to the graves, despite the official narrative. MSP would never willingly expose past case files to federal audit without a warrant, but Velasquez is looking for allies to help protect herself, especially those with the right federal credentials. Agents attempt to use **Law**, **Bureaucracy**, or **Persuade** if they have them above base levels. An additional roll can convince the sergeant to add her less professional commentary.

OFFICIAL NARRATIVE: Ryan Innokenty's drug priors and the presence of illicit substances in the house suggest that the murder and/or disappearance of the adults was a drug-related crime, likely stemming from a feud dating to Ryan's days in Brighton Beach. Informants regarded Innokenty as a cowardly snitch. It is believed he used the charitable organization as a front to cover his drug operations, manipulating coworkers into excusing or joining in his illegal activities without the knowledge of the senile Yelena Kalamatiano. The presumed murders of the adults on site were carried out by organized crime seeking to eliminate competition. It's a small mercy that the children were spared, but their young age and fear of the assailants made questioning useless. Any damage to the facilities was carried out by the hit squad.

VELASQUEZ'S MEMORY: Detectives Baswell and Dale were dissatisfied with the drug war narrative. The crime, they argued, seemed far more personal, and Innokenty's pedophilic transgressions during his teenage years suggested a stronger motive. Evidence of such abuse only fueled their speculation. However, the drug explanation was easiest to pitch to the state, as it left far less fuel for a scandal. A single facility corrupted by the influence of narcotics and senile management remained far more forgivable than what Baswell and Dale suspected was a decades old child-trafficking ring. Ultimately, the detectives decided not to risk their careers on distinction without difference. Either way, without living family members, competing criminal interests remained the most compelling explanation as to the orphans' rescue. One child, identified by fingerprints in the missing persons database, was

questioned by federal agents after finding adoption placement out of state (See **FBI CASE 07-195121** on page 109.) Maryland State Police only heard about it long after he'd been sent to a facility. Velasquez's old bosses wondered if it might not be a kidnapping case, but if rescue or revenge had been the motive of the killers, they couldn't explain why the suspects hadn't taken the child directly from the scene.

Cornucopia House as a Cult

If the Agents left a great deal of evidence. They may have been squarely part of the public investigation. See **CALLING IN THE AUTHORITIES** on page 73.

Long after the 2001 Cornucopia House case was closed, Baswell and Dale remained convinced that it involved actual, longstanding devil worship. Velasquez thinks they were right, but she refuses to state it aloud for fear of being laughed out of her job or persecuted for trying to revive a dead case. Agents can use **Law**, **Bureaucracy**, or **Persuade** at -20% to get information from her that they don't already have.

OFFICIAL NARRATIVE: The detectives took great care to keep their ongoing investigation confidential. No progress was reported on the case until nearly a year later, when both men were disciplined for breaching departmental protocols. The FBI reported an attempt "to secure unsanctioned consultation with federal law enforcement" to their superiors. The nature of the consultation was apparently bad enough that it destroyed both men's careers. Baswell quit his job and worked in security consulting until his death. Dale took early retirement. The case was declared cold mere days after transfer to another unit. The cult explanation remained the dominant theory for a motive, but the extent to which it had corrupted a Maryland orphanage for decades appears nowhere in the reports.

VELASQUEZ'S MEMORY: Though everyone knew something "weird" was involved, Detectives Baswell and Dale were tight-lipped regarding their theories as to what really happened. Velasquez recalls that both men were paranoid about the investigation, based on bits of the evidence she was never allowed to see. She knows that an FBI missing persons case was connected (see **FBI CASE 07-195121** on page 109) and provides

the Agents that case number. And she knows Baswell and Dale secretly passed evidence to a cult expert working with the FBI. She only found out about this later when both men were disciplined for breaching confidentiality. The FBI reported their unsanctioned consultation and demanded Maryland Police censure both detectives. Velasquez isn't certain whether her former bosses got carried away with wild theories. She's equally worried they may have been actually on to something and merely lacked the political skill to see the investigation through.

FBI Case 07-195121

The Agents are likely to come across mentions of FBI Case 07-195121 in the haphazard and irregular notes that pepper every document related to the children found in 2001. Detective Velasquez remembers it coming up years ago. If the Agents do not interview Velasquez, they come across the case while investigating what became of the children of Cornucopia House.

The FBI's numbering system tells the Agents most of what they can learn: It was the Bureau's 195,121st case, which puts it opening in the mid-1990s, and it was a kidnapping investigation ("07"). The case is tightly sealed. All communications about it must be directed to the FBI Office of General Counsel and the DOJ's Office of Inspector General. FBI personnel looking into it in any other way face disciplinary action. That tells federal agents that the case must have been the source of some huge trouble for the Bureau. Neither the FBI nor the DOJ give the Agents any information about FBI Case 07-195121, not even the reason for its being sealed. Extracting anything would require months of hearings.

The Agents could get the details of Case 07-195121 if they pursue it after the events of "Red Thoughts." See **CASE SUMMARY: 07-195121** on page 214 for details.

The Cornucopia Excavations

Bodies are still being dug up on the grounds of Maryland Corrections Storage Unit 3, a warehouse in the shadow of Zion Correctional Facility. State and county police, the county coroner, the state forensics office, FBI forensics, and consultants from the Harvard Department of Anthropology have all worked the scene. Only the Harvard group has any association with the Program.

Pitzerelli has cleared the Agents of MASTICATE to take charge of the investigation on behalf of the Department of Justice. They have access to whatever evidence they want to look at and some authority to direct activity. They are being watched the entire time.

All remains are being set aside for examination by the Agents and their experts. Steering everything to the Harvard team is already starting to draw ire amongst the stressed-out crime scene investigators.

The scene is overwhelming, and it's not uncommon to see a grown man weeping behind a decon tent, or a technician smoking sullenly as they stare into the middle distance. Raised voices and screaming matches occasionally shatter the tomb-like silence. The nature of the victims, organizational pissing contests, and the endlessly receding explanation for all this death visibly weighs down on everyone in the area.

The warehouse has been enveloped in an enormous inflatable canvas—much like the ones used for fumigation—with a prefabricated decontamination trailer sewn into the front entrance. To enter, the Agents must suit up with Level C Hazmat gear, full-body protection with a filter mask.

Yellow and white tents dot the property. The grass is festooned with evidence markers, tools, and photographic equipment. Technicians in coveralls and surgical masks huddle around dozens of cordoned-off rectangles that stretch into the trees, carefully excavating, documenting, and removing remains to the processing centers.

State troopers, local police, and high-power portable stadium lights surround the area in a kilometer-wide cordon, preventing media or onlookers from getting closer. Dogs and the sound of ground-penetrating radar can be heard in the woods.

COMPLICATIONS

NOSY NEIGHBORS

POLICE: Velasquez and Costa stubbornly accompany the Agents into the heart of the investigation. If cut out from autopsies and facilities, Velasquez acquiesces. Costa privately approaches an Agent and threatens to pull cooperation of Cecil County Medical Examiner personnel if not accommodated. Agents may use **HUMINT** to realize this is a bluff, and if successful, may use **Persuade** or **Law** to flip the threat on Costa and earn a favor for continued access to the crime scene. If Agents call the bluff, Costa is temporarily removed from play and evidence collection slows. Costa convinces the Sheriff that he's being frozen out in preparation for the feds dumping the whole thing on Cecil County.

PRESS: Olivia Toomey watches the site carefully, hoping to identify the lead investigators: the Agents. Agents may use **Alertness** to spot the reporter focused more on her phone than screaming unanswered questions at the police cordon and **Navigate** to circumnavigate the scene and spot the drone with a telephoto lens, catching license plates and faces on the approach. The drone is outside restricted air space and illegal to confiscate. It is not, however, recording to the cloud, so knocking it out of the sky can only be witnessed by the pilot. If sabotaged in this way, Toomey only grows more determined.

OPINT

ZION CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

The land previously occupied by Cornucopia House was seized in 2008 when neither a will nor heirs could be produced for Yelena Kalamatiano, missing and presumed dead. Maryland deeded the acreage to a state prison to be built on the site.

Construction of the prison was delayed for years thanks to lawsuits from neighbors around unincorporated Zion, desperate not to have their property values tainted by a prison and associated halfway houses, bail bond companies, payday lenders, and cheap motels. After acquiring the rest of Kalamatiano's property, the state worked out zoning and tax arrangements with Cecil County. Zion Correctional Facility opened in 2010. The state bulldozed the remains of the farm and replaced it with a prefabricated warehouse to store surplus furniture, books, and office supplies.

The prison houses over 800 inmates, minimum security to maximum, in 10 buildings plus a couple of administration buildings and the detached storage facility. It is surrounded by multiple layers of security fencing and never less than 500 yards of forest separating it from the outside world. One road, always locked and guarded, leads in and out. The old utility trail was shut down long ago.

The prison holds no secrets for the Teeth. Looking for witnesses or anyone with knowledge of the crime, or of anything related to the *God's Teeth* campaign, yields nothing. Avoid letting the players get too distracted.

Old Remains

Dogs have identified 56 corpses buried on the grounds where Cornucopia House once stood. Uniformly, no care was taken in the disposal of the bodies, which were either placed in large trash bags or tossed into open graves, still clothed. Skeletonized remains have been found, and while dating a time of death from bones is notoriously difficult, other factors at the grave sites—roots, clothing, soil stratification—suggest some were buried as long ago as the late Sixties.

The exact number is still in flux. The K-9 units have been struggling after more than a few hours, either becoming crazed from the number of hits or falling into a sort of stupor, refusing commands. Radar has been more reliable, but tree roots, old plumbing, and other obstructions obscure results.

The searchers are working in expanding rings out from the storage unit. Bodies became much easier to

find as the search reached into the woods that top the hill. But all these hits also caused progress to slow as workers painstakingly cut away roots to get to the remains. Due to the sheer abundance of remains at the crime scene, heavy equipment can't be used to speed the process.

When an excavation reveals human remains, forensic technicians finish the dig with precise tools and document the ground with a grid and photographs. Remains are then moved to one of three processing tents, each cataloging the bodies, beginning the work of identification and pathology.

It's entirely possible more corpses could be buried under the concrete slab; demolition and removal can't begin until the other remains have been cataloged. Further complications come from cattle skeletons dotting the compound, wasting even more time with excavation. Full processing of the scene will take months.



SYNCHRONICITY

THE BAT

One Agent is alone for a moment, sitting on the rear bumper of a vehicle or inside it. A rabid bat crawls along the bumper toward the Agent or flaps into the car. The creature's snout froths blood, blind eyes rolled back into its skull as uncontrollable spasms ripple through it. It's impossible to say why it is active in the summer sunlight. A seizure sends it flopping toward the Agent's lap.

The Agent can get away from the bat with a **Dodge** test. The bat convulses so hard it snaps its spine.

If the **Dodge** test fails, the panicked animal claws or bites the Agent for 1 damage and its bloody froth flies up and into the Agent's mouth. Ask the Agent to make a **CONx5** test. No matter the result, frown and just shake your head sadly when asked what the roll means. The Agent loses 0/1 **SAN** from helplessness every day until a rabies test result comes back. If they send the bat for a rabies test, it comes back negative after 1D4 days. Relief earns a lost **SAN** point back.

No one else noticed the bat attack. They were looking down at their work. Heavy equipment drowned out any yells or screams.

This synchronicity repeats for the same Agent for the remainder of the campaign, sometimes after a day or two and sometimes after months. Every game session should have at least one new bat incident. The **SAN** losses are always the same.

There is always a bat dying of rabies. It is always living somewhere near the Agent: underground, hanging under the eaves of a bridge, inside the trunk of a friend's car. It doesn't matter how insane the logic chain may be for a bat to roost in the location. The bat always comes out in the presence of the Agent and violently dies in their direction. The Agent should soon come to know with bone certainty that there is always another rabid bat, waiting, somewhere.

The Specialists

Archeology and anthropology professor Monique Grace, age 61, heads the team on loan from Harvard. Grace does not know the true relation of the Agents to the panoply of horrors found at the site. As far as she knows, the Agents are the adults in the room, come to make sense of this nightmare and relieve her of having to run interference with the FBI and state officers. Grace has dangled enough tantalizing publication opportunities in front of the university to secure state-of-the-art equipment and lab access, which she in turn waves in front of her underfunded state collaborators, trading access for obedience. Pitzerelli backs up her authority when necessary.

Over half her team are grad students with little to no field experience, and only one other faculty member on site has collaborated with her on the more "esoteric" research of the Program.

Grace spends a great deal of time dressing down forensic professionals with her ivy-league credentials—sometimes justifiably, sometimes just to delay—while attempting to wrangle a group of young adults whose idea of archeology is skewed more toward Machu Picchu than the Killing Fields. She knows her involvement has an end date. Her academic specialties provide only the flimsiest explanations for being there, and the combined resentment and horror in the atmosphere is going to cause in-fighting she can't manage.

She's grateful for the opportunity to show the Agents around, as she assumes they must have at least some idea as to what the fuck is going on, and they can take over before things spiral out of control.

Causes of Death

An Agent or specialist with at least 50% skill in **Forensics**, **Criminology**, or **Surgery**, or who succeeds at a roll, recognizes that most of the dozens of skeletons were killed by the usual suspects of childhood abuse and neglect. Malnutrition and starvation, throttling, blunt trauma, stabbing, shooting, sexual violation: the bones tell stories of every sadistic thing a depraved adult can do to a small victim.



ASSET

Specialists and Backup

Delta Green always expects its agents to complete operations with the skills and resources they have at hand. But in a major case, it sometimes offers a little help.

THE HARVARD TEAM

Pitzerelli brought in two specialists from Harvard Medical School to take over the Cornucopia House excavations and help control the pace of the investigation. They answer to the Agents. Only Dr. Grace and Dr. Campbell know the Program exists. They think it is a national security task force specializing in biological and chemical weapons. As far as they know, its extent is Pitzerelli, the Agents, and a few agents from the FBI's National Security Branch, currently "elsewhere."

Name	Expertise	Program?
Monique Grace, Ph.D.	Anthropology, Archeology, Forensics, Medicine	Yes
Tim Campbell, Ph.D.	Medicine, Science (Biology), Science (Chemistry), Science (Microbiology)	Yes
Melinda Ruiz, M.D.	Forensics, Medicine, Pharmacy, Surgery	No
<i>Six grad students:</i> Charlie Ross, Kristine Jennings, Owen Becker, Esther O'Brien, Frances Morrison, Maureen Patrick	Forensics, Medicine, and roll 1D6 or choose: (1–2) Anthropology, Archeology (3–4) Science (Biology), Surgery (5–6) Pharmacy, Science (Chemistry)	No

FIELD SUPPORT

If the Agents are desperate for medical aid, tactical support, or academic expertise, a call to Pitzerelli might help. The Agent who makes the call gets a **Luck** roll.

If the **Luck** roll fails, nobody with the right skills is available, but they can try again in 1D6+1 days; on a fumble, some paranoid flags the request as a security risk and nobody with that skill set will ever be available from the Program.

If the **Luck** roll succeeds, an expert with the right skills is available in 1D4+1 days, or in only one day with a critical success. The Handler can invent their name and background. The specialist has the necessary skills at 60% to 70% and is available for 1D6+1 days in the field and can pursue further research back home. Pitzerelli orders the Agents to expose the expert to as little of the unnatural in their investigation as possible. If the specialist becomes a long-term part of the team—taking over for a fallen Agent, perhaps—use the *Agent's Handbook* to create full details.

Preserved Bodies

Eleven of the bodies are mysteriously well preserved. No embalming took place, yet certain children appear mummified, retaining skin and desiccated organs long after the flesh should have rotted away. Nothing in the geological survey of the graves indicates how the bodies escaped the ravages of time. Many have been found in wet pits that should have long ago liquefied all flesh. Witnessing the chalk-eyed, shrunken rictus smile of small corpses costs 0/1 SAN from violence.

The mummies resulted from Yelena's arcane experimentations as she attempted to rediscover the lost rituals of the Skoptsi on her own. Whatever she did to the children has frozen their decay in time. Close contact with the mummies triggers the **Scent**, costing 0/1 SAN from the unnatural.

A detailed examination of the preserved corpses doesn't make the situation any better.

Initially, forensic investigators remarked on their good fortune, anticipating what the intact bodies could tell them. None of this information, however, has been in any way scientifically coherent, leading only to increasing despair among the Cecil County and Maryland state forensic teams. Grace uses that confusion to delay further examinations, pointing out the contradictions in the increasingly frustrated reports of the technicians and redirecting them to the collection of more predictable grave sites that are "within their range of expertise."

Decay

An Agent or specialist with **Forensics** at 50% or better, or who makes a successful roll, discovers that the earliest preserved body died sometime in the mid-1990s, which is long enough ago that the body should have rotted to bones. The only way to discover this is by dating the artificial fabrics in clothing.

Autopsy

If an Agent or specialist performs an autopsy, having 50% or better in a **Science** skill that pertains to microorganisms or microbiology, or makes a successful roll, they receive an even deeper shock. The leathery tissues of the body are inexplicably sterile.

No microbiological cultures of any kind can be found among the dead cells. No bacteria. No mold. No decomposer of any kind. If the Agent adds cultures of any microbiological creature that would ingest necrotic tissue, it dies on contact. Worms, rats, and vultures want nothing to do with the bodies, avoiding them if put into contact. Discovering this bizarre phenomenon costs 0/1 SAN due to the unnatural.

Causes of Death

If an Agent or specialist in the autopsy has **Medicine** or **Surgery** at 50% or better, or makes a successful roll, they find unusual causes of death. In every preserved body, the cause of death appears to be an extreme case of Alzheimer's or some similarly advanced stage of cognitive decay. The brain, though dry and difficult to examine, exhibits signs of widespread glial scarring. It is reminiscent of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), but their skulls contain no hairline fractures or other signs of trauma. Furthermore, the scale of the damage is beyond anything the examiner has ever seen. It went deep enough to affect autonomic processes such as eating, swallowing, and breathing. The children died because something made them forget how to live. This costs 0/1 SAN due to the unnatural.

An autopsy without sufficient skill or a successful roll means a definitive cause of death cannot be determined. The cause must have been whatever killed off the body's gut biome and kept everything else dead without decaying for decades.

Necessary Fictions

Dr. Grace worries about the preserved bodies even before she learns of their unnatural properties. She's failed to limit access to the specimens to the Harvard team. For all she knows, technicians could be uncovering another one in the woods as she speaks to the Agents. Thus far, she's held off questions about the remarkable preservation with bullshit about the properties of local clay deposits, but the longer the haunting specimens go without an official cause of death, the more forensic curiosity she has to police. The Agents need to come up with a plausible explanation for the child mummies staring up at the distraught workers

from the floor of the collection tent. At a minimum she requests they remove the remains to a “specialist facility,” out of sight and mind.

“The Stew”

Four graves contain nothing except a foul, black jelly. Not even bones remain. Soil dating estimates their grave sites to be the most recent. Dr. Grace orders all other investigators away from those sites so her team can handle them, dressed in biohazard suits. She insists that only the Harvard team is equipped to glean actionable information from specimens suffering such advanced deterioration.

While a body decomposing into sludge isn’t uncommon, this “stew,” as Grace calls it, has alarming properties. Its viscosity and surface tension kept the contents from leaking out of the trash bags the bodies were buried in. The thick gelatin takes the shape of its container.

More disturbingly, the pitch-black substance experiences subtle ripples and bubbles whenever ungloved human flesh comes near it, almost like ferro-fluid in the presence of a magnet. It has no reaction to tools or any nonliving substance.

These four remains were children who interacted with the Estrus of the Mother ritual or the resulting discharge, and Yelena Kalamatiano if the Agents buried her. An Agent who was forced to imbibe Estrus of the Mother loses 1/1D6 SAN from the unnatural as the smell of the “milk” evokes nightmarish memories. Other Agents chosen as God’s Teeth awaken to the scent of the unnatural. See **AWAKENINGS** on this page.

Close Examination

An Agent or specialist who examines the stew at a microscopic level, and who has a relevant **Science** skill at 50% or better or makes a successful roll, determines that the stuff can’t definitively be said to have ever belonged to a human cell structure at all. The cause of the stew is anyone’s guess.

Further experiments only open more questions. Microbiological cultures that died on contact with the preserved bodies thrive and grow when exposed to

Awakenings

Any Agent chosen as one of God’s Teeth who encounters the stew for the first time loses 1 **SAN** due to the unnatural as it awakens the **Scent** power (see **SCENT** on page 9). Even though the ichor is supposedly composed of human remains, it reeks of the taint of the supernatural until incinerated.

Awakening to the **Scent** is a profound moment with disturbing impact and implications. It is the first sign that something else, something *outside*, has claimed and changed the Agents. Make explicitly clear that this awareness, this new sense, is alien. Whatever it is, its source is in no way human or natural.

the stew. Necrophagic worms, rats, and birds ignore the presence of the stew, but if it is fed to them, it causes slow changes. The changes are not immediately apparent. Over the course of a few days, the animal seems to improve in health and strength. A lab rat that was born without an eye has the eye grow into place, functioning perfectly. Then each animal begins to mutate. Tumors grow inside and out. Without exception, animals fed the stew die hideously.

Those observations cost an Agent or specialist conducting the examinations 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural, and another 0/1 **SAN** if they see the cancerous changes in a creature.

Containment

Grace keeps everyone she can away from the stew. She’s ready to destroy or contain the material according to the Agents’ orders. She suggests to the Agents that they claim the bags holding the stew were not human remains at all but some other substance. Perhaps they can explain it away as sewage from a deteriorating septic system. Or used oil buried illegally. She leaves it to them and Pitzerelli to cast a veil of official secrecy over it.

DISINFORMATION

YELLOW CARD

FORENSIC CONCLUSIONS

Use the Program's experts on the scene to make clear to the Agents that the evidence implies—though in no way proves—a rough timeline.

- After the founding of Cornucopia House and Families Without Frontiers, children periodically died due to indiscriminate sexual and physical abuse perpetrated by the staff. The dead were unceremoniously dumped in the ground and forgotten.

- This continued until the mid-1990s, at which point someone (perhaps Yelena Kalamatiano, considering the Agents' experience with her) switched to a more systemic pattern of murder using unnatural means of increasing sophistication.

When they study the death of Kerry Houghton, they find that the same side effects, manifesting as symptoms akin to CTE, also appear in her brain. So does Franklin Price, Houghton's predecessor in keeping tabs on Cornucopia House and subject to even more of Yelena Kalamatiano's sorcery.

THE LINE

COMPLICATIONS**LEAKS**

After the first day Agents take control, Toomey identifies one of the grad students, interviews them at their home, and learns of the "stew" (see page 115). Owen Becker was there for the collection of the first sample, before Dr. Grace ordered all additional instances restricted to team leads. Toomey convinces Becker that any attempt by the "suits" (the Agents and Dr. Grace) to suppress information about the fluid's odd characteristics bespeaks cover up, and Becker has a responsibility to secure a sample before vital evidence is destroyed. Roll **Criminology** or **HUMINT** to determine if an Agent spots Becker acting suspicious the day he smuggles a vial home in his bag. If he succeeds, ask an Agent to roll **Luck**.

On a success, Program surveillance detects Becker Googling contact information for the *Baltimore Sun* on his home computer. MASTICATE is scrambled to his apartment and can find the sample before it is turned over. On a failure, Becker fails to secure the fluid properly. It becomes motile and kills the 22-year-old in his sleep. His corpse becomes an **UNNATURAL DAUGHTER** (see page 80) with 50% stats and skills. Agents find it lurking over the corpse in his apartment bedroom.

The Death of Kerry Houghton

Kerry Houghton was the victim discovered by State Trooper Vivian Sawyer during her routine follow-up on the Eckstein call. Local police identify her as an unemployed retail worker. The Agents might remember her as the social worker responsible for Cornucopia House in 2001. See **SOCIAL WORKER KERRY HOUGHTON** on page 45 for reminders.

The body has been moved, but the bloodstained puncture marks still stain the white aluminum garage door of Maryland Corrections Storage Unit 3. The remains are stored on a slab in an industrial refrigeration truck adjacent to the tent. It appears no expense is being spared in the investigation.

Pitzerelli has delayed the autopsy of Kerry Houghton, much to the annoyance of everyone involved. The

corpse was originally removed to the Cecil County coroner's office. The county coroners had the task removed from them by Maryland State Police, who in turn handed it over to the FBI and their Harvard forensics "consultants." The FBI had the corpse returned to the murder scene, delaying the autopsy further.

A corkboard set up by Maryland State Police displays crime scene photos of the body as it was found. FBI technicians are currently in the process of digitizing this information and displaying it on a plasma-screen smart board. The screen displays the fingerprints that were recently used to identify Kerry Houghton by cross-referencing her 1997 Maryland Child Protective Services background check.

Other minimized tabs on the giant screen depict the frozen playback from what looks like surveillance camera footage.

DISINFORMATION

YELLOW CARD

NO HOUGHTON?

If Kerry Houghton somehow didn't survive "Go Forth," replace her with another caseworker in charge of monitoring Cornucopia House before her. Feel free to make up this NPC yourself. The identity of the victim doesn't really matter to the plot so long as they were once victims of the mind-altering sorcery of Yelena Kalamatiano.

7/16 13729-13363 8.4 12th 43-57
 7/17 14091-13729 8.1 11th 88-89
 7/18 14367-14091 7.8 11th 41-92
 7/20 15729-14367 8.1 12th 47

COMPLICATIONS

AUDIT

Velasquez and Costa follow the Agents' steps, not interfering but confirming what they find. The pair cooperate to audit the case, ensuring that none of the evidence is 'misinterpreted' to implicate their respective agencies. Anytime Agents make a skill test to gather a clue about Kerry Houghton's murder, Handlers should note whether that information is restricted to the Program. If Velasquez and Costa have access as well, the Handler rolls **Luck**.

Success means Velasquez follows up on the Agents' work. As a superior investigator with purer motives, Velasquez's interpretations of the evidence are correct, even when the Agents' are not. This makes her a valuable resource to Agents that miss skill checks, provided they can coerce the detective sergeant's cooperation. This also makes her the more significant threat to Program security, by far.

Failing the **Luck** test means it's Costa who checks the Agents' work. His interpretations skew toward the short-sighted and self-serving. He dismisses any suggestion of the unnatural in favor of quotidian speculation. Encouraging Costa accomplishes a significant amount of disinformation work for the Agents. The more they can muddy the waters with his 'help,' the better.

Houghton's Body

Any Agent with a medical background may conduct the autopsy at a refrigerated surgical suite erected in one of the satellite tents of the excavation. Other Agents may observe the autopsy, relying on experts sympathetic to the Program. Dr. Monique Grace's colleague Dr. Ruiz—see **THE SPECIALISTS** on page 112—could help. The procedure takes a few hours.

Kerry Houghton was 40 years old at time of death and passed away some time during the morning of Friday, 19 AUG 2016, roughly one week ago. Her corpse appears to have been discovered and put through forensic processing less than a day after her killing. She is remarkably well preserved for the terrible destruction she suffered.

Disfigurement and Death

Seeing the corpse up close costs 0/1 SAN from violence. Its condition and the means of her death are shocking, even traumatic in themselves. Gloss over them if necessary for the comfort of your players.

The body suffered violent puncture wounds on the hands and above the collarbone, presumably made by the bloody chisels and screwdrivers placed on a nearby tray. Pliers and a garden mattock are also among the murder weapons. Her teeth were removed. The head of the mattock was used to pry her lower jaw off. The pressure of this procedure was, presumably, what caused the victim's eyeballs to burst.

Houghton died from a combination of shock and suffocation on her own blood. The lividity of bruising on the temples and torso indicate she was likely beaten and dragged against her will from a separate location.

Faint scrapes on the tops of her toes indicate she was dragged to the sitting position against the building before being pinned to the garage door of the warehouse.

She was pinned using chisels and screwdrivers: a flathead through the left wrist, a Phillips through the right hand, and a chisel through the left shoulder. The force required to do this while the victim struggled suggests multiple assailants. The broken nose, missing hair, and bruising on the brow indicate Houghton's

head was held back after she was pinned. Then her teeth were removed.

It's at this point the victim began to aspirate on her own blood. The process would have been extremely loud, and the lack of response fits the time of death and isolated location. The back molars were more broken off than pulled. To get the rest of the teeth, the killers used the mattock to sever the jaw ligaments and separate the jaw while Houghton was still alive. The rip in the flesh between the second and third right metacarpals likely occurred as the victim struggled against this final attack.

It's unclear how long Houghton survived. Cardiac arrest could have occurred shortly after the removal of her jaw. Or asphyxiation may have come quickly as blood poured down the windpipe and into the lungs while the victim tried to scream.

The strength required for the violence suggests young, healthy assailants, a suggestion supported by surveillance footage taken from the killing.

Anomalies

A successful **Forensics** test, or having the skill at 50% or better, reveals that Houghton's body shows no sign whatsoever of insect damage. Houghton was killed between 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. on Friday, 19 AUG 2016, and found at 7:00 p.m. the same day. Her body was undiscovered in the August heat for 17 hours. The lack of damage from insects is bizarre.

A successful **Medicine** or **Surgery** test, or having the skill at 50% or better, finds another anomaly involving Kerry Houghton's brain. Under a microscope, she appears to have been suffering from serious glial scarring. It is widespread enough that had the symptoms of dementia not yet manifested, they soon would have. The brain damage doesn't appear to be from a common disease like multiple sclerosis, nor does anything in Houghton's medical history indicate cardiovascular issues or other signs of early onset Alzheimer's. The damage is most consistent with chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). Her medical history does not include any treatment for head injuries, so that diagnosis doesn't make sense. There's no damage



to the skull outside what was caused during her killing, and the glial scarring is too deep to be that recent. It's as if she received years' worth of traumatic brain injuries from within her own skull.

Houghton's Effects

The bloody clothes removed from Houghton's body included only pajamas without pockets. No shoes are present. Nothing about the nature of the crime indicates robbery as a motive, and the lack of shoes or any identification mean it's almost certain she was taken from her home or somewhere else nearby.

Murder Weapons

Maryland State Police have already investigated the murder weapons and eliminated their owner as a suspect. The tools used to kill Kerry Houghton have labels on the handles, written in permanent marker. They belong to one Kim Sun-Hu and bear his phone number. Sun-Hu works maintenance for the prison (see **ZION CORRECTIONAL FACILITY** on page 110) and has a rock-solid alibi for Thursday night and Friday morning, having been recorded by CCTV inside the prison. He was fixing a plumbing emergency inside one of the cells at the time of the murder.

Interviewed, Sun-Hu told state police that the tool bucket he uses for basic maintenance work went missing the previous week. Police reviewed further prison CCTV footage and found that the bucket of tools fell from the back of the Maryland Corrections utility truck after Kim offloaded some bed frames into the storage unit on Thursday morning, 18 AUG 2016. This was the first visit to the facility in over three weeks.

The handle of the mattock can be seen on the edge of the frame, in the exact location where it fell, unmoved for over 20 hours when the motion sensor triggers the camera again early that Friday morning as the murder begins.

A Suspect

The Cecil County coroner pulled two sets of prints off the murder weapons. Cross-referencing all available databases returned a single match: Elle Gable, a

19-year-old with no criminal record. Gable's prints were in a National Child Identification Program database, from an event held at the Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2005. Then eight years old, she was brought to the event by the King-Torino Children's Refuge.

No other records for Gable are available, aside from her Social Security number. She appears to be off the grid. See **KING-TORINO CHILDREN'S REFUGE** on page 150 for details on that institution.

If informed of Gable's name or the name of King-Torino, Agents who viewed the Families Without Frontiers records can make an INT×5 test. On a success, they remember Elle Gable as one of the children held at Cornucopia House in 2001. See **THE CHILDREN OF CORNUCOPIA HOUSE** on page 128 for further research.

Conclusions From the Killing

Dragging Houghton to an isolated location in the dead of night indicates planning and forethought, as does the sadism and ritualistic nature of the killing. Even the victim's clothing suggests a home abduction, which is yet more evidence of foresight. However, to go through all that planning, only to arrive at—as far as the killers knew—an empty warehouse, completely unarmed and without any tools to do the job? Either the motives contradict themselves, or the killers expected the murder weapons to be waiting for them in the middle of the road.

Footage of the Murder

The single security camera at Maryland Corrections Storage Unit 3 sits above the entrance to the right of the garage door, angled down and to the north to catch sight of any intruders trying to open either of the locks. It's an old VHS model that saves battery and tape by only activating if a motion sensor triggers the security light. It films at one frame a second. The timestamps are drastically inaccurate, but by localizing around the approximate time of death, it becomes clear that the tape only holds about three weeks of footage before rewinding and recording over old footage. Thanks to the FBI techs, the tape has been digitized and is searchable on the SmartScreen setup.

The Killing

The footage is shockingly gruesome. Gloss over details as needed to suit your players' enjoyment of the game.

Viewing the low-quality footage, even without sound, costs 1/1D6 SAN from violence. Worse, Agents chosen as God's Teeth who fail the **Sanity** test feel something else from the footage: the thrill of the hunt, of the capture, of the predator making the kill and preparing to feed. The emotion is entirely alien, something outside themselves yet part of themselves. That costs a further 1 SAN from the unnatural.

The murder of Kerry Houghton took place near the center of the aluminum garage door where she was staked. Most of the action, seen in stills one second apart, hovers just out of frame. In addition to the motion-activated security light, headlights illuminate the scene, indicating the party drove to the location.

The choppy footage's first frame shows the legs of a rail-thin white man dragging the prone, kicking Houghton across the gravel toward the door. His hand drives the screwdriver through her left wrist. Grainy footage shows a tattoo on his sinewy inner right forearm: an open, fanged mouth with blackness inside.

Another assailant, dressed in a variety of raggedy skirts, an army jacket, and rain boots, kneels on Houghton's legs to hold them down. This almost brings the second assailant's face clearly into frame multiple times but comes just short, only revealing her as a white woman with shoulder-length black hair and a lip ring.

A third assailant is off-screen further to the north, holding down Houghton's right side. The hands look like those of a white or Hispanic man. The left hand shows what looks like the angry scar of a deep cut still healing.

It takes roughly thirty minutes for the assailants to remove Houghton's teeth with pliers. This is mostly blocked by the man in jeans on Houghton's left, though her struggles cause him to move enough that a glimpse her increasingly traumatized lower jaw occasionally becomes available. The female assailant does the dental work while her two companions hold Houghton down. None of them seem hurried or

bothered by the screams or the glaring security light illuminating them.

After a short break spent standing in their positions, presumably catching their breaths and watching Houghton puke blood, the woman in rain boots leaves the frame and returns shortly with the mattock.

The torture continues for another ten minutes, for most of which Houghton mercifully goes limp. Perhaps she lost consciousness. Perhaps she had the good fortune to die.

Then, in unison, the figures leave the range of the motion sensor, and the camera shuts off.

The Killer

Seconds later, the female assailant is back in frame, staring a challenge into the camera. She is smiling cruelly, revealing stained, crooked teeth indicating a near total lack of dental hygiene and/or a methamphetamine addiction. She is young, with unkempt black hair barely tamed inside a beanie cap. Her cheeks are sunken and malnourished; her lips, in addition to the ring, are peppered with sores. The left side of her neck holds some sort of tattoo resembling the mountain lion symbol of a popular sports brand.

Each of the Teeth feels an eerie instinct that she stares directly at them, individually, like a challenge. One who failed the **Sanity** test for viewing the footage feels it more deeply: a kinship of predator to predator and a challenge for dominance like two rival lions. It is an instant of communication without words, beyond the need for words, so deep that words become meaningless noise. That costs a further 1 SAN from the unnatural.

She stares for several frames. Then the girl has raised her cupped hands to the camera lens, revealing a handful of Kerry Houghton's teeth. There is exactly one tooth for each Agent claimed as God's Teeth. She holds the teeth up to the camera for one more frame before the motion sensor shuts down again.

Footage doesn't resume until Trooper Vivian Sawyer discovers the body.

The Camera

Having watched all the footage and seen the crime scene in person, an Agent who succeeds on a roll with **SIGINT** or a photography or videography-related skill notices something odd. First, the camera's location is plainly visible. It would have been easy for the killers to destroy it or avoid it. But second, the camera sports a half-globe of tinted black glass to obscure the direction in which it aims. There is no way to track the camera's movement without breaking the covering or shining an extraordinarily bright light directly at it. Neither happened. And yet the leader of the assailants perfectly framed her face and her trophies for the camera.

The Dog

An Agent who spends an hour reviewing security footage from days before and after the killing finds another anomaly. At exactly 0723 every morning, the motion-activated camera snaps exactly one frame. These stills form the plurality of the camera's activations. If consulted, the FBI technicians assume this to be a default in the camera's programming, used to space the footage and provide continuity to time stamps.

An Agent who succeeds on an **Alertness** or **Search** test, or who has either skill at 50% or higher, notices an odd artifact in the upper left corner of those static images from time to time. By comparing multiple images, the Agent finds the anomaly appears to be the back leg of a dog. Minuscule differences in the gravel



over time indicate a path. If consulted, the technicians insist that while a stray dog was responsible for discovering the buried remains, there's no way the photo was triggered by an animal passing by the motion sensor every day. Whether or not the time-stamps are set to an accurate clock, they keep consistent time. That would mean the same animal was passing along the same path on the outskirts of the motion sensor's range. Every day. At the exact same time. Down to the second. That's a ridiculous conclusion.

The first responder did report finding the first buried body due to the excavations of a nearby stray dog. However, the animal was not found by the time backup arrived on scene. Presumably it ran away into the countryside.

The Culvert

Agents who search for signs of the dog glimpsed in the footage find its trail with a successful **Search** or **Survival** test, each attempt taking an hour. The trail dead-ends at a small culvert pipe leading under the road. The woods are deafened by the hum of the excavation's multiple generators. The trees are devoid of animal life. Even birds and squirrels.

The Agent smells the culvert before they see it, a deep stench of rot and sickness. If they go inside with a flashlight, they find an unthinkable high pile of animal bones clogging the dark space. Opossums, raccoons, squirrels, the skeletons of small mammals of every type can be found torn apart, piled high, and left to rot for years, otherwise undisturbed.

The dog whose digging revealed the first of the buried bodies lies hidden in awkward, ancient misery among the bones. Seeing it costs 0/1 **SAN** from helplessness. An Agent who knows dogs well or who succeeds on an **INT**×5 test thinks from its skull and muzzle shape that the animal is a male Rottweiler. The little fur it has left has gone white with age, the rest falling off in clumps as the skin beneath was eaten by sarcoptic mange. One eye drips a crusty line of pus and blood. It's riddled with worms, ticks, fleas, and every other parasite imaginable. Both hips are swollen from dysplasia, each barely holding up the animal's gaunt frame. Three teeth are left in the thing's rotted

jaw, and the stink of it has weight. The dog does not trigger the Teeth's unnatural **Scent**.

If one of the Teeth comes near, the diseased Rottweiler stands and limps toward them. It lies down at their feet, lets out a sigh, and dies on the spot.

A worn leather collar bites into the flesh of the dog's neck. Cutting away the twisted remains of the leather collar reveals that the dog's name is Mr. Throbb. It is the same dog that acted so strangely at Cornucopia House 15 years earlier. Having any amount of a relevant **Science** skill, special training with veterinary science, or extensive contact with dogs means Agents know that the average lifespan of a Rottweiler is nine years. If he had been a newborn pup on that day in 2001 instead of a full-grown guard animal, Mr. Throbb would still be the oldest Rottweiler in recorded history.

It takes the better part of the day to sift through the bones and attempt a **Forensics** test. Success recognizes that all the animals came to the culvert under their own power, not dragged there from a successful hunt. Each was torn apart and eaten by a dog while *still alive*. Nothing explains this behavior: no parasites, no rabies, nothing. That costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

Houghton's Home

The Agents can easily get Kerry Houghton's home address. She lived in a one-bedroom apartment on a second floor of the Strawberry Mills Apartments complex in White Hall, Maryland, about an hour's drive from where she was murdered. The scene was being investigated by state police before Pitzerelli halted processing. The apartment has been locked and covered in police tape, but remains otherwise unchanged from how deputies originally found it.

Detective Sergeant Velasquez (see **STATE POLICE: VELASQUEZ** on page 104) has the key to the apartment and a flash drive with footage from the complex security cameras. She specifically says the footage is strange enough to be worth watching. She offers to meet the Agents there and help process the scene, and agrees to simply hand over the key only if the Agents leave her no choice.

Velasquez came by late on 22 AUG 2016 to investigate the scene. The apartment door was unlocked and had no signs of forced entry. Velasquez entered briefly before being called back by command at the behest of federal authorities. She pulled security camera footage from the main office of the complex, run by Professional Property Management Realtors (PPMR). She hands it over without prompting and urges Agents to ask her if they have any questions.

Houghton hasn't been employed by the state since losing her job in the wake of the 2001 debacle. A successful **Bureaucracy** test, or having the skill at 50% or better, uncovers how she managed to afford the apartment. The short answer after hours of phone calls and paperwork? She didn't. Eviction was no more than a couple months away. Houghton appears to have been living off the last of her parents' meager inheritance. Over the last decade, she supported herself with a series of low-paying, entry-level jobs and never again returned to social work. She was most recently laid off from Best Buy in March 2016. See **SOCIAL WORKER KERRY HOUGHTON** on page 45.

In the midst of researching her financial history, receipts for medical prescriptions and treatment copays indicate complaints of mood swings and cognition problems. The drugs used to treat these symptoms run the gamut of psychological diagnosis: depression, bipolar disorder, PTSD, schizoaffective disorder, etc. As costs rose from 2013 to 2014, Houghton dropped her medical insurance and ceased treatment for her symptoms. She only recently regained medical insurance under the Affordable Care Act but cannot really afford it.

Security Footage

The security camera footage is digitized and top of the line for a residential apartment complex. Unlike at the storage unit, the images have sharp resolution and cover multiple angles. Additionally, a text document provides a link and password to an off-site server containing recordings from all PPMR-managed properties, in case detectives needed to look at multiple dates to pull footage. Velasquez's flash drive itself holds two days' worth of footage, 18–19 AUG 2016.

Anyone poring over the video finds that Kerry Houghton did not leave the apartment all day Thursday, 18 AUG 2016. The only camera angles depicting her unit are a high-angle shot of the parking lot in front of Building 12 and a shot of the stairwell on the second floor. Her door is seen in the periphery at the left of the screen.

At 12:09 a.m. that night (early 19 AUG 2016), the stillness of the parking lot is interrupted by three figures walking up the stairs. The figures clearly match the two males and one female present on the security footage at the murder scene. The female and one male walk up the northeastern stairwell where the camera is located, while the second male comes into frame from

COMPLICATIONS

HOUGHTON'S APARTMENT

POLICE: Continue or begin the **COMPLICATIONS: AUDIT** from page 118. Velasquez has reviewed the evidence at Houghton's home and remains eager to help solve the case, provided she can be assured no blame for Cornucopia House falls on MSP. Costa is happy to steal and/or tamper with any of her evidence in exchange for federal favors.

PRESS: Toomey learns the identity of the victim and shows up at Apartment 12121. At first, she discreetly approaches an Agent in an attempt to learn their identity, feigning residence at the complex. She hopes to learn as many details as possible before identifying herself as a reporter. Once discovered, Toomey enjoys more autonomy in the parking lot of a crowded apartment complex than outside the rural crime scene. She can be prevented from entering the apartment itself, but has legal standing on public property everywhere else. She photographs Agents on the scene and refuses to leave unless threatened with arrest or bribed with case details.

the other open-air stairwell on the southwestern side of the building, which faces a small patch of woods.

The two males stack up on either side of the door as if preparing to breach it. The female faces away from the apartment, toward the unit across the hallway. At 12:12 a.m., the door opens and Kerry Houghton becomes visible. She is wearing the clothing she would die in and carries a sack of trash. The two men grab her arms, clamp her mouth shut, and begin striking her about the head. They drag her down the stairs as the woman turns and enters the open door of Houghton's apartment. She is inside for six seconds before exiting again, carrying a dangling keychain. She does not close the door behind her.

By this time, the men have beaten Houghton unconscious and dragged her to the parking lot. They wait next to a red 1997 Toyota Corolla. The female assailant exits the stairwell on the ground floor. She finds the car key on the lanyard in one guess and opens the trunk of the Corolla. Looking up its license plate reveals that the car belonged to Houghton. They throw Kerry Houghton in the trunk and get in the vehicle. The car pulls out of the apartment complex before 12:13 a.m.

Shortly thereafter, the door to apartment 12121, left ajar by the assailants, closes seemingly by itself. The glare from the light differential between the lit apartment and dim hallway makes it impossible to see why.

Closer Viewing

Reviewing additional footage from around the suspected time of Houghton's death takes the better part of a day. Multiple days around the crime can be covered if an Agent would like to forego sleep for an all-nighter. Each task requires a skill test or having the skill at 50% or higher.

COMPUTER SCIENCE OR SIGINT: The footage has not been doctored. What they see is what happened.

SEARCH: Reviewing the weeks of footage around Building 12 reveals that Kerry Houghton kept odd hours and rarely left her apartment. Lights turn on or off at unpredictable times of the night. Her trips to the grocery store seem erratic and poorly planned, as

she can be seen returning from her car at least once holding nothing save what appears to be a box of Hot Pockets. Her car is the same red 1997 Toyota Corolla, meaning that the killers performed the kidnapping with her own vehicle.

MILITARY SCIENCE: The staging of the crime was intensely odd. Male assailant #1 approached by hopping the front gate to the apartment complex, walking southbound down Liberty Avenue. The female assailant appears to have just materialized from the west near Building 9, coming into frame from seemingly nowhere in that parking lot's camera. A camera placed to view the community playground behind Building 13 catches male assailant #2 approaching from the north by jumping the fence bordering a small set of woods. None of the assailants wait for anyone to arrive, and there is no communication equipment visible. They seem to have converged from three different directions in perfect unison.

CRIMINOLOGY: Any abduction so precisely planned involves a lot of research. The victim's patterns must be observed and recorded. Since the victim had no regular pattern, a surveillance device must be planted inside the apartment and retrieved to prevent its being used as evidence. Apparently, none of this occurred. All the angles necessary to case the location contain no sign of the assailants, dating back months before the crime. No one exhibited suspicious behavior along any of the sight-lines necessary to plan such a precise snatch-and-grab. Additionally, even if they were to have made the plan secretly, it makes no sense to do that much research and ignore the obvious camera placements that caught them in the act.

Facial Recognition

Pitzerelli can provide access to federal facial recognition software. If the Agents do not pursue this course, Pitzerelli forwards the results to them from local detectives in a week or two. While footage taken on the ancient storage unit camera is useless, the more modern system at Houghton's apartment complex yields matches.

One of the men is listed as a John Doe in a number of public intoxication and petty theft charges from

Broward County, Florida. The suspect never gave his name in any arrest or stint in jail. He never even spoke, according to his files. No name, no known address. The mug shot and identifying characteristics provide a description. When the Agents encounter Samuel Ball—see **BLACK BEAR** on page 154—they recognize the face.

The other male assailant matches photos posted to a social media page for Maryland home-school families. Susan Cunningham, mother of three adopted teens, posted photos showing her family studying, praying, and working and playing on the family farm. She usually calls the young man “Tommy,” but in one post she gives a full name, joking that he was in trouble: “Thomas Perez Cunningham, you get down from there!” With that, it does not take long to identify him as Thomas Perez, age 17, adopted by Susan and Emil Cunningham in 2003 after they fostered him for a year. He was in Cornucopia House as a toddler. Susan Cunningham has not posted on social media in about two weeks. Attempts to contact the Cunninghams get no response. See **SEALED: THOMAS PEREZ** on page 133 for details.

The young woman—Elle Gable, if the Agents identified her fingerprints—bought a Greyhound ticket at a self-serve kiosk in Miami on 16 AUG 2016. She paid in cash. The kiosk snaps a picture of all ticket holders so drivers can confirm purchase. The photo matches the assailant perfectly. She’s even wearing the same clothes. Tracking down the bus she rode, it becomes clear that she got into Baltimore four hours before the crime took place. Planning the attack from Florida or with a mere four hours in preparation would have been all but impossible.

The Agents may soon learn that the bus station where Elle Gable’s travel originated is in the same Miami neighborhood as St. Laurence Church, described on page 169.

Studying the faces of the killers, each Agent chosen as one of God’s Teeth must make a **Sanity** test. On a failure, the Agent feels an unshakable conviction that these children are on the hunt. And that the Agents are predators on the hunt, just like them—or else the Agents are prey. That understanding costs 1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

Apartment 12121

Houghton’s apartment tells a clear story of a life-long bachelorette with a serious hoarding problem. It’s unclear from the poverty on display how much longer she could afford to stay in the relatively new apartment complex. Had her corporate landlords not neglected inspections, she would have been kicked out long ago, regardless of the rent.

The windows of the bedroom are blacked out by piles of clothes, stacked shopping bags, and various thrift-store bric-a-brac. A thin sliver of the queen-size bed has been left empty for sleeping. Otherwise, the only other places in the apartment that aren’t buried in crap are rat trails between the TV, couch, and a glass-fronted cupboard that is stuffed full of porcelain Precious Moments figurines from the Norman Rockwell collection.

A carpeted path has been dug through the trash from the living room and down the hallway to the bathroom and bedroom. This narrow path is the only thing kept clear of the waist-high stacked paperbacks that dominate the rest of the hall’s floorspace. In the path sits a bottle of carpet cleaner specialized for pets and a roll of paper towels. A large stain on the carpet is fresher than the others. It appears the cat threw up late at night, causing a mess that even Kerry Houghton couldn’t ignore.

Scents

The place reeks. Plates of rotten food can be found everywhere, not just moldering where they were left in the kitchen sink and bathtub. The sheer variety of places for food to be stashed and forgotten seems to imply senility and dementia not usually found in someone of Houghton’s age.

Beneath that is something else. Each of the Teeth must make a **Sanity** test. If it fails, the Agent finds their mouth watering. The place smells of prey gone to ground, ready to be devoured—but some other predator already claimed it. Some alien emotion takes hold that expresses itself in the human brain as disappointment or frustration, a soul-deep need to feed on something that is not flesh or anything physical. The Agent loses 1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

The apartment also smells of a more urgent rot, and the culprit can be found above trash that blocks the sliding glass doors to the balcony. A dead British shorthair cat hangs from the blinds. It appears the cat got the cord to the venetian blinds wrapped around its neck and accidentally hanged itself while jumping from one pile of detritus to the next. The cat does not look freshly dead. Having **Forensics**, or a relevant **Science** skill above base, reveals that the cat has been dead for a little under a week. It may have even died the night Houghton was abducted. There is no sign of dehydration or malnutrition.

One of the Teeth who failed the mouth-watering **Sanity** test feels a weird kinship with the dead cat. It did not die by accident. It followed a path laid down for it. It served well. But what did it serve?

Houghton's Computer

Houghton has a twenty-year-old computer unplugged on a desk and half-buried under detritus. She has not used it for years, but it still works, and it still has email chains from long-dead accounts that show her side of the catastrophic revelations at Cornucopia House.

Houghton was overworked and demoralized before the news of the Cornucopia House children came out in 2001. She had been deteriorating for months, but she clearly was as horrified and bewildered as anyone at what authorities found there. She reiterates over and over that she never saw anything bad, let alone children in conditions as awful as the police say. She reminds her supervisors that her predecessor, Franklin Price, likewise found nothing to worry about over years of visits.

None of that helped. By 2001, Price had already been in long-term care for years due to early-onset dementia. Houghton's communications grow more and more desperate and strident. They stop entirely when she is first suspended and then fired from her job.

See **CHARLOTTE'S REST VETERANS HOME** on page 145 for details on Franklin Price. See **SOCIAL WORKER KERRY HOUGHTON** on page 45 for more about Houghton's brief career and deterioration.

Searching the Apartment

If the Agents did not find Houghton's diaries in 2001, searching for at least four hours and succeeding at **Search** at -20%, or having the skill at 70% or higher, finds them now in the debris. See **HOUGHTON AT HOME** on page 47 for details.

If the Agents watched the security footage, a successful **Criminology** test, or having the skill at 50% or higher, eliminates possibilities for who could have closed the door when the killers departed. There's no room in the cluttered apartment for another person. There's no way for someone to secretly enter or exit without being seen scaling the exterior of the building. The only thing that could have closed the door behind the killers was the victim's cat.

The evidence suggests that the cat threw up right as the assailants closed in on the apartment from three separate directions in perfect union. As Kerry Houghton took the trash out, the assailants dragged her away. One entered, somehow found the keys amongst the mess, and left again within seconds. The cat closed the door behind her, thus delaying discovery of foul play. Then the animal appears to have hanged itself. Bad luck that this happened right as a trio of killers waited for her outside the front door. Or was it? Could that cat have been trained to puke at a certain time? Could the cat have been...in on it?

Then the killers took a car they couldn't have known about to a location they couldn't have known was unoccupied, and killed a woman with weapons they had no way of predicting would be there. It's an impossible crime, reliant on coincidences beyond belief that, nonetheless, remain the only explanation. The realization costs each Agent 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

The Children of Cornucopia House

Much of the work finding what became of the children must be done physically in the Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse State Archives Building in Annapolis, Maryland. Child-welfare files from 2001 were moved there for storage long ago and were rarely digitized.

Even with Pitzerelli backing the Agents, unearthing sealed custodial records for juveniles requires a search warrant. Agents may use **Law** or **Bureaucracy**, at +20% thanks to Pitzerelli putting the weight of his office behind it, to obtain a warrant allowing them to access the files. The warrant takes 3D6 days to matriculate down to the Agents. If the roll fails, the warrant is denied after one week until further evidence can suggest probable cause for the search.

Alternatively, the Agents could use some combination of **Bureaucracy**, **Persuade**, **Stealth**, or **Disguise** to infiltrate the archives and search adoption records without leaving a trace. Or they can talk to archivists informally and try to persuade them to provide access, off the record, in order to save lives. That may require skills such as **Bureaucracy**, **Criminology**, **Law**, or **Persuade**. They can sift archivist backgrounds and flat-out blackmail one, using some mix of **Bureaucracy**, **Computer Science**, **Criminology**, **HUMINT**, **Persuade**, or **Psychotherapy**. Whatever the Agents' approach, ask the players to describe it, come up with trouble for each failed test, and see if they succeed twice before they fail twice.

Unless the Agents burned her in their cover-up in "Red Thoughts," Detective Almudena Velasquez can provide a great deal of help. She and the other state investigators did some of the groundwork back in 2001. (See **THE OLD INVESTIGATION** on page 106.) In the wake of Yelena Kalamatiano's disappearance or death, a serious effort was made to discover a narrative, especially if it could absolve the state of potential scandal and get rid of the nearly twenty children suddenly put into foster rotation. The scope of Velasquez's aid is up to the Handler. The more evidence Agents left behind, the more resources were dedicated to the case and the more information is waiting in state police archives.

COMPLICATIONS

MADE

Michael Costa approaches one of the Agents in private. He's been in discussions with Vivian Sawyer, the officer that drove by the Maryland Corrections Storage Unit 3 on a lark and found the body. Sawyer checked the area based on a call from the Hendry County Sheriff in Florida. In addition to asking about any past criminal activity at the area, the deputy wanted to know about a list of names. Costa managed to pull one name out of the trooper. He scoured online and found a picture tagged with one of those names. He shows whatever Agent a photo of themselves. This causes **O/I SAN** against helplessness if the Agent has presented ID or identified themselves by another name.

Costa pretends to have a stronger hand than he does. He has no context for the mention of the names and the call only asked for contact information. There's no indicator where the photo was pulled from or if it was accurately labeled. Succeeding on an **INTx5** test calms the Agent down enough to realize this isn't an ironclad-gotcha. Let them decide how to explain themselves, if at all. Costa isn't so corrupt he would cover for child-murderers, but he regards pretty much everything else as tools for negotiation. His first ask is a peek at the adoption records from Cornucopia House, a warrant no Cecil County judge has authority to grant. If he doesn't get it, revealing that a member of the DOJ team is operating under false credentials would cause a massive clash between state and federal power that the Agents cannot afford.

SYNCHRONICITY

THE RABBIT

If an Agent hasn't had a Synchronicity yet, it happens while investigating the Cornucopia House paper trail.

Ask the Agent to describe a well-heeled, suburban area that holds one of the records departments or databases they need to access. How is it surprisingly green? Is there a park? Tree planters? A community garden?

Describe a very large, live rabbit that has drawn the attention of other passersby near the building the Agent needs to enter. The rabbit is native to the local ecosystem, but it is surprisingly out of place sitting on an urban sidewalk and seemingly unafraid of the curious humans around it. There is some rumination among the crowd about whether the creature is rabid, but the concerns are quickly dismissed. The creature seems healthy, glowing even. In fact, anyone with a rural upbringing recognizes the rabbit is pregnant. Everyone realizes it when, as the Agent arrives, the rabbit begins giving birth to a litter right on the sidewalk.

Though it seems very odd, the Agent bears no special responsibility to the rabbit or little bunnies on the sidewalk. It could just be a coincidence. Ask the Agent if they would like to stay and watch at the cost of 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural, contemplating the odd timing of it all. If they decide to roll the dice, no matter the result, the odd rabbit pregnancy never happens again. It remains a mere occurrence, of no further significance.

If they decline, they can go inside, continue with their day, and let one of the other half-dozen people passing by deal with the intrusion of nature onto the sidewalk. The rabbit births repeat for the rest of the Agent's life. Every month, at some point of the waxing gibbous phase of the moon, a rabbit or some species of hare gives birth to a number of rabbit kittens. The birth always takes place in front of the Agent, and the litter is always equal to the number of living Teeth. It doesn't matter if rabbits are supposed to be hibernating. It doesn't matter if they have no earthly reason to be there. It doesn't matter if they are later adopted, killed, or left to fade back into the grass. The hares always give a miraculous birth in the presence of the Agent, every month, for the remainder of their days. During every home scene between operations, the Agent loses 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.



Bus Therapy

The children recovered from Cornucopia House in 2001 were assigned to one of the three active youth facilities in existence at the time. Each stay lasted, at most, nine months. Any Agent with **Psychotherapy** above base realizes the Cornucopia House children were given what is colloquially called “bus therapy.”

Unable to handle the burden of a child in need, bus therapy occurs when the state, company, or school district in charge of a child's welfare ships them off to a different custodian "better suited" to meet their needs. In reality, it's a legal way for institutions to foist their underage burdens onto each other, enticing out-of-state concerns to take responsibility in exchange for the federal assistance money attached to each case file.

After their rescue, the children of Cornucopia House were again abandoned, each essentially sold to whatever adoption agency, treatment facility, religious “rehabilitation” camp, or other concern that thought it could transform a child from state deficit into private profit. The tracks have been obscured so as to make it nearly impossible to trace their paths through life, and accountability for their neglect has been scrubbed away like fingerprints from a murder weapon.

The victims of Cornucopia House disappeared into the idiot machine, like the 500,000 other children churned through its guts every year.

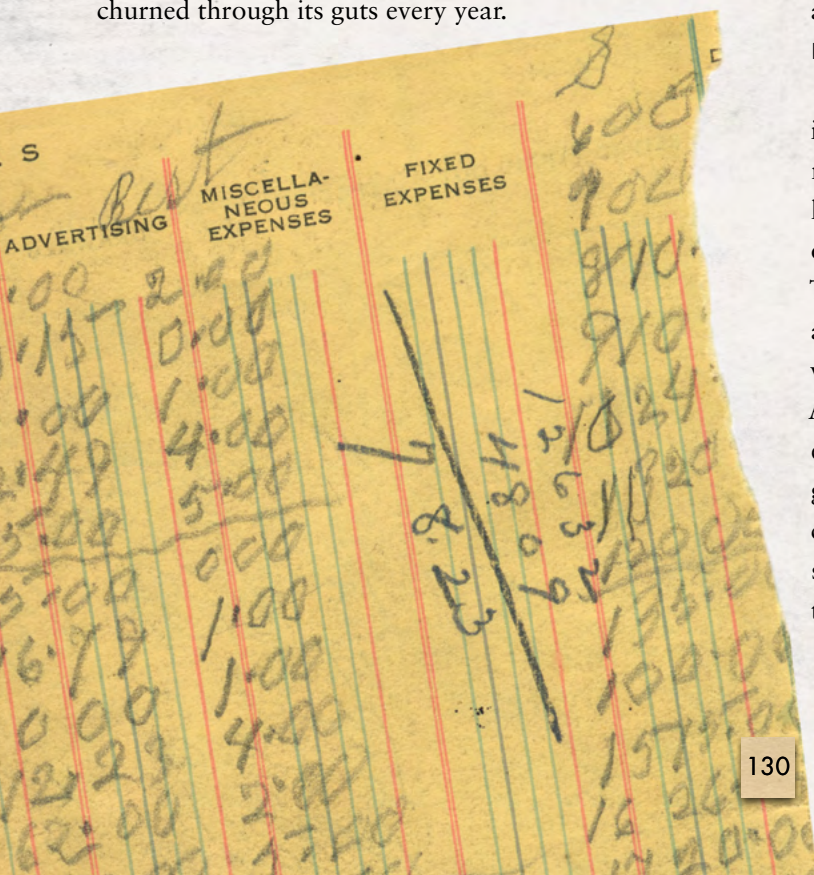
Arnold Springs: Undifferentiated Diagnoses

Maryland DHS sent seven of the children to the state-run Arnold Springs Children's Home. A series of well-meaning medical diagnoses suggests the children recovered from Cornucopia House suffered from a laundry list of psychological disorders: ADD, ADHD, PTSD, borderline personality disorder, oppositional-defiant disorder, reactive-attachment disorder, varying degrees of autism, etc. But the symptoms often look very familiar.

Reading the scant documentation in the file, an Agent with Psychotherapy skill above base suspects that a variety of doctors, uninformed of each child's shared background, were desperately casting about for diagnoses to explain the same condition. Most children, particularly the younger ones, were nonverbal, waffling between catatonia and violent outburst, especially when separated from their peers.

The sheer variety of care they required overwhelmed the in-house educational staff of the facility. They lacked the specialists required to meet the educational needs of the population. They soon transferred the four most severe cases to self-contained childcare facilities around the country specializing in the various (incorrect) diagnoses. Three children were placed through local adoption and had their records at Arnold Springs sealed in the legal proceedings (see **LOCAL ADOPTIONS** on page 131).

Agents without **Psychotherapy** can get the same information by visiting Arnold Springs in Forest Hill, northeast Maryland. The facility has an extremely high turnover rate. Traumatized children often lash out: bruising, biting, and covering caretakers in urine. The reward for the average caretaker is pay barely above minimum wage. Certified staff are salaried and work 60-hour weeks with mandatory on-call time. After 15 years, no one has worked at the facility long enough to remember anything from 2001. So many generations of entry-level caretakers and rotating counselors have poured through the Children's Home since 2001 that the only record of their stay is the transfer paperwork closing the files.



PeaceLove: 'Poor Management'

A privately owned mental health corporation (Baltimore-based PeaceLove, Inc.) took custody of six rescued children. Children from this facility were bused to a local public school so that the private company would not have to pay tutors for their education. Upon arrival at the local school district, no more than lip service was paid toward addressing their special needs.

The children share the same alphabet soup of medical diagnoses as their state-housed counterparts, but each file shows that the child was later disqualified from Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 modifications for Other Health Impairments (OHI). Educational diagnosis is a secondary assessment required to confirm that a child's medical diagnosis actually requires modifications to curriculum or an educational setting. An educational diagnosis must be performed by an educational psychologist. All of the children from Cornucopia House had their assessments done by Dr. Diane Daugherty, a special education process coordinator from the local school district closest to the privately owned mental health facility. Uniformly, the assessments report "no evidence of behavioral or learning disabilities," and blames teacher referrals of the new students on "poor classroom management."

With a successful **Psychotherapy** or **Bureaucracy** test (or any attempt to intimidate the retired Daugherty), Agents deduce that Daugherty's negligence was an attempt to protect her small school district. The district ranks amongst the poorest and smallest in Maryland. The only reason it agreed to take on the educational load of the private youth facility was in exchange for their ADA (Average Daily Attendance) money, which provided funding from the state based on the number of students enrolled. Despite the behavioral issues caused by at-risk kids, this deal had previously been profitable for both the facility and the school. However, the influx of specialized staff required to teach six nearly preverbal students added to the district's roster mid-year would have likely bankrupted the school.

In an attempt to protect the district from federal laws requiring they provide services to all qualifying students, Daugherty disqualified the children from Cornucopia House from special education services. By the time the fall semester of the next year started, the behavior of the educationally neglected students worsened to the point that the private healthcare provider forfeited additional state payments for each child's care and "renegotiated" the custody arrangements of each survivor, sending them to other private mental health facilities around the country.

Mary's Place: Gone and Forgotten

The last six children were sent to another state-run orphanage called Mary's Place, but it was soon defunded by the governor's "Smart Growth" budget cuts as an overdeveloped rural institution. After two months in the facility, all the children were shipped to housing outside the state. Maryland only knows the moves happened. It has no idea where the kids were sent.

King-Torino: Trauma Bond

Most of the survivors were shipped across the country alone. Four children given bus therapy—including Elle Gable—were sooner or later sent to King-Torino Children's Refuge in North Carolina. This was apparently due of sharing a similar set of diagnoses: oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, ADHD, anxiety, and selective mutism. The highest concentration of follow-up material likely exists there. See **KING-TORINO CHILDREN'S REFUGE** on page 150 for details.

Local Adoptions

According to Maryland Department of Human Services records, foster families permanently adopted three children from Cornucopia House. Two have since been unsealed. The third remains under seal until the adoptee reaches 18.

Unsealed: Lilia Bondarenko

Lilia Bondarenko died at the age of 15 in 2008. She was killed attempting to hop a Norfolk Southern freight train passing through Baltimore. The grisly state of her body initially provoked a homicide

investigation before toxicology and forensics revealed she fell beneath the wheels while high. The records were unsealed by detectives pursuing the case, but Lilia's adoptive parents, the Thompsons, had reported her missing multiple times throughout her adolescence. Interviews with the family, conducted by detectives attempting to write the case off as death by misadventure, make it clear that Lilia's struggles with bad behavior and addiction were worse than anything her adoptive parents had dealt with before. Her death was a serious tragedy to the family, and they made every attempt to find her when she ran away.

Unsealed: Samuel Ball

The Agents could get the clearest picture of these children's lives by investigating Samuel Ball. Ball's record was unsealed by a previous investigation.

Samuel Ball was adopted by Clarence and Becky Mcleod in 2002 at age six. They changed his name to match theirs. They unofficially, illegally "returned" him to the state in 2005 at age nine by leaving him at a social services office.

The Mcleods claimed they were unfit to parent Samuel after he allegedly attempted to kill their biological daughter with a kitchen knife. The record was unsealed by an attorney hired by the parents as defense against prosecution for reckless abandonment. They lost the case. Each served six months in jail and paid a \$1,000 fine, and they temporarily lost custody of their biological daughter. They divorced in 2007. Becky Mcleod changed her name back to Marshall.

BECKY MARSHALL: Becky Marshall, is serving time for check fraud in Garrett County, Maryland. The Agents can easily arrange an interview. She is a broken shell of a parent. She recounts life with Samuel Ball with a mixture of deep shame and recalled trauma. His intellectual disabilities—the doctor blamed his inability to decode or form language as the result of infant malnutrition—hinted at nothing of the behavioral or emotional struggles the child suffered.

Samuel's constant outbursts strained the marriage terribly. When the Mcleods had their biological daughter in 2003, Becky thought things were beginning to improve, but Samuel's reactions to the new

child grew increasingly violent. The family exhausted itself financially trying to find therapists capable of improving Samuel's behavior. By the time they found him with a knife in their daughter's room, they were at a breaking point. They "returned" Samuel out of fear for their daughter's safety, fully willing to accept the punishment for their actions.

Records show Samuel was given bus therapy shortly after being returned to state custody. He ran away in 2008 and has not been seen since.

Their daughter is now in the permanent custody of her biological grandmother, as Becky has been in and out of Maryland jails since her release on neglect charges in 2007. Becky Marshall hasn't heard from her ex-husband in years.

CLARENCE MCLEOD: Tax records show Clarence Mcleod's last employment was as an offshore rigger for Gulf Quality Inc. of Mobile, Alabama, in 2014. Calling the company can help Agents locate the rig where he worked and his last foreman, Jim Boone.

Calling the foreman gets a frustrated account of a worker who seemed promising but went downhill, fast. He remembers Mcleod had some serious family troubles and had tried to find a kid they had lost or given up. Boone thinks Mcleod is drinking himself to death in a cheap single-wide trailer on Pillans Street in Mobile. He can give the Agents the address. Boone doesn't have a phone number for him.

If the Agents track Mcleod down, they find him deeply unhinged, committing slow suicide by drink and drugs. After he and his wife split up, he went looking for the disturbed boy that they gave up. He found him at a shelter in Miami in 2009. He says "Sammy" still never said a word. At first, he didn't seem to recognize his adopted father. When he did, he smiled, the first time Mcleod ever saw him smile. Then he stabbed Mcleod eight times in the chest with an icepick.

A couple of other kids were with him, just as silent, and they came over and looked down at Mcleod like he was a bug. The kids drifted away, and a passerby called an ambulance before he bled out. You can barely see the scars, now, but blood loss and infection nearly killed him. He never saw Samuel Ball again.

Mcleod remembers the name of the shelter: St. Laurence. See **ST. LAURENCE CHURCH** on page 169 for its details. Shown photos of Kerry Houghton's killers, Mcleod identifies one of the young men, the one in worst condition, as Samuel Ball. He identifies Elle Gable as one of the kids with Ball at the stabbing in Miami. He never learned her name.

Sealed: Thomas Perez

The final adoption record, that of Thomas Perez, has been sealed until the adoptee requests it be opened as an emancipated adult at age 18 at the end of 2016. He was estimated to be three years old in 2001.

Unsealing the Perez file legally requires a Law test at -20% and a month of court processing before the decision is even handed down. The file has not been digitized and put online. Looking into it illegally requires access to filing cabinets at the Maryland Department of Human Services in Baltimore, either sneaking in or talking a clerk into helping. See **THE CHILDREN OF CORNUCOPIA HOUSE** on page 128 for possibilities.

The file holds the same fishy certificates as the rest of the Cornucopia House files, though paperwork for Thomas's adoption at six months old seems especially sketchy. Owing to his age and ethnicity, and the dwindling finances of Families Without Frontiers, the documents are likely fakes. It's unlikely that Perez originally hailed from Yugoslavia, as Kalamatiano claimed on paperwork.

Perez was placed with Emil and Susan Cunningham. Though he was initially diagnosed as developmentally delayed by his orphanage before adoption, Perez has no other educational records on account of being homeschooled by the Cunninghams on their farm in Wicimico County, Maryland, along with two more adopted siblings. See **FACIAL RECOGNITION** on page 125 for what the Agents might find about them online.

The Cunninghams' address in the countryside is easy to find. Both parents and both adopted siblings were murdered there and left to rot weeks before the Houghton killing. They were stabbed to death in their sleep, with no sign of forced entry. Seventeen-year-old Thomas Perez is missing.

MARYLAND DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES
ADOPTION RECORDS
Thomas Perez
Case #4520A5389
SEALED UNTIL 12/31/2016

Former Case Workers

It's not hard to discover the list of case workers assigned to Cornucopia House. Most of the records are available to the public at the Maryland Department of Human Services in Baltimore, and no one is keen to protect even confidential files once they hear which case prompted the questions. Getting help on the phone is all but impossible but a visit in person finds every door open. Warrants aren't even necessary as long as Agents remain discreet.

Kerry Houghton, the victim of the latest murder at the excavation site, handled the case before being dismissed from her position in mid-2001. Her work record was spotty after that. She seemed to avoid any additional jobs involving her experience in educational psychology, children, or government work. It has been many years she since worked in such fields, so no one has correlated Houghton's former job with the geographical location of her killing. But it's only a matter of time.

Insurance records from Maryland DHS paint a haunting picture. Nearly everyone that ever worked on the Cornucopia House file is dead. There were three suicides by hanging among seven staff assigned to monitor the children from the 1970s to the 1990s. The only survivors past 2001 were Kerry Houghton and her predecessor, Franklin Price. Franklin Price has been receiving Non-Economic Loss benefits owing to "psychological competence" since 1998 at age 40. Now 58, Price is a resident of the Charlotte's Rest Veterans Home located south of Washington, D.C., where he has lived for nearly two decades.

If Agents suspect Price is in danger, they can call ahead to warn the facility. Staff assure the Agents that they have strict visitation policies and won't be allowing any strangers into the building. No one has been cleared to visit Mr. Price in years. The man is nearly catatonic with advanced dementia and likely couldn't speak even if someone came to see him.

Burying the Past

Handlers should track MASTICATE's progress in the four areas of concern for the Program.

THE OLD INVESTIGATION: page 106

THE CORNUCOPIA EXCAVATIONS: page 109.

THE DEATH OF KERRY HOUGHTON: page 117.

THE CHILDREN OF CORNUCOPIA HOUSE: page 128.

When Agents have done their best to comb through the mess, Pitzerelli contacts them. He warns that the timetable is accelerating. APBs and BOLOs for the subjects across Maryland have come back with nothing. The murderers have likely fled, and there's still the initial incident from Florida that needs attention. Pitzerelli urges MASTICATE that it is time to seal the breach. He calls them to an interdepartmental task force meeting. Though never explicitly stated, the meeting's objective is to establish an official narrative explaining the events of Cornucopia House—a version of events to quell the press and steer any further investigations.

The meeting occurs at a time of the Handler's choosing. Agents better have their stories straight before showing up.

The meeting takes place in conference room furnished much like the one in D.C. This one is located in the basement of the G.H. Fallon Federal Building in Baltimore. Unlike the first, it is not covered in hidden surveillance devices. In fact, all attendees are required to turn over their phones and weapons to an anonymous bailiff waiting outside the door. No one is keeping minutes for this one. It is quite literally the back room where deals are made.

Aside from the Agents, Pitzerelli, Det. Sgt. Velasquez, and Det. Michael Costa are in attendance. Olivia Toomey, the *Baltimore Sun*, and the rest of the press get an official statement after the fact. Hopefully, the Agents have already ensured she has nothing to contradict it.

The Agents, as federal consultants and investigative leads, deliver the briefing. Ostensibly, they are providing state and local authorities a progress report

of the investigation and outlining DOJ procedures for continued work on the case. Privately, Pitzerelli reminds Agents that this is not a discussion: they are Uncle Sam, telling the kiddos how things are going to be.

Agents in the room can make a roll against Pitzerelli's **HUMINT** 60%. The Agent that was a former acquaintance gains +20%. On a success, the Agents see cracks in the lawyer's practiced facade. He's sweating despite the blasting AC. His eyes stay fixed on the faces of Velasquez and Costa like a man watching a bomb countdown. It's clear that Pitzerelli's purpose in the meeting is to judge the two officer's reactions to the new version of events. The Agents hold Velasquez's and Costa's lives in their hands, and they will be the ones to snuff them out if they fail. Realizing the stakes of this meeting costs 0/1 **SAN** against helplessness.

Making the Report

Agents are being asked to engage in the creative writing of political power. They are crafting a story that cannot be questioned. It may kill anyone who tries. Handlers should use the following metrics to judge the quality of the explanation presented, specifically when deciding how factions in **THE BLAME GAME** react to the news.

The Old Investigation

- » **ASSESSMENT:** More mundane investigations that missed the bodies in the woods can be easily explained away as officer incompetence. The Program is only threatened if Cornucopia House was deemed a cult (see **CORNUCOPIA HOUSE AS A CULT** on page 108). The FBI sabotage of Dale and Baswell looks bad in the wake of the mass grave's discovery. Velasquez herself has serious suspicions. Journalists and LEOs looking into why evidence of cult activity got ignored veers too close to the exposing the Program.
- » **REINTERPRETATION:** It looks bad for Maryland State Police. The only difficult task is convincing people that someone other than MSP were at fault. Cecil County had control of the scene for all of two days from 2001 to 2016. The FBI's

only interaction is a single case file, discovered after the fact, and they never had jurisdiction. At best, the efforts of Agents can lessen the blow against Velasquez and the current administration by painting the dead detectives as an incompetent, irrelevant old guard.

- » **REMOVAL:** If Agents can do it quietly, this is the best solution. It's not hard to believe that a 15-year-old closed case went missing and never got digitized. The elimination of Dale's and Baswell's notes means any accusation against Velasquez and MSP gets reduced to hearsay.
- » **SANCTIONS:** The state is happy enough to concede Velasquez a sacrificial lamb. Almudena's job is on the line, and she fights for it. Removing her public objections from play gets MSP onboard. If they've seen the quality of her work, Agents can make a **Persuade** test at -20% to beg Pitzerelli for mercy. On a success, a separate Agent reads Velasquez into the existence of the unnatural and urges her cooperation in covering it up on this case. She ceases her objections and keeps her job. In the event a character needs to be added mid-campaign, Velasquez could serve as a replacement Agent (see **NEW TEETH** on page 8).

The Cornucopia Excavations

- » **ASSESSMENT:** Delta Green exists to destroy things like **THE STEW** (page 115). It has to disappear. The **PRESERVED BODIES** (page 114) also exhibit unnatural properties, but it's subtle enough the Program accepts more nuanced risk management.
- » **REINTERPRETATION:** If everyone believes that the 56 graves are the sole result of terrestrial human cruelty and madness, the Program is satisfied. The caretakers were undoubtedly the killers. What needs explanation is their motive and the remarkable preservation of some of the bodies.
- » **REMOVAL:** At a minimum, **THE STEW** (page 115) must be destroyed. As the Harvard team never registered the substance as human remains, this is relatively easy to do. The **PRESERVED BODIES** (page 114) are much harder to dispose of without leaving a glaring trail of evidence tampering. If Agents

do manage to lose 11 corpses discreetly, Pitzerelli praises their thoroughness.

- » **SANCTIONS:** Cecil County was first on the scene. Their medical examiner, technicians, and officers have been assisting since the beginning. This makes Costa the hardest to convince. He's seen the mummified corpses and knows there's some sort of 'bag of black jelly' he hasn't been allowed to examine. It also makes him the easiest fall guy. A lot of missing evidence and 'lab errors' can be blamed on the inept fumbling of local cops. If Costa pays a price more severe than his professionalism, Cecil County knows enough to call it quits and roll over. If Toomey secured a sample of **THE STEW** in the **COMPLICATIONS: LEAKS** on page 116, the Program orders the Agents to kill her before she gets a chance to write about it.

The Death of Kerry Houghton

- » **ASSESSMENT:** Though grisly and bizarre, nothing about the murder at the storage facility directly exposes the Program. Evidence of unnatural influence caught on film remains deniable. The suspects are former residents, and the horrors found beneath the hill suggests strong enough motive. The Program's only concern is that the Agents keep their names out of it.
- » **REINTERPRETATION:** If the suspects have yet to be identified as former residents of Cornucopia House, Agents can leave the savage nature of Houghton's death a mystery. If they have been identified, revenge takes a clear lead as motive for the torture and killing. If they wish to muddy waters further, Agents can regard her killing as a drug hit, gang initiation, or other stand-by cover story.
- » **REMOVAL:** Unnecessary. The FBI's claim of jurisdiction has placed all evidence from the Houghton murder under their authority. The Program has enough Bureau influence to control access indefinitely.
- » **SANCTIONS:** The Program's ire is directed toward the culprits. Local and state officials are fine

with feds catching the trio, so long as they aren't blamed for missing the abuse that made them. This is MASTICATE's next mission. The only 'civilian' at risk is Franklin Price, if Agents discovered him. The Program sends Agents to ensure the old man doesn't recount any of the memories pried from Houghton's skull.

The Children of Cornucopia House

- » **ASSESSMENT:** Little risk. The cruelty and inefficiencies in the American foster care system are well-documented and of little concern to the Program. The paper trail also requires warrants the Program is confident they can deny.
- » **REINTERPRETATION:** The children were failed cosmically, and then they were failed nationally. There's nothing to spin and no surprises.
- » **REMOVAL:** Though difficult, the Program prefers this option. They've already suffered blowback from the survivors of the 2001 event. If it happens again, they don't want anyone checking their work as they hunt down the adult threats.
- » **SANCTIONS:** If Agents fail to secure the adoption records covertly, murders may be sanctioned to erase evidence of their tampering.

Assigning Blame

The more obvious the interference by Agents and federal authorities, the more unfavorable the reaction of any party assigned blame for the dozens of dead children found dead under the hill. It's possible for MASTICATE to develop a story that satisfies all parties, but not easy.

Though not in the room, Olivia Toomey with the *Baltimore Sun* acts as a force multiplier. The last resort of the besieged law enforcement officer is a leak to the press. If Velasquez or Costa object to the Agents' version of events, they have as long as it takes to reach Toomey before their problems multiply.

BLAME THE FEDS: The Program finds this unacceptable. If the Agents know about FBI Agent Gary Hall and his disappearance or death, they can use **Persuade** at -20% to convince Pitzerelli that the whole affair

should be dumped on his memory. Federal records can be altered to show that Hall was investigating the case when he disappeared, presumably killed by the pedophiles he was hunting. This also explains the involvement of the Agents by name, as they were known associates of Hall. After his disappearance, failure to share information with local and state authorities prevented other law enforcement from discovering the truth after the Cornucopia's caretakers fled/died. Explanations that exonerate them from responsibility please Velasquez and Costa, but embarrassing the FBI sours every subsequent interaction between MASTICATE and the Program. Treat all future **Bureaucracy**, **Law**, and **Persuade** tests to secure resources or permissions from the Program at -20%

BLAME STATE POLICE: Maryland State Police and the old investigation are easiest to blame. Failing to find the bodies after the site's only previous criminal incident is enough to crucify them in the press. Costa and Cecil County don't object to this interpretation of events. Handled discreetly, state police heap the blame on the dead detectives. Velasquez's career stops dead, but she isn't disciplined for her role in the affair as a rookie officer. If evidence from the case went notably missing, she is blamed and fired as a sacrificial lamb. If Velasquez suspects the Agents of cover-up, she fights accusations of negligence like she's fighting for her life. The Program orders Agents to silence her protests by whatever means necessary. The Agents might prefer to recruit her over killing her. The Program says they had better be ready in case that backfires.

BLAME COUNTY POLICE: Cecil County is not responsible for state-licensed adoption facilities. They can only enforce mandates handed down by Maryland Department of Health and Human Services. This makes blaming local government a harder sell, but not impossible. Cecil County Sheriff was the first responder the morning of 2001. Initial bungling of the call could have sabotaged the efforts of Baswell and Dale. More recent failures in forensics engineered by the Agents can paint Cecil County as negligent. The phony adoption records of Families Without Frontiers can be blamed on corrupt local officials without

revealing Kalamatiano's employment of sorcery. A frame job like this is precisely what Costa was ordered to prevent. He fights it like his career is on the line. Out of misguided loyalty, Velasquez backs Costa up. She needs to be convinced to back off her support fast, or else the Program orders them removed as a pair. If Costa goes down, professionally or physically, Cecil County gets intimidated and accepts whatever story the feds throw at them.

Cleaning Up

When the cover-up is as complete as Agents can manage, Pitzerelli demands that the Agents hand over any notes, false IDs, paperwork, and evidence related to Cornucopia House. Electronics containing this information are also confiscated. The attorney escorts Agents to a room with a quality archival scanner of images into a 60 TB attached SSD. Everything is to be digitized and encrypted in the Program's records. Once scanning is complete, Pitzerelli himself removes the scanner's computer memory and places it with any gathered electronics into a Faraday bag.

He orders MASTICATE to destroy the original paperwork. He directs Agents to the industrial paper shredder located in the subbasement of the G.H. Fallon Federal Building (see **SHREDDING FUTURES** on page 138).

Before they leave to pulp the last evidence of their crimes, Pitzerelli begs the Agents to stay vigilant. With the Program out of immediate danger, Delta Green still has many questions: What happened to Crystal Killian in Florida? How did it get the Agents' names thrown in the mix? Where have the assailants fled? What do they want?

Pitzerelli suggests Agents rest up and make new excuses to their Bonds. Soon, they go hunting.

SYNCHRONICITY

SHREDDING FUTURES

Bast exists beneath and between language. It can be difficult to convey the nature of such an entity. The following Synchronicity only occurs if the Handler feels players still need help to grasp their roles in the universe. The result is an unnatural revelation, written across probability and fate, only they are cursed to see.

The subbasement of the G.H. Fallon Federal Building contains a Formax 8906CC high-capacity paper shredder, located at the edge of the loading dock leading to the service elevator. It serves all the confidentiality needs of the various departments above. The machine can cut 650-page binders into ribbons in seconds. The hundred-gallon industrial baler at the bottom of the machine is padlocked until off-loaded by a waste service and transported to an incinerator. Pitzerelli warned Agents that he ordered an early pickup to ensure the minced evidence heads directly into a furnace. The dump truck sits parked on the other side of the basement parking lot, the clueless driver playing on his phone.

Ask Agents who shreds the documents. Describe the squealing whine as the teeth of the machine whirr into motion. As the engine of the shredder starts, the brake lights of the dump truck flash. The driver has seen the last document being shredded and backs up to load the bale. Powerless to signal over the truck's beeping indicator and screaming engine of the machine, it becomes clear too late that the truck is riding too high: it doesn't have full clearance.

The top of the dumper clips the big metal sign reading "LOADING DOCK." A chain breaks free, sending one end of the sign scything through a rusting pipe of the overhead sprinkler system. High-pressure iron-oxidized water sprays reddish-brown stink all over the basement. The other mooring on the sign snaps, bounces off the braking dump truck, and slams on top of the Formax. The weight of the debris tips the shredder over the lip of the loading dock and sends the entire apparatus slipping over the side. Before they can say, "stop," the Agents witness the two-ton machine slip over the edge and explode against the concrete below. The still-running engine sends a spray of confetti into the air. Paper weaves through the hissing red sprinklers like streamers in a maelstrom.

Pick an Agent whose scar from Chipping the Teeth meets open air. Inform them that they feel an itch on the spot. Three scraps of shredded paper have landed on them, with splotches of red water on certain words.

...defendants ASK that the state acknowledge...

...authorities wish to KNOW the providen...

...BECOME the point-of-contact for...

Agents extending their hands to the snowfall find the same three words fall into their grasp: cut from different paper, written in different fonts, but highlighted in the same blood red. The oblivious driver exits the vehicle, looking for a shut-off valve and cursing about getting fired. The back of his jumpsuit reads "Cat's Paws Shredding Services." The cartoon cat logo is eerily familiar. The misaligned, damaged teeth of the broken machine continue to spark and scream, grinding themselves to shrapnel against the concrete.

The Agents lose 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural. Agents who fail the **SAN** roll have a sudden, intrusive thought: If they have questions, they have until the last remnant lands to snatch answers from the air.

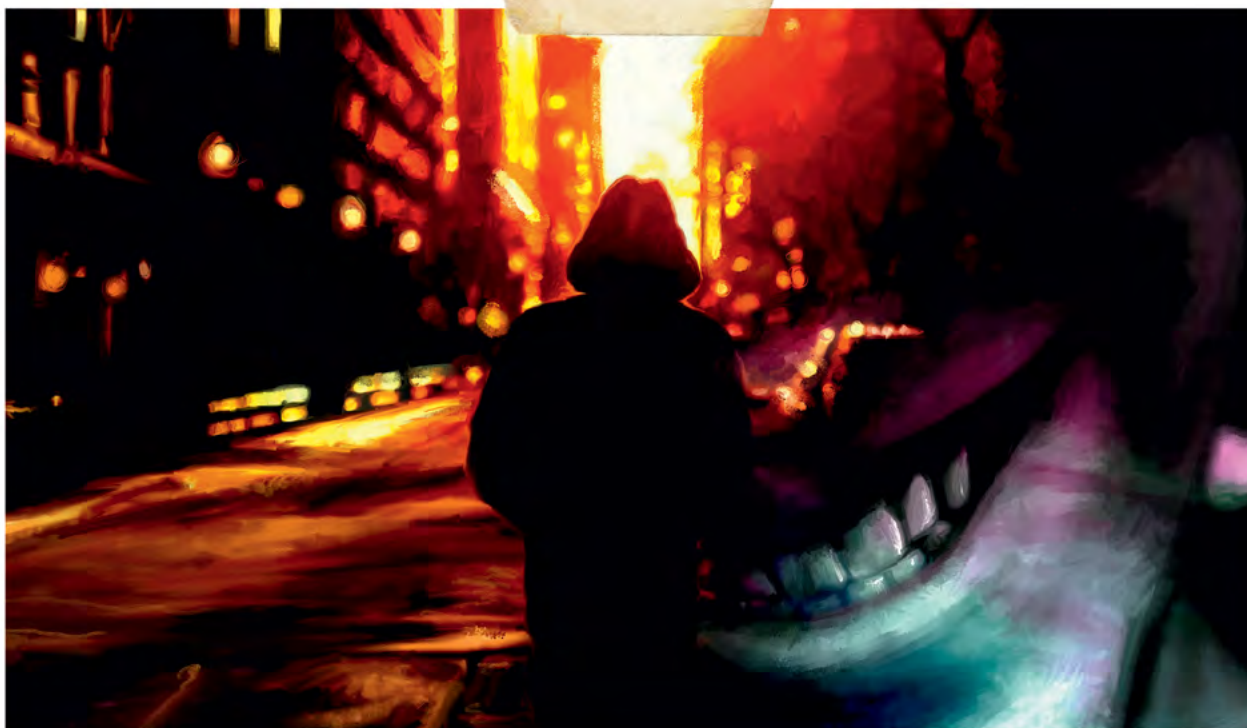
SPEAKING AS BAST

Before portraying Bast in text, Handlers should be familiar with all the information from **INVESTIGATING BAST** on page 11. Remember the following and keep answers short when answering questions as god.

MINIMUM VIABLE GRAMMAR: Bast doesn't understand English or any other language. It knows humans make symbols on dead trees, and it measures the ways those symbols change electrical activity in the brain. For the Teeth, it has simulated every symbol available to it, in every conceivable combination, and determined which random assemblage constructs the highest probability for Bast to feast again. Bast does not seek to communicate or be understood by its appendages. It has engineered a statistical assemblage meant to ensure a future where they continue to feed it.

WORK AROUND: Bast understands how to control the thoughts of animals. Humans are animals. With the redundant cognitive fiction of language running interference with their instincts, they demand finer control. The maelstrom of improbable text is a brute force workaround, akin to infinite monkeys on infinite keyboards trying to hack the Pentagon.

SELF-FULFILLING: Fatalism cannot be disarmed by learning about it. The Teeth learning about their fate is a necessary component in fulfilling their destiny. Reaction, refusal, denial—any rebellion God's Teeth may perform has already been calculated and simulated. No matter what answer they receive or what they do with it, they exist in a reality only ever allowed to serve Bast's hunger.



Characters

Asst. U.S. Attorney Antony Pitzerelli

Short and trim, Antony Pitzerelli is fit for his age, but the bags under his eyes and pale complexion make him look like someone put the head of a seventy-year-old on the body of a *Golf Digest* model. Too bad he's terrible at golf. Pitzerelli's first priority is reducing public awareness of the unnatural horrors at work. Protecting the one Agent who used to be close is second. Protecting the rest is a very distant third.

Antony Pitzerelli

Assistant U.S. attorney and case officer for the Program, age 53

STR 9 CON 12 DEX 6 INT 15 POW 14 CHA 10
HP 10 WP 14 SAN 40 BREAKING POINT 25

DISORDERS AND ADAPTATIONS: Addiction to prescription amphetamines, intermittent explosive disorder, sleep disorder; adapted to helplessness and violence.

SKILLS: Alertness 40%, Bureaucracy 40%, Criminology 50%, Dodge 40%, Driving 40%, Firearms 45%, HUMINT 60%, Law 60% Occult 15%, Persuade 70%, SIGINT 25%, Unnatural 7%

ATTACKS: *Unarmed* 40%, damage 1D4-1.

SCENT: Faint.

Detective Sergeant Almudena Velasquez

Velasquez is taller than most of the men in Maryland State Police. She was a starting forward at Townson until a knee injury her junior year. Nearing forty, she stays fit enough that the good ol' boys no longer jokingly challenge her to one-on-one. When distracted by the specifics of a case, Almudena grows expressive and even light-hearted. Otherwise, she wears the deadened, "game day" facial expression of a woman accustomed to drawing fire from all sides.

Detective Sergeant Almudena Velasquez

Maryland State Police detective specializing in organized crime, age 38

STR 16 CON 11 DEX 11 INT 14 POW 10 CHA 10
HP 14 WP 10 SAN 47 BREAKING POINT 40

DISORDERS AND ADAPTATIONS: None.

SKILLS: Alertness 70%, Athletics 70%, Bureaucracy 40%, Criminology 50%, Dodge 50%, Drive 50%, First Aid 30%, Firearms 50%, Foreign Language (Spanish) 50%, Forensics 30%, HUMINT 60%, Law 30% Melee Weapons 50%, Occult 15%, Persuade 50%, Search 50%, SIGINT 20%, Unarmed Combat 60%.

ATTACKS: *Glock 22 pistol* 50%, damage 1D10.

Extendable baton 50%, damage 1D6.

Unarmed 60%, damage 1D4.

SCENT: None.

Deputy Michael Costa

Costa would be handsome if not for the hazy brown mustache he insists on wearing. As a member of Cecil County's street-level crime unit, he enjoys relaxed uniform regulations and spends most days in a branded polo and cargo khakis. Since the press showed up around the scene, he's started wearing his Sheriff's Kevlar for the cameras, hoping he won't be asked to change back into blues. When not in direct conversation, his eyes pan from side to side, as if looking for a teacher over his shoulder.

Deputy Michael Costa

Criminal Investigation Division liaison for Cecil County Sheriff, age 33

STR 10 CON 12 DEX 11 INT 10 POW 15 CHA 14
HP 11 WP 15 SAN 73 BREAKING POINT 60

DISORDERS AND ADAPTATIONS: None.

SKILLS: Alertness 60%, Accounting 40%, Bureaucracy 60%, Computer Science 20%, Criminology 40%, Drive 50% Dodge 40%, Forensics 50%, Firearms 40%, HUMINT 70%, Law 50%, Melee Weapons 50%, Navigate 40%, Persuade 60%, Search 50%, Unarmed Combat 50%.

ATTACKS: *Glock 22 pistol* 40%, damage 1D10.

Extendable baton 50%, damage 1D6.

(in cruiser) Remington 500 pump shotgun 60%, damage 2D8 (halved against armor).

Unarmed 50%, damage 1D4-1.

ARMOR: 3 from Kevlar vest.

SCENT: None.

Olivia Centrell Toomey

Toomey's clothes were out of style five years ago when she pulled them off the rack. Her blonde hair is constantly tied into a bun or under a bandanna. She looks like a soccer mom. On weeks when she has the boys, she *is* a soccer mom. Ever since her kids started school and her ex remarried, more and more of her minivan has been devoted to camera equipment, laptops, and file folders. With a shattered marriage and reduced childcare responsibilities, Toomey hopes to score a story big enough to buy her way back onto the city desk.

Olivia Centrell Toomey

Reporter for the Baltimore Sun, age 42

STR 10 CON 9 DEX 10 INT 17 POW 14 CHA 12
HP 10 WP 14 SAN 55 BREAKING POINT 42

DISORDERS AND ADAPTATIONS: Generalized anxiety disorder.

SKILLS: Anthropology 40%, Alertness 40%, Art: Dance 40%, Art: Journalism 60%, Bureaucracy 40%, Computer Science 40%, Disguise 50%, Dodge 40%, HUMINT 60%, Law 40% Occult 15%, Persuade 50%, Stealth 30%.

ATTACKS: *Unarmed* 40%, damage 1D4-1.

SCENT: None.

Part Three: White Teeth

"I do so miss the games we played in
our dalliance amongst the children
of Atlantis."



Part Three: White Teeth

AFTER THE TEETH OBSCURE THE AWFUL TRUTH OF

Cornucopia House, the crisis becomes a longer investigation. Three murderers of awful depravity are at large. Agents must look into the death of Crystal Killian and the findings of the young deputy sheriff whose meddling opened this whole affair. They must learn the truth of what they, the Teeth, have become.

It could take days or weeks for its feelers in law enforcement to find sign of the prey. Play through a home scene and personal pursuit with each Agent. Focus on harms that have befallen the Agents already: Bonds that have deteriorated, injuries suffered, and new disorders that have manifested. Insert the recurring synchronicities that mark the predatory force controlling fate. When Agents become Teeth, the hunt comes home.

Agents may wish to stay on the case. Allow them to continue **INVESTIGATING BAST** (page 11) or to work in active pursuit of Houghton's killers. If they choose the latter, the clues lead them to the events of "White Teeth." If they survive their brash early investigation, it sends MASTICATE back into the field. Let everyone know that the Agent's obsession cut short what could have been everyone's last chance to say goodbye.

On the Lookout

With the FBI now in charge of the investigation, Pitzerelli sends BOLO requests—"be on the lookout"—to local police for Kerry Houghton's killers. The BOLO requests are more effective if the Agents give particular target sites to watch and reasons they expect the suspects to show up. Agents can pursue any such leads themselves, but the Handler can use BOLO hits to draw MASTICATE back into the field when it's time to start the scenario in earnest. BOLO reports can also alert Agents to any aspects they may have missed.

For every location in the scenario, the **CLUES** and **BOLO** that lead there are outlined below. Agents pursue **CLUES** using their own clever investigative techniques and intellect. Handlers can use a **BOLO** to draw Agents inexorably toward their fate if progress slows.

Whether the Agent pursues the killers on their own time or chase leads as a team, the events of "White Teeth" happen at each location whenever the Teeth arrive. Destiny demands it.

Finally, **THE DEATH OF CRYSTAL KILLIAN** (page 158) leads to the discovery of the Cornucopia House and the formation of MASTICATE. Pursuing this loose end also leads the Teeth toward the fate in which they feed and understand.

Dreams of the Speaker

During the home scenes, make secret **SAN** rolls for the Agents from time to time. One who fails has a remarkable dream. Multiple dreams offer more and more hints of what might come.

- » A broken child alone in a hungry, predatory world, eagerly dreaming of death and of a god of death.
- » A broken child who finds and inspires other broken children, silent children, awakening them to a vengeful god of death.
- » Broken and silent children waiting for an unknown leader to come to them, to speak for them, to join them in the joyous glories of the god of death.

No dreaming Agent can ever recall any detail of the broken child except teeth, sharp and bloody.

>> BOLO Contacts

Suspect	Location	BOLO	CLUES
Elle Gable	Charlotte's Rest Veterans Home Charlotte Hall, MD	Print match on a rock used to break in to McGaren Outdoor Outfitters. No surveillance footage, Unclear if anything stolen.	<u>Follow-Ups</u> (page 45) <i>Price the only survivor of Cornucopia file</i> <u>A Suspect</u> (page 120) <i>Gable's prints on murder weapon</i>
Samuel Ball	King-Torino Children's Refuge Charlotte, NC	Kerry Houghton's red '97 Corolla found abandoned in the neighborhood.	<u>King-Torino: Trauma Bond</u> (page 131) <i>Highest pop. of survivors</i> <u>Franklin Price</u> (page 149) <i>File shows delusional relationship</i>
Thomas Perez	St. Laurence Church Miami, FL	Cunningham family reported dead by UPS driver (see SEALED: THOMAS PEREZ on page 133). Perez missing. Family SUV abandoned in the Flagami District of Miami (alternatively, Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest near Myers Point).	<u>Facial Recognition</u> (page 125) <i>Bus tickets to Maryland bought here</i> <u>Researching the Tag</u> (page 167) <i>Graffiti at crime scene that started all this</i> <u>The Pamphlet</u> (page 149) <i>Cryptoglyphs lead to St. Laurence</i>

OPINT

PACING PURSUIT

Handlers may wish to ensure the Agents face all encounters before rushing to the climax in Florida. If so, the excuse is simple. With the situation still far from resolved, Delta Green remains less than pleased with the Agents.

No way in hell are Pitzerelli and the Program letting them near a plane. MASTICATE has both their real and cover identities placed on the no-fly list until the issue is resolved. Agents can travel to pursue the investigation. So long as it's in a LoJacked government vehicle. With spywared cellphones. Calling in for frequent reports. The manhunt becomes a road trip down the east coast.

Charlotte's Rest Veterans Home

Charlotte's Rest Veterans Home stands just outside Charlotte Hall, Maryland. It is entered through a large parking lot that adjoins the main complex. The facility offers living apartments, a nursing home, and outbuildings used for family meals and musical guests. Expansive courtyards encourage spins in the wheelchair and quiet reading under shady trees. Franklin Price, Kerry Houghton's fellow survivor of Maryland's failed oversight of Cornucopia House, has lived in room 121 for almost twenty years.

As the Agents pull into the parking lot, an ambulance sits, silently flashing underneath the covered awning to the side entrance. Two paramedics load a covered body into the back. A third man fills out paperwork on a clipboard.

If the Agents identify themselves as law enforcement, the three men are confused but eager to comply. The paramedics responded to a code on the heart monitor of Mrs. Williamson, who appears to have died of a stroke before medical help could arrive. The

code was relayed by Desomond Robinson, the nurse on monitor duty. The director of the facility, Dr. Kaufeld, is filling out paperwork so the ambulance can deliver the body according to family funeral arrangements. What did the Agents say they wanted again?

Even the most thorough examination reveals the story to be true. If the Agents wish to speak to the director, he urges them to wait at the nurse's station until he finishes this paperwork.

The Nurse's Station

The halls of the nursing home contain no sound save soft, echoing music. The 1970s hit "Muskrat Love" wafts from the nurse's station at the intersection of the different wings.

The nurse's station is unoccupied when Agents arrive. Agents may roll **Search**. On a success, an Agent notices the small red stain on the carpet leaking from

beneath the nurse's desk. Entering the nurse's area, the Agents see Desomond Robinson lying underneath the desk, his throat freshly torn out. Warm blood drips from the carotid artery. The sight and its timing cost 0/1 SAN from violence.

Bloody paw prints lead down the hall.

Surveillance System

An Agent who has any **SIGINT** skill, or who makes an **INT**×5 roll, can understand the monitor system fast enough to rewind a few minutes. The footage shows the paramedics arriving, rushing through the door with their stretcher, and running down the hall with Nurse Robinson. Before the front door can close, the girl photographed at the kidnapping and murder of Kerry Houghton walks through with effortless timing.

She hides in a broom closet while Mrs. Williamson dies. She waits. When they remove the body,

SYNCHRONICITY

THE SONG

Pick a player. Look directly into their eyes. Say the following:

"This isn't any normal rendition of 'Muskrat Love.' This is the live version from the 1980 performance on *The Toni Tennille Show*. The one where Toni tells a story about Kissinger not enjoying the song. Your Agent knows this."

If the player asks how they know this information: "You have no idea. You just know."

If the player makes an **INT**×5 roll to remember: "You have no idea. You just know."

Find that version of "Muskrat Love." It's on YouTube. There once was even a version made specifically for a Charlotte's Rest Veterans Home Playlist. Don't let them look away.

OPINT

PRICE SPEAKS

If Agents still struggle to figure out where to go next, a tip-line established to gather intel on the Cornucopia House murders actually delivers something useful when a nurse calls. If they were cautious enough to warn the Veterans Home, the nurse calls the Agent that contacted initially.

Staff report that Franklin Price spoke for the first time in years. The doctors aren't convinced he was really speaking, because his neurological deterioration is so severe, but the nurse was there. He stirred in bed, staring at the TV, and said, "Nika! Nika! My poor girl!" His voice and face were filled with anguish. It was heartbreaking. The nurse went to him but even with tears still on his face, he had forgotten what he said.

He looked at the TV and said, "They are the Quiet Children now." Then he drifted off again. The TV was showing news about the bodies found at Cornucopia House. The nurses keep Price's TV on more soothing shows than the news, but someone must have changed it over.

the girl goes through the door closing behind them, walking with a confident flourish of her rags into the assisted living hallways. She is flanked by three large dogs that come out of rooms down the hallway in exact unison.

She strolls to the nurse's station. Robinson doesn't get past a quizzical look before a standard poodle vaults the desk and clamps down on his throat, thrashing like a shark. The girl doesn't even look at the dying man as she passes, moving through the nurse's wing to the nursing home hallway. The feed follows her and the three bloody hounds. They enter Franklin Price's room precisely as the Agents go through the main entrance.

Watching the footage costs 0/1 SAN from the unnatural.

Room 121

Unlike the other doors on the nursing home hallway, the door to room 121 is closed. The narrow window of security glass has been covered with a bloody scarf. Light shines through where the thin fabric isn't clot-
ted with gore.

The room is locked. Agents can use **Athletics** or **STR×5** to kick in the door, or **Athletics** or **DEX×5** to run around the building and break in through the exterior window. Agents can use **Search** to find a master key card in the nearby medication cart.

However they enter, Elle Gable faces the Agents holding a bone-handled knife above the chest of Franklin Price. She is flanked by a German shepherd, a giant schnauzer, and a gore-soaked standard poodle. (If there are three or fewer Agents, remove the German shepherd.) She regards the Agents in her frozen pose as long as they try to talk to her. She says



nothing, and her dogs heel, snarling. In person, she looks even farther gone to a lifetime of addiction and abuse. A successful **HUMINT** roll indicates that she's looking at the Agents with something between sexual attraction and religious ecstasy.

Franklin Price is awake, muttering the phrase, "smells like cookies, smells like cookies," over and over. And it does smell like cookies. The **Scent** power triggers for any Teeth in the room, the smell a nauseating allusion to the odor of freshly baked cookies radiating from Babushka's nightmare cottage. Franklin does not notice the knife. Each of the Teeth must make a **SAN** test. For each who fails, describe the scent in the room as a vivid flashback to their previous experience with the smell. Even Teeth who never smelled it in person feel Babushka's crawling horror.

If the test succeeds, tell the player the following: *"Kerry Houghton bore some of the bloody smell, but this man was marinated longer. His flesh is saturated in the acrid stink. The room feels hot with a miasma rising from the floor, the smell of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies welling up. Somewhere in the odor lurks some chemical corruption, something urgently caustic that warns against taking a bite."*

If the Agents speak, Price's attention wanders to them. In a rasping voice he says, "She's one of the Quiet Children."

If the Agents move to apprehend Gable or threaten her or the animals, she lets out a shriek that sounds more like a baboon than a woman. The dogs launch forward and attack. The sudden assault costs the Agents 0/1 **SAN** from violence.

Agents can attempt **Military Science (Land)** rolls to gain a tactical overview in that frozen second before combat begins, realizing with perfect clarity that the only way to protect Franklin Price is to shoot or strike the girl first.

Gable fights until the Agents have to kill her. If at all possible, she dies with her eyes open, staring raptly at her killers. If the dogs are still alive when she dies, they instantly lose their ferocity, grow afraid, and sprint away to hide.

Therapy Animals

Birk, Lamaroo, and This Gal are therapy dogs owned by Palliative Pooch, a private pet therapy company. These are some of the best-trained animals money can buy. It's completely unheard of that years of conditioning would break so suddenly and completely, turning the dogs into a small pack of wolves. They attack viciously. God's Teeth feel the same instinctive kinship with them as with Gable.

As unlikely as it is to occur to the Agents in their panic, they have one easy way to deal with the maddened dogs. One of the Teeth who deliberately stares down a dog and wills it or commands it to go away can attempt a **POW×5** roll. If it succeeds, the animal flees.

Otherwise, as long as Gable lives, they fight to the death. When she dies, they lose interest in violence and become confused and unhappy.

Gable's Details

Agents who lost no **SAN** or **HP** from the attack keep their wits enough to get a number of clues without a roll. Any level of skill above base finds this information. An Agent who lost **SAN** or **HP** needs a successful roll.

- » **PSYCHOTHERAPY:** Something was developmentally unique in the young woman's demeanor. Most humans verbalize in the presence of an adrenaline response or great pain, even if only subconsciously and unintelligibly. Gable's scream appeared rehearsed. She died with the same flat affect with which she first saw them, with which she began stabbing Franklin, with which she calmly walked through the door.
- » **HUMINT, MEDICINE, PHARMACY, OR SEARCH:** The Agent recognizes in Gable the tell-tale signs of methamphetamine abuse. This girl, barely out of her teens, bears the scars of every kind of addiction and self-abuse ever to grace a police training video. It's a miracle she was still alive, not to mention planning and committing two physically demanding murders. What remains unclear is how she secured enough narcotics to support a habit, as there's no evidence she even knows how to speak.

Franklin Price

Franklin Price keeps repeating the phrase “smells like cookies, smells good like cookies, smells like cookies.”

Dead or alive, Franklin's curled fist clutches a bloody pamphlet that he pulled from the inside pocket of Elle Gable's jacket. See **THE PAMPHLET** on this page.

Agents can try other skills in a desperate attempt to glean information from Franklin Price.

- » **MEDICINE:** From Price's medication, he has suffered from severe dementia for years. For him to be speaking at all is amazing. There is no way he could pick Elle Gable's pocket as she prepared to stab him. If the Agents already know about the CTE symptoms exhibited by Cornucopia House victims and Kerry Houghton (see **HOUGHTON'S BODY** on page 118 and **CAUSES OF DEATH** on page 112), they find them in Price, too. Social workers and children suffered from the same ailment.
- » **FIRST AID OR MEDICINE:** Elle Gable stabs Franklin Price's abdomen first. The wound perforates the bowel deeply. Even if he doesn't bleed to death, Price is doomed. A man with his shattered immune system has little chance of surviving sepsis. He's bound to die, and it's bound to be long and painful. It would be a mercy to shoot him in the head right now. If the Agent rolls a critical success, inform them that the bowels typically don't have enough surface tension to be perforated by a knife. They tend to slide out of the way. The stab was remarkably powerful and accurate, a lucky blow.
- » **UNNATURAL:** Yelena Kalamatiano's sorceries kept her disgusting nightmare farm from detection. Franklin Price and Kerry Houghton suffered long-term cognitive defects as a result of experiencing Yelena's sorcery over extended periods. But how long is “extended”? Who is to say how “ensorcelled” the Agents were in 2001? How much is too much?
- » **BUREAUCRACY:** Price has a large file, updated frequently, in the nurse's station down the hall. The nurse's station, where the only person guarding the file is dead. Price's file shows a long and heart-wrenching decline into early senility.

Six-month file updates depict the story of a nice, dedicated man slipping into confused rage, then defeated silence, then child-like wisps of thought as his brain hollowed itself out with scar tissue. For the last three years, Price was not able to speak. One of the last bright spots in his medical history was a brief resurgence of lucidity in response to a new drug regimen in 2011. Therapist notes indicate he was expressing a desire to see his adopted daughter, Nika Chilikov, whom he heard had been sent to King-Torino Children's Refuge in North Carolina. He claims to have taken custody after encountering her in his social work at Cornucopia House and developing a relationship. “We were each other's favorites,” he says in the doctor notes, in a rare direct quote. Later notes indicate that his attempt to renew contact with Chilikov did not go well. Caretakers at King-Torino eventually admitted to having custody of a Nika Chilikov, but they insisted that Franklin Price was of no relation to her, adopted or otherwise. Price's pleading to see her was dismissed as so much sundowning. Agents familiar with the Cornucopia case recognize Nika Chilikov as one of the children who survived in 2001.

The Pamphlet

The bloody pamphlet clutched in Price's hand advertises St. Laurence Church, a chapel and homeless shelter in Miami, Florida. Elle Gable's grimy prints are on it. She drew odd doodles on the back:

- » A black head containing a red brain.
- » The moon over a nondescript line of horizon. Stars dot the background, in a uniform pattern across all instances of the image. A dead tree is silhouetted in the foreground against the moon.
- » An airplane depicted over a large cross. The cross is overlaid on a haphazard grid.
- » A dog in a circle.
- » In a stock photo of a smiling nuclear family, angry inking has turned the mother's head into a black hole. Only the mouth and chin remain, and the mouth has wicked fangs descending.

King-Torino Children's Refuge

Charlotte, North Carolina. The mansion and five acres that became King-Torino Children's Refuge was willed to Busby Behavioral Hygiene in 1995 by the late Dr. Elaine Fitzsimmons. The doctor had been an activist against the militarization of mental health interventions since the Reagan administration, especially with regard to children. The gift was contingent upon the property's use as a mental health facility for adolescents and the continued use as an alternative to juvenile incarceration. Owing to the tendency of many ODD, conduct disorder, and callous/unemotional children to receive their initial diagnosis through interactions with the law, King-Torino began specializing in adolescent disorders with extreme behavioral components.

Four of the most troubled children of Cornucopia House were sent to King-Torino Children's Refuge in 2001: Nika Chilikov, Elle Gable, Conrad Hopko, and Jennifer Wills. The Agents may have already faced Gable, one of Kerry Houghton's killers. What became of her companions?

Around the Refuge

King-Torino Children's Refuge occupies a once-swanky three-story home that has been run down by decades of institutionalized living. The area around the refuge has become a bustling suburb since the once-secluded house was built, but the land around King-Torino remains undeveloped despite being sold off by Busby Behavioral Hygiene down to its final acre. Frequent screaming from children in psychotic meltdowns and the need for staff to restrain them physically, often dragging them back inside as they scream for help, makes neighboring the King-Torino house undesirable.

Dormitories take up the top floor of the building, separated by gender and joined by a hallway with a central staff station for a night watch. The main floor contains the kitchen, bathrooms, living room, and classrooms added to the home as an extension in the mid-2000s. Among the school rooms are three padded

isolation cells for residents in crisis. The bottom floor contains staff lockers and two therapists' offices. That portion of the building remains off-limits to children, though they pass through it escorted to the backyard through the basement's exterior door.

A large, well-manicured lawn slopes down from the house's rear as the play and recreation area. It is fenced in and surrounded by thick woods. All this information is listed on the "About Us" webpage of the facility, which appears to have taken a policy of total transparency as a form of protection from accusations of wrongdoing. The faces of children, for purposes of confidentiality, are blurred out in the photographs.

Visitors

King-Torino does not allow visitors without permission from the house psychologists, especially considering the history of abuse and neglect perpetrated by many of the residents' relatives. The one exception is law enforcement. Children in King-Torino often make false reports of abuse against the facility while attending local public school in hopes of being sent back to their families. Mandated reporter check-ins are routine, though no one with federal credentials has come by before.

If asked about children at the facility, staffers are well trained to stay silent. They don't reveal anything about their current residents even if faced with a warrant, instead directing Agents to call the supervising psychologist. However, if shown a list of names from Cornucopia House, a staffer recognizes one of them: Nika Chilikov. She works at the house as a caretaker. There are no laws about revealing adult employment information, and Nika is no longer a minor at 22 years old. The Agents may speak with her. She is currently in the backyard, supervising play time.

The Caretaker

Agents with **Psychotherapy** at 40% or higher, or who make a roll, notice that Nika Chilikov is one of the most effortlessly skilled childcare workers they have ever seen. She radiates pleasant certitude. Prolonged observation of her supervision of the playground makes it clear she can redirect the children with no



more than a glance or head nod. The children rush to confide in her. When they grow rash and too violent in play, she calmly redirects them. If they screw up, she comforts them after their punishments, forgiving them as they cry. The rest of the playground seems stressfully chaotic, but she runs the area assigned to the smallest residents as if directing the dance of a flock of birds.

When adults approach, her confidence disappears. Her posture visibly closes, wilting in the Agents' presence. Her breath takes on the rhythmic uncertainty of a barely contained panic attack. She is reluctant to speak due to the scant trace of Ukrainian accent remaining in her voice, for which she apologizes profusely. It's pretty clear her comfort among the children comes at a cost.

While not exactly eager to speak, Chilikov cooperates with the Agents so long as they do not distract from supervising the children. She answers even their most uncomfortable questions, in an over-the-shoulder whisper, her eyes never leaving the playground, so long as recess is not interrupted.

What follows are her answers to likely lines of inquiry by the Agents. Roll 1D10 for the number of questions the Agents get to ask, whether off the list or of their own design, before beginning the encounter with the bear: See **BLACK BEAR** on page 154. The resolution of this event determines whether Nika and the Agents live to finish her interrogation.

Page	Question
152	What Happened at Cornucopia House?
152	When Did You Get Here? What Has Happened Since?
152	What Happened to the Others?
153	What Are They?
153	What Are They Doing?
153	What Does the Graffiti Mean?
153	How Are You Different?
153	How Do They Know the Future?
153	Where Are They?
154	Why Are They Doing This?
154	What Is Happening to Us?

What Happened at Cornucopia House?

"I don't remember a lot, and when I do it makes me miss too much work. So please, no. I suffered as a child. Things were bad, but I don't know if they were more bad than what any of these suffered. People came and stopped them. And then I was here. That is all I care to remember of it."

A HUMINT roll reveals she is telling the truth. Not thinking on it is how she survives. Going any further only puts her into meltdown. Pointless cruelty.

When Did You Get Here? What Has Happened Since?

"I was seven, sometime in 2001, though I do not remember it clearly. I wet myself every night. I bit and clawed anyone who came near. I had lost the will to speak and convinced myself I could not. Feral, people would say."

"But Dr. Brice came to work here. Sarah Brice. She saw what was in me. She got me through school. We got through the pain of my trauma. She was more mother than anyone I've ever known. She adopted me after I aged out."

"I lost her in 2012. Brain tumor. But I'm still getting my degree. I'm continuing Dr. Brice's work, and it's all because of King-Torino's Children's Refuge. 'If you would like to donate to this cause...blah, blah, blah.' They always trot me out for the big donors. The big success story. It's true, in part. Dr. Brice ruled. But I get tired of my canned little speech."

What Happened to the Others?

"One of them left after only a week. A blond boy. I don't remember his name. The others—I was not one of them by the time Elle was sent away. Jennifer ran not long after that. They were younger than me. And I was dead to them the second I began speaking to Dr. Brice. They were the Quiet Children, and I rejected their silence. You either spoke or you were part of the tribe. There was no middle ground. You knew it in your bones."

"I don't think I was ever really the same as them. I think I was suppressing something so I wouldn't be alone. Something that had been cut out of them. They

never forgave me. I spiraled really hard after that. I tried to go back, but they were so cruel. They would have made me a slave to their cruelty. To their silence. I'm lucky I survived long enough to see them go."

What Are They?

"They don't think like you or me. They don't see things. Or rather, they only see things. But nothing means anything. Language, the way we talk and even think, is alien. Things have no names. Things just happen. As they must. There is a kind of comfort. Knowing there is no other way. Knowing that dreams of anything better are always lies. That only nightmares are real. It is how we survive the pain. It is how many of these little ones here learned to survive: to give yourself over to it.

"When you are like that and go out in the world, you know something else is moving you. But I was only pretending to be one of them. Pretending it did not hurt. Pretending I had no hope. When I stopped pretending, they stopped loving me. There is only the actual, to them. Things are or they are not."

What Are They Doing?

"I don't know. They don't know, either. They just... act. I remember being with them. We saw the world as something hungry. Hateful. A predator. And everyone else served it. People who smiled wanted to feed you to it. But even at our angriest, there was no 'why.' No choice. Only instinct. I sometimes wonder if it is still like that for the others. And if they are right. If imagining control is its own form of madness."

What Does the Graffiti Mean?

"They hate human communication. But sometimes they need it. Sometimes they have to leave messages for each other. Symbols that mean feelings."

If the Agents have a photo or sketch of the graffiti found at Killian's trailer, a black head containing a red brain, Chilikov recognizes it. She tells what she knows, as described at the end of **NIKA'S THESIS** on page 156. If the players fail to piece it together, she says the image meant danger. A threat. An enemy.

How Are You Different?

"Clinically, I suffer developmental impairments as a result of poor infant nutrition and late-stage language acquisition.

"The others suffer from what many call selective mutism, but their silence is not a choice or physical impairment. They never learned to speak.

"In classes, they would scream and claw during the lesson. During any speech. I joined them, at first. We resisted the call to join the monsters in adulthood. Their words were poison. A flag of evil armies.

"I met Dr. Brice. I weakened. I was older, and words came back. I no longer feared them. I listened to the lessons.

"One night, Elle Gable stabbed me with scissors while I slept. They bounced off my skull and landed in my shoulder, which is what saved me. She was shipped away the next day. Eventually, all of them left like that."

How Do They Know the Future?

"They do not know the future. They do not understand the idea of a future. There is only now."

Where Are They?

"I do not know. They made new signs when I betrayed them. Signs I can no longer read.

"Silence is sometimes not enough for us—for them. They use pictures of places. One would point a finger at something, then draw a picture of it. That was the new sign for it. It wasn't quite language. There was no grammar or abstract ideas. But it is how they communicate, when they feel the urge.

"They don't need the drawings, see? Language is about control of others, and they don't have control over themselves. But I think they want the game of it. They want words, deep down in their flesh, but they can't admit it.

"If they had to meet somewhere, they would use the pictures. That would be enough. Everything is always just enough. Enough to make sure the thing that must happen, does happen."

Why Are They Doing This?

"I could not say this in therapy or I would not have this job...but there is no 'why.' There is no why for me or you, either. A 'why' is a story. I choose to believe in it. They have never heard this fable of 'why.' Never believed the lie of choice. They only act."

What Is Happening to Us?

"How would I know? What is this all about again?"

A successful HUMINT roll recognizes a deflection. Chilikov knows but does not want to say. If Agents push her, she eventually admits:

"Whatever is happening to you is what is happening to me, what is happening to them. What is supposed to happen. What will always happen, because there is no other way. No other time. We talk and talk and talk ourselves out of it, but it cannot be changed. We drown out the screams with our talk, but it does not make the truth go away. They see the actual. We are all inside it."

Black Bear

A thin white man wearing only cargo pants that barely hang on his wasting hips emerges from the emerald-green arborvitae that hedge off the tall fence around the backyard. His flesh is pocked with sores and improvised tattoos. His crazed eyes dart wildly. His left hand drags a pair of bolt-cutters. The cutters look too heavy for him until he whips around in a wide, dangerous arc with his sinewy, almost double-jointed arm.

The deranged man twists at the waist to survey his surroundings, unable to turn his neck due to some rictus in the tendons. The drug-use, announced by the dirty track marks on his arm, makes him forget who or where he is and how to turn his head and any number of other things.

The man seems disoriented and uncertain until he sees the Agents, at which point he looses some barbaric "yawp" of joy. Chilikov bursts into tears of recognition from those terrible years at Cornucopia House. She remembers his name: Samuel Ball.

No sooner does Ball appear than some huge, loping, four-legged shape comes through the same gap

in the arborvitae and sprints toward Chilikov. Ball sports a cunning look and withdraws again into the trees and bushes.

Each Agent loses 0/1D4 SAN from violence. Each may attempt using one skill: **HUMINT**, **Psychotherapy**, or **Survival**. After they have all the information they can glean in a few seconds of adrenaline boost, start the combat.

- » **HUMINT:** Chilikov will not retreat to the house unless the children are safe. She is trying to get the attackers' attention, giving the kids time to run.
- » **PSYCHOTHERAPY:** Some of the traumatized residents are likely to shut down in the face of such a threat. The caretakers might be able to get the children unfrozen and inside, but that means drawing the threat toward something else.
- » **SURVIVAL:** Holy shit. That's a bear. It's a goddamn bear running straight at them. It means to kill them. Someone better shoot straight because you won't get more than one chance.

The Agents get no more than that. What's required is action, any action, right now. The bear is out to kill Chilikov and the Agents. See **THE BLACK BEAR** on page 189.

As the bear charges the Agents, Ball maneuvers around the property. He means to come into the Children's Refuge from the side while all are distracted. Once inside, he means to lure the Agents out and stalk them, murdering them and Chilikov one by one if he can.

When Samuel Ball dies, the bear loses interest in the Agents and Chilikov. It retreats back into the woods if they let it. As with Elle Gable and her service dogs, God's Teeth feel an inexplicable kinship with the beast. One of them who deliberately stares down the bear can will or command it to flee by succeeding at a **POW×5** test. On a critical success, the bear mauls Ball to death before running back through the fence. The deranged young man laughs as he's thrashed to pieces in the thing's jaws (1/1D4 SAN against violence for the Agent that dominated the beast's will).

An Agent who sees him up close finds that a tattoo on Ball's inner right forearm depicts an open, fanged mouth with blackness inside. The Agents recognize it from the video of Kerry Houghton's terrible death. He is one of her killers. See **SAMUEL BALL** on page 189 for his details.

Agents chosen as God's Teeth who see Ball so closely feel an instinctive but inexplicable connection to him. As with Elle Gable, they sense the link but have no context for it.

King-Torino Files

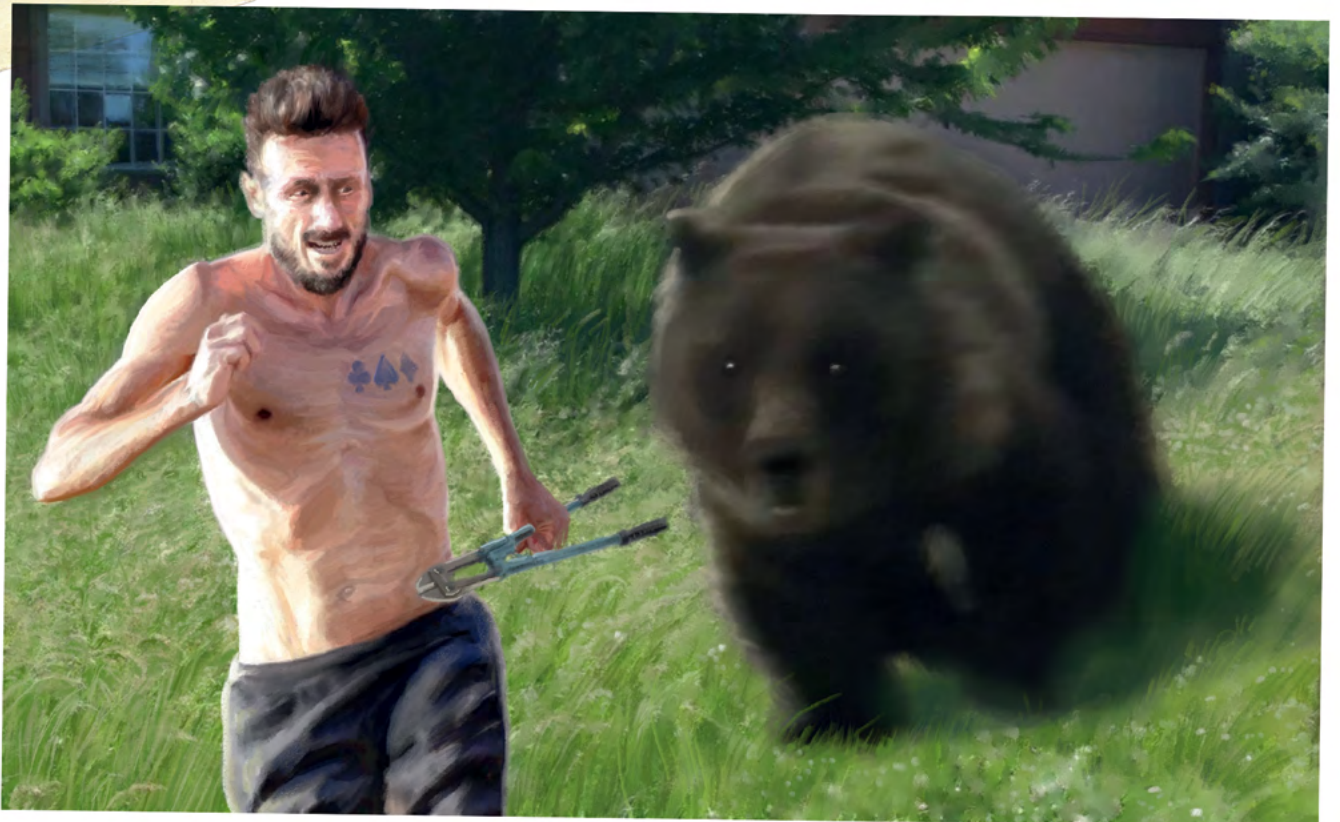
Stealthy Agents could sneak around in the children's refuge and find old files locked away in basement archives. The paper trails for all four Cornucopia House children sent to King-Torino are frustratingly brief and vague.

Three of the files—Chilikov, Gable, and Wills—include therapy reports, often contradictory, as

described in **ARNOLD SPRINGS: UNDIFFERENTIATED DIAGNOSES** on page 130. Nika Leninovna Chilikov's file is the most complete and the closest thing to a success story. Each of those plays a part in Chilikov's thesis project under the pseudonyms Subject A, Subject B, and Subject C.

Elle Amanda Gable was transferred to Hamilton Youth Home in Raleigh, North Carolina, after assaulting Nika Chilikov with a pair of scissors in 2009. She ran away from that facility in 2010 and has not been heard from since.

Jennifer Leah Wills fled in early 2010 at age 14. Her file includes a note that she was arrested eight months later after assaulting another teen at St. Laurence Church in Miami, Florida. Miami police found a scrap with King-Torino's number forgotten in a pocket and called King-Torino for information. She quickly escaped custody and vanished into the lethal ocean of American homelessness. See **ST. LAURENCE CHURCH** on page 169 if the Agents reach out to that institution.



The fourth file, for Conrad Danilovich Hopko, is entirely empty but for a Post-it note with the scrawl, "FBI Case 07-195121." (See page 109 for details.)

Hopko appears in no other pertinent documents or databases that the Agents search. It appears on no birth certificate in Maryland or anywhere else in the

U.S. in the 1980s or 1990s. It is, in fact, the name that Yelena Kalamatiano invented for Jacob Tillman. Nika Chilikov remembers very little about him. He was a small boy, fair haired. The adults at Cornucopia House called him by another name, a diminutive: Conradin.

Patient	Born	Admitted	Thesis Designation	Status
Chilikov, Nika L.	1994	2001	Subject C	Discharged as adult in 2012
Gable, Elle A.	1997	2001	Subject A	Transferred in 2009
Hopko, Conrad D.	1994	2001	n/a	Discharged to family in 2001
Wills, Jennifer L.	1995	2001	Subject B	Ran away in 2010

ASSET

Nika's Thesis

Chilikov has her own desk in the offices on the bottom level of King-Torino, thanks to the lingering influence of Dr. Sarah Brice, four years dead, and Chilikov's "trustee" status as the facility's token success story.

If she survives their visit, Chilikov is happy to provide a digital copy of her notes to the Agents. She says the paper is a case study of her former peers. It might help the Agents find them. She believes if they are not stopped, they will continue to hunt her for her "betrayal."

If Nika is dead, her desk is on the way out of the facility and covered in the odd symbols found on the back of the pamphlet described on page 149. A prominent notecard holds the names of all four Cornucopia children sent to King-Torino, apparently some sort of key for using false names. The Agents can easily take it in the chaos after the attack.

The Effects of Traumatic In-Group Behavioral Fluency on Late-Stage First Language Acquisition

In English. Study time: hours. *For Teeth only:* Psychotherapy +3%, Occult +3%, Unnatural +1%, and SAN Loss 0/1.

A litter of handwritten and printed pages comprise a manuscript version of Nika Leninovna Chilikov's master's thesis in child psychology. Only the abstract, first few pages, and bibliography are complete.

Chilikov's subjects are the children shipped from Maryland to the King-Torino Children's Refuge. Each is given a simple moniker ("Sub. A," "Sub. B," etc.) to protect anonymity. The "Methods" section, which describes each child, makes it clear Chilikov included herself in the study. The consulting Ph.D. on the thesis is Sarah Brice, who worked at King-Torino and signed off on the use of her case files. Brice died of a brain tumor in 2012.

The thrust of Chilikov's argument is that under certain extreme conditions of educational neglect and physical abuse, housing victims together may actually impede their development of language skills. She explains that strict in-group norms forged in the abusive environment can severely alter behavior and communication. The paper recounts, through a veil of objectivity, Chilikov's own struggles after accepting the tutelage of Dr. Brice, the violence she endured at the hands of her former friends, and her slow progress in education despite enormous pressure to shut down.

Chilikov's notes include a few sketches of drawings left by the children:

- » A small, childlike figure with red hands stands triumphant over larger, adult victims all lying in blood. Their number equals the number of Teeth. The head of each victim has a red splotch that might represent the brain. Other children and small animals watch in a crowd.
- » A pole with a pair of horns atop it. The half-circle of the sun—radiating lines of light—halos the symbol, half crested over a horizon line.
- » The moon over a nondescript line of horizon. Stars dot the background, in a uniform pattern across all instances of the image. A dead tree in a distinctive shape, empty limbs curling, is silhouetted in the foreground against the moon.
- » A campfire seen through a thicket of skinny trees.
- » A black head containing a red brain.

She cannot decipher their meaning. The “red brain” design appeared most often. The subjects drew or painted it only when they were separated for lengths of time, leaving symbols for each other in a playroom. It first appeared in 2004 outside the office of Dr. Brice, whom the subjects loathed and feared for trying to help them communicate. In 2006, one of them drew it on a sketch of a particularly brutal caretaker. In 2007, one of them drew it on every copy of a cheery, cartoonish pamphlet that encouraged children to trust police.

Thesis Insights

A reader with **Psychotherapy** skill at 30% or higher (or who makes a roll at +20%) finds the thesis a remarkable example of psychological insight, perseverance, and bad research ethics. Chilikov connects a series of widely disparate theorists, referencing Sapir-Whorf, Piaget, Vygotsky, and Green. However, the researcher's personal involvement in the case, if discovered, makes it all but impossible to publish. Chilikov secretly used her own childhood experiences to craft a compelling research subject, lying about her personal involvement in order to get the thesis abstract approved.

Even worse, it is partially plagiarized. The young woman preferred working on paper with pen, printing out everything she needed in a collage of dead tree rather than leaving it on the screen. Included in the nest of documents is an extensive email exchange with one “ScribeLife420,” the Internet handle of a freelancer she found through PaperMill.us, an online essay farm that composes bespoke essays, proofed against plagiarism, for students at a price. Chilikov also saved copies of the conversations in her computer files.

While Chilikov's ideas and analysis are her own, her struggles with late language acquisition hampered her academic progress. The email includes patches of text, inexpertly composed with limited vocabulary, misspellings, and numerous agreement errors, that she sent to ScribeLife420. Chilikov's jumbled text would never pass muster at the graduate level, but ScribeLife420 sent back concise paragraphs using field-appropriate vocabulary, paraphrasing the student's own ideas. ScribeLife420 also appears to have translated a number of passages for Nika that she sent to him via screenshot.

Chilikov and ScribeLife420 appear to have been introduced through an acquaintance called only Conradin. ScribeLife420 was the first to send an email, claiming that Conradin informed PaperMill.us that Chilikov might need his services after the death of Dr. Brice. There is no other mention of the name in the files. Nika and the plagiarist have been corresponding all semester and making progress.

Knowing that each symbol is a graphic representation of a real-world landmark or object helps Agents decode symbols they may find on the back of Elle Gable's pamphlet (see **THE PAMPHLET** on page 149), at the Crystal Killian crime scene (see **THE BONNAVILLA TRAILER** on page 166), or at St. Laurence Church (see **ST. LAURENCE CHURCH** on page 169).

The Death of Crystal Killian

Hendry County, Florida. The fuse that detonated the bomb underneath Cornucopia House was lit by the death of Crystal Killian in Florida. The scant documentation of Killian's existence practically made her a ghost before she died.

In the weeks since the events of "Red Thoughts," the Program's assets have been able to find little about the woman. With the trail weeks cold, MASTICATE must investigate the original event themselves. Pitzerelli has been using the time to build contingencies against exposure, in no hurry to repeat the disaster in Maryland.

The sum total of his research into Killian is presented to Agents before they embark on pursuit of the killers.

PHOTOS AND SOCIAL MEDIA: No pictures of Crystal Killian are available online or in any federal database. If she has a social media presence, it's indistinguishable from dozens of other Crystal Killians in Florida. The body no longer has enough identifying features for image recognition software.

FEDERAL RECORDS: Her birth certificate and Social Security number, issued in Alaska in 1982, indicate she was 34 years old at the time of death. She had no job history or tax records before 2008, when she took her one and only job at Florida SouthWestern State College as a library assistant.

FLORIDA RECORDS: She has no listed assets, no car, and no driver's license. She never voted in an election. She rented her trailer at Myers Point and took the bus to work.

ALASKA RECORDS: An Alaska high school equivalence diploma was reissued from the private company FOCUS Homeschooling in 2007, with a note in state records indicating that the original diploma was earned in 1998 and reissued due to "a loss of records." Her only listed relation is her father Hlachi Killian, aka Hlachi Sakari, a member of the native Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association who died of cancer in 1997. He was paid \$12,000 by Alaska as part of the 1987 Proposal of the Aleutian and Pribilof Restitution Act, but he otherwise didn't enjoy any more records of existence than his daughter.

Killian at Work

Though not part of federal records, a picture of Crystal Killian is on file at the Florida SouthWestern State College Rush Library where she worked. The lead Agent from "Go Forth" instantly recognizes a haggard, older Agent Clove. That costs 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

Coworkers

Canvassing her coworkers finds that they held Killian in high regard. She was skilled at her job and often willing to cover shifts. She was quiet and reserved, but coworkers attributed that to her age. With a salary of only \$18K a year, the librarian assistant job is typically held by younger people, grad students unable to find assistantships at nearby Palm Beach or Edison Colleges.

Student Jay Olivera, working at the library, says he regularly saw Crystal Killian at Joe Mama's Swamp Shack, a dive bar near the Myers Point Trailer Park. She drank there nightly and occasionally took home some of the regulars. The student got the impression she was more put together than the rest of the barflies. She always pretended not to recognize him. She kept that part of her life separate from her job.

Supervisor

The only person on staff that seems to know anything about Killian personally is Laura Corduroy, the head librarian who hired her in 2008. But she knows little of Killian's personal life. Beyond claiming to be from Alaska, Killian never talked about her family. Ever. She made it clear the subject brought her much pain. Revealing the falseness of Killian's background certainly surprises Corduroy.

When asked why she hired a woman with only a high school education, Corduroy recalls that she was impressed by Killian's auto-didacticism. She had taught herself Mandarin and spoke it fluently, despite never having traveled internationally. She discoursed on a wide range of subjects during her interview.

Asked why she accepted Killian's claim of being only 26 at time of hiring, Corduroy says she was convinced that Killian looked older than she was.

Though Killian had no criminal record, she openly admitted to suffering from drug addiction during her youth, owing to the death of her parents and a bad home life. Corduroy suspected that aged the poor girl. Given Killian's flawless work record, Corduroy never had reason to doubt the story. An Agent who makes a **Bureaucracy** or **HUMINT** roll suspects that Corduroy turned a bureaucratic blind eye to possible discrepancies in order to give Killian a chance.

Corduroy's only complaint about Killian was her consistent refusal to get a degree and advance up the library's org chart. She was content to work on personal, secretive research projects after hours. Killian's library records indicate heavy reading in genealogy, criminology, and the occult. Corduroy assumed it had something to do with the bad home life to which she sometimes alluded.

Identifying Noella

The Agents can cross-reference Killian's photo with the FBI's Next-Generation Identification database. That identifies her as Dr. Marie Noella and opens up details of her life since 2001. Upon the disintegration of her family and professional life in China, Noella seems to have re-entered the United States using a false identity cobbled together from an unreported disappearance in Alaska. How she got access to this "leftover" Social Security number is unknown, but her contacts from the old Delta Green remain the most likely explanation. Marie Noella, aka Agent Clove, aka Crystal Killian, returned to the United States and started over with the new identity.

The Sheriff's Office

In the week since the discovery of Killian's body, the deputy who found her has "resigned." It was that or face suspension and disciplinary action from Sheriff Deacon Benson for insubordination, a black mark on his record that would make future employment unlikely.

If anyone from the federal government comes by his office, Sheriff Benson is apologetic. Their involvement stems only from his rookie deputy's overactive imagination. It's a shame they flew or drove this far.

The sheriff is convinced that Crystal Killian died of a heart attack and then was partially eaten by starving house cats. Theories of foul play and connections to multiple homicides were the fancies of a young officer who saw too many detective dramas growing up. The sheriff tried to guide the boy, but his inexperience and stubbornness proved too much. He refused to budge from his imaginative story. It was time for him to move on.

While Sheriff Benson hasn't destroyed the case files made by Eckstein, he refuses to show that "nonsense" to anyone. A **Criminology** or **HUMINT** roll reveals the sheriff is worried that others might find Killian's death as interesting as Eckstein did. He's got an easy cause of death from the coroner and a body with no living relatives. He doesn't need a slam dunk turning into an unsolved homicide during an election year. Informing him that the death might have some connection to the mass graves in Maryland only makes him twice as determined to be quit of this case.

Agents can use **Persuade** to convince Benson of their intentions or **Law** to intimidate him into giving up the files. No roll is required if the Agents just promise to claim federal jurisdiction over the case and take it off his hands.

The file has photos taken by Eckstein and a copy of the coroner's report. More detail requires contacting the medical examiner or visiting the scene in person.

The Deputy's Photos

Eckstein's photos of the Killian trailer include shots of the office where he found her corpse, the front door, hallways, and every room.

Killian's Office

Killian's desk, chair, and bookcase were clawed and torn to pieces, papering the room in splinters, fluff, and confetti. An Agent who makes a **Forensics**, **Medicine**, or **Surgery** roll, or who has the skill at 50% or higher, can tell from the volume of blood spray on the walls that Killian suffered her wounds while her heart was still beating. She was eaten alive, trying to fend off multiple attackers. When she went into shock and

bled out, the feast continued. What the sheriff mistook for days of nibbling took place over minutes.

A book is visible in the photos, lying in the middle of the office. Its pages are blood-soaked and torn, but it is splayed open to a legible, handwritten page. Eckstein took care to photograph the journal in its original position. On the page is a list of the Agents' first names from "Go Forth," miraculously unmarred save for a single bloody paw print. The chances of a single page surviving amongst the destruction encompassing the entire room, not to mention being visibly displayed, are astronomical. This realization costs 0/1 SAN from the unnatural. Eckstein did not enter the journal into evidence.

Entrance and Hallways

The front door hangs off the hinges inside the living room. An Agent who makes a **Forensics** roll, or who has the skill at 50% or higher, determines from blood spatter and handprints that the attack was swift and savage. Killian rose from a recliner and then fled down the hallway to the office. She fell through the office door in a rush, turning to face her assailant, and landed with her back against the desk.

Looking Closer

An Agent who makes a **Search** or **HUMINT** roll, or who has the skill at 50% or higher, realizes that nothing in the trailer indicated pet ownership. There are no litter boxes, no toys, no bags of food, no shed hair. If Killian was eaten by her own pets, she was neglecting them long before she died.

Medical Examiner

As the body was approaching two weeks dead and not part of an active investigation, Crystal Killian was cremated four days before the Agents arrived. The only forensics evidence available is the medical examiner's report and an interview with its author, Dr. Govindna Chaudhuri. The medical examiner is stationed in Lee County and worked the case on loan, as Hendry County doesn't have its own facilities.

The Report

With a successful **Forensics** or **Medicine** roll, or having the skill at 50% or higher, an Agent can critique the sloppy report, so long as they can stomach losing 0/1 SAN from violence upon seeing the grisly cadaver photos. The Agent finds major problems with conclusive identification and the cause of death.

No autopsy was performed. In a death like Killian's, an autopsy should have been done to rule out foul play. But preliminary examination by the sheriff's office and the medical examiner determined that death by natural causes—cardiac arrest—was so clear-cut that it did not warrant an autopsy.

There's no definitive physical identification of the corpse. Facial features were mutilated beyond recognition. Dental records were inconclusive. Too little skin remained on the digits for fingerprinting. DNA records weren't tested against any database or residuals found in the home. The body was assumed to be Crystal Killian because that's who paid rent on the trailer.

Chaudhuri notes in the report that damage to the body's soft tissues occurred post-mortem from house pets stranded in the home. This conclusion was reached as a result of photos taken by the first responder. They show bloody paw prints on the carpet and kitchen tile. However, blood spatter on the walls of the office where the body lay indicates arterial spray. Bloody handprints streaking along the hallway indicate a struggle.

The Examiner

The overworked Dr. Chaudhuri meets criticism with understandable hostility. He reminds Agents that DNA identification without evidence of foul play only clogs up lab work. The body contained no wounds save claw and bite marks. There was no post-mortem bruising aside from typical lividity where the back met the floor. Vertebrae of the neck and skull were intact. Dr. Chaudhuri ascribes inconsistencies at the scene to vandals that broke in the door and to the first responder improperly handling the scene. Didn't the Agents hear the deputy had been recently fired over the case?

Chaudhuri went with the only rational explanation. A lonely woman died by herself, and her hungry pets ate the body to survive. Vandals broke into her home afterwards, got scared, and ran. They left behind red-herring evidence of forced entry, allowing the animals to escape and letting other scavengers inside. What is the alternative? That an army of house pets kicked in the door and consumed the woman like a swarm of fire ants? The more the Agents argue, the more quickly Chaudhuri asks them to get the hell out of his office.

Deputy Eckstein

Casey Eckstein only ever wanted to be a cop. Junior ROTC and police explorers in high school. Three years volunteer firefighting while working security at a storage facility. Once of age, he joined the Hendry County Sheriff's Office and passed 22 weeks of academy training with middling marks. He completed field training between 2014 and 2016. He was in the middle of his first year as an independent deputy when the Crystal Killian case cost him his job.

Eckstein lives in half of a rental duplex in eastern Charlotte County. A flagpole out front proudly

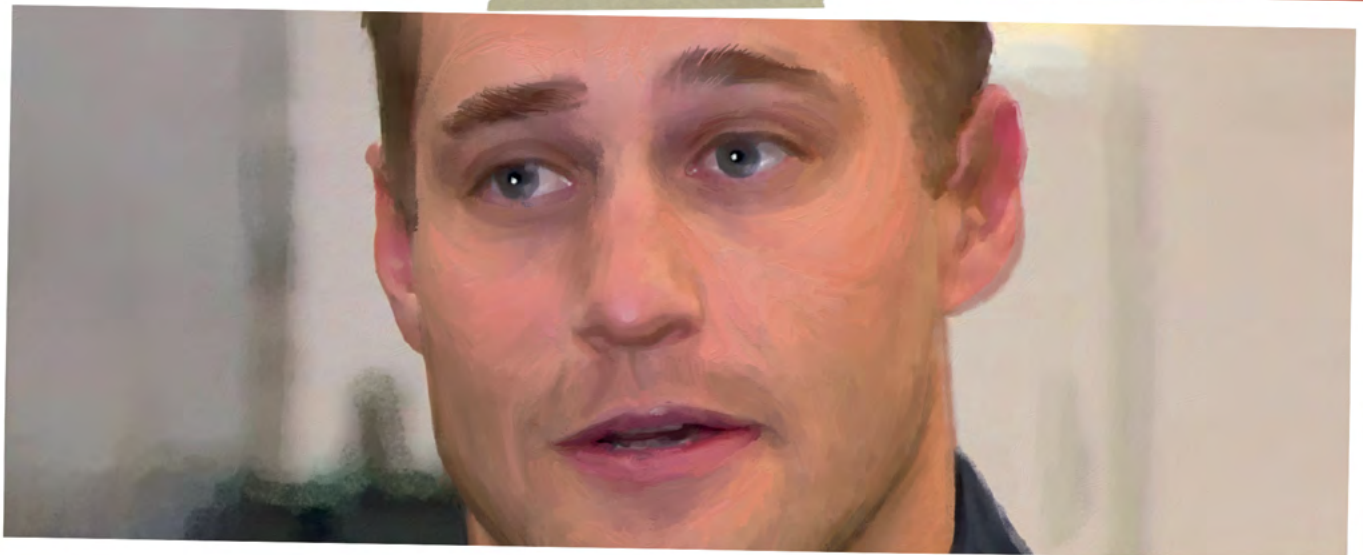
displays a "Blue Lives Matter" flag, as does the bumper of his truck and a skull decal in the rear window. On the front door hangs a wood-burned sign that reads "Proud First Responder" next to a painting of a fireman's helmet and an American flag.

Eckstein has complained vaguely on social media about troubles with his job and having to look for something new. Friends online are surprised and supportive. He gets lots of Blue Lives Matter affirmations and reassurances that he'll find an even better way to serve soon.

It's up to the Agents how they wish to approach Eckstein. An Agent who makes a HUMINT roll, or who has the skill at 50% or higher, recognizes that playing it cool best suits Eckstein's deep trust of law enforcement.

Insurance

Eckstein's stepmother and biological father live in a small house on 10 hectares (25 acres) of land a few minutes' drive away. Pitzerelli tells the Agents that, after learning Eckstein's role in the events that tipped off this operation, the Program took out a sort of insurance policy on his behavior. They buried a barrel



containing an M249 light machine gun, a sawed-off double-barrel shotgun, and a kilo of cocaine on Eckstein's parents' property. If the Agents request it, the Program could tip federal authorities to the existence of the cache, recover it, and dangle dropped charges in order to enforce Eckstein's silence. Or they can use the barrel's contents however they like to support the operation.

Bad Cop

Calling in tips to bust his parents for the planted weapons provides leverage, but Eckstein's resentment makes anything he reveals a begrudging half-truth. He admits that he learned the Agents' names from a journal left near Crystal Killian's body. He got too stubborn when defending his homicide theory in front of

Sheriff Benson, and he was let go as a result. Eckstein claims (falsely) that everything he logged as evidence remains on file with Hendry County. He agrees to keep quiet, provided no charges are pressed against him or his family. He wants an opportunity to continue being a cop somewhere else and forget whatever sick conspiracy he stumbled into.

If charges are officially filed and lenient prosecution is used to motivate him, Eckstein fights for his life. The mark on his record means future employment in law enforcement is impossible, and the thought of going to prison is, to him, indistinguishable from the nightmare of losing his job and identity. Overplaying the planted evidence causes Eckstein to lawyer up and tell his story to absolutely anyone who will listen.

RED CARD

THREAT MATRIX

ECKSTEIN INVESTIGATES

Freed of the constraints of the county sheriff's office, Casey Eckstein soon resumes his investigation into the secrets of Crystal Killian's journal. If the Agents are slow in prioritizing Florida, he might find a phone number or email address for one of them and call or leave a message. If he gets no response, he mentions Gary Hall, the Skoptsi, or "C-cell" to see if that gets things moving. See **CRYSTAL KILLIAN'S JOURNAL** on page 164 for more threads he could pull. Most importantly, he could be the one to find the "red brain" graffiti from the Killian crime scene in other photos: See **ST. LAURENCE CHURCH** on page 169.

If they seek to place Eckstein at an even further disadvantage, the Agents can try to kidnap or otherwise incapacitate him. Eckstein is very well armed and has spent a significant portion of his life fantasizing about how he would repel home invaders. If the Agents manage to restrain him, his stoic lawman persona crumbles and he gives up everything. He kept Killian's journal when it became clear Benson wouldn't investigate. It's hidden in his house. He's been going through it ever since, trying to make sense of the connection between the Agents, Dr. Marie Noella, and the mass grave in Maryland. He hoped to continue the investigation on his own, once he found a new job, and use it to disgrace Sheriff Benson. If Agents leave him after that, Eckstein leaves law enforcement permanently and becomes a deeply paranoid right-winger.

Good Cop

The former deputy very much wants to hear a story about how Sheriff Benson—lazy, cowardly, and a disgrace to the badge—made the life of a gifted young officer miserable merely because he couldn't understand what real police work looked like. If the feds are there to help, as “the adults in the room,” Eckstein does everything in his power to prove how gifted he is as an investigator.

Still nervous about Sheriff Benson and his former co-workers, a cooperative Eckstein demands to meet at a secluded location: an abandoned drive-thru car wash called Rub N Dub. Once convinced of the Agents' good intentions, Eckstein proves that he understands a lot more about the case than Delta Green would be comfortable with, corroborating most of the conclusions discovered in the Agents' own investigations.

He remains guileless when surrounded by fellow “heroes.” He's aware that his calls up north had something to do with the mass grave now in the national news, but he doesn't know what. If the Agents plausibly connect themselves to the evidence as allies, rather than perpetrators, he welcomes them as friends.

THE JOURNAL: Eckstein took the bloody journal from the trailer when it became clear Benson intended to downplay evidence. A bloodstained page left open amongst the shredded papers at the crime scene clued him in to the names of the Agents. But the names he found in Crystal Killian's journal were just names. He does not know their relevance.

KILLIAN'S DEATH: Eckstein knows that the trailer door was kicked in before Killian died; that she died as a result of multiple animal bites; that the speed of the perpetrators' evacuation of the scene indicates the animals were trained and serving a master.

KILLIAN'S IDENTITY: Continued study has made him suspect that Crystal Killian is not the real name of the deceased. Killian's background details are too thin.

THE 2001 CASE: He knows from the journal that Killian was somehow connected to the 2001 disappearance of FBI Special Agent Gary Hall. And he knows something happened involving a Russian cult in Maryland in 2001 that was supposedly an offshoot of the historical Skoptsi. (He had to look them up on Wikipedia.) Killian investigated the cult after Hall disappeared. The journal gives no details, but he found mentions of “the Group” infiltrating the cult, which led to the destruction of “C-cell.” He does not know what those were.

CONCLUSIONS: All in all, Eckstein is convinced that Killian was tracking a conspiracy of federal agents pursuing foreign devil-worshippers. Was it a Deep State conspiracy of the kind that “everyone says” is trying to discredit and persecute Republicans and patriots with false-flag operations? Or was it a conspiracy of patriots evading that very Deep State for the good of real Americans? *Was Pizzagate true all along?* Eckstein looks to the Agents for answers.

“AGENT ECKSTEIN”: If the Agents bring him aboard, he becomes an enthusiastic asset for Delta Green. At least, that is, until someone catches onto his anonymous 8chan posts. He never says “C-cell” or gives any names, but he says he's in a group that's hunting devil-worshipping pedophile conspirators. For now, they're just more nonsense posts in the proliferation soon to ulcerate into Q-Anon.

ASSET

Crystal Killian's Journal

In English. Study time: days. Occult +5%, Unnatural +1%, SAN loss 1.

The journal is bound in faux leather, a mass-market model purchased from Borders bookstore. Only about half of its 300 pages contain writing. The cover and pages are torn from a variety of animal teeth and claws, likely the same that shredded most of the other books and documents found in the trailer's office. Most pages are clotted with blood that pooled around the document where it lay on the floor. This makes parsing the document difficult. Ink has run or been overwritten by bloody grime.

Killian's notes trace investigations into the forces that destroyed her life in her time with Delta Green from 1996 to 2001, the year she fled with her family.

C-Cell

Killian mentions working with an FBI agent and an intelligence officer, given the pseudonyms "Clyde" and "Cerise." To a reader who knows how Delta Green worked in those days, it's clear that she advised them as a friendly at first and then as an agent beginning in 2000. She writes that "Clyde" and "Cerise" died in a shootout and fire at a taxi garage. Clyde handed her a folder of evidence that he had found and told her to run. She writes about the folder like a source of the most traumatic horrors imaginable without ever giving details.

It's clear why Delta Green once found her a useful asset. Once freed from the constraints of her family life, Killian made remarkable progress in multiple lines of inquiry using pure academic research. If her journal is any indication, her work and psychological stability deteriorated steadily over the years.

Skoptsi

Much of the still-legible material regards the history of the American offshoot of the Skoptsi, based on what Killian remembered of the investigation before she fled. She discovered anthropological records suggesting the cult's original purge from Russia and immigration to the U.S., settling in Los Angeles in the early 20th century and decades later in Maryland.

She even made some remarkably accurate suppositions as to the nature of their worship of "The Magna Mater," presented to the public as a version of the Virgin Mary but worshiped secretly with horrific and bloody rituals as a pagan goddess of eternal life. Most importantly, Killian linked ownership of the Basilica of Our Virgin Mother in Maryland, at the community nicknamed "Moscow on the Chesapeake," to the cult.

The Program

Another line of inquiry regards the fate of survivors of Delta Green. This section is largely written as interviews with code named subjects (unless it is to be believed that Killian received information about Delta Green from the members of Boyz II Men and C+C Music Factory). Each coded entry appears to be notes hastily scratched after interviews with other operatives of "the Group" that she managed to track down. Though she never mentions interviewees by name, she took first-hand accounts of the conflict that gave rise to the Program. Killian corroborated the radio silence she experienced with that of other agents, though none appeared to have experienced the total loss of fellow agents that caused her to flee.

The interviewees warn of a new, "official" group entirely suborned by the enemy and urge Killian to stay in the shadows. She muses that the silence of the leaders of "the Group" may have been a coincidence that unfortunately intersected with the disaster during the Skoptsi investigation, but the thought of both misfortunes falling on her at the same time appears to be too much for her to have entertained for long.

Killian made only one slip in her notes. She includes enough scattered details about "Clyde" to piece together that he was an FBI agent who vanished in 2001. Then in one hasty, exhausted scrawl she calls him "Hall." This is enough for a determined reader to identify Gary Hall.

The Children

The final investigative thrust of the notes appears to concern the whereabouts of the children from Cornucopia House. Cut off from access to federal documents, Killian made the least progress on this front. She wasn't sure if the children were alive or if her final order had been followed, and this uncertainty seemed to cause her much distress.

She never knew the names of the children housed at Cornucopia House in the first place, and sealed juvenile records made finding more information impossible. The most she managed to maintain was an up-to-date record of information available about the "friendlies" she sent to destroy Cornucopia House, hoping that, if need arose, keeping track of them would lead her to the whereabouts of the children.

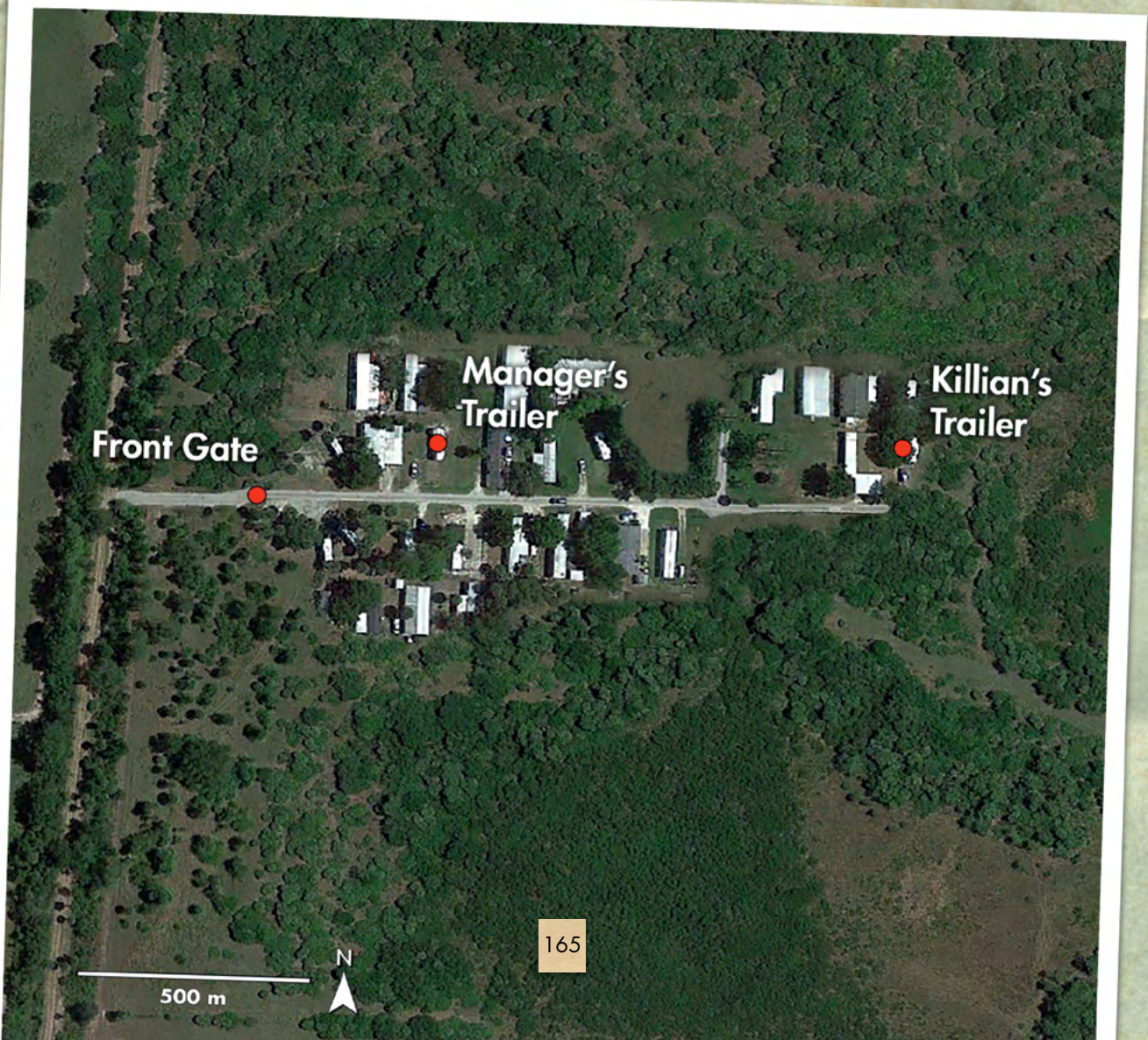
Killian notes seeing a number of strange symbols or icons sprayed like graffiti. She sketches a "red brain" that she saw on trash at her trailer in 2016. She mentions trying to gain access to the "GARI database" to search for it. Her notes wonder what the symbols mean or what locations they represent. She did not live long enough to find out. See **RESEARCHING THE TAG** if the Agents look into "GARI."

Myers Point Trailer Park

Myers Point Trailer Park sits atop a large embankment on the outskirts of unincorporated Felda, Florida. Elevated above the sprawling wetland of Okaloocoochee Slough State Forest, the manmade rise falls steeply into groves of longleaf pines, palms, and pond cypresses.

The trailer park consists of a single gravel road with rows of trailers off either side. The raised row of boxy homes jut into bog like a decaying fortification. The earthwork is old and eroded. The backyards of many lots crumble away into the lowlands. Were it not for the chicken wire and rotting supports hastily girding the tiny isthmus, the entire property would have long ago fallen into the swamp.

Crystal Killian rented a 1990 BonnaVilla single-wide on the far end of the park. The entrance has been boarded up with plywood and covered in police tape, but no guards are stationed there. The elderly landlord shows the trailer to anyone with the vaguest whiff of authority, but he has no answers to questions about its tenant. This is a place where people come and go. He doesn't bother learning names until they stop paying rent, and he forgets them the second he tells his collection agent whom to evict. Crime scene cleaners have been inside and the possessions removed, and the landlord is quick to mention the sheriff gave him permission to do that. He's waiting for his handyman to come back from vacation in Jacksonville before he replaces the door and refurnishes the trailer for new tenants.



The Neighbors

Most folks at the trailer park aren't keen to talk to cops. However, spending a couple of hours canvassing the neighborhood or making a **Persuade** roll eventually finds Glenda Czyzniejewski, the caller that brought Eckstein to the neighborhood. Czyzniejewski doesn't know anything about that poor woman down the street, but she's eager to finally talk to someone about her missing cats.

Czyzniejewski claims she had over two dozen cats in and around her lot, but every single one went missing two weeks ago. She suspects "snatchers," men who collect strays and pets to sell to cosmetics labs in Orlando for experimentation. They've come sniffing around the neighborhood before, and she's always warning her neighbors not to sell puppies from their litters to those monsters. They must have gotten bold and started breaking into houses. This is the first time Czyzniejewski has been without a cat in three decades, and she wants the cops to get revenge on those bastards. She even has plate numbers taken from their cars over the years, but that damned Sheriff Benson didn't care.

There are no signs of forced entry on Czyzniejewski's house, nor anyone else's in the neighborhood besides Crystal Killian. However, re-interviewing neighbors in light of the "snatchers" theory reveals that many in the park had a pet recently go missing. The lax leash habits practiced by most owners makes their timelines a bit fuzzier than Glenda's, but the cosmetics poachers theory is generally accepted due to the sheer scale of the disappearances.

The Silence of the Dogs

An Agent who makes an **Alertness**, **Criminology**, or **Survival** roll, or who specifically looks or listens for dogs, realizes there are no dogs barking. Anywhere. It is unthinkable that no one would have a guard dog in a hellhole like Myers Point Trailer Park. It's even more ridiculous to think they would stay quiet at a bunch of strangers walking down the main drive. Where are all the dogs?

In the Weeds

An Agent who thinks to search the weeds around Killian's trailer, or who makes a **Survival** roll, finds strange game trails. They lead away from the trailer and straight off a muddy embankment to the swamp below. The drop is steep enough that it makes no sense for an animal to jump unless it were being chased. There's definitely no reason to take the leap in large numbers.

The Agents can easily climb down. A couple of sweaty, muddy hours tracking through the thick wetlands leads them to a shallow pool of muck enclosed on all sides by a ring of water tupelo, roots interlocked. Inside, the missing pets of Myers Point Trailer Park can be found, dead and floating. The stench of two weeks of rot claws at the nostrils, and carrion insects swarm the air, but the pets are remarkably well preserved. Uncannily preserved. Some still wear their owners' collars.

Each animal appears to have died the same way: Its stomach burst, internally hemorrhaging or sending intestines trailing behind it. How did the animals all come to be there after suffering so much internal damage? What caused it? Did they eat themselves to death? How did they stand still while they bled out from the inside, growing weaker until they collectively drowned in a shallow pool? Why won't the flies biting the Agents land on the dead, even though they swarm in the stench? Discovering the grisly scene costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

The BonnaVilla Trailer

Killian lived and died in the trailer addressed 21 Myer Street. Agents spot the BonnaVilla trailer's door discarded amongst the weeds of the unkempt yard. The cheap wood is split where a boot would be placed on an averaged-sized man. The top of the door holds a faded piece of graffiti: the black paint outline of a head in profile with a splotch of red spray in the shape of a brain.

The back door is intact. Both doors open into a kitchen and living room. On either end of the trailer sit two bedrooms. One bedroom hallway has a door to the bathroom, the other a small closet.

Indentations in the carpet in the bedroom facing the exterior of the trailer park indicate that was where Crystal kept her bed. The carpet and furnishings in the other bedroom have been completely removed, but outlines of a desk and filing cabinet against the cheap wood paneling indicate it was a makeshift office. Killian was found dead there.

The Office Floor

A **Search** roll in the office leads Agents to a loose slat in the flooring near where Killian was found. Raising it from the floor makes a woman's nail visible, broken off and lodged in the slats. Beneath the slat, a hole was cut in the wooden floor for a makeshift hiding spot. It holds a lump wrapped in cloth: a Sig Sauer P938 subcompact pistol, fully loaded, serial numbers filed off. Agent Clove wasn't just running in panic. She was trying to get to her gun, but something held the floor slat down and pinned her before she could reach it.

The Trash

Killian's furniture is piled at the edge of the driveway, waiting for a dump truck to take it away. Amongst the detritus is a framed photo. It depicts Dr. Marie Noella, aka Agent Clove, with her husband and son. Agents from "Go Forth" who recognize Killian as Clove lose 0/1 **SAN** from helplessness. A school ID for "Crystal Killian" can also be found in the trash. She worked in the Rush Library at Florida SouthWestern College.

Killian's journal seen in Eckstein's photos is not in the trash heap.

An Agent who makes a **Forensics** roll pieces together that there is no sign the cleaners did anything but remove the furniture. And yet the couches, chairs, and mattress stacked by the curb don't show signs of bloody paw prints. Had the woman been eaten over the course of days by starving pets, they would have gone to favorite spots to rest. And the crime scene photos clearly indicate prints of common breeds of house pets, not wild animals that might have fled. The animals appear to have rushed in through the broken door, eaten the woman alive, and then filed out the way they came.

Researching the Tag

Agents can search for matching graffiti in the Gang Graffiti Automatic Recognition and Interpretation (GARI) database funded by the Department of Homeland Security.

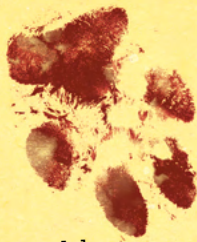
The red brain graffiti gets no hits in Hendry County. However, moving one tab over and searching the image among "Unidentified" tags brings up a number of similar images noted by gang task forces in Miami, the next county over. It appears one click more was one click too many for the original investigators. The red brain graffiti can be found near St. Laurence Church, located between the West Flagler and Flagami districts. An Agent with 20% or better in **SIGINT**, or any special training in cryptography or codes, soon suspects that each symbol is a graphic representation of a real-world landmark or object. That can help Agents decode symbols here, on the back of Elle Gable's bus ticket, or outside St. Laurence Church.

DISINFORMATION

SYMBOLS IN THE JOURNAL

The Agents can piece together that each symbol described in Crystal Killian's journal is a graphic representation of a real-world landmark or object. That can help them decode symbols they may find on the back of Elle Gable's pamphlet (see **THE PAMPHLET** on page 149), Nika Chilikov's thesis (see **NIKA'S THESIS** on page 156) or St. Laurence Church (see **STREET LEGENDS** on page 171).

The page containing the names and the addresses of the Agents is the same page to which the journal fell open after animals had finished mauling it. The bulleted list of names remains unmarred by the blood smears polluting the rest of the surrounding pages. Aside from the dead woman's ink, only the single, bloody paw print of a house cat marks the page.



SYNCHRONICITY

THE RIDER AT MYERS POINT

Ensure Agents have encountered all the clues you want to communicate before they encounter the Rider. Agents are likely to be quite distracted afterwards.

At some point during investigations at the trailer park, select an Agent. A rail-thin man in yellow biker leathers stares at the Agent from the trailer park entrance. He stands with an MV Agusta F4CC. His face cannot be seen through the deeply tinted black visor of his matching yellow helmet. Two cats, one white and one black, mill around his legs in a figure-eight pattern.

If not approached, the yellow rider disappears at some point when the Agent is distracted, the powerful motorcycle somehow making no sound. If the Agent approaches with backup, fellow Agents and NPCs see no yellow rider. The rider, motorcycle, and cats disappear the moment the Agent is distracted. They likewise vanish if the Agent attacks. The cats belonged to no one in the trailer park. The vanishing costs the Agent 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

Once near enough to converse, the Agent suffers the **Scent** power described on page 9. The yellow rider reeks, simultaneously nauseating and enticing. Whatever strange force moves within the Agent, this rider is something *Other*, something hateful and hated.

The yellow rider's voice resonates oddly out of the black visor:

"It has been too long since you've been up, my pet. I've missed you. I admit, the fault is partly mine. My attentions...elsewhere. My thoughts...divided. But my affections, forever with you. You must be so hungry. There was more fuel for your tiny fires in other climes, more willing flesh to carry your majesty on a palanquin tour of this strange place. Perhaps we may play again before you recede beneath and between. I can always spare some of myself to feed so interesting a machine. I do so miss the games we played—"

The voice trails into an unidentifiable language. The visor opens to reveal not a face but an enormous red tongue. It darts out and licks the Agent's face, costing 1/1D6 **SAN** from the unnatural and leaving a bloody smear. The rider, motorcycle, and cats disappear. No one but that Agent saw anything. The tongue caused no harm. If the blood on the Agent's face is tested, it is an exact match for the Agent's own DNA.

The words linger. Let the player hear or read the entire speech again at any time. The Agent can even phonetically remember the unknown words. A day in a well-equipped university library allows an **Archeology** roll, or **History** at -20%, or a **Bureaucracy** roll to find a consulting linguist to translate. The yellow rider was speaking Middle Egyptian, a language last widely known around 1300 BC: *"I do so miss the games we played in our dalliance amongst the children of Atlantis."*



St. Laurence Church

Miami, Florida. The Agents might come to St. Laurence Church after searching government databases for graffiti like that found on Crystal Killian's door: Police gang units uploaded similar images saying graffiti complaints came from St. Laurence. If the Agents don't think to search for graffiti but have recruited Casey Eckstein to their cause, he might come to them after finding photos of similar tags taken at St. Laurence Church. The church can also be discovered from the pamphlet Elle Gable used as scratch paper and had at Charlotte's Rest Veterans Home, or it could be intuited from the iconography she drew on back of it. (See **THE PAMPHLET** on page 149.)

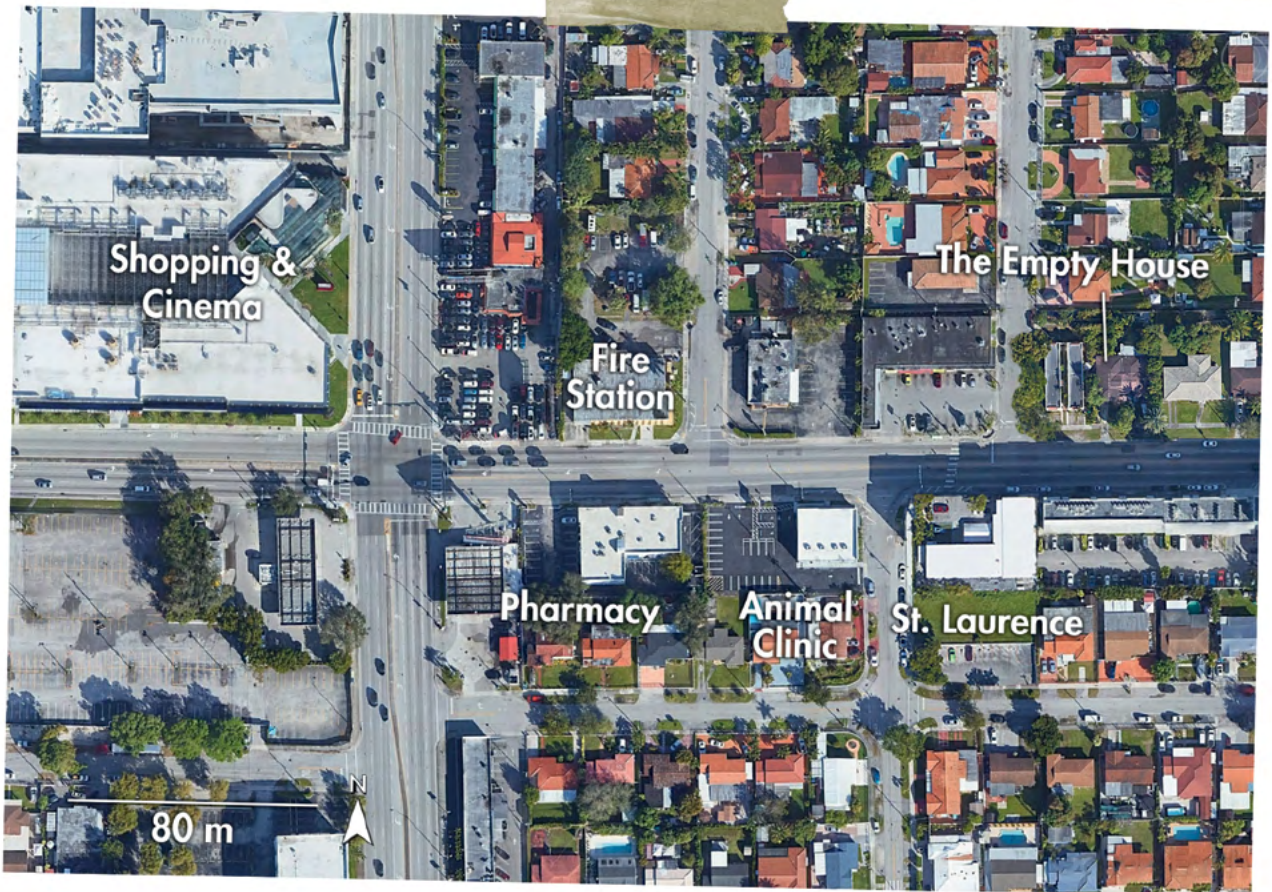
St. Laurence Church greets parishioners with a large sign announcing its name, atop which is a golden cross lashed to the gridiron of St. Laurence's fiery

martyrdom. A giant, boxy, modern addition serves as a homeless shelter where the church's old graveyard once stood. This barracks is bordered by picnic tables. Residents often eat outdoors despite being a bit deafened by planes overhead.

Church and Shelter

A 2016 Bloomberg report singled out the Miami metropolitan area for the worst income inequality in the nation. St. Laurence Church struggles with the symptoms of that ailment. It stands in a crowded neighborhood on the border of Miami's West Flagler and Flagami districts, south of Miami International Airport.

The neighborhoods around St. Laurence are 90% Hispanic. Most work in service jobs. Nearly half have trouble understanding English or do not speak it at all. The area was devastated by the subprime mortgage crisis of the 2000s. High-income owners from outside



the area bought houses from desperate sellers and rented them back to locals at higher and higher rates. People moved. Half the residents have lived here five years or less. House prices and rental prices are far beyond what residents can comfortably afford, and the gap keeps growing. But vacancy rates stay low. People need shelter even if it keeps them poor.

Until they give up and move to the streets.

St. Laurence is a service-dominated ministry that operates with funds from Catholic Charities USA and the Broward Partnership Pompano Beach Center of Fort Lauderdale. Its main sociological function is as a safety valve on the city's growing homeless population.

SYNCHRONICITY

THE SNAKE AND THE DOG

As Agents enter the church, a greyhound crosses a busy street, narrowly avoiding traffic as it runs toward them. In its jaws writhes a colorful snake latched onto the tongue. The greyhound does not seem to notice. If allowed to get close, it stops short of threatening them. It instead begins wildly thrashing its head, tearing the snake in its jaws to pieces. Then, with a whine, the animal collapses to the pavement. It begins seizing as the neurotoxin courses through its face and neck, eyes deflated and running out from multiple snake bites. Before a minute has passed, it is dead.

An Agent who makes a successful **Survival** roll, or a biologically-versed **Science** roll, recognizes the eastern coral snake, one of the deadliest snakes in the area.

Agents who inspect the dog find its collar, which reads "Thanks Obama" and has a series of phone numbers on it. Calling the numbers reveals the greyhound was a champion that escaped from the track that morning. It placed second in the 2015 Champion Stakes in London and was being kept at the track for breeding. The Agents just watched \$50K worth of racing dog die.

Father Robledo

St. Laurence Church is run by Father Mauricio Robledo, about 40 years old, tanned and a little frayed from spending a great deal of time outdoors.

Robledo is no stranger to cooperating with the authorities. If the Agents come to him with questions about graffiti they found in a gang database, he resignedly provides whatever information he can. He is fully aware that stonewalling the cops to protect his residents only leads to the cops raiding his shelter and taking whoever they want anyway. He'd rather roll the dice on the law capturing someone guilty of a crime more severe than vagrancy than expose those in his charge to the indiscriminate trauma caused by frustrated policemen.

Father Robledo insists he never called anyone about graffiti, no matter what a database may say. He has paint and a brush. He can take care of a little vandalism without involving the cops. Graffiti marks like the ones at the crime scene are certainly found near the shelter, but Robledo says the cops claimed he reported them as their pretense for involving Miami's police-FBI Violent Gang Task Force. They were convinced the Zoe Pound gang was expanding into the community through the church. Robledo says the report was a lie. The church's only interaction with any gang has been housing some of their most addicted customers and victims. For a few hours, cops harassed whoever came around. They left after arresting a harmless schizophrenic as the "ringleader" to save face. Robledo was disgusted with the whole affair.

Father Robledo assures whoever will listen that the graffiti has nothing to do with gang activity. He says that the marks on his walls come from the street legends of his most vulnerable residents. (See **STREET LEGENDS** on page 171.) The homeless think Robledo more ignorant of their spiritual innovations than he is. Adults take care not to speak blasphemies around the priest, but the children he tutors often let slip tidbits of lore. Robledo doesn't press. He doesn't want to scare away people in need of the church's help by making them fear a missionary sermon. So he paints over the symbols from time to time, pretending not to understand them.

The Orphans

If the Agents have photos of Cornucopia House survivors Elle Gable, Samuel Ball, or Jennifer Wills, Robledo or any other adult interviewee recognizes them from years ago. It was around 2011. They weren't exactly children, all around age 14 or 15, but their staring, angry, violent silence terrified and inspired other children. Robledo banished them after Gable stabbed a younger child, sending her to the hospital.

Another youth was often with them. His name was Philip. He often fought with the others because he preferred to speak, but they seemed to find it useful to have him speak for them. He told many of the stories that became a complex local mythology surrounding the Quiet Children and Silence Slaves. (See **STREET LEGENDS** on this page for details.)

Philip left with the others, but Robledo has seen him a couple of times over the years since. The priest has had to warn him away from St. Laurence. The young man is now known as Philly Phil. He became a drug dealer, and many kids say he is a witch. Asking local police about Philly Phil gets essentially the same story. Even the most well-informed officers have no idea how to find him.

If the Agents have a recent photo of Thomas Perez, anyone at St. Laurence recognizes him as a stranger who arrived a couple of weeks before. No one knows his name. No one ever heard him or saw him speak. But a few of the most troubled young homeless people seemed to hover around him. Within a couple of days, he and they were gone.

Street Legends

Some of the local homeless have developed their own theology, a fusion spirituality not unlike Santeria. It's unique to the hardships of life on the streets. Father Robledo suspects it provides as much comfort to their suffering as traditional Catholicism. Those who have been on the streets for years believe in "the Hungry Mother" far more than any dim Christian god.

This elaborate mythology arose over the years among and about the traumatized children who survived Cornucopia House, even though none of them has remembered it or its name in years.

The more time the Agents spend interviewing volunteers and the desperate people they help, the more they can learn. See the **STREET LEGENDS SOURCES** table for likely sources. A source who does not know

>>Street Legends Sources

Name & Affiliation	Hungry Mother	Red-Minded Men	Quiet Children	Silence Slaves	Speaker	Sredni Vashtar
ADULTS						
Father Mauricio Robledo <i>Diocesan priest, age 40</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe
Guadalupe Chavez <i>Nurse, age 33</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Rannier Perry <i>Volunteer tutor, age 42</i>	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe
CHILDREN						
Alantea Curtis, age 14 <i>Runaway, prostitute, and addict</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe
Carl Nixon, age 11 <i>Neglected child of homeless addicts</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	No
Jaivon Simon, age 9 <i>Abused child of homeless addicts</i>	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

much about a subject can point the Agents to one who knows more. “Maybe” means the Handler can choose.

Always adapt the voice in which the information is delivered to the background of the interviewee. Father Robledo’s thoughtful scholarship—he wanted to do his graduate seminary work on this topic before the diocese said it was outside the church’s focus—sounds very different from the exaggerations of a child trying to figure out how they can say what adults want to hear.

The Hungry Mother

FATHER ROBLEDO: Though he has picked up details from the mythology espoused by his charges, the priest is always eager to place them in a larger sociological framework before indulging in exoticized folklore. Children who had childhoods before homelessness typically come to Christianity genuinely or persist in their previous faiths. But children born and raised on the streets design their own theologies. The ones that survive the harsh lifestyle and become parents themselves spread the stories down to even more impoverished children, creating a separate oral tradition that most people never encounter.

ADULT OR CHILD: The theology of the “Hungry Mother” is held by the youngest members of the homeless population that come through the church. The children say the world outside the shelter belongs to the Hungry Mother. Sometimes this is a monster personifying primal fears: a toothy, tentacled nightmare woman come to consume them. Other times, she is a kind-seeming old woman who lures in victims. When people go missing, children whisper that the Hungry Mother claimed another one. The “Hungry Mother” is just as often used as a catch-all term for the outside world, especially as it pertains to endangering the homeless. *The Hungry Mother stopped my ma from finding a job. The Hungry Mother spiked the drugs. The Hungry Mother sent pigs to bust up the camp.* Other players in the cosmology of the Hungry Mother are the Red-Minded Men who serve her and the Quiet Children and Silence Slaves who oppose her. Like all oral traditions, the details change with the teller, but the larger structure stays the same.

CHILD: If questioned away from their parents or other authority figures, the children seem to share a framing for the cosmology left off reports of the adults. They whisper that Heaven and Earth are merely a farm for the Hungry Mother. The majority of the world, unaware that they’ve been raised as food, are called *las vacas*, “the cows.” Reality is a lie used keep the cattle docile while the Hungry Mother consumes their misery. Everything exists to feed her. The only possible redemption comes from accepting this truth.

OCCULT ROLL: Many Miami youth once believed in a guardian angel called “the Blue Lady” that protected believers from the gang violence of 1980s and 1990s. The Hungry Mother seems to be a grim echo or reconfiguration of those stories of a prior generation. Players can find real-world articles online about the Blue Lady legend.

Red-Minded Men

ADULT OR CHILD: The symbol depicting a human skull with red paint streaks as a brain denotes an area of danger. It represents what children call Red-Minded Men. They disguise themselves as ordinary people to prey on the homeless, especially homeless children. They use the same covers and pawns that the capitalist United States uses against all the homeless: cops, pushers, pimps, pedophiles, scammers, cults, federal agents, etc.

CHILD: Every child knows the Red-Minded Men serve the Hungry Mother. Adults dismiss this as the tendency of children to collapse everything into broad, simple moral categories, but the kids insist that the Red-Minded are, simply, “the bad guys.” They hunt the Quiet Children and their Silence Slaves, who help everyone else understand the truth about the Hungry Mother. The Hungry Mother wants humans who see the truth to die sooner than the rest of *las vacas*. She can’t allow their panic to upset the rest of the meat.

FATHER ROBLEDO: The Red-Minded Man symbol is disturbing and worrying because it discourages those most in need of help from seeking it. It is often painted on the shelter and chapel by residents in the midst of mental breakdown, conflating the help of the church with the same society that let them down.

The Quiet Children

ADULT: Some young people who come to the shelter are so severely traumatized that they make almost no connections with the larger community. Believers in the Hungry Mother call them Quiet Children. As their only characteristic is never speaking, that's all most adults at St. Laurence can say about the population's bizarre fixation on the mute.

FATHER ROBLEDO: Children discussing their beliefs with the Father go on longest about the Quiet Children. The younger shelter occupants regard the Quiet Children as angels fallen from heaven. They are only disguised as ignorant boys and girls so they might slip beneath the gaze of the Hungry Mother. They refuse to speak because they know that all speech is a lie. Life would be easier if they could escape the love that's programmed into their souls, but they can't. So they seek to wake people to the dangers of the Hungry Mother. When a Quiet Child dies, it is to reveal the truth to humanity through the only language it still knows.

CHILD: In secret—and only to someone they really trust who *promises* not to tell—regulars at St. Laurence reveal that the Quiet Children have special powers. They can see past the tricks of the Mother. They sometimes know what's about to happen and how to avoid it. They can come to harm, but only when they wish to. The Quiet Children test each other to make sure they have the strength to fight the Hungry Mother's servants. The tests are brutal, sometimes deadly. Their Silence Slaves call it “sharpening.”

Silence Slaves

ADULT OR CHILD: A few children have gone through a phase where they imagined themselves Slaves of Silence. Silence Slaves speak for the Quiet Children. Not sign, writing, or even eye contact is required for this translation of thought into language to occur. Perhaps the speakers like the power and attention that came with prophecy, with being thought angels. Most seem to grow out of it. Everything known about the theology of the Hungry Mother was once preached by a Silence Slave.

CHILD: Silence Slaves were angels like the Quiet Children. They know speech is a lie that makes people food for the Hungry Mother, but they can't help but return to the comfort of the lie. The Quiet Children do not forgive anyone breaking their vow, so they conscript these weaker angels into service as Silence Slaves. The children insist that the real ones “talk funny” and that's how they tell which truly preach for the Quiet Children and which pretend.

The Speaker

ADULT: There are rumors that the Quiet Children and Silence Slaves wait for some unnamed, messianic figure. That is dangerous because it primes these young people for manipulation and abuse by would-be cult leaders. But so far, it has not come to that. Three outsiders over the years tried to gather the Quiet Children and the Silence Slaves to them as followers. One abandoned it as too much effort for too little reward. One fled after a terrible beating. One vanished. The Quiet Children and Silence Slaves still wait for their messiah.

CHILD: The Silence Slaves say the Speaker is coming. The Speaker is like the Quiet Children but possessed of “the true Voice.” The Speaker stole it from the Hungry Mother during its escape from her throat. That makes the Speaker powerful. The Speaker will be able to wake up the cattle. The Speaker isn't coming to offer grace or forgiveness, or even to give meaning to life, but for revenge against the Hungry Mother and to give meaning to pain. (Alantea Curtis: “Speaker wake 'em all up. All come up cuttin' and stabbin'.”)

Sredni Vashtar

ADULT: Sredni Vashtar is the rarest concept in the Quiet Children's faith. It is a sort of combination of Ragnarok, the Second Coming, and the apocalypse of Revelations. The Speaker seems to be the key. Stories vary wildly, but they all revolve around the end goal of informing mankind that they are cattle for the Hungry Mother. When that happens, the suffering people and angels will cry out in a single choir of pain. Sredni Vashtar will hear and come.

CHILD: Sredni Vashtar is asleep. The Hungry Mother keeps Sredni Vashtar locked in her cellar. But the lock won't hold. When the Speaker wakes up enough of the cattle, they'll cry out all their pain and wake up Sredni Vashtar. Sredni Vashtar will come out and eat the Hungry Mother. Then we'll all be free.

CHILD: Sredni Vashtar is violent and savage but honest and pure. Sredni Vashtar lives only to hunt. Just like human animals eat other animals, Sredni Vashtar eats other gods. Sredni Vashtar is truth. It does not tolerate the lies and unnatural corruption of the Hungry Mother's factory farm.

ANY RESEARCH OF THE NAME: "Sredni Vashtar" is a very short story by the author Saki. Any player can find its full text online. Perhaps some lost child found the story and took its eloquent cruelty to heart. Robledo is fascinated, if confused, to learn the term comes from an early 20th-century short story; he'd always assumed it was a nonsense phrase the children made up. An Agent who encountered it at Cornucopia House loses 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

The Empty House

Father Robledo tells the Agents that the people most attached to the legend of the Hungry Mother, and those most likely responsible for their graffiti, are often found across the street in an abandoned house. The Father has no qualms about bearing witness against those that lurk in that abandoned house. The young men and women who congregate there don't associate with his church except through Silence Slaves, and even then only to sow dissent and fear. They've been violent toward residents, and he suspects they bring even more drugs into the neighborhood. Robledo laments, "If you can get them away from here for good, I'll sign and testify to whatever you want. Policemen are always writing fictions. Maybe bearing false witness can serve a purpose for once. God help me."

The interior of the desolate, split-level home across the street is visible from the street. The boarded-up doors lie burst open, hacked down. The mold-carpeted floor holds the remains of camping

equipment, broken needles, and trash. The air stinks of red spray-paint used to tag the filthy yellow wallpaper that bubbles off the walls in the swamp humidity.

The Agents see no predators lurking around the Empty House, nor any animals at all. If they ask about it, one sees a mangy but dangerous-looking stray dog trot near the house as if familiar with it, then stop, sniff the air a few times, whine, and run away.

Robledo refuses to go anywhere near the place without a **Persuade** roll. It's dark, and he doesn't trust anyone they're likely to find inside. If they convince him to go, the priest shows more courage than anyone else he ever warned about the place before Agents arrived.

Signs on the Walls

The same symbols repeat across the walls, over and over again, in the same uniform order:

- » **AT THE FAR RIGHT:** A pair of alligators, on hind legs and baring jaws at each other in a sort of arch. A shape like a car beneath.
- » **LEFT OF THE ALLIGATORS:** A pole with a pair of bull horns atop it. The half-circle of the sun—radiating lines of light—sets behind the symbol.
- » **LEFT OF THE POLE:** A picture of the moon over a non-descript line of horizon. Stars dot the background in a uniform pattern across all instances of the image. A dead tree in a distinctive shape, empty limbs curling, is silhouetted in the foreground against the moon.
- » **BENEATH THE MOON:** A campfire seen through a thicket of skinny trees. A ring of stick figures hold hands around it.
- » **ANOTHER DESIGN IS DRAWN HERE AND THERE, NOT PART OF THE PATTERN:** A small, childlike figure with red hands stands triumphant over larger, adult victims all lying in blood. Their number equals the number of Teeth. The head of each victim has a red splotch that might represent the brain. Other children and small predatory animals watch in a crowd.



The Voice and the Pit

A high whisper begins to follow the Agents as they search the ruins. It has no source they can tell but seems to come from the walls themselves. It speaks in the harsh rasp and clipped, clumsy diction of a woman who has hardly ever spoken at all.

- » “She hungered. She God. She Sredni Vashtar. She eat it all, but eat you most. Ate with and on forever on. You stink of Outside.”
- » “Hungry Mama, mama to you. They grab babies from heaven, but Hungry Mama send you, say Mine, give back! Hungry Mama make both. Make us and make you. Make us when God save us.”
- » “God gonna eat Hungry Mama. Wake up and bust free and eat.”
- » “Elle and Sammy thinks you feed God. Thinks you not like us. Thinks you Red-Minded. Thinks God is ate you up. Tommy thinks you just is do the chewing. Just a tooth. Which? Ate up, or eat?

Or ate up and eat, same time? Like us? Like bite the tongue.”

- » “We find out which. We see. Smell and see. Ate or eat? You a tooth, make you sharp. Just meat? Eat you up. Surprise Jenny. Singing good for surprises. Only good in it.”
- » “Phil first to go tea time and come back after. You know Condly were second. Others went in the ground, but Phil different. Most different than everybody. Phil change.”
- » “I ask Phil teach me the milk trick he’d sell the red-mind men. Hadda ask hard. You smell it? The tricks we was taught? You wanna see? Learned it to show you.”

The voice speaks as the Agents search. An Agent who makes a **Search** roll finds the voice seems loudest in the wreckage of a fallen staircase in the center of the house. A second **Search** roll indicates that the wreckage seems to have been moved recently and

only some of it moved back. A few shattered drywall panels, boards, and stretches of sodden, rotten carpet cover a gap. Naked wooden stairs lead down, small nails jutting and rusting.

The Basement

The Empty House was one of many in Miami built with a basement. The water table is high so near the coast, rising sometimes within inches of the surface. And the aquifer runs through limestone and carbonate rock, risking a sinkhole with every incautious excavation. Foolish or shady developers dug deep anyway. They added sealants and advertised the basement as a feature guaranteed against flooding. After flooding came, the house never sold again.

The basement has decayed even more than the upper house. Paneling and drywall crumbled away from raw, clammy bricks. The floor is a rot of soggy carpet and ragged foam over rough cement. A strange, earthy fume of burned herbs or fungus haunts the air, drifting from a mass that smokes in an ancient coffee can. Candles flicker around a sort of shrine built of cat bones and alligator teeth. Paraphernalia of every kind of high litter the floor and a couple of wobbling tables and folding chairs.

Jennifer Leah Wills waits for the Agents. She is on the short side, a mixed-race woman who has never known a home since Cornucopia House. She has wasted away from years of abuse and addiction. Her skin, pocked and scabbed, is yellowish from

DISINFORMATION

YELLOW CARD

LATE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

In the womb, children begin differentiating the melodies and tonality of their mother's speech. This begins a critical period of language acquisition that stretches from birth until puberty. Neuroplasticity during this developmental stage allows the associations of sound and meaning, sign and signifier, to form at remarkable speeds. When neuroplasticity slows during puberty, unconscious language acquisition degrades into the conscious, deliberate, and difficult process of adult learning. Much of what we understand of the effects of interfering with childhood language acquisition comes from thankfully rare case studies of horrifying neglect and abuse.

When the Agents freed Jennifer Wills in 2001, she was nearly seven and had already lost years of development to the cruel silence of Cornucopia House. She further resisted the therapeutic efforts of the staff at King-Torino. The few scraps of English she absorbed over the years are entirely idiosyncratic.

Agents that have **Anthropology** or **Psychotherapy** at 20% or higher realize that the shortening of Wills's critical period of language acquisition permanently marked her speech. Her pitch, intonation, and pronunciation are clear enough, but she has little understanding of verb conjugation, fixed syntax, or grammatical norms. Her vocabulary, in raw word count, is similar in size to a first grader, despite pulling from the lexicons of juvenile detention centers, psychiatric treatment facilities, and homelessness.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

liver disease. Tattoos around and on her lips imitate stitches. When shut, it looks like her mouth was sewn together. Her thin left forearm has a rough tattoo of a fat cartoon alligator standing up like a man. It sports an insane smile that drips gore from a lolling tongue and jagged fangs. It holds a trumpet made of bones.

An Agent who saw a 2010 photo of Wills from King-Torino recognizes her. So does Father Robledo. If the Agents brought him to the Empty House, we leave his reaction to its horrors to the Handler's imagination.

An Agent subject to the **Scent** power feels the hungry stink of the unnatural coming powerfully from Wills. The reek is pungent, but somehow secondary.

The **Scent** comes even stronger from a hole in the corner, where pipes and a sump pump were ripped out long ago and left a narrow brick pit.

Sharpening

When she gets bored with the Agents, or when they attack her, Wills chants the one-turn ritual Philip “taught” her as she gouged out his eyes. See **THAT GOOD SMOKE** on page 192 for the spell's effects. The boy intuited the spell after a childhood marinated in the unnatural discharge of the Magna Mater during Babushka's ritual abuse. Before he was tortured into shock by his fellow Silence Slave, he used it to prostitute himself on the streets of Miami for years, replaying the greatest hits of his lifetime of trauma for depraved johns in order to fund a drug habit. Anything extra he could steal while the johns lolled away under the ritual's stupor went to the Quiet Children, his street family who could not—and need not—speak for themselves.

Wills, in contrast, uses the ritual to “reminisce” with the Agents. She has abandoned her only loving family for the chance. The basement of the Empty House is already rife with the mix of rare, occult herbs and fungi required to cast the spell, the odor overwhelmed by mold, rot, and supernatural stink. For Wills, this doesn't seem so strange an impulse. She regards the Agents as her real family. Or at least one of its appendages.

Wills changes the world for each Agent who succumbs to the ritual. They find themselves transported to Babushka's cottage before it all burned down, or rather to the treacly illusion Babushka presented: a kindly Russian grandmother's home full of soft blankets, with warm tea on the table and cookies baking in an oven. Each Agent is alone in that illusion. To those who resisted, the ones who succumbed just stand still, smiling, no matter what happens around them or to them.

Wills uses her boxcutter first on any Agents who resist the illusion. She is protected by the Witch Oil ritual—see **WITCH OIL** on page 193—until her WP run out. If she lives long enough, Wills begins cutting the Agents in the illusion. She aims to torment them and to enjoy their strange distraction, so she inflicts normal weapon damage each time rather than the heightened damage of attacking a helpless victim. Truly, she doesn't want to kill them so much as provoke a reaction from the god they serve. If they destroy her, that's a form of embrace: the sensation Wills has missed ever since foul language severed her connection to the divine predator.

A hallucinating Agent who takes damage can try again to throw off the vision of the cottage. In the illusion, they don't experience the damage as physical harm but as rising hunger and thirst. An Agent who dies while in the illusion merely yawns and lies down on a sofa or rug to sleep. Only when the Agents snap out of it do they find all the damage she inflicted. Coming out of the hallucination costs 0/1D4 **SAN** from the unnatural. Each who finds themselves stabbed and bleeding loses another 0/1D4 **SAN** from violence.

In the Pit

In a thin scum of foul water, atop the bones of small dogs and cats, cringes a withered and bloody white man mauled by torture, eyes recently blinded but his ears and tongue left carefully intact.

He goes by Philly Phil. He never knew his surname. The old Maryland records listed him as Philip Dominic Boone, born in 1994. He had graduated



from Babushka's horrors and was due to enter the Skoptsi when the Agents attacked Cornucopia House.

Maryland sent him to Arnold Springs Children's Home in 2001 for specialized treatment of severe trauma. He went to West Virginia Children's Home in 2006. He ran away in 2008 and began mastering the "gifts" that came with Babushka's favor.

Phil begs them to help him. He says Jennifer made him teach her those things. If the Agents save him, he'll teach them. He pleads. If the Agents pull him out, he makes good on his offer to teach his rituals. If they prefer to murder him, he can't resist. It costs them 0/1D6 SAN from violence. Turning him over to the Program costs 0/1 SAN from helplessness due to the suspicion that it only adds a few hours to his life.

Testing Phil's blood finds traces of the substance that resulted in the "stew" of Cornucopia House graves. He is the only source around for the key ingredient of the Witch Oil ritual.

The Scent never leaves him. Extended time near the corruption may be enough to drive the Teeth mad.

Deciphering the Symbols

What's the date? That is important in giving the final details of the symbols. Look back on when the scenario began and how many days have passed.

Agents can roll an INT×5 test after some time on Google Earth, or they might ask Father Robledo to translate the symbols. If the Agents have recruited Deputy Eckstein, he recognizes the first two, the alligator sculpture and the steakhouse sign. The code is fairly obvious to those from the area. If they've discovered Nika's thesis or used the power of the Call, figuring out the code is even easier.

- » The alligators fighting on hindquarters are a giant sculpture, built over Interstate 75 on the way west out of Miami. It was a financial boondoggle in an attempt to expand tourism into more rural areas by promoting I-75 as Alligator Alley.
- » The pole with horns is a giant sign on Alligator Alley advertising a steakhouse. It stands outside the Miccosukee Service Plaza, the gas station at

>>The Sky Over Miami

Date	Moon Phase	Moon	Sun
Sat., 9 SEP 2016	Half	Sets 12:19 a.m. Rises 1:43 p.m.	Rises 6:57 a.m. Sets 7:19 p.m.
Sat., 16 SEP 2016	Full (Harvest Moon)	Sets 6:41 a.m. Rises 7:21 p.m.	Rises 6:59 a.m. Sets 7:13 p.m.
Sat., 23 SEP 2016	Half	Rises 12:22 a.m. Sets 1:51 p.m.	Rises 7:00 a.m. Sets 7:07 p.m.
Sat., 30 SEP 2016	New	Rises 6:40 a.m. Sets 7:00 p.m.	Rises 7:02 a.m. Sets 6:59 p.m.

the intersection of I-75 and West State Road 84. That's the last good place to stop for gas in the western drive across the state. A tribal police station across the street keeps boats in a garage and is usually staffed by one or two officers. Facing the sign from east to west, the setting sun frames the giant horned sign.

- » The moon in the drawing of tree and stars is in the same phase as the moment the Agents decipher the graffiti. Draw an estimated phase from **THE SKY OVER MIAMI**. The stars in the drawing match exactly those around the moon in the sky. If the dead tree is depicted with the same level of detail, the code might convey a place to turn off the highway and a specific time of night.

Interstate 75 (Alligator Alley) stretches across the Everglades. There are hiking trails and camping sites here and there, but Father Robledo insists that most of the homeless avoid it. It's too wet, too far, and too infested with swamp creatures to reward sleeping rough.

Other rolls can get advanced interpretations.

- » **FORENSICS OR SEARCH:** The planks on the boards holding shut the abandoned home don't have weather-aged splinters. The wood was broken recently. The art is also new, some of the paint still wet. This was done recently, perhaps by the same person(s) that killed Crystal Killian.
- » **ART OR CRAFT:** Aerosol spray paint is difficult to manipulate even for experienced artists. The line

work of these tags, though simple, is remarkably detailed and consistent. It's amazing they have the skill to communicate with these pictures and with such complexity. An Agent who rolls a critical success also gains the same information as from making a **Science (Astronomy)** roll.

- » **OCCULT OR SCIENCE (ASTRONOMY):** The stars behind the horns depict portions of the constellations Aquila, Aquarius, Pegasus, Pisces, and Cetus. Star charts promise that, if Agents view moonrise that night, they'll see the same arrangement of constellations depicted in the image. The nondescript line of horizon before the moon is the exact shape drawn by the shadows when facing south tonight. This realization costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.
- » **BUREAUCRACY:** There is no reason for Delta Green to provide help if things go wrong. Agents who die on a secret mission in the swamps might make convenient patsies to take the blame for Cornucopia House. On the other hand, if the killers are hiding beneath a bridge in a gator-filled bog, that's the perfect opportunity to wrap this up tight and prove the worth of the Agents to the Program. Either way, they are on their own.
- » **MILITARY SCIENCE (LAND):** Going to a place like the camp at Alligator Alley, it would make sense to attack from two directions in approaches with an "L" shape. When the fires of the camp become visible, coordinate digitally to strike in unison, finding cover in the trees where there's

no visibility from the road. Make a killbox of dry land, nowhere to flee except into the mire. By the end, a trucker thinks he hears some backfires on the lonely morning highway, and there's no more to be said about it.

Feeding Ground

Once Agents find the message left near St. Laurence Church, destiny aims them down Interstate 75: Alligator Alley. Past the giant faux-bronze alligators. Past the sad, dingy yellow of the truck stop. Slow-flowing canals run on either side, most of the way, each as wide as the interstate.

A withered tree, all too distinctive, stands alone between the southern lanes and the tall fence that holds back the wilds, as if it came forward to grow bravely on its own and then died. The fence, meant to keep alligators and panthers back from the highway, has been hacked wide open. Signs warn of danger. No hikers or campers are safe here.

Cellphone coverage is uneven, and the Nameless God despises communication anyway. Any call needs a **Luck** roll to get through. Emergency response is likewise spotty thanks to years of budget slashing. Help takes 1D4×30 minutes to arrive.

Agents could get help from tribal police or park rangers before they set out. Do they wish to expose such strangers to the unnatural horrors of Delta Green?

If the Agents warn Pitzerelli that they expect a horrifically deadly confrontation and need backup, let one of them make a **Luck** roll. If it succeeds, he arranges for a Florida-based asset with survival and hunting training to meet them in 24 hours. Eveline Roberts, a retired National Parks Service ranger in her late 50s, brings a heavy pistol and a heavy hunting rifle, has 60% in Boating, Firearms, Stealth, Survival, and a few other relevant skills, and has 50 SAN. She is extremely likely to die when the chimeras rise.

The Children Wait

A faint trail leads from the breach in the fence into the swamp, a slow slog through trees and undergrowth where still water seeps and the wise would know to fear. It meanders along stretches of muddy but solid earth surrounded by sawgrass marsh. Mosquitoes are inescapable. Mires and thickets deepen and thicken claustrophobically with every step. An amphibian chorus sings deafeningly all around: rhythmic squawks and pulses sound almost musical above a constant, painfully high-pitched ringing, punctuated here and there by low, insistent croaks. Clicks, buzzes, and clacks seem to follow the human intruders. An Agent with **Survival** at 30% or higher, or who makes a successful roll at +20%, identifies some as great egrets and anhingas. Occasional belching growls, deep and menacing, are unmistakably alligators.

IN THE FIELD

To the Feeding Ground

The graffiti is meant to lead the Agents to the feeding ground of Alligator Alley. Steer the interpretation down Highway 75 and past the Miccosukee Service Plaza. Keep them headed west, following the moon until they find a dead tree with a weird shape poking from the swamp, marking where they should go. That's the only place Agents can find answers. Delta Green has no more resources for them. It's their mess, and they can clean it up or get cleaned up with it. It's all been leading here. It always has been.





By the time the Agents come in sight of the Quiet Children and their campfire, there are few lines of sight from solid ground that extend more than 50 meters. Agents could take time to prepare by using **Survival** and **Military Science (Land)** to find the best sightlines and most reliable ground on which to set overwatch. The players should describe their efforts but make no rolls yet. They'll find out soon how well they did.

Whenever the Agents come in person, the Quiet Children wait for them. Agents who piece together the meaning of the graffiti weeks ahead of time and head straight for the swamp, planning to set up observation long in advance, find the Quiet Children already there.

The Camp

Struggling through saw palmettos and grasping shrubs, the Agents see six young men and women standing huddled together around a fire. They sway back and forth, wailing together in a wordless, breathy keening. Some look like average customers at Wal-Mart. A couple are gaunt, covered in sores and wearing filthy rags. None have yet reached their mid-twenties,

though hard lives have added years behind their eyes. They clutch each other, moaning. Agents who studied old photos of the children of Cornucopia House and make **INT×5** rolls recognize some of them here. These are victims the Agents saved from Yelena Kalamatiano. That realization costs 0/1 **SAN** from helplessness.

Hearing or seeing the Agents approach, the group separates. Most warily begin to back away toward the swamp. The teen in the middle of the hug approaches the Agents. The Agents may recognize him as Thomas Perez, a survivor of Cornucopia House who nearly escaped the pull of their terrible god. His left hand shows what looks like the angry scar of a deep cut still healing, identifying him as the third of Kerry Houghton's killers. Tears well in his eyes.

As with Elle Gable and Samuel Ball, Agents chosen as God's Teeth feel some inexplicable connection with Perez. If the Agents spare him long enough, Perez earnestly signs something in American Sign Language. (See **ASL** on this page for details.) The other Quiet Children silently wade into mud and brown water.

DISINFORMATION

YELLOW CARD

ASL

An Agent who knows American Sign Language understands the young man's signs. Does an Agent know ASL? It's not hard to learn, but few take the trouble. Ask each player whether their Agent has some reason they might have learned it. If one is convincing, let them know it as a kind of special training. If they brought Deputy Eckstein along, it turns out his mother is deaf, and he learned ASL long ago.

Perez signs: *"I know you serve her. Her teeth. Thank you. We've missed you. He is coming. He is coming. But she must not starve. We will feed her. Now you take us to her."* The sign for "we" in "we will feed her" encompassed the Agents and Perez and the cultists and monsters together. Agents who realize that the plan was always to either die at the hands of the Agents or kill them lose 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

The Hunt

Perez angrily stops signing and slices his hand with a knife, as if rejecting the hand's words. In the swamp, alligators rise, each nearly four meters long, as if they have been waiting patiently for this moment. The reptiles rend flesh and crack the bones of the ecstatic men and women. The Agents lose 0/1 SAN from violence.

Perez raises the blade and charges the Agents. Behind him, shapes rise from the mud, the alligators and the dead fused into inchoate things that defy examination. There is one for each of the Teeth. They skitter, thrash, and lope toward the Agents, joining the charge. The Agents lose 1/1D6 SAN from the unnatural. Temporary insanity here means either mindless flight or freezing up and shutting down in shock.

And what if the Agents refuse to leave their cars and the traffic of Alligator Alley? Perez approaches to communicate by ASL. When he rushes the Agents, the chimeras come raging out from the trees. Witnesses in passing cars veer screaming out of the way. The Agents must make a **Luck** roll each turn. Failure means a passing car wrecks. A fumble means a

passenger retains enough sense to record the horror on cellphone video. Further complications and consequences are up to the Handler.

Probabilistic Chimeras

The survivors of Cornucopia House have had their flesh torn apart and fused with the alligators that consumed them. Abominations of flesh and scales, bony scutes and jagged fangs, sprawl and stumble toward the Teeth. Human fingers grasp and mad human eyes stare from random reptilian distensions. There's no explaining it. The things don't have a name. There is only the terror and the need to survive it. See **CHIMERAS** on page 190 for their details. Unlike the natural animals suborned by Samuel Ball and Elle Gable, the chimeras hunt the Agents even after Thomas Perez dies.

The Agents have no power over these unnatural creatures as they might have had over Elle Gable's dogs or Samuel Ball's bear.

It takes the chimeras one turn to emerge from the blood and muck and another turn to clamber within reach of the Agents and Perez. The chimeras want the

Agents but are blood-mad. One within reach of multiple humans attacks them at random.

Agents who set up overwatch positions apart from the meeting now roll **Survival** and/or **Military Science (Land)**. Each success grants them one turn to fire on Perez and the horrors before those threats descend upon the Agents who went nearer. A critical success grants a +20% bonus to that Agent's first attack. A fumble turns a critical success to an ordinary success, cancels out a success, or costs an overwatch Agent a turn; their sightlines turn out catastrophically obscured.

The Agents' wisest course of action may be to kill Perez and flee, hoping to reach the relative safety of their vehicles. If a chimera is near enough to attack, getting out of reach requires a **Dodge** roll that overcomes the chimera's attack. If out of reach, players can describe their Agents trying to escape.

- » **CLIMB:** Retreating from the underpass up steep embankment toward the highway requires two

consecutive **DEX**×5 rolls. If either roll fails, the Agent slides down the muddy hill toward the pursuing chimeras. Agents can use **Athletics** to arrest a fall, but two successes are still needed to crest the surface. The chimeras are too heavy to scale the embankment.

- » **ELUDE:** Roll **Survival** to slip away into the swamp. On a failure, the Agent gets mired in the bog. The next **Dodge** attempt to avoid a chimera is at -20%. Even if Agents do manage to pick their way across the high ground long enough to escape the creatures, trouble is just beginning. Exiting the swamp at night requires a **Navigation** success. For every failure, an hour passes and the Agent loses 1 HP and 1D4 WP to the terrible conditions. This lasts until they succeed, get rescued, or day breaks.
- » **OUTLAST:** After each roll, a chimera loses 3 HP as the inhuman will that holds it together begins to lose interest. At 0 HP, the chimera sags back into the mire and begins to fall apart as the animating wrath of the Nameless God subsides.



Aftermath

Saving Franklin Price's life earns each Agent 1D4 SAN.

Each Agent gains 1 SAN if they kill Jennifer Wills and no one else dies in the process.

Each Agent gains 1 SAN after killing or capturing one of Houghton's murderers, provided they recognize them as the perpetrators.

Each Agent gains 1 SAN for each chimera whose destruction they cause or witness.

Once the smoke clears, remind players of the truth their Agents just learned. They know what they have become. The players should have all the information that follows, making this only a recap. If any of it has escaped them, work it into a dream of Bast as described in **INVESTIGATING BAST** on page 11.

- » An unnatural force, a once-distant god, has claimed them. They were summoned by one evil—call it Bast, Sredni Vashtar, God, whatever you like—to destroy another at Cornucopia House in 2001, and they never escaped its service. It drives them to hunt the unnatural.
- » There isn't really any choice. Everything they ever do has already been written somewhere, and every delusion of free will just sends them hurtling into the maw of...whatever it is. Live, die, work, quit, lie down and sink into the mud, it doesn't matter.
- » The Children knew. They fed themselves to it, weaving effortlessly along a current of events the Agents can never see. They sharpened the Agents into their god's new Teeth.

If these realizations are new, they cost 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

Resolutions

Delta Green's relationship with the Agents depends on the outcome of "Red Thoughts" and "White Teeth." Their rubric of success is based on four priorities.

- » **CONTAINMENT:** Did the Agents keep their mission out of the public eye? If they failed, can things be explained as freak accidents or erased through government confidentiality (their involvement in Cornucopia House)? Were Agents spotted doing anything illegal? Who are the witnesses? Can they be silenced?
- » **THREAT ELIMINATION:** Does the Program have to worry about more murders highlighting mass graves? Have the perpetrators all been captured or killed? Does the Program understand their intentions?
- » **INTEL:** Were the Agents honest about Cornucopia House? Have they mentioned the Synchronicities? The other forces at play? Does the Program know about the nature of the Teeth, or at least as much as the Agents know? Does the Program know the Teeth can be used to sniff out the unnatural?
- » **DEATH:** This condition is only met if *all* Agents selected as Teeth died.

The Handler should grade each element on a yes/no basis.

Agents never learn of these results directly. The evaluation determines the cover story for the previous operation and the attitude of Antony Pitzerelli for the remainder of the campaign.

Regardless of the result, the Program refuses to risk the exposure of additional personnel and compartmentalizes the potentially compromised Agents. With a link already established through their cover in "Red Thoughts," Pitzerelli finds himself stuck as MAS-TICATE's handler and sole contact. The U.S. Attorney becomes Delta Green's leash, and the results of "White Teeth" determine how much lead he's allowed to give.

Start Again

Containment	Y	Threat Elimination	Y
Intel	Y	All Teeth Dead	Y

The abuse at Cornucopia House is blamed on Kalamatiano and anyone else whose death can be explained away by something unrelated. The surviving Children kill themselves in grief at the loss of the Teeth. They thought their savagery was meant to begin the feast on Earth, not end it. The Program tasks a new group of Agents to track down anyone who might be left in the wake of Cornucopia House. In addition to making sure no more surprises arise, the mission's secondary objective is to see if the Program can learn how to make more Agents with the ability to detect the taint of unnatural magic. As the person most directly responsible for learning about their powers, Antony Pitzerelli is placed in charge of the new group.

The Fishbowl

Containment	Y	Threat Elimination	Y
Intel	Y	All Teeth Dead	N

Working Group MASTICATE had good effect on target. More research needs to be done on exactly what has infected the Agents before a course of action can be recommended. Jobs are shuffled to place the Teeth as close together as possible, both in terms of their cover and work for the Program. They are required to undergo frequent tests and physicals, sometimes twice weekly. Eventually, the Program moves MASTICATE to active status, hoping to get more data on the Agents' strange new instincts by observing them. Any dead members are replaced with Agents selected by the Program, briefed by Pitzerelli to spy on the remaining Teeth. Pitzerelli uses middle management to spy on his employees, directing investigations in the field while collecting intel from any double Agents. For the remainder of the campaign, anything revealed to Pitzerelli finds its way to the top of the Program.

The Grind

Containment	Y	Threat Elimination	Y
Intel	N	All Teeth Dead	N

Though still suspicious of the Agents, the Program deems elimination of the threat proof of loyalty. The blame for Cornucopia House is placed on its dead caretakers. Any subsequent violence is explained away or kept quiet with a combination of rabies outbreak, gang activity, and Homeland Security gag orders. The members of Working Group MASTICATE obviously need more supervision, but their talents seem to be wasted away from the front lines. Their lives are rearranged so that they may be more easily briefed and sent into the field. Dead Agents are replaced by new ones given explicit instructions to keep the Teeth in check. Pitzerelli serves as the team's point of contact. His anxiety at being held unfairly responsible for MASTICATE's future actions is palpable at every briefing.

Open Case

Containment	Y	Threat Elimination	N
Intel	Y	All Teeth Dead	N

If the Agents fail to kill or capture the murderers of Kerry Houghton and "Crystal Killian," the incident resolves itself. Their purpose unfulfilled, the cultists kill themselves in the seclusion of the swamp. Delta Green, however, doesn't know this. It casts blame for the Cornucopia House mass grave on a conspiracy between Kalamatiano and the previous social workers, insulating the Program by throwing the scandal in Maryland's lap. The motive for Houghton's murder is thought to be revenge by the abused children. The link to the case in Florida is dismissed as a false lead. Agents have their lives rearranged to make Working Group MASTICATE a semi-permanent assignment. Their mandate is to pursue the rest of the Children, but Delta Green's true purpose is to keep the Teeth close and ready to take a fall. Pitzerelli is assigned as group leader and tasked with alerting The Program if MASTICATE's liability becomes unacceptable. Aware what his job might one day require, Pitzerelli remains distant for the remainder of the campaign, taking a hands-off approach to leadership and limiting face-to-face interaction with the Agents whenever possible.

Free Agents

Containment	N	Threat Elimination	Y
Intel	Y	All Teeth Dead	N

If Delta Green knows about the weird sensations and coincidences plaguing the Agents, it isn't about to let that element loose in the prison population by letting the Agents take the fall. Agents are quietly dismissed from jobs or arrested, and their trials are closed to the public. Depending on how sympathetic Pitzerelli is feeling, they might eventually be exonerated and reinstated to new government positions. He's also content to plead them out in bogus deals, providing light sentences but branding the Agents as felons. The only other option for Agents is an altogether more permanent retirement plan. Officially unemployable by the government, Working Group MASTICATE still must answer to a Program eager to learn what they are and how they can be used. Pitzerelli resents being forced to direct a squad of disgraced human experiments. His interactions with MASTICATE cycle through morbid curiosity, disgust, and fear at what the Teeth have become.

Quarantine

Containment	N	Threat Elimination	Y
Intel	N	All Teeth Dead	N

Similar to "Free Agents," but Delta Green makes MASTICATE permanent merely because it's easier to watch the Agents than bury them in the desert. The Teeth are quarantined into a fuckup squad, but they're continually thrown into the path of eldritch terrors due to the manipulations of the force beyond. Pitzerelli is somewhat sympathetic to their plight, but resentful of being forced to manage a bunch of dead-enders. Beyond protection of the Program and himself, his goal in any interaction with MASTICATE is to end it as quickly and as cheaply as possible.

Confinement

Containment	Y	Threat Elimination	N
Intel	N	All Teeth Dead	N

At least it's been kept quiet. Some days, that's enough. Pitzerelli rearranges the lives of the Agents so that their Program work is more centralized. He's very clear that this is just to keep an eye on them. The Program doesn't trust them to do much but sit around as emergency scapegoats. But the force from beyond won't have its Teeth go unused. Further Delta Green operations involving MASTICATE ripple through the legacy of that night in 2001 or find the Agents through chance acquaintances, clerical errors, and bad luck. In an expanded, episodic campaign, the coincidences that keep putting the Teeth in the line of fire make the Program extremely suspicious. Its leaders begin studying the Agents secretly, with Pitzerelli as their primary observer. He remains skeptical of any unnatural influence selecting his team's operations, but he can't help but feel cursed alongside them.

Eradication

Containment	N	Threat Elimination	N
Intel	Y	All Teeth Dead	N

The Program knows that Agents are somehow linked to a cosmic force. They've used that unnatural power to expose the Program to harm and allow a cult of young murderers to escape. Pitzerelli politely tells all the Agents to come back to Washington, D.C. for a debrief. There, a team is positioned to kill them. The Program frames them for any and every crime it needs explained away. Survivors face a nationwide manhunt. Agents skillful enough to go underground and start over with life are done with Delta Green—until they are drawn into the confrontation with Conradin in "The Hidden God." How Bast orchestrates their contest with its other champion is up to the Handler.

Elimination

Containment	N	Threat Elimination	N
Intel	N	All Teeth Dead	Y

Thanks for playing!

Experiments and Firewalls

God's Teeth is a campaign frame intended to slot as many operations as Handlers wish between “White Teeth” and “The Hidden God.” The collection *God's Hunt* provides some options, but Handlers may write their own. The continuity of these episodic investigations requires consistently portraying Delta Green's attitude toward the Teeth. Especially if the Program suspects the Agents may be in thrall to the enemy.

In earlier scenarios, the Program may have learned of the special powers of the Teeth. If it does and decides they are not an immediate threat, it maintains Working Group MASTICATE indefinitely under Pitzerelli's reluctant leadership. The Teeth become an experiment. They are kept carefully isolated from every other part of the Program. The only members of Delta Green they ever see or hear from are each other and Pitzerelli. As far as they're concerned, that is the entire extent of Delta Green. New Agents who join the team are folded into that firewall.

The Program has two key questions:

- » *Can it use the Teeth to confirm unnatural threats?*
- » *Are the Teeth more effective than others at neutralizing unnatural threats?*

The answers to those questions come from what the Program knows of the Agents' previous experiences in the campaign. Those answers determine how the Program uses the Agents.

Use these guidelines to shape an overview of further operations the Teeth must confront.

No and No: Back to 'Normal'

If the answer to both key questions seems to be “No,” and the Teeth show no new signs of unnatural influence, then MASTICATE eventually resumes working like any other team. It's still kept largely apart from other parts of the Program, but that's more a precaution than a hard rule. Exceptions are sometimes made.

Yes and No: Detection Dogs

If the Teeth can be used to confirm threats but are not unusually effective at confronting them, they remain carefully isolated from the rest of the Program. The mission changes. Their function becomes intelligence rather than direct response. The Program sends them in to “sniff out” a threat and then sends them home. Other teams are sent to deal with it. Word of this special purpose spreading could attract the interest of factions hoping to exploit and monetize the unnatural, from March Technologies and its offshoots to Canada's M-EPIC, Britain's PISCES, or Russia's GRU SV-8.

No and Yes: Attack Dogs

If the Teeth seem better than others at neutralizing—but not discovering—the existence of threats, they remain carefully isolated and their mission changes in another way. They are sent to deal with *bad* threats. And “bad” by the Program's standards means the worst. Threats that already destroyed good agents.

Yes and Yes: Hunting Dogs

If the Teeth seem better at detecting *and* neutralizing threats, the Program uses them primarily to help confirm threats and, in the worst cases, to put threats down. To prevent losing all subject to a single threat, the Program splits them up, sending Teeth in singles and pairs alongside caretaker teams tasked with maintaining the usefulness of ‘the assets.’ Though nebulously briefed on what the Teeth can do, they are given explicit instructions to watch for any unnatural threat in “the assets” and to shoot if they see it. The Teeth find themselves at occasional debriefing interviews to go over the development of their powers in detail. The more expertise in HUMINT or Psychotherapy a cursed Agent has, the sooner they conclude that the Program's interest goes beyond exploiting their abilities and into their possible reproduction. We leave further developments on that line to the Handler.

Characters and Rituals

Samuel Ball

See **UNSEALED: SAMUEL BALL** on page 132 for Ball's background since Cornucopia House. He comes to the Agents with unnatural strength beyond his size. Note that all attacks with bolt-cutters are at -20% for their unwieldiness, which is already included in his attacks.

Samuel Ball

Quiet Child, age 20

STR 18 CON 14 DEX 14 INT 12 POW 6 CHA 8
HP 16 WP 6 SAN 0

SKILLS: Alertness 90%, Dodge 50%, Melee Weapons 60%, Navigate 90%, Stealth 50%, Unarmed Combat 55%, Unnatural 10%.

ATTACKS: *Bolt cutters* 40%, damage 1D8+2 and snip (see **SNIP**).

A heavy stick 60%, damage 1D6+2.

Unarmed 55%, damage 1D4+1.

SNIP: On a critical success with this attack, some part of the target of the Handler's choosing gets caught between the blades and chopped off.

SCENT: Strong.

The Black Bear

The Humane Society of the United States recommends these actions if you encounter a black bear:

- » Stand and face the bear directly. Never run away from or approach it.
- » Make yourself look as big as possible by spreading your arms or, better yet, a coat.
- » Make as much noise as possible by yelling, banging pots and pans or using other noise-making devices.
- » If the bear approaches and you have bear spray, spray the bear as it approaches.
- » In the very rare case that a black bear does attack you, fight back (don't play dead).
- » After the bear leaves, remove whatever attracted him to the location (barbecue grill, bird feeder, pet food, or garbage).

Black Bear

Huge and furious beast in thrall to Samuel Ball

STR 23 CON 1 DEX 10 POW 10
HP 20 WP 10

ARMOR: 4 points of fur and thick hide.

SKILLS: Alertness 70%.

ATTACKS: *Bite* 30%, damage 2D6.

Claws 50%, damage 2D4 and hold (see **HOLD**).

HOLD: A claw attack that rolls an odd number for damage also pins the target.

SCENT: None.

Nika Chilikov

See **THE CARETAKER** on page 150 for Chilikov's details.

Nika Chilikov

Rescued Cornucopia resident and child psychology student, age 22

STR 10 CON 12 DEX 12 INT 11 POW 11 CHA 8
HP 11 WP 11 SAN 42 BREAKING POINT 35

ADAPTATIONS AND DISORDERS: Depersonalization disorder, depression, adapted to helplessness, adapted to violence.

SKILLS: Alertness 60%, Bureaucracy 25%, Dodge 50%, Foreign Language (English) 35%, Law 10%, HUMINT 50%, Occult 15%, Psychotherapy 55%.

ATTACKS: *Unarmed* 40%, damage 1D4-1.

SCENT: None.



Chimeras

Red in tooth and claw, a horrid creation of Bast. It can flop and run about as fast as an ordinary human adult but is subject to clumsy stumbling. Deranged and broken in thought and instinct, it is as likely to savage one of its own as a known threat.

Probabilistic Chimera

Symmetry-breaking amalgamation of alligator and human.

STR 22 CON 18 DEX 8 POW 10

HP 20 WP 10

ARMOR: 3 points of scales and flesh made strangely resilient by its transformation; not reduced by Armor Piercing.

SKILLS: Alertness 50%, Stealth 60%, Swim 50%.

ATTACKS: *Bite* 40%, damage 2D6 and hold (see **HOLD**).

Thrash 40%, damage 2D4 and knock down (see **KNOCK DOWN**).

Grapple 40%, damage 1D4 and embrace (see **EMBRACE**).

FRENZY: If a chimera is near more than one potential victim, roll randomly to see which it attacks.

HOLD: A bite attack that rolls an odd number for damage also pins the target. Alligators sometimes drag held prey into nearby water to drown or bleed out.

KNOCK DOWN: If this attack hits, the thing attempts an opposed **STR**×5 test against the target. On a success, the target is knocked prone.

EMBRACE: If this attack hits, the thing's remaining human limbs attempt an opposed **STR**×5 test against the target. On a success, the next bite attack gets +20% to hit.

ROTTING: After every few minutes, the chimera loses 3 HP as the inhuman will that holds it together begins to lose interest.

UNGAINLY: In pursuit, on land or in water, the chimera must roll **DEX**×5 tests to catch prey or escape. The terrifying speed of alligators is lost in their grotesque mutations.

SANITY LOSS: 1/1D6 from the unnatural.

SCENT: None.

Casey Eckstein

Blond and burly, Eckstein is a former high-school linebacker and Marine reservist whose bulk is still mostly muscle. He always wanted to be a cop. Taking the initiative to pursue the Killian death—he believes it's a murder—to a site in Maryland that turned up another murder and the mass grave of 56 children should have made his career. Instead, it got him fired. If he connects the Agents to all this awfulness and his own misfortune, he deeply wants to turn them in and use that to get his job back. Part of him yearns for them to be part of some deep state child-murder conspiracy and for him to be the one to expose it. Driven to temporary insanity, he likely responds to violence by fleeing, to helplessness by fighting, and to the unnatural by freezing up.

Ex-Deputy Eckstein

"Blue lives matter," age 25

STR 16 CON 13 DEX 14 INT 12 POW 10 CHA 8

HP 15 WP 10 SAN 50 BREAKING POINT 40

ARMOR: 5 from a reinforced Kevlar vest (stored at home).

SKILLS: Alertness 60%, Athletics 71%, Criminology 25%, Dodge 57%, Driving 38%, Firearms 45%, First Aid 30%, Forensics 12%, Heavy Weapons 20%, HUMINT 23%, Law 20%, Melee Weapons 55%, Military Science (Land) 15%, Pilot (Boats) 25%, Stealth 21%, Survival 34%, Swim 30%, Unarmed Combat 60%.

SPECIAL TRAINING: American Sign Language.

ATTACKS: *Glock 22 pistol with hot-loaded rounds* 45%, damage 1D10+1.

Weatherby Vanguard .30-06 hunting rifle with telescopic sight 45%, damage 1D12+2, Armor Piercing 3.

AR-15 carbine 45%, damage 1D12, Armor Piercing 3.

Beretta 1301 semiautomatic shotgun 65%, damage 2D8 (halved against armor).

Unarmed 55%, damage 1D4.

SCENT: None.

Elle Gable

See **GABLE'S DETAILS** on page 148.

Elle Gable

Quiet Child, age 19

STR 12 CON 14 DEX 16 INT 14 POW 10 CHA 6
HP 13 WP 10 SAN 0

SKILLS: Alertness 90%, Dodge 50%, Melee Weapons 55%, Navigate 90%, Unarmed Combat 55%, Unnatural 7%.

ATTACKS: *Viciously sharp knife* 55%, damage 1D6, Armor Piercing 3.

Unarmed 55%, damage 1D4-1.

SCENT: Strong.

Thomas Perez

See **SEALED: THOMAS PEREZ** on page 132 for Perez's background since Cornucopia House.

Perez has been deaf since birth. This made him the perfect acquisition for the silent chains used at Cornucopia House. It made him a pariah after he was rescued.

But then he was adopted by the Cunninghams. He suffered the same problems as the rest of the survivors, maybe more, but the Cunninghams could not be deterred. They learned ASL and forced him to learn as well. Each sign made him forget a portion of the god in his mind. They taught him to read. He resisted but they loved him too much. He succumbed and learned the true definition of silence as he was dragged to live in the godless world.

When Samuel Ball showed up at Thomas Perez's house a few weeks ago, he knew the second he answered the door that the wait was over. She was calling him home. There would be no more loneliness in this prison of love. Samuel gave him the knife and he set about the work. He could be of use again. He could feel her moving in the world next to him, even though her thoughts were no longer his own. Perhaps he could use that which had tainted him to her advantage.

Thomas and Samuel met with Elle outside the apartment of Kerry Houghton. He took the ticket they gave him, not even reading the destination. He found his real family, down here in the swamp, and now the angels were finally coming to take them home. Confronting the Agents, he dies smiling in the knowledge that he has met the genuine Teeth of God.

Thomas Perez

"Silence Slave" and communicator of the Maryland trio, age 17

STR 12 CON 12 DEX 14 INT 12 POW 12 CHA 10
HP 12 WP 12 SAN 0

SKILLS: Alertness 40%, Dodge 43%, Melee Weapons 35%, Unnatural 2%.

SPECIAL TRAINING: American Sign Language.

ATTACKS: *Knife* 35%, damage 1D4, Armor Piercing 3.

SCENT: Strong.

Philly Phil

See **IN THE PIT** on page 177 for Phil's details.

Philly Phil

Slave of silence and worse things, age 20

STR 8 CON 7 DEX 11 INT 9 POW 12 CHA 8
HP 8 WP 12 SAN 0

SKILLS: Alertness 70%, Dodge 50%, Navigate 40%, Pharmacy 42%, Unarmed Combat 45%, Unnatural 20%.

ATTACKS: *Unarmed* 45%, damage 1D4-2.

RITUALS: That Good Smoke, Witch Oil.

SCENT: Overwhelming.

Service Dogs

See **THERAPY ANIMALS** on page 148 for the dogs' details.

Deranged Dog

Man's best friend, sometimes

STR 12 **CON** 13 **DEX** 13 **POW** 10

HP 8 **WP** 12

ARMOR: 1 point of fur and thick skin.

SKILLS: Alertness 70%, Track by Smell 80%.

ATTACKS: Bite 30%, damage 1D6.

Knockdown 50%, damage special (see **KNOCK DOWN**).

KNOCK DOWN: If this attack hits, the dog attempts an opposed **STR**×5 test against the target; if the dog succeeds, the target is knocked prone.

SCENT: None.

Jennifer Wills

See **THE VOICE AND THE PIT** on page 175 for Wills's details.

Jennifer Wills

Quiet Child who found her voice, age 21

STR 9 **CON** 8 **DEX** 14 **INT** 12 **POW** 15 **CHA** 7

HP 9 **WP** 15 **SAN** 0

SKILLS: Alertness 60%, Dodge 50%, Melee Weapons 55%, Navigate 60%, Unarmed Combat 55%, Unnatural 15%

ATTACKS: Rusty boxcutter 55%, damage 1D4, Armor Piercing 3.

Unarmed 55%, damage 1D4–1

RITUALS: That Good Smoke, Witch Oil.

SCENT: Saturated.

Rituals

Philly Phil is happy to teach the Agents.

That Good Smoke

Simple ritual. Study time: hours; 1D4 SAN. Activation: one turn; 4 WP, 1 SAN.

While target and operator breathe the smoke of certain rare occult herbs and fungi, the operator utters a brief chanted invocation of Shub-Niggurath and spends 4 WP. Unless the target resists with a **POW**×5 roll that opposes the Ritual Activation roll, the target experiences a sensory hallucination of the operator's choosing. This can be a subtle optical illusion or a seemingly complete replacement of reality. It can cause anything from ecstasy to simple comfort to weeping agony, from wonder to abject horror. Once every few turns, the target may attempt to throw off the hallucination with an unopposed **POW**×5 roll. If it succeeds—but not if it's a critical success—the operator can spend another 4 WP to keep the hallucination in place. If the target's **POW**×5 roll fails, the hallucination lingers. They can attempt to resist again only after a few minutes. After a second failure, only after half an hour or so. After a third failure, only after 1D4 hours. After a fourth or any later failure, only after 3D6 hours. During that time, the target may try again to resist any time they take damage, losing one HP or more. The target loses no SAN during the hallucination. When it ends, the target loses 0/1 SAN from the unnatural for a benign experience or as much as 1/1D6 for the worst torment. A single use of the ritual can affect multiple targets, costing 4 WP each and allowing each to resist.

Witch Oil

Simple ritual. Study time: *hours*; 1D4 SAN. Activation: *turns*, 1 POW, 1D4 SAN.

The operator injects the subject with a fluid distilled from one of the countless spawn of Shub-Niggurath or from the blood of someone who has been subjected to a ritual such as Estrus of the Mother or Healing Balm. Unfortunately, the operator's own blood is ineffective.

Long prayers in some lost language accompany relatively simple laboratory work. The distillation floats in water, tiny, discrete black spots like oil. It is injected into a subject's bloodstream. It can be mixed with mundane drugs.

For 2D4 hours or until the subject's WP run out, the subject recovers 1D4 HP at the end of every turn at the cost of 1 WP per HP. If reduced to 0 HP while affected by the ritual, the healing can restore them to life. Seeing or experiencing this healing costs 1 SAN from the unnatural, and another 0/1D4 if it keeps someone impossibly alive. A subject who suffers from a harmful disease or infection, or even from a permanent physical injury or deformation, recovers from it over the course of the next few weeks with a successful POW×5 roll. What happens to permanent procedures such as a pacemaker, metal hip, or tooth fillings is up to the Handler.

There may, eventually, be a price to pay: a bizarre mutation or some deeper expression of the power and incomprehensible will of Shub-Niggurath. The more the subject heals, the greater the risk and the price. When that price must be paid and what form it takes remain up to the Handler.

Nightmares End

After "Red Thoughts," the Teeth continue to feed their god. Working Group MASTICATE undertakes as many operations as the Handler wishes. If the Program knows that Agents have the ability sniff out the unnatural, it throws them at horrors while keeping them at arm's length.

The operations in the collection *God's Hunt* tie in directly to *God's Teeth*. Handlers may run as many scenarios as they wish between 2016 and 2020. No matter how tangential the connection, each case somehow links back to that night in 2001 or the Agents. The Teeth should come to understand that Cornucopia House—their lives, perhaps existence itself—was a trap. The children were bait, their pain a lure for unnatural prey. The Teeth are destined to follow the blood trail, chewing other immortal beings asunder or shattering in the attempt.

The final scenario, "The Hidden God," occurs at the very end of the hunt for survivors of Cornucopia House. The Agents finally approach the most elusive name on their list. Fate, or the power that we give that name, pushes its would-be champions to a confrontation.

What has happened in the meantime?

The Spiral: 2016-2020

“If the audio is unmuted, the phrase repeating
is ‘You are our heroes.’ Over and over again.
Oddly slowed and distorted, like a dirge.”





The Spiral

"THE SPIRAL" SETS UP THE END OF *GOD'S TEETH*.

Play "The Spiral" before starting "The Hidden God." Use the same rules for expanded home scenes found earlier in "The Long Years" (page 84). The scenes may take place at any time between 2016 and Spring of 2020.

If using *God's Teeth* as a campaign frame for more varied horrors, home scenes proceed normally between operations. When it comes time to stop, advance the clock to summer 2020 and limit "The Spiral" to the special vignettes.

In either case, when the nightmare needs an end, the clock hits July 2020. Bring MASTICATE back together with discovery of **THE TIP** (page 203). End the scenario after the Agents confront Lee Jarnigan and obtain the handouts on pages 210–215. They may review the handouts between sessions. "The Hidden God" begins as Agents brief each other on their contents.

New Agents, New Scars

If players have had replacement Agents installed into Working Group MASTICATE to make up for characters killed in previous adventures, it is time to "mark" those new Agents as also belonging to the force beyond. The guidelines set forth in **CHIPPING THE TEETH** on page 38 still hold. Opportunities to "scar" the Agents with strange fauna encounters are presented in this period's special vignettes.

At Home in the Spiral

If you play no further scenarios between "White Teeth" and "The Hidden God," let each player conduct two home scenes as described in the *Agent's Handbook*. This is a prime opportunity to learn about the god that has chosen them: See **TRACING THE SIGNS** on page 91.

Remember the recurring Synchronicity from **THE RABBIT** on page 129 and **THE BAT** on page 112. Work those unwelcome appearances into the home scenes.

Special Vignettes

As in "The Long Years," a few scenes help establish what the "off" years were like. Put each Agent through one of the special vignettes to make clear they are being called back into a deeper service than the Program. It doesn't matter whether the Agents are the original Teeth or replacements. All of them are chosen now.

God's Teeth is about the intersection of a cosmic agenda and stupid human cruelty. One of those intersections is the year 2020. The special vignettes take place sometime during the Covid-19 pandemic, between January and July of 2020. The pandemic is still new. Some people still hope that Americans will agree to contain it. The full, lethal extent of the Trump administration's corruption is only beginning to become plain.

OPINT

STAYING ON THE CASE

The Agents by now may be desperate to learn the nature of the force that has come to shape their lives. They can engage in the "Staying On the Case" home pursuit to make astonishing discoveries. An NPC specialist who worked with the Agents might well suggest one of these courses and offer to help if the Agents do not think of it or lack the right skills.

- » Agents with an array of skills in the humanities can uncover the origins of the Nameless God's cult. See **THE WORKSHIP OF BAST** on page 11.
- » Historians can seek recent events with Bast's marks. See **THE TRAIL OF BAST** on page 14.
- » Scientists can seek Bast in the stuff of reality itself. See **THE PHYSICS OF BAST** on page 16.

For the most part, these vignettes happen to the Agents. The Agents are victims or witnesses. Lack of agency can frustrate players. Play each vignette as quickly as you can.

A topic as immediate and devastating as the pandemic is risky. As always, ensure all the players at the table feel safe. Establish boundaries. Avoid causing real-world pain.

Empty Streets

Ask where the Agent lives and with whom. Then ask: "Why were you out late one night, walking during the shutdown? What drove you to break isolation?" Let the Agent answer.

Then begin to describe the area through which the walk takes the Agent.

Near a lonely streetlight, a few moths flutter about the warm glow. A raccoon across the street sniffs at a plastic bag in the gutter. Starlings feast on gnats above a cooling patch of asphalt. An owl flies high overhead, silhouetted in moonlight. There are no other humans around. Every door and window is closed. There are no engines in the distance. There is only the chirp of insects hiding in the grass.

And then there isn't.

The sound stops instantly. The raccoon flops onto its back, twitching. The starlings dive hard into the pavement, dead long before the dander of dead gnats flutter weightlessly down to join them. The moths spiral down dead from the streetlight. The owl streaks downward, soundless, before crashing into a tree, roof, or unfortunate power line. In a second after

the thought about how empty the streets were, all life within sight of the Agent has ceased instantly. The silence is terrible.

No one else saw it. The fauna are so far apart and small that no pattern can be seen by anyone who wasn't there when it happened. Only the Agent was there. Only they can say what it means.

This costs 0/1 SAN from the unnatural.

The Protest Escalates

Ask the player selecting this vignette why their Agent was at a large protest and what it was for. Agents can be enforcing the law, protesting injustice, or twisting it to their own criminal purposes. It's up to the player.

Work with the player to describe how the protest grew out of hand.

Tear gas canisters fall into the crowd. Thick white clouds pool between buildings and collect in the streets. Lines of protesters break. People panic, running without direction, swinging on instinct. The white haze goes orange with flames and blue with police lights. It becomes hard to see. Ask for a **Navigate** roll to orient through the clouds of poison (at -20% if the Agent doesn't have a gas mask).

A police horse, normally well trained and removed from the front lines, has spooked at the gas, thrown its rider, and gone charging into the cloud billowing out from the protest. If the Agent succeeds at **Navigate**, they are on a wide enough road to duck aside as the huge horse runs past at full gallop. The frenzied creature smashes at catastrophic speed into an unseen parked car that sits burning at the side of the road. The explosion of glass, metal, and horseflesh costs 0/1 SAN from violence. If the Agent does not find some way to put the thrashing, screaming animal down, it takes a long time to die. Killing it costs 0/1 SAN from violence. Letting it scream costs 0/1D4 SAN from helplessness.

If the Agent fails the **Navigate** test, they must roll **Dodge** to duck out of the way. If that fails, they take 1D10 damage as the horse smashes into them. If the Agent takes enough damage to be killed, they do not die, but instead trigger the power of the **Hunt** as described on page 10. Ask the player to describe how

DISINFORMATION

STARTING BROKEN

The special vignettes in "The Spiral" are brutal. They are meant to accelerate the doom that comes with serving the force beyond. Disorders gained in these special vignettes begin to manifest at the beginning of "The Hidden God."

their Agent gets up from such a devastating injury. How do EMS or street medics find them impossibly standing, impossibly still alive? Only then does the Agent black out.

An Agent reduced to 2 or fewer HP, even if saved by the power of the **Hunt**, must roll **CON**×5 or suffer a permanent injury as described in the *Agent's Handbook*, page 55. However badly hurt, the Agent gets out of the hospital at full HP just in time for "The Hidden God" to begin.

Nature Is Healing

The Agent gets a call from one of their non-Delta Green Bonds. The Bond urges the Agent to meet immediately. They cannot describe or understand what they are seeing.

Somehow, even if the area or season is atypical for wasps, an enormous, record-breaking wasp's nest has formed within the Bond's vehicle. The floors and seats are buried completely underneath layer after layer of honeycombed galls of drying saliva. The insects black out the windows, trapped in the car. There is no way to tell how they got inside.

The Bond was going to get groceries when they discovered the mysterious infestation. The lockdown means they were getting out of the house a lot less, but there's no way the car was parked long enough for wasps to build a nest of such size. The Agent loses 0/1 SAN from the unnatural.

Any attempt to open the car door without protective equipment provokes the swarm to attack all those present, causing 1D6 damage. A professional exterminator may easily dispatch the creatures after a day's labor in a full Tyvek suit. Even professionals are baffled by the infestation. The nest was assembled so quickly that it is still wet on the inside. The interior layers come apart in the hand like old butter. The wasps only solidified the exterior of the nest by cooking it with the friction of their movement. When the exterminator opens the vehicle, he measures the initial temperature at 51° Celsius (124° F), substantially hotter than what it would take to bake the whole colony dead.

That night, the news reports a fatal accident involving an 18-wheeler at an intersection where the

Bond would have been driving had they made it to the grocery store, during the time at which the Bond likely would have been en route. The Agent loses 0/1 SAN from the unnatural. On a success, the Agent may rationalize the events away as coincidence. On a failure, it becomes clear that the Agent's loved one was saved by the force that stalks them, no doubt so they may continue to fulfill some higher purpose.

Feral Hogs

A Bond calls the Agent for help. They have already called the local authorities and been put on hold. They need help *now*. Their home is under siege by feral hogs.

Thirty-five states suffer problems with feral hogs. Groups of the animals, called sounders, tear through farmland, ravishing entire ecosystems in search of food. They're fiercely territorial, and large males are more than capable of goring an unprepared adult to death. If the Agent's Bond does not live in an area suffering from the nation's six-million-plus pig problem, they do now. A large sounder has migrated to wherever the Bond lives, walking through the empty streets of lockdown America.

The morning of the Bond's call, their location was surrounded by the beasts, digging happily outside the building. As the Bond is on the phone with the Agent, though, squealing and thrashing can be heard in the background. After a crash, the Bond utters a curse and disconnects the call. They cannot be reached by the Agent on the phone afterwards. Local authorities say they are aware of the situation and trying to respond, but the swine are popping up all over the area and they are overwhelmed. This costs 0/1 SAN from helplessness, or 0/1D4 SAN if the Agent does not respond right away.

If the Agent goes to assist the Bond, they find the building surrounded by the animals. Grass has been completely gutted by their tusks. Mailboxes are felled. Vehicles suffer broken glass and dented sides. Buildings are scraped by hooves, smeared with blood, and dripping with slobber as the swine try to boost themselves up to windows. A large, silver-bristled male bashes his head against the front door, which looks

like it's about to cave in. The animals are trying to get inside. An Agent with any **Science** skill or **Survival** above base recognizes that there is no explanation on Earth as to why the animals would behave this way.

If the Agent attempts to fight the hogs, no combat rolls are necessary. Gunshots and stabbings do nothing to redirect the attention of the feral hogs. They do not flee the sound of gunfire. They do not turn around to face their attackers. They simply keep attacking where the Bond has taken shelter. They continue the assault until death, happily rooting through and over their dead kin to continue the assault. It isn't until the Agent slaughters dozens of the creatures that the spell breaks and the few squealing pigs retreat to the more rural climes. This costs the Agent 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

If the **SAN** roll fails, the **Scent** power takes over. The Agent continues to hunt the sounder until every last pig is dead. They wake in the woods a day later, dehydrated, having taken 1D4 damage, and covered in blood.

If the Agent does not combat the swine, they lose 0/1 **SAN** from helplessness as other authorities take their time to arrive. The mix of law enforcement personnel that eventually mop up the scene treat the ending of the siege jovially. Most regard killing the pigs as a great perk of their job. The short battle around the Bond's shelter resembles a holiday turkey shoot. Cops joke about barbecue. Many take selfies with the dead hogs. No one seems to notice the hogs' odd behavior. They dismiss the animals' behavior as innate stupidity. They loudly declaim to their colleagues that none of this would be happening if it weren't for so-and-so in whatever political office. Everyone laughs at the joke, no matter how many times they make it. The Bond is never quite the same. The squealing haunts their sleep. Reduce the Bond by 1D4.

In the weeks that follow, news coverage of the event gets picked up by a number of websites in the extreme-right blogosphere. The Agent's and Bond's participation in this media frenzy is not needed or even very much appreciated. Pundits have linked this occurrence to the "30 to 50 feral hogs" meme of August 2019.

Right-wing political agendas use the event to spin what was once the most embarrassing justification for unrestricted gun laws on record into a salient, prophetic call for self-reliant, heavily armed home security. If the Agent does not agree to this exposure, it doesn't matter. The Agent's public denial of the narrative gets them dismissed as a Deep State crisis actor. A number of GoFundMe pages are launched for the benefit of both the Agent and the Bond, without the consent of any party receiving the charity. While a number of the crowd-funding campaigns are outright frauds, enough donations trickle in to the Agent (no matter how they may try to stop them) that they can now afford two Major-level requisitions. It still requires a successful **Criminology** test to find a source for equipment not legal for a civilian to own.

The Agent loses 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural as they struggle with the realization that this is how the force beyond gives gifts.

Essential Worker

Ask the player how the Agent was deemed an essential worker during the crisis. Is it due to their day job? To volunteer work? To the Program's interference? Allow the player to describe the job during the pandemic. What is daily life like? How has the Agent been sleeping?

Describe the break room in a facility in which the Agent must work. It is of the old Seventies style, wood paneling and stained carpets and full of barely-repaired, ancient couches, each still reeking from when you could smoke at work. The ceiling tiles are yellowed like the filters of old cigarettes.

The new flatscreen TV mounted on the wall sticks out like a sore thumb. The station remains tuned to a single internal broadcast network for the essential facility. It mirrors a broadcast from Fox News, but every half hour, a message from Mike Pence's Covid-19 task force plays on repeat. By HHS mandate, this message plays for all federal programs deemed essential to public health response. The short video is a canned speech thanking the workers for their service during the current crisis, supposedly written by Vice President Mike

Pence but read by a female staffer into microphone, playing over a slideshow of Pence press-packet photos.

Ask the player to describe the Agent going into a break room. Set the scene. Who else is there of the Agent's essential coworkers? Do they wear masks? Why go to the break room at all?

A strange static afflicts the television feed as the Agent enters the room. The public address ad plays again, outside its time slot, and gets stuck looping a few seconds of Pence ascending the stairs to a plane. If the audio is unmuted, a phrase repeats with the loop: "You are our heroes." Over and over again. Oddly slowed and distorted, like a dirge. This disturbance in the broadcast system continues for as long as the Agent is in the room. It ceases the moment they leave. If the Agent returns, so does the glitch.

Ask the player how the Agent responds. Ignore the phenomenon? Avoid it? Research it? If they research it, do they tell the Program?

IGNORE IT: Ignoring the phenomenon grows more and more difficult. Coworkers at first think the recurring glitch is some sort of prank but soon attribute it to some mental illness in the Agent. They assume the bizarre occurrence must be the fault of the Agent, because there is no alternative explanation, and the fact the Agent would continue to play them for fools offends them. So much alienation at work distresses every part of the Agent's life. Reduce all Bonds by 1. The crisis ends when the Agent comes in one day to find the TV smashed. Everyone chooses not to talk about it and moves on.

AVOID IT: Staying out of the break room is easy. No one in America questions ceaseless working, particularly now. There is no rest to be had save the dreamless sleep between shifts. The phenomenon does not repeat, and no one questions the Agent's behavior, but the Agent loses 1 SAN from helplessness.

RESEARCH IT: The Agent's proximity triggers the loop at the same distance to the television, every time, in a perfect circle four meters around the television's receiver. It occurs no matter what the Agent is wearing or carrying. It happens whether the TV is hooked to the server manually or wirelessly. Regardless of any possible technical explanation beyond unplugging

everything (which does shut the signal off), the glitch correlates perfectly to the presence of the Agent. Ask the player to choose the number of weeks the Agent spends studying the phenomenon, from one to sixteen. Before the player answers, inform them that for every week the Agent studies the "You are our heroes" loop, they lose 1 SAN from the unnatural and gain +1% **Unnatural** skill regardless of the result. At the end of the research, the Agent may choose to intentionally trade 1D6 SAN for that many more points of **Unnatural** skill. The substance of this rising knowledge of the unnatural is instinctive and indefinable.

TELL THE PROGRAM ABOUT THE RESEARCH: The Program is not pleased. The Agent is put under a 72-hour protective psychiatric hold by the emergency request of relatives, using documents forged by the Program. The Agent is told to forget about the television in the break room and get back to work or else die here. The Agent loses 0/1D6 SAN from helplessness suffering a short stint of drugged medical captivity under such a threat. If the Agent cooperates, they are returned to their life. Pitzerelli worriedly warns them to forget about it all.

KEEP THE RESEARCH SECRET FROM THE PROGRAM: One fateful night, the Agent cuts the power cable to the break room television with a knife and stays up the whole night, watching as the TV plays the glitch over and over, impossibly. "You are our heroes... You are our heroes... You are our heroes... You are our heroes..." By morning, as the Agent is awakened by others arriving at work, the television has been smashed and lies broken on the floor. The Agent's hands bleed. No one was there to see what happened. The Agent loses 0/1 SAN from the unnatural.

Social Distance: The Musical

Ask the player about a public place where the Agent would be going to with a Bond. The trip takes place during the quarantine lockdown measures of wherever the Agent lives. Who does the Agent travel with? Why are they out? Do they simply not care and flout the law? Is there a quarantine law in their area at all? Are they on some emergency errand? Are they masked to the best of their ability?

Customers pack multiple kiosks in the area that sell as-seen-on-TV junk and cheap food. The sun is shining. People walk their dogs and jog. Street performers compete for the money of passersby.

Ask the player to roll for the Agent's **Alertness** or **Military Science (Land)**, whichever is higher. On a failure, nothing happens. The Agent and any Bonds move through the crowd normally. On a success, the Agent loses 0/1 SAN from violence. The crowd is somehow wrong. Indescribably wrong. They do not move as an uncoordinated mass of people should. They flock as if choreographed. Designed. Something about the whole scene reeks of a design, and it surrounds the Agent. This is a trap.

In the next moment, a street performer blows a piercing trumpet note. Everyone in the crowd—shopers, kiosk workers, street performers, animals, joggers, everyone—looks at the Agent. The people begin forming well-rehearsed chorus lines as the dog walkers get the animals to perform tricks. Cameras peek up from above the roof lines of all the local buildings as everyone in the area sings “HELLO AND WELCOME BACK!” in a Disney-esque tune. The words circle, repeat, and overlap in a hypnotic drone. The street performers have gotten behind the singers now. They

play a jovial ragtime tune with the rehearsed vibe of a band trained to play even while the ship goes down.

If the **Alertness** or **Military Science** roll did not warn the Agent that something was coming, the shock costs 0/1 SAN from the unnatural.

‘Hello and Welcome Back’

“HELLO AND WELCOME BACK!” The song reaches a terrible climax, the bystanders-turned-choral-dancers freezing in a chest-heaving final pose. If the Agent has yet to have an adverse reaction to the events, this goes on for several awkward seconds until the nearby doors begin to open and scores of technical personnel for a movie or television set pour out. Grips, ADs, craft services, and lighting technicians come running from hiding like an army in ambush. This seems to surprise the actors in the crowd as much as the Agent, but soon hidden cannons rise from the scenery and begin launching confetti overhead. An impromptu dance party begins. Hidden speakers play what sounds like the theme song to a cheesy reality TV show called *Social Distance: The Musical*. If the Agent failed the previous **Sanity** roll, having this second layer stripped off the Russian doll of reality costs another 1D4 SAN from the unnatural.



Meet TeflonBoy

If the Agent manages to keep their shit together, they learn what just happened through a surprise interview, not unlike the way commentators and cameramen shove equipment in the face of a professional sports star after the big game.

The interviewer is Chad Easley-Saffron (aka TeflonBoy), an Internet content creator famed for viral prank videos, the host of this program. An Agent who has **Anthropology** at 30% or higher or succeeds at a roll at +20% recognizes the name. The Agent remembers reading that Chad Easley-Saffron had been hired by ABC for an unnamed project just before the Covid pandemic locked down the U.S. This was to be his first work in the public eye since a scandal in 2016 after he desecrated a Cahokia burial mound on a livestream.

The entire area was a set up for an ABC venture called *Social Distance: The Musical*. The show organized Broadway actors and dancers into an elaborate "real-life musical" cast for a flash mob. The actors' need for work during the shutdown and the plummeting cost of renting public spaces reduced expenses enough to get the show greenlit. The show is shooting its first season. Episodes are made up of behind-the-scenes moments of writing and rehearsal with contrived reality-show conflicts between cast and crew. The flash mob was assembled before the Agent arrived

to be sprung on the first hapless people to walk into it. Surprising the cast as the crew rushed the "stage" was a secondary reveal, meant for the season finale. Which was just filmed.

Chad Easley-Saffron wants to know what the Agent and any Bonds thought of the performance. The Handler decides how the Bonds react.

Sign This Waiver?

There is nothing the show can do with the footage just captured if the Agent does not consent to be filmed. The manipulations producers typically use to get waivers signed likely won't work on an Agent of the Program. If the Agent reacted badly during the reveal, the footage is suppressed by the studio in an attempt to avoid litigation. If violence occurred and the Agent is a member of law enforcement, nothing happens. The litigation between the organization and ABC for the bad shoot goes behind closed doors. The Agent suffers no punishment whatsoever, no matter how extreme their violent reaction to the prank. In fact, if it is ever made public, many fellow officers cheer on their outburst.

After experiencing *Social Distance: The Musical*, the Agent may choose to gain or ignore an unexpected insight into the nature of the universe. If they choose to gain the insight, they gain 1D6 points in **Unnatural**

God Chose Me

God, whatever its name is, has chosen me. It considered everything that could happen across all time. It slotted all possible objects into every scenario and permutation it could conceive with an endless consciousness.

It chose this performance, disguised as reality, stripped away of both to become mere product.

It all comes together to make an Omen, meant only for my eyes. God does not know what the performance means or what it is for. God does not understand humanity's movements or hooting cries. God only knows that showing this arrangement to me, in this very moment, changes my mind into the shape it must take.

God sets the circuit-connections of causality to bring me where I am needed. God has shown me that there is a plan and design behind all things. I will forever ride this prescribed path, no matter how baffling God's motivations may be to me.

I am meant to know I am helpless. Like prey. Like a fang. In the jaws of God.

and lose the same number of Sanity Points. Give the player the **GOD CHOSE ME** handout on page 202. Ask them to read it silently to themselves and think of it as the Agent's most intrusive thought.

The Tip

Unless he died and was replaced, U.S. Attorney Antony Pitzerelli is still in charge of Working Group MASTICATE. He is as seasoned a veteran as the Program has to offer, and he knows that whatever the Agents are mixed up in might not operate on human timetables. He monitors them vigilantly even when busy with other duties.

When it comes time to reassemble the Teeth, advance the date to July 2020. On the first of the month, Pitzerelli receives an email notification containing the 2FA alphanumeric keycodes with which to log in to an encrypted server. The only other content is an auto-generated message:

"URGENT (CODE: OPERATIC) 1/7/20
0121 CST (-6GMT) 66% Keymatch
<Conradin(morph)><Children(con/sym)>"

Pitzerelli long ago loaded NSA's MAGENTA GAMBLER system with keywords related to the Cornucopia incident and fallout from the 2016 operation. This is the highest coincidence for related terms in years. It comes from an anonymous FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3). The tip seems bogus—entries for victim's ZIP code and phone number match U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement headquarters in Washington, D.C.—but the risks are too great to ignore.

Pitzerelli contacts his superiors and activates MASTICATE. The Agents are ordered to find out what else the informant knows.

The Plagiarist

Despite the anonymous tipster's claims, he's not exactly a hacker. The Program easily traced the complaint through metadata. The tip came from Lee Jarnigan, a professional gambler living in St. Louis.

Pitzerelli has plane tickets to St. Louis and a warrant for Jarnigan's house on their way to the Agents. No evidence required. In William Barr's DOJ, a lawyer can do anything so long as it isn't justice.

Jarnigan's Background

En route, any Agent with 30% or greater in one of the following skills, or who succeeds at a roll at +20%, can pull information about Lee Jarnigan:

- » **BACKGROUND CHECK—HUMINT:** Jarnigan is a graduate of Parkway West High School in St. Louis, Missouri. He attended UMSL until 2003, finishing with a bachelor's degree in creative writing. He was accepted to the MFA writing program at Washington University in St. Louis under a fellowship, but he dropped out of the program in late 2004 after his parents died in a car accident. Jarnigan lives in the childhood home he inherited in Ballwin, Missouri.
- » **TAX RECORDS—ACCOUNTING:** Since 2006, his income has been listed as coming from winnings at local riverboat gambling and reservation casinos across the border in Arkansas.
- » **SCHOOL DAYS—BUREAUCRACY:** Dr. Miranda Hogue, a professor of indigenous literature at WashU, can be interviewed over the phone. She remembers Lee Jarnigan from when he was in the MFA program. She doesn't recall him fondly, a typical workshop rich kid who read too much David Foster Wallace. But then his parents died in that car accident. His attendance faded until he stopped showing up altogether. Fellow grad students heard a rumor about Lee starting up an essay mill, a plagiarism-for-profit operation in which academic cheaters trade cryptocurrency for forged homework. Hogue has no qualms about relaying this information to federal authorities.

The Tip

URGENT (CODE: OPERATIC) 1/7/20 0121 CST (-6GMT) 66% Keymatch <Conrad(morph)><Hopko(morph)><Children(con/sym)>

BEGIN CAPTURE

VICTIM INFORMATION

VICTIM NAME	ScribeLife420
VICTIM ADDRESS	Teh Internet
VICTIM CITY	Washington DC
VICTIM COUNTRY	United States of America
VICTIM ZIP CODE	Route 20024
VICTIM PHONE NUMBER	7036033400
VICTIM EMAIL	ScribeLife12121.ofmailer.net

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUBJECT(S) WHO VICTIMIZED YOU

SUBJECT NAME	Conradin
SUBJECT ADDRESS	Some fucking icebox, probably
SUBJECT PHONE NUMBER	7036033400
SUBJECT EMAIL	est121<at>oit<dot>duke<dot>edu
SUBJECT WEBSITE	https://www.ice.gov
SUBJECT IP ADDRESS	107.131.221.111/99.78.72.18

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

Look, don't try to find me. It won't work. I'm too good for that shit. I'm an essay farmer. I help rich kids cheat college papers for money. I've done it for years and served a lot of people inside whatever building this goes to. But one of them is about to do something awful.

I worked with the guy through college at Duke between 2011-2016. He used the handle "Conradin." He ended up getting a job doing something at ICE. I know because I wrote his application. Then I stopped hearing from him and forgot about it. A few weeks back, he gets back in touch with employment applications for these two other guys. He wants me to make them look cool for Fed records, but he doesn't have the language skills to forge it. He thought he redacted the names in the PDF, but I got edit access and the original file.

I'm officially warning you: these freaks he's trying sneak in make the assholes you got in there now look like Mr. Rogers. I've done digging on at least one of them, and he shouldn't be allowed near a playground, not to mention running a government child prison. And it's more than that. I think Conradin has gone crazy. The BAD kind.

I got Conradin all wrong and regret having any hand in this. I'm coming as clean as I can. He cheated his way to a diploma, lied on his resume, and submitted fraudulent employment applications. Plus, I've attached screengrabs of all the weird shit I found about the guys he's trying to hire. Link: <https://rb.gy/enaq3a>

Should be enough to strip his degree and fire him. Keep it quiet for all I care, but he cannot be allowed to continue doing this. It's bad, even for monsters like you.

So, you know, fuck off. I didn't vote for you shitheads. Do your fucking job for once and stop something awful. Don't waste time trying to find me.

END CAPTURE

- » **SOCIAL MEDIA—HUMINT:** Lee Jarnigan's social media presence shows a shabby, bearded white man in his late thirties who seems to do nothing but take party photos and post angrily about political causes at all hours of the day. It would be stunning for him to have time for a job.
- » **A DEEPER TRACE—COMPUTER SCIENCE:** Jarnigan's amateur attempts to scrub his trail suggest a deeper intrusion would be possible. With a successful roll, the Agent gains remote access to the very computer that sent the IC3 tip. The Agent has access to a widespread and international plagiarism enterprise organized by Jarnigan under the alias ScribeLife420. He offers bespoke assignments catered to whatever subject a student may need, including special packages where the plagiarist consults with the student to imitate their writing style. Services include specific grade targeting in situations where an "A" would be too conspicuous. Jarnigan is the only person employed by the enterprise. Since 2006, he has been responsible for thousands of cases of academic fraud. An Agent with any academic skill at 50% or higher knows that if those cases were actually pursued (unlikely), universities' academic dishonesty policies would cause a loss of accreditation large enough to provoke international news coverage.
- » **LEGAL CASES—LAW:** A single case, *Perkins/Padulano v. Loyola University Chicago*, has hits containing the phrase ScribeLife420. The case was a civil matter owing to the stripping of two Loyola alumni of degrees after the revelation of a cheating scandal. The jealous roommate of the girl named Perkins revealed to the school plagiarism task force hacked emails that proved Perkins negotiated to have her organic chemistry lab paper written by a professional service called ScribeLife Online Tutoring Services. When confronted, Perkins admitted getting the contact information of the service from Padulano, a sorority sister who graduated the previous year. Court records in this case are accessible owing to being linked to discovery in a RICO case titled *State of Illinois v. Padulano*, which is classified. A successful roll

finds that ScribeLife420, whose identity was not discovered in the case, is a remarkable writer pursuing a meaningless career. The paper entered into evidence is a convincing, high-quality lab report that passes most plagiarism algorithms to the tune of 70% originality. The multiple works written for Padulano's academic fraud were in the field of art appreciation, and all earned high marks. Some papers earned ScribeLife420 up to \$5K a pop.

The Applicants' Backgrounds

The only evidence provided with the tip were screenshots of two online job applications for ICE's Detention Management Division. One application is for Alan Rapp seeking a position as maintenance professional. The other is an application for juvenile officer by Terry Smedley. The exact detention facility the two applied for is undisclosed. The Agents can get background on both before they meet Jarnigan.

Alan Rapp: Maintenance Professional

Alan Rapp's application excerpt makes him sound dangerously insane. That appears to be why he is being hired.

Alan Rapp is a white Texas native born in 2000. He graduated from high school in Austin in 2018. He has neither work history nor higher education, but his contact information is up to date and accurate.

Alan Rapp is either an irony-poisoned Internet troll, looking to clog the wheels of bureaucracy, or a budding serial killer. Either way, this application should have probably led to his arrest or at the very least have been thrown away. Instead, Conradin is paying his own money to make sure he can hire Rapp as a custodian.

Terry Smedley: Juvenile Officer

Terry Smedley has a job history as an experienced juvenile corrections officer. Smedley earned an associate's degree in criminal justice while doing a variety of youth detention-related jobs.

Most recently, he worked for the El Paso County Juvenile Detention Center. Not anymore. Googling Smedley is all it takes to learn what happened. In

October 2019, he was recorded by a cellphone smuggled into the detention center. In the video, he throws a bucket of cold water on caged minors while screaming anti-Latinx bigotry, demanding they “*clean the river smell off.*”

Public outcry led to El Paso County “firing” Smedley the night of the video’s release, an attempt to prevent riots. In reality, El Paso County merely “chose not to renew” Smedley’s contract, neither filing nor enforcing any charges despite the clear evidence of wrongdoing. Smedley is free to get a job anywhere that will hire him, including doing the same thing as before: jailing and abusing children.

Meeting Jarnigan

Lee Jarnigan lives in a gentrified neighborhood in the Ballwin suburb of St. Louis. His lawn is finely maintained by a landscaping service whose sign is posted in his yard, alongside a graveyard of past election signs the owner never bothered to take down. Heavy drapes cover the many windows dotting the mildewing siding of a four-bedroom suburban mini-mansion.

If the Agents knock, Lee Jarnigan answers the door after cries of “Wait a minute!” He reeks of marijuana smoke, having failed to notice who was actually knocking. He’s unhappy to see any federal agency but not terribly surprised. He knew his claims of hacker secrecy were bravado.

The **Scent** power shows ScribeLife420 to be clean. His charmed life has never encountered powers from beyond the stars.

Lee Jarnigan initially only admits to being the person responsible for sending in the tip. He knows the chances of federal prosecutors actually enforcing academic honesty laws borders on nonexistent, but he reflexively tries to keep his secrets.

Jarnigan’s friendship with Conradin is deeper than he would care to admit. In fact, the client relationship was one of the few consistent contacts in Lee’s increasingly isolated life of online fraud. His reluctance to turn Conradin in delayed his IC3 complaint for months.

Jarnigan does his best to conceal the fact that the relationship was deeper than financial. It is a lame attempt at distancing himself from the betrayal of a friend, a friend he knows he would not have made if it weren’t for the money.

Even so, the Agents easily get the sense that there’s more to his connection to Conradin than Jarnigan let on.

Getting the Details

The Agents can use further skills to extract the information. Each Agent gets a shot. One success wins everything. If every Agent fails, they wear Jarnigan down and he gives it all up, but coming that close to



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

ALAN RAPP

Why do you see yourself as a good fit at ICE?

I’ve seen what you are, and I know what you do behind your eyes when you see them. I think you are all doing what I think you are doing behind those walls. I would like in.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

In young skin. Resplendent. Like you. The world is changing, and we can be what we are now, together. Forge a heaven behind bars.

Were you referred to ICE for hire by a current or former ICE employee?

I chickened out of the whole school shooting thing, but then I saw you and your organization and dreamt of something more long-term.

missing everything costs each Agent 1D6 WP and 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

- » **PERSUADE:** Jarnigan reveals everything he knows, responses elicited through whatever rhetorical tactics the Agent may choose in roleplay.
- » **LAW:** Agents playing hardball scare Jarnigan into cooperation in exchange for leniency.
- » **HUMINT:** Trickery gets the details. The Agent refers to Conradin by another name, feigning confusion. When Jarnigan corrects the mistake, the Agent springs the trap. How can Jarnigan know the Agent was wrong unless he knows Conradin's real name? Caught, raised on too many detective procedurals, and generally too high for this, Jarnigan confesses everything.
- » **COMPUTER SCIENCE:** The Agents find deleted files on Jarnigan's hard drive. All the evidence of Conradin's identity is still there.

What They Learn

In the end, Jarnigan admits to knowing all the shifting details of Conradin's identity:

- » Conradin is the pseudonym of Jacob Tillman, son of a famous homeschooling advocate.
- » Jacob Tillman changed his name to Esau Tillman.
- » Esau Tillman now works for ICE.

ScribeLife420 and Conradin

When he comes clean, Jarnigan has more to say about the relationship than what he included in the IC3 tip.

First Contact With Conradin

Conradin only came to Jarnigan's attention through Chasten Laugherty, the son of for-profit prison magnate Kyle Laugherty. ScribeLife420's services is the only reason Chasten didn't fail out of private high school in 2009. Jarnigan acted as a "tutor" to that whale of a client during a summer preparatory program, bolstering Laugherty's chances in applying to Duke University.

Agents with 30% or better in **Accounting**, **Bureaucracy**, or **Law**, or who successfully roll at +20%, find with a little research that Kyle Laugherty's company, *LYFForce*, has since seen enormous growth after being selected in a blind bid for ICE contracts at the beginning of the Trump administration.

In 2011, Chasten Laugherty became roommates at Duke University with a young man named Esau Tillman. Tillman struggled with a learning disability affecting reading comprehension and writing. Laugherty, already semesters deep into a fraudulent academic career, recommended the services of ScribeLife420. That began a four-year working relationship of academic fraud.



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

TERRY SMEDLEY

Why did you leave your previous employer?

I was the target of an extremist left-wing terrorist attack of misinformation, perpetrated in cooperation with the liberal media.

Additional comments?

I would like to thank the REAL American Patriots that run GOD'S COUNTRY, the ones TOO SMART for cancel culture bullshit and dedicated to the belief that a white, pure American people must be PRESERVED FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. NOW AND FOREVER! MAGA!

Conradin's Communications

Jarnigan claims that, owing to what his client only referred to as “the past,” Conradin suffered a nonspecified impairment in written language. He could express complex ideas within a limited vocabulary, but syntax, agreement, and spelling were elementary. Early emails are barely comprehensible. Sometimes, Jarnigan spent pages of email exchanges just trying to understand the assignment. Though progress was slow, Conradin displayed little frustration and remained eager to learn. The ethics of the cheating were never mentioned.

Progress at Duke

Between 2011 and 2016, the email chains found on Jarnigan's computer show a complex correspondence. ScribeLife420, in his attempts to unpack, understand, and reformulate what his client needed, ended up becoming his teacher. Conradin's language appears notably improved by the time he receives his criminology degree from Duke in 2016. In the end, he learned the information by rote, displaying an impressive capacity for memorization and mimicry. Before recent events, Jarnigan felt pride in his part of the teacher/student relationship. In his opinion, Conradin earned his degree more than any of Jarnigan's clients and more than most legitimate graduates.

Jarnigan laments, “It felt like I'd done something good for once, you know?”

Fake Names; Real Friends

Long before Trump won, Lee Jarnigan did not handle the 2016 election season well. He was so isolated by his online fraud kingdom that he had no friends or families upon which to vent his anxieties. The plagiarist admits that instances of ScribeLife420 “just checking in” increased, and chatlogs reveal topics strayed from typical client relations.

Through online friendship, Jarnigan learned Conradin's real name was Esau Tillman and that he used to be called “Jacob.” Jarnigan looked up the name and discovered Jacob Tillman was the subject of multiple Christian homeschooling texts written by his father, Eli. He never cared enough to read the books himself.

Even after revealing his background, Conradin insisted on using the pseudonym, even in casual online chat.

Mistaken Motivation

Shortly before Conradin graduated in late 2016, Jarnigan spotted the first red flag when his client asked for help with an employment application for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency. Even with its tamer public profile at that time, ICE alarmed the plagiarist. He asked more questions than usual. Why did Conradin want to join ICE?

Conradin's response burned itself into the plagiarist's memory: “I want to be inside it for reasons that do not come from it. I want to be inside and serve something outside. Change from within.”

Jarnigan imagined leftist sentiment in the phrase. Conradin did nothing to confirm or deny that assumption. Jarnigan convinced himself that Conradin sought to sabotage the institution. He agreed to help polish the application's essay responses—after receiving his usual fee, of course. That job was their last contact until March 2020.

The Last Assignment

In March 2020, Conradin reached out again to ScribeLife420. He had two employee applicants suffering language problems. He claimed to empathize with their struggle to communicate. He hired ScribeLife420 to punch up their applications. Jarnigan agreed and negotiated payment, but only after first confirming that Conradin was still working at ICE.

According to Jarnigan, he thought Tillman might be smuggling journalists into a facility for an exposé or other subversive activity. Conradin only claimed both applicants were “important to the cause.”

Conradin shared via cloud drive applications the employees had prepared, but everything was left blank except the applicants' identifying information. Conradin claimed it would be easier to start from a blank slate than work through their “grammer.” He asked ScribeLife420 to make up whatever he liked.

Jarnigan, far more suspicious of agencies like ICE after years under the Trump administration, could

not resist checking the applicants' files. Conradin had left file versioning options intact, allowing Jarnigan to see the documents as they were before Conradin's deletions. See the **EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION** screenshots on pages 206–207. The original answers caused Lee Jarnigan to lose sleep after he reversed the deletions. He eventually sent them with the IC3 tip.

THE LOCATION: Jarnigan no longer has access to the cloud account, but metadata in the PDFs that Conradin sent give the Adobe account holder name as “Frank Harvey Water Reclamation Plant.” See its details on page 225.

THE LAST EMAIL: As if what Jarnigan discovered about Rapp and Smedley weren't disturbing enough, Conradin later sent another email. This thank-you message disturbed ScribeLife420 to his core. It finally convinced him to send a tip to the IC3 line. See the email from Conradin to ScribeLife420 on page 211.

Everything He Has

Finally, Jarnigan offers a massive amount of additional data as he begs for leniency. His documents establish digital communications and financial transactions with Conradin going back a decade.

The Breakthrough

Jarnigan's testimony and files open a bitter world of secrets for the Agents. They have everything they need to piece together what Conradin is trying to do.

When Pitzerelli learns the Agents have what may be the last piece of the Cornucopia House puzzle, his enthusiasm is unusually high. He's excited at the prospect of finally clearing MASTICATE's 20-year-old fiasco off his plate. His mood chills considerably when he learns the suspect might have a federal security clearance.

Nevertheless, he orders the Agents to cease field operations immediately. They must learn everything they can from this material and then give him a briefing. Then the team can consider next steps.

The Agents have three broad avenues of research and get handouts for each. No skills or even stat rolls

are required. Causality has bent their path toward Conradin. Even classified files find their way over as favors offered or returned. See Arc Dream Publishing's *God's Teeth Evidence Kit* for even more expansive handouts.

They may divide up the research however they wish. Give each player the handouts they turn up. That ends “The Spiral.”

The players must read the handouts before the next game and be ready to brief each other. Tell them to review their notes from the rest of the campaign. “The Hidden God” begins with the Agents sharing what they learn about their lost boy.

Research	Handout	Page
ScribeLife420 Files	Chat Log	210
	Email to ScribeLife420	211
Searching Online	Eli Tillman's Memoirs	212
	The Illegal Agenda	215
	BMIA	213
Government Records	Identity of Jacob Tillman	211
	Background of Esau Tillman	210
	Esau Tillman Tax Return	214
	Case Summary:	214
	07-195121	
	Recommendation to the Assistant Director	215

Characters

Lee Jarnigan, the Plagiarist

See **THE PLAGIARIST** on page 203.

Lee Jarnigan

ScribeLife420, professional cheat, age 34

STR 10 CON 13 DEX 10 INT 15 POW 10 CHA 7

HP 12 WP 10 SAN 50 BREAKING POINT 40

SKILLS: Alertness 20%, Bureaucracy 50%, Computer Science 20%, Craft (Forgery) 80%, Dodge 35%, History 30%, Persuade 75%, SIGINT 10%, Stealth 15%.

ATTACKS: *Unarmed* 40%, damage 1D4–1.

SCENT: None.

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JARNIGAN, LEE: CHAT LOG, 11.2.2012 0211 CST

CONRADIN: Hi scribe. I need help w another essay. If your free. Not just writing it but help w the readings, help summarize so I can answer if questioned. I know thats more, thats ok.

SCRIBELIFE420: Sure. Good to hear from you. Nothing happening here. As usual. What's it on?

CONRADIN: split brain syndrome. Severing the corpus callosum causes cognitive changes from disrupted communication between hemispheres

SCRIBELIFE420: Right. Seems like you can already copy/paste it. Why not draft it yourself and let me edit like before?

SCRIBELIFE420: Save you a lot of \$\$.

CONRADIN: Thats ok. Got money from father. I want to understand fully. Im prettsure I have split brain syndrome. One reason I need you. Cant type except hunt & peck. Happened when i was a kid. Not total severng but sometimes APHASIA, ATAXIA, esp left side. The halves communicate some but not enough. Not without lots more input, senses that dont need concentrate. like animal brain sensing. hard to mix with talking, writing.

SCRIBELIFE420: Oh wow, wild! I didn't know. You do amazing to work through all that.

SCRIBELIFE420: But man, why go to Duke with all that trouble?

CONRADIN: it demands it of me

SCRIBELIFE420: ??? And how did it happen??

CONRADIN: I drank too much of something I should nt.

SCRIBELIFE420: LOL. Right on.

DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE BACKGROUND OF ESAU TILLMAN.

Applying to work at ICE in 2015, Esau Tillman received a background check that other federal agents recognize as shockingly cursory. It's like the investigator checked to make sure Tillman had no criminal record and no bankruptcies and left it at that. No family on record. Two interviews with friends, one of them prominent ICE contractor Kyle Laugherty and the other Kyle's son Chasten Laugherty, who went to Duke University with Tillman. Both painted Tillman as a hard worker, scrupulously honest and patriotic. And that was it. Tillman got the luckiest, least challenging background check in history. Or someone very powerful made sure he did.

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DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE IDENTITY OF JACOB TILLMAN.

In 2011, at age 17, Jacob Tillman legally changed his name to Esau Tillman. The reported motivation for the name change was to distance himself from the fame forced upon him by his father's work. The paperwork was filed in Tucson, Arizona. The judge rubber-stamped the change. Notifications went out to update the record of Jacob Tillman at the Social Security Administration, the Selective Service System, and Arizona's Motor Vehicle Services Division.

The name change was not provided to Duke University when they accepted Esau Tillman for the fall 2011 semester. The school's records list the student's Social Security number and other data as if they always belonged under the name Esau. College transcripts being effectively as far back as anyone would look for his future employment, Jacob essentially rewrote himself as Esau, permanently.

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E-MAIL TO SCRIBELIFE420

To: "ScribeLife420"

From: "Conradin"

Subject: Understanding.

Date: 7 APR 2020, 0419 CST

Hello Scribe. I have a new talk to text program. Hope it works. It's been a while. I miss having someone to talk to. You know how hard that can be. I miss it more than ever. Because so many things are coming together. Things I said before but don't know if you heard. Things from my childhood. Loving is hard because it hurts. But the pain let me see truth most people never see. There is a hunger in the universe. Hunger is the universe. It's the cause. It's the effect. Energy moves from one form to another. Like water into a cloud into a stream. Energy accumulates in cells that become meat. We take it into our bodies and fatten for something bigger. Everything is like that. A universe eating itself.

But there are energies most people never know. Never see. Dangerous energies. Worse than radiation. They don't just hurt people. They don't die. They break the before and after with their undying. I can sense them. Kind of like a smell. A stink. As a kid. The stink was everywhere inside the pain of that place. So we used a deeper hunger. We called the bigger predator. It wanted to break the undying like me, just to lick at the inside. It needs to hunt the terrible things that hunt us.

I hope you understand. The incredible gift. I have begun to awaken others. Like the hunger and the hunt awakened me. History is a bloodtrail. My roommate. His father. Even my father. You, more than anyone. Our lives are trails of blood it follows into the nest our world. It feasts here. And so we are all safe. You deserve to know for the good you've done. My pack will seek out the insult of the undying. We will hunt. We will feed. We will never be alone.

Thank you.

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ELI TILLMAN'S MEMOIRS

Hope Comes Back to Life (Eli Tillman, Candelcove Press, 2006). Eli Tillman recounts the 1994 abduction of his infant son Jacob from a Wal-Mart parking lot, his wife's subsequent suicide, his struggles with guilt and addiction, and the blessings that came with belatedly embracing Jesus. In March 2001, Jacob Tillman is found alive in North Carolina. Eli has a religious conversion in a truckstop chapel just before he is to see his son for the first time in seven years.

The Long Road Home (Eli Tillman, Candelcove Press, 2007). Eli Tillman describes reuniting with his son Jacob, reaching a settlement in his lawsuit against the FBI for failing to pursue the abduction, and his conflicts with health and education professionals in Jacob's struggles with overwhelming trauma. He begins providing his own care and education to Jacob through trial and error. Astonishingly, Jacob Tillman begins understanding and using language only in 2004. Eli Tillman never details the methods that achieved the breakthrough. The book remains immensely popular among evangelical homeschoolers, advocates for school prayer, and vaccine conspiracy theorists.

The Road Show (Eli Tillman, Candelcove Press, 2009). With *The Long Road Home* selling briskly, Eli Tillman embarks on a speaking tour of the U.S., living with and teaching his son Jacob in an RV as they travel. He recounts hiring a nanny and tutor named Clovis and a driver named Clark. Tillman describes a loose curriculum built around watching popular films with Jacob and building lessons around things that the boy asked about while watching. He plays to his audience with polemics against standardized testing, a lack of prayer in schools, and the quality of school lunches.

Learning to Fly After We Fall (Eli Tillman, Candelcove Press, 2012). Eli Tillman writes of coming to terms with his troubled son's transition into adulthood. He describes Jacob Tillman as shy and soft-spoken but devoted to his studies and his and his father's beliefs, including "a patriotism built from life on the road in this great country." Jacob wants to become a police officer in order to protect others from the harms he suffered. And he wants to change his name to escape public scrutiny. Eli takes every opportunity to praise Jesus and the Founding Fathers as he struggles with the sense of losing his child again. He does not give Jacob's new name.

The Hype Train (Barbara Cymbaline, Lindisfarne Press, 2015). A vicious but obscure pop-academia hit piece against Eli Tillman's memoirs, published by a professor of educational psychology at Purdue. Cymbaline refutes the movie-education model he describes in *The Road Show*. She proves that Eli Tillman drove his son around the country alone. Neither the helper Clovis nor the driver Clark existed. Receipts show that Eli Tillman left Jacob during the day at private, for-profit holding facilities in order to have time to write: teen boot camps, Christian re-education camps, experimental boarding schools, and detention centers owned by the Laugherty family, pioneers in private jailing. Online, Tillman and his fans dismissed *The Hype Train* as Deep State propaganda funded by Obama's Department of Education.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

BMIA: BABIES MISSING IN ACTION

Montgomery Baxter, *Jacobin*, August 2018. El Paso-based Baxter claims that the child separation policy of 2018 was not in fact stopped by the courts. He argues that in addition to the abysmal treatment of unaccompanied minors since before the Obama administration, there's never been sufficient evidence that all children were reunited with their parents after the 2018 separations. The article discusses the ORR Portal, the program used to track children under the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services. The HHS software was designed to process adult refugees and collected little data about immigrants' children. It proved completely inadequate to the task of reconnecting families.

An "Agent Tillman" appears early in the piece. The week after the Trump inauguration, a source working at Providence Children's Hospital in El Paso, Texas, told Baxter that ICE agents were removing infants from the nursery at night. Baxter reported it to local police, but they took no action. At the hospital, Baxter confronted a young, white ICE officer called only Agent Tillman. Tillman said he was finishing a sweep for unaccompanied minors crossing the border. When Baxter asked how Tillman they were unaccompanied minors, he answered, "Because I just finished arresting their mothers for illegal entry. They are guilty of crime. It is my duty to take custody of the minors. For their protection."

Baxter reports similar actions involving Agent Tillman in Haitian and Salvadorian communities. Tillman is referred to as something of a boogeyman for the remainder of the article. Immigrant mothers call him *El Niñero*, "the Babysitter." Baxter claims *El Niñero* is based in an unlisted ICE facility in El Paso, where the child separation program was piloted in mid-2017. It's estimated 700 children were separated from families around El Paso during that time. Baxter is convinced *El Niñero* was legally kidnapping children even earlier, beginning in the over 600 raids ICE ordered in the second week of Trump's administration. The reporter cites tax information that indicates ICE contracted with Laugherty Youth Facilities Force to construct an El Paso detention facility shortly after Trump's election.

After the courts reinstated temporary protective status for immigrants, ICE dismissed concerns by nurses at raided facilities and claimed that all parents and children had been reunited. The agency refuses to divulge the number of arrests. Since many of the mothers had not yet checked in for prenatal appointments before arrest, no paper trail can confirm they were ever there.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

CASE SUMMARY: 07-195121

On December 13, 1994, Jacob Tillman was reported missing by his mother, Delilah Tillman, outside a Wal-Mart in Campton, Kentucky. Mrs. Tillman claimed that she placed her infant son in his car seat, moved to get into the driver's seat, and the child disappeared.

Grainy surveillance footage showed an unidentified woman walking up to Delilah Tillman shortly after she buckled up her son. All wear thick coats against the cold. The shorter woman appears to speak to Tillman for a moment, after which Tillman stares blankly into her purse, unresponsive, not moving. The woman unbuckles the car seat, removes it, and walks out of frame carrying the child. Tillman remains standing still for nearly thirty minutes despite an air temperature around freezing. Eventually, Tillman can be seen panicking, running through the rows of cars and screaming her son's name before she returns through the Wal-Mart's entrance to call the police.

Public and police suspicions fell upon the Tillmans. Delilah had no explanation for her long period unmoving in the parking lot. She committed suicide a week later. No evidence could be found to indict Eli Tillman.

Jacob Tillman remained missing until March 2001, when he was one of nineteen children found abandoned at a burning Maryland orphanage called Cornucopia House. The owner of the facility, Yelena Kalamatiano, was missing and presumed dead. She could not be directly linked to the kidnapping. Jacob had been given a false name, Conrad Hopko, but DNA testing linked him to the Tillmans.

There were no leads until 2001. Attempts by Maryland officials to identify nearly twenty children found abandoned at Cornucopia House led to a DNA match taken from a teething toy in the back of Delilah Tillman's car. The child was identified as Jacob Tillman. Conrad Hopko was the name on his bogus adoption paperwork and other children called him Conradin.

Jacob Tillman had suffered severe trauma at the hands of his captors, but his father's insistence on his speedy return cut short recovery therapy. Even before recovering his son, Eli launched lawsuits against the Kentucky State Police, the FBI, and a number of media companies for millions in damages in their investigations of him and his wife.

ESAU TILLMAN, FORM 1040: U.S. INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RETURN, 2016

In 2016, Esau Tillman filed a tax return reporting his residence as El Paso, Texas, and his employer as ICE, Enforcement and Removal Operations, Detention Management Division. He holds dual job titles of immigration officer and facilities contract coordinator. Tillman has worked at the same location since the beginning of the Trump administration. Beginning in 2016, he reported 1099-MISC freelance employment income from Laugherty Youth Facilities Force, also in El Paso.

In 2018, a W-9 form requesting his Social Security Number for tax purposes was sent from the offices of the Frank Harvey Water Reclamation Plant, north of El Paso. ICE appears to be funneling Tillman's pay through the El Paso Service and Processing Center for work at an unlisted detention facility at the water plant.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

RECOMMENDATION TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Office of General Counsel, November 2, 2002. Before the recovery of Jacob Tillman, Eli Tillman launched multiple civil lawsuits against the FBI alleging negligence, harassment, and libel. The FBI's primary defense was the lack of evidence in Case 07-195121 to suggest suspects other than the parents. With Delilah Tillman dead and insufficient evidence against Eli Tillman, the FBI and Department of Justice maintain their right to declare the case cold under prosecutorial discretion. After the recovery of Jacob Tillman, DOJ and FBI negotiated substantial settlements with Eli Tillman in exchange for his signing strict hold-harmless and nondisclosure agreements.

The Office of General Counsel recommends that all information about the case be kept confidential. All information about the case should be restricted to a limited number of specific personnel. Any other personnel who contact the Tillman family or their representatives under any circumstances should face disciplinary action. All further developments should be reported directly to the Office of General Counsel.

THE ILLEGAL AGENDA: ORIGIN OF A RACIAL CLEANSING
Jossy Mercedes and Ronald Carr, MacMichelin Press, 2019. *The Illegal Agenda* explores the origins of the Trump administration's immigration policy. It argues that the travel ban, the ending of temporary protective status for refugees, the massive increase in deportations, and the expansion of the child separation policy to include accompanied minors are all largely due to the influence of Trump advisor Stephen Miller.

The book reports that even before Trump entered office, Miller convened low-profile immigration policy teams to prepare an immigration crackdown. These meetings between Customs and Border Patrol, ICE, the DOJ, and the Office of Refugee Resettlement were unofficial, unnamed working groups. They were not subject to a congressional record of attendees or meeting minutes. The first occurred mere weeks after the election.

The book traces as many attendees to the "Miller Cell" meetings as possible, arguing that the harsh, rushed, and often illegal treatment of immigrants during the Trump administration owes much to midranking officials obstructing accountability processes on the administration's behalf.

One page recounts Miller 2012 organizing of a campus alumni "debate" at Duke University, hosting white supremacist Richard Spencer. Miller bonds with Chasten Laugherty after recognizing the Biblical allusion in the name of Laugherty's roommate, named Esau.

Chasten Laugherty is the son of Kyle Laugherty, a private prison contractor that received many ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) contracts after Trump's election. The book points out that while the federal budget lists 201 ICE holding facilities, the ICE website lists only 121. The locations of unlisted facilities are classified, as are the names of agents and private contractors working on site.

Part Four: The Hidden God

“Any sufficiently advanced technology
is indistinguishable from magic.”

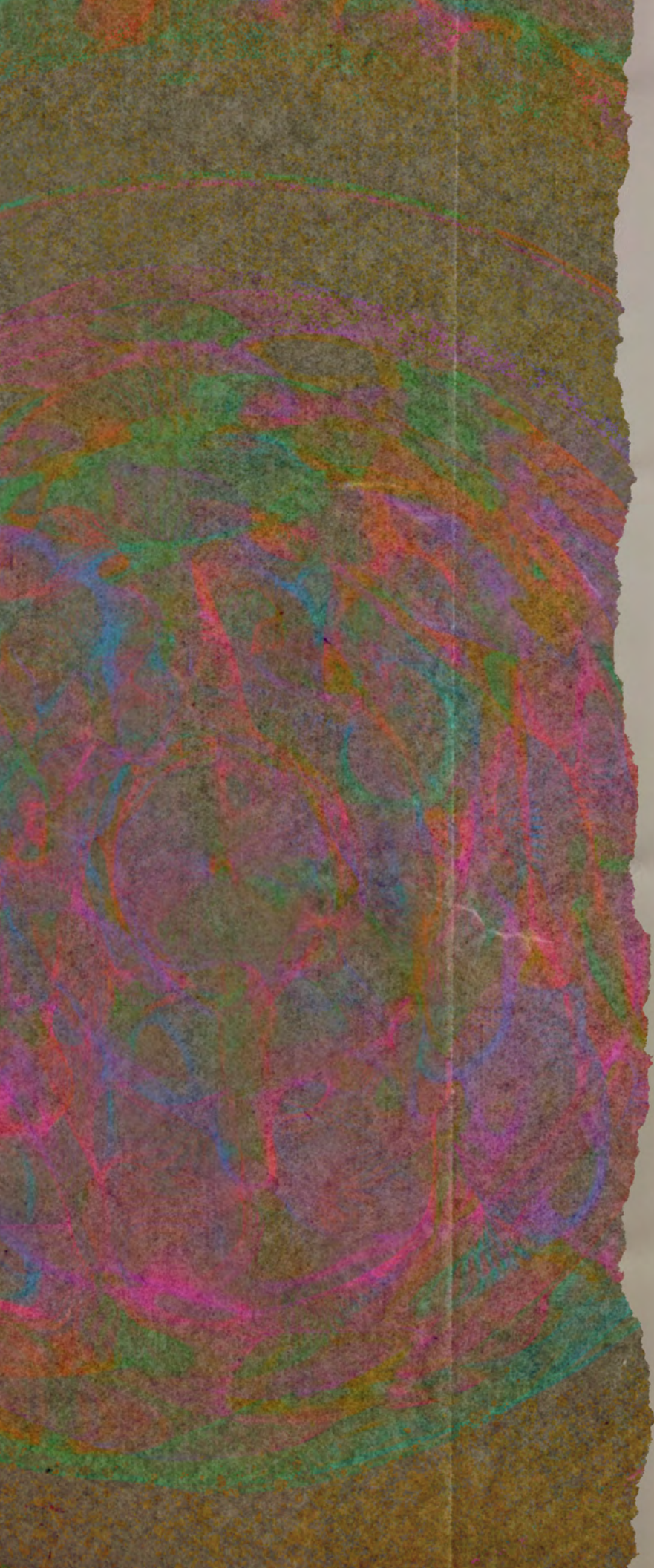
—Clarke’s Third Law

“Never attribute to malice that which is
adequately explained by stupidity.”

—Hanlon’s Razor

“Any sufficiently advanced incompetence
is indistinguishable from malice.”

—Grey’s Law



Part Four: The Hidden God

JULY 2020. THE WORLD FEELS LIKE IT'S DYING.

The beginning of the actual end? No one knows. All is in disarray.

Except it is not.

It may feel like that for the rest of them. Not for the Agents. They glide along protected by fate. They are guided through the fray as children birthed, caught inside something sleek and made of hunger. Protected from everything except the Mother of All That Moved in the Once-Cold Stars.

Sign of the lost figure hinted at in investigations of 2016 has surfaced: the Quiet Children's red-handed "Speaker." The ferret child. Herald of Sredni Vashtar. Recorded in King-Torino's records under the false name Conrad Hopko, disciplined by Babushka as Conradin.

As the Teeth chase after one of their own, cannibalistic hounds of God that they have become, they find the prey has gone to ground in the one place they may not dig: a mound of festering evil called the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency.

Conradin has become one of them. Perhaps he always was.

The Truth of Conradin

Ensure that the players understand the following:

- » "Conradin" is the Internet handle of Esau Tillman. Jarnigan claims Esau's name used to be Jacob.
- » "Conradin" was the name Yelena Kalamatiano gave the boy with the ferret, renamed Conrad Hopko. The boy that went missing from King-Torino, behind the classified FBI Case 07-195121.
- » Conradin, Conrad, Jacob, and Esau are all the same person. The lost survivor. He's all grown up now and working for the government. Just like his heroes.

Set the Scene

"The Spiral" ended with the Agents receiving a vast amount of information about Conradin. The players were tasked with dividing up and reading the handouts. "The Hidden God" begins with them sharing the material with each other.

Begin by setting the scene where Agents process this material. Pitzerelli furnishes whatever the team needs to assemble the intel quickly and quietly. Prompt the players to take turns describing the following details.

Location

All work is done at a secure, deniable, and isolated site. Perhaps an office closed by lockdown. The closed subbasement of a car park. Where is it? Why are you the only ones there? Describe the scene.

Security

The Program insists on operational security. Research is to be gathered, processed, and then destroyed wherever possible. Describe the Agent in charge of these precautions. With only a few days notice and no additional personnel, what measures do they take at the location?

Organization

The life of Conradin is painted across entire books, gigs of documents, and files forgotten in warehouses. The Agents must sift the information quickly. What Agent does MASTICATE nominate to the task? Describe the office supplies and systems used to coordinate the investigation.

Sustenance

Bodies started this. Bodies must end it. The brain is part of that meat. To get this done, the team still needs to piss, eat, and sleep. How does the Agent make the space livable? Are there snacks? Caffeine? Something stronger?

What's Missing

MASTICATE is not meant to be here. This place is one stop in a kinetic field op. Some vital furnishing is missing: chairs, a table, toilets, etc. Describe what it is. How does the Agent improvise a solution?

Disturbance

It's still government work. Describe some persistent flaw that mars the location—hissing fluorescent lights, music from a gym next door, the stink of a dead rat in a wall. The imperfection forms a backdrop across everything the group learns here. It is the detail most ready to mind when Agents remember this place.

The Agents' Findings

The Agents must create the briefing to this operation. The Program regards them as the experts. If only they truly knew...

The Agents learn that Yelena Kalamatiano abducted Jacob Tillman and renamed him Conrad Hopko, nicknamed "Conradin." Esau Tillman, ICE agent, uses that nickname as Internet handle. Linking the names brings into focus a mountain of evidence once hidden in plain sight. It's up to the Agents to sift through it.

For a group in a rush, review **QUICK CONCLUSIONS**. For a richer experience, roleplay each Agent's presentation of the evidence in **DEEP BACKGROUND** on page 220.

Quick Conclusions

Lee Jarnigan was secret friends with Conradin and kept blackmail material on him throughout their relationship. He learned Conradin's real name, Esau Tillman, formerly Jacob Tillman. The veil of secrecy and neglect draped over child services in the U.S. was enough to conceal Conradin for years. He took few precautions covering his tracks as an adult.

- » **CONRADIN'S IDENTITY:** Jacob Tillman, Esau Tillman, and Conradin are all the same boy from Cornucopia House. The paper trail of his childhood paints a picture of effortless evasion, dodging detection by the Program through coincidences and luck that cannot possibly be natural.

- » **ABOUT JACOB TILLMAN:** Jacob Tillman's father, Eli Tillman, wrote popular memoirs about Jacob's abduction, rescue, and difficult recovery.
- » **NAME CHANGE:** After recovering enough from his ordeal to achieve some sort of independence, Jacob Tillman legally changed his name to Esau Tillman right before he turned 18 and applied to Duke University. He effectively buried his notorious childhood under a different legal identity.
- » **CONRADIN AND LAUGHTERTY:** Esau Tillman—Conradin—formed ties to the wealthy Laugherty family, recently awarded lucrative for-profit prison contracts by changes in U.S. immigration policy.
- » **CONRADIN'S CONDITION:** Conradin's struggle with language likely stems from brain damage caused by Yelena Kalamatiano's mix of neglect and unnatural abuse. This seems to have allowed him to maintain a connection to the unnatural force, the cosmic hunger, that chose the Teeth.
- » **CONRADIN AND ICE:** Conradin works for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He has been using every abuse of power perpetrated by the Trump administration to build a new Cornucopia House. He wants to call down cosmic forces by hiding the ritual inside everyday horrors.
- » **CONRADIN'S IMPUNITY:** With the current administration and Tillman's connections, almost nothing can legally be done to stop him. Even the Program is unlikely to expose itself by taking action.

Finally, *the original Teeth* may each make an **Unnatural** roll at +20%, or at +40% if they have found many revelations about the nature of Bast. On a success, provide the following intrusive thought.

- » **CONRADIN'S PURPOSE:** Babushka's torments at Cornucopia House meant to light a beacon for the gods. The wrong god answered, blessing sacrifice over sorceress. Conradin, the sacrifice, *summoned you there* in 2001. You are his creature. You are leashed to his fate. Now he's doing it again. Igniting the beacon. Singing Sredni Vashtar awake to hunt forever. Making more things like you. Lose 1/1D6 SAN from the unnatural.

Deep Background

Let the Agents assemble their intel through a montage of roleplaying. Taking turns, each player roleplays their Agent presenting findings from the handouts to the rest of the team.

KEEP IT GROUNDED. Remind the group of the physical details of the research space. The sounds, sights, and smells. The passage of time in a cram session. How does a grinding all-nighter shows up in their dress and behavior? Add details at every turn.

EVERYONE IS ONSTAGE. In character, the Agent summarizes a source. The rest of the Agents are the audience, there to interrupt, add context, paraphrase, digress, ask questions, etc. To interject with salient points or wild conjecture.

REACT; DO NOT READ ALOUD. Quotations are acceptable if Agents find a passage especially important, but nothing is more important than presenting how the presenter *feels*. How does that Agent react to the information? Do they leave anything out?

FOCUS ON ANALYSIS, NOT EXPOSITION. This information does not enter the game until filtered through one of the Agents. That means the presenter can be truthful...or they can deny, omit, and lie. It's up to other Agents to check each other's work on the handouts. If accusations, offense, or suspicions arise, roleplay accordingly.

REWARD EXPERTISE. Agents may ask to roll relevant skills during the presentations of others. Success calls for additional connections to the campaign's events and **INVESTIGATING BAST** (page 11). For example, an Agent with a successful **Medicine** roll might connect the target's brain damage to the advanced neurological decay of the Cornucopia House cadavers in 2016. Successful use of **Pharmacy** might lead an Agent to suspect the substance excreted by Kalamatiano. **History** could link Tillman's abuses to the lost Rites of Bast.

OVERVIEW: At the end, make sure the players understand everything in **QUICK CONCLUSIONS** on page 219.

OPINT MOLES

The group may be infiltrated by plants and deep cover operatives by now (see **NEW AGENTS, NEW SCARS** on page 196). That the divided loyalties of replacement Agents may derail the campaign is a concern shared by Bast. Remember **CHIPPING THE TEETH** (page 38), the **Scent** power, and other means to 'infect' the fate of those near **MASTICATE**. Once the Program's moles get drafted by a cosmic power, Teeth have a chance to explain the futility of trying to stop them. At least if they can be honest about their own condition.

Briefing Pitzerelli

Esau Tillman is rebuilding hell on the government's dime. This is exactly why the Program wanted more intel before committing to action. To proceed with the operation, the Agents have to brief Pitzerelli and run things up the chain of command.

No Good Possibilities

Depending on their skills and backgrounds, the Agents might realize before they call in Pitzerelli that this briefing could go badly.

Hard-Earned Skepticism

At this point in the campaign, some Agents may have been government employees for decades. Veterans of civil service or the military can roll whichever skill is highest: **Bureaucracy**, **Law**, or **Military Science**.

Inform those that succeed that grim experience has taught them to be cynical. They think there's almost no chance Delta Green acts on this. Tillman has ties to private prison contractors, ICE, and the Trump administration. Anything that happens to him has to be explained to a ravenous press and undergo scrutiny from multiple factions within the U.S. security state and politics. As repercussions spread, Delta Green might even be forced to brief the President on

the existence of the unnatural—the same President who revealed U.S. nuclear secrets to a Russian foreign minister mere *days* into office. Meanwhile, Conradin's abuse appears from the outside to be one more sadistic embarrassment in a cascade of mundane American atrocities. That doesn't rate as a threat compared to exposure of the Program.

The Agent with the lowest SAN is convinced the Program won't accept the risk. The order to retreat is coming. They must decide whether to repeat this suspicion to the group. Keeping quiet costs 0/1 SAN due to helplessness.

Urgency

An Agent who has 40% or greater in the skill may roll whichever is highest: **Medicine**, **Forensics**, **Psychotherapy**, **Occult**, or **Unnatural**. If they gained revelations by **INVESTIGATING BAST** during home scenes (page 11), add +20% for each discovery.

Success means the Agent performs cold arithmetic. The Skoptsi inflicted language neglect on their victims for decades. The silence may have been designed to hide their arcane abuse, but some victims heard something in the void without a voice. Language somehow interferes with the Hidden God, weakening control over the animal of man.

In contrast, Tillman's operations have been going for two years, maybe less. That's still inside the age range of cognitive linguistic development. The children inside can recover. They can be saved. The Teeth can stop it this time. But only if they go *now*.

Every delay means more pain, trauma, and brain damage. Every second brings the children closer to eternal silence and risks spawning more Teeth for the hunt. It's up to each Agent whether to convey this urgency to the group. Roll 0/1 SAN for helplessness if the Agent keeps quiet.

The Clove Choice

Anyone on MASTICATE who realizes that getting help from the Program may be as impossible as it is necessary has a choice to make. It's the same choice forced on Agent Clove nearly twenty years ago, and they have until Pitzerelli arrives to decide.

This discussion should occur in character but don't let the conversation get bogged down in details. The choice is simple.

1. *Give up.* Watch the Program do nothing. Imagine what's going on in Conradin's little playhouse during every spare moment for the rest of your life.
2. *Pretend to give up.* Pretend to heel like a good dog. Then ditch the leash and go hunting alone. Try to survive afterward.
3. *Manipulate the intel.* Get the job done before the Program gets wise. Try to survive afterward.

How It Goes Down

The players have already briefed each other. There's no need to play out their briefing for Pitzerelli in detail.

Start this scene the moment after Pitzerelli has processed the last of the evidence—or as much as MASTICATE allows. The Agents already know the truth. They packaged it however they saw fit.

If They Lie

If the Agents lie, Pitzerelli gets a **HUMINT** roll to spot the play, minus 10% for every point of Bonds shared with each member of the team.

If he suspects manipulation, Pitzerelli furiously demands the whole story. Whether he gets it or not, he seeks to leave the briefing as quickly as possible, contacting leadership and warning them about MASTICATE's intention. The Program takes immediate steps to sabotage careers, manufacture charges, and remove the Agents off the board. Once his trust breaks, there's no getting out clean if the attorney leaves the room under his own power.

If They Tell the Truth

Briefed on the truth, Pitzerelli's reaction is consistent with his past relationship to the team (see **RESOLUTIONS**, page 185). He might act apologetic, dismissive, exasperated, or even regretful, but he cannot be cooperative. Launching an operation against Conradin's detention facility is a non-starter. He knows command won't accept the risk of exposure, and he's right. He

orders MASTICATE to stand down. They can revisit the issue after the election. A year or two, max.

If the Agents didn't see this coming—if they thought they worked for the good guys—each loses 1/1D4 SAN from helplessness.

If They Blow It

The campaign doesn't end if Agents fail to fool Pitzerelli. The attorney is a fixer, not a field operative. Remind the players that if all else fails, they can buy time by abducting him. A missing persons report can cut chain of command for weeks, especially in a compartmentalized organization like Delta Green.

Provided they accept having their lives destroyed afterward, there's still time for the Agents to act. Even if the Program scrambles a team to protect Tillman from the Agents (and they do), that team covers his apartment and the El Paso offices. The Teeth can still finish this. But it requires total commitment.

Preparations

The time, resources, and cooperation available to MASTICATE depend on how the briefing went.

- » If they lied and got away with it, MASTICATE has weeks to prep and access to Program resources. But their tactics are limited to actions that disguise their true intentions, and Pitzerelli provides constant oversight.
- » If they were ordered to stand down, the Agents have whatever resources they can beg, borrow, and steal. They have until Pitzerelli notices them missing to accomplish the mission.
- » If they got caught lying and stuffed Pitzerelli in the trunk of a car or worse, the Teeth become fugitives. They must finish the job before the Program takes countermeasures.

Once in El Paso, Agents can take as many precautions and form as many plans as time allows, but never let them forget that time is torture.

Plots Against America

If the players struggle for a strategy, offer these possibilities.

Lying to the Program

Stirring the Program to action requires only the most questionable intelligence. Leave the details of the lie up to the players. They should know by now the kinds of threats that stir Delta Green into action.

Unless the Agents are exceptionally thorough, the Program learns of the operation's false pretenses while carrying it out. If it can't stop the Agents before they reach the Surplus, it sticks around to finish things and cover everything up. The second the operation ends, the Program activates a group to eliminate MASTICATE completely. They bury the untrustworthy Agents alongside their precious Conradin. Pitzerelli might get rolled up with them as punishment for his gullibility. It all depends how badly the Agents put the Program at risk and misused its resources.

Prison Break

Any rescue that actually helps the people suffering inside the Surplus requires a lot more than shooting up the place. Detainees need food, medical treatment, translators, legal counsel, transportation off-site, and a network of safe houses for their lives to improve. Victims may need specialist treatment from child psychologists (perhaps even Nika Chilikov, if she survived). The only way to arrange for such care is to work outside the government.

The U.S. government regards the rescue of Surplus captives as a jailbreak of lawfully detained criminals. However, once the inmates are freed, officials face overwhelming challenges in ever arresting them again. Most were taken under false pretenses, using legal precedents that have since been reversed in appeal. The same bad paperwork used to hide arrests from oversight make them difficult to repeat. Supervisors fear media fallout. It's possible to do some good here, provided the Agents do more than dump the liberated back on the streets. Their best local resource is Nelinha Esteves

Nelinha Esteves

Nelinha Esteves is a 37-year-old immigration law specialist of Brazilian-American decent. Her legal non-profit, *El Puente de la Esperanza*, “The Bridge of Hope,” or more often, just “The Bridge,” is a co-op of local immigration defense officials providing pro bono representation for asylum and naturalization cases since 2015. Esteves is extremely capable in her field of law. But she is coming apart at the seams. She can’t recall the last time she had time for a full night’s sleep. The work has destroyed her marriage. The desktop wallpaper on her home computer is a still frame from *Day of the Dead*, where a man screams “Choke on it!” as zombies eat him.

Nelinha Esteves does not trust cops. Her dealings with them are professional but terse, revealing the bare minimum legally required. As she says to her clients, the goal of any conversation with any law enforcement is to avoid it. Failing that, the best one can hope for is ending the encounter quickly.

Success on a roll of **Law** or of **Persuade** –20% is required to convince Esteves that the Agents are on her side. Any lies about their motivations must overcome her 60% **HUMINT** skill.

The Bridge of Hope

If Agents can make Esteves believe they actually want to help, she has connections to arrange the whole operation. Once committed, she insists the Agents stop talking. She needs to know as little as possible about their plans. Esteves is under no legal requirement to report anything. If someone comes to her out of nowhere, says a large number of people need her help, and gives her a time and place, she has no legal responsibility to know where they came from. She is not mandated to report crimes she’s not told about.

She only wants to know how many people they plan to bring to her, what their needs are, and when to have everything ready. She needs a week to prepare.

The Bridge is tied to a number of other organizations, including the Immigration Legal Defense Fund and the International Refugee Committee. If the Bridge can obscure the Agents as a source, there are big pockets and lots of volunteers available to help.

The Bridge and its allies can provide donated food, clothing, transportation, and shelter by stashing detainees in churches and homes around the area. Then they can begin the work of reuniting children with their relatives and preparing legal defenses to curtail additional arrests. Any rescued detainees that speak on the abuses at Surplus provide the organization with significant political leverage, media exposure, and fundraising opportunities. At that point, the government goes on the defensive, and the detainees are no longer pursued in lieu of promises of “reform” from the upcoming Biden administration.

Unless given special instructions, any “special” inmates from Private Side disperse among the Bridge’s networks. The Agents never see them again.

See **AFTERMATH** on page 251 for some unwelcome possibilities if things go wrong.

Bringing In the Outlaws

The Agents may have made contact with the old guard as long ago as **FINDING THE SKOPTSI** on page 88. If they don’t have a contact, they can try a cold approach if they have the luck, tradecraft, and **Criminology** success required to pull off a clandestine meeting.

The first problem with contacting an Outlaw is doing so without alerting the Program. Attempts to defect or leak information between organizations is always viewed as a threat. The Program makes sure any Agents caught breaching confidentiality become the next team’s mission.

The Outlaw comes alone and sticks around only long enough to hear the pitch. They are none too surprised to see the Program refuse to do what’s right.

The Outlaws are keen to ride, but they won’t take orders. If the Agents want help, they’re asking the remnants of the old Group to take over.

If the Agents have a Bond in the Outlaws, that secures cooperation without a roll. That Outlaw can recruit a number of others equal to half the Bond rating, rounded up. A Bond of 1–2 sees the Outlaw help with a partner. At Bond 3–4, they show up with two as backup, etc.

Without a Bond, the Outlaws are not willing to walk into a kill-zone like this. If the Agents try to

THE PRICE

The Croatoan Strategy

If Outlaws help the Agents, they have dual first objectives: stop the threat and protect themselves. A close second is causing as many problems as possible for the Program. They pursue what they refer to privately as "the Croatoan strategy." At every stage, they sabotage attempts to cover up action against the Surplus or mitigate harm caused by their actions.

They treat attempts at stealth and crafting cover stories as wastes of limited time and resources. They want to get in, destroy the entire facility, and disappear. They only plan to leave behind bodies, fire, and unanswered questions.

Presenting them with the implausibility of enacting such a plan with so many detainees changes nothing. Talk of ethics prompts derisive snorts of laughter. If the Outlaws are being asked to risk their lives raiding a federal facility, they're not about to waste time making it look good for the Program.

The rejection of subtlety is mitigated only a little if the Outlaws agreed to work under the authority of MASTICATE. An Agent who leaves an Outlaw to guard important cultists might come back to find the whole room gunned down because one of them "reached for something." The phrase "hey, you came to me" is their defense for any such result.

During the operation, if authorities are en route and capture seems likely, the Outlaws betray their Program counterparts to secure their own escape. This could involve anything from stealing a getaway vehicle to shooting them in the back.

Twenty years on, the Outlaws who know about the Program are convinced it was a huge mistake. They are ailing and resentful. Having been called in from the cold, they hope to drop a disaster into the traitors' laps.

make it look better than it is, that requires its own **Persuade** roll. The Outlaw detects bullshit by opposing it with a **HUMINT** roll at whatever skill level you decide.

If the Agents are honest with a Bond, or if they manage to hoodwink a fresh contact, the rest is up to a **Persuade** test.

- » **CRITICAL SUCCESS:** The Outlaw sees the true severity of the situation and pledges the help of their cell. Moreover, they agree to take orders from MASTICATE. There's no time for jurisdictional pissing contests. The war does not wait.
- » **SUCCESS:** The Outlaw begrudgingly agrees to provide resources. The Agents gain access to whatever databases the Outlaw can reach as part of their day job. MASTICATE gets the key and location of a Green Box. They may take supplies from it and/or use it for off-site interrogations. The Outlaw provides advice but their Group can't risk boots on the ground. It has other threats to consider.
- » **FAILURE:** The Outlaw only agrees to help if MASTICATE agrees to follow the Outlaws' orders. The Outlaws want full authority. The skills used to determine the success of the raid only come in part from MASTICATE. They are now at the mercy of whatever talent the Outlaws scrape together on short notice. The Outlaws' assistance is fraught with dick-measuring and recklessness as they desperately try not to admit how unprepared they are.
- » **FUMBLE:** The Outlaw agrees to help, to take orders, and to provide resources. After the mission, they try to eliminate MASTICATE as too risky an outfit to have so close to their Group.

Working with the Outlaws is a fast way for the Agents of MASTICATE to leap out of the good graces of the Program and end up hunted for life.

The Frank Harvey Water Reclamation Plant

ICE sends Esau Tillman's paycheck to the El Paso training facility, but he spends his days at the Frank Harvey Water Reclamation Plant. The complex dominates a couple of hectares of northern El Paso, a maze of barbed wire fences, service roads, pipes, sluice gates, skimmer cisterns, scum pits, and sand aquifers. The grounds are owned by El Paso Water and process roughly 12 million gallons per day.

Researching the Plant

The following can be derived from public websites and Google Earth.

Water pumped into the Frank Harvey Water Reclamation Plant first gets pushed through a series of bar grate sluices, arranged in concentric squares to remove solid waste. Catwalks connect these large concrete canals to the main junction house. From there, the water flows into a series of recessed sedimentation basins. Solids fall into the sludge skimmer at the bottom of the pool, while top skimmers remove pooling oils. Water is then pumped into a series of organic clarifier cisterns, seasoned in pools with waste-consuming microorganisms before transfer to the treatment plant itself. Inside, an enormous network of pipes and vats administer loads of lye, granulated carbon, chlorine, and pressurized ozone until the water is dumped back into the aquifer through one of the recessed sand pits surrounding the property.

On the northeast side of the compound lies an enormous, windowless, gray warehouse at the corner of the property. Fences with razor wire cut this area off from the rest of the compound and the surrounding desert scrubland. Security lights and cameras watch everything around it. A single service road through the desert terminates at the only outside access, a gate in the razor wire fence. No one enters or approaches the desert door while Agents observe.

Passage through the water plant seems to be required for access. This interior path leads through the filtration equipment to a gated razor wire fence separating a small employee parking lot. Once inside the

gate, the only active entrance is the security door next to the garage shutter. The southern entrance facing the interior sees all the activity: LYFForce employees changing shifts, local police prisoner transfers, and the occasional CBP bus.

- » **MILITARY SCIENCE (LAND):** The warehouse in the top corner is set up like a PMC safe-house in Iraq, not a storage building in suburban Texas. If it follows the usual formula, there should be a drive-thru lane cutting through the whole facility, allowing any assault from one direction to be escaped out a second garage door. The "Surplus" only has the two garage doors, and no one is observed using the one facing the desert. This "escape hatch" likely has the most restricted access, and therefore the lightest security once past the door.
- » **BUREAUCRACY:** No plans for the building exist since it was subcontracted to the federal government, but construction plans indicate the south and east sides of the facility are giant, open-spaces once used as pump rooms. The garage doors at the south and north probably formed a drive-through to drop off equipment. In a retrofit, these areas would most likely be sealed off and used to house prisoners. It would make sense to renovate the control rooms on the west and north sides to house personnel and equipment.

Surveillance: The Gatehouse

The gatehouse is a prefabricated garden shed with holes cut in the side for a window and door.

A single employee guards the visitor gate. When the Agents first arrive, it's Gaddis Creel. The old man inside spends his day smoking cigarettes and listening to sports talk radio. This is all the job requires in his last year before retirement from El Paso Water.

Creel is supposed to check IDs of people coming into the facility against two lists of approved visitors, one for the municipal side and one for whomever is visiting the "Surplus" site. Creel hardly ever checks IDs, though, and instead just opens the gates for any car he recognizes. He does not recognize the Agents, of course, but any amount of authority convinces him

to open the gate. There's nothing in there he imagines they could hurt. Besides, those folks out at the Surplus have their own security if it turns out he's wrong.

If asked what he means by "the Surplus," he briefly explains that the plant used to be even bigger before a bunch of it got automated in remodels. El Paso Water rented the spare space out to some company he never heard the name of. He doesn't know who they are or what they do in there, but he suspects it's nothing too good. He sees a lot of dark-tinted vans and SUVs go in. They don't even speak to him. They have their own remote controls to his gate.

- » **CRIMINOLOGY OR DRIVE:** A carefully steered chat with the bored old man could get details on the Surplus vehicles. He doesn't have names, but he recognizes the make and model for every regular with a remote for his gate. Reverse searching their plate numbers learns the identities and addresses of all the named staff members, though it's up to the Agents to figure out their jobs on-site.
- » **PERSUADE:** An Agent can convince the old man to give up the contents of his clipboard. The paperwork reveals the list of approved identities from the El Paso Water staff and the company that rents the mysterious "Surplus." Creel just wants a promise that the paperwork won't come back to haunt him. Past that, he's fine to look the other way, smoke a cigarette, and focus on the radio while the feds work.
- » **LAW:** Gaddis actually knows his rights well, but he's equally certain he doesn't care what happens to anyone working at Surplus. On a success, the Agent can pass almost any legal justification as a "warrant" and get buzzed into the Water Plant. They're on their own when it comes to getting inside the building proper.

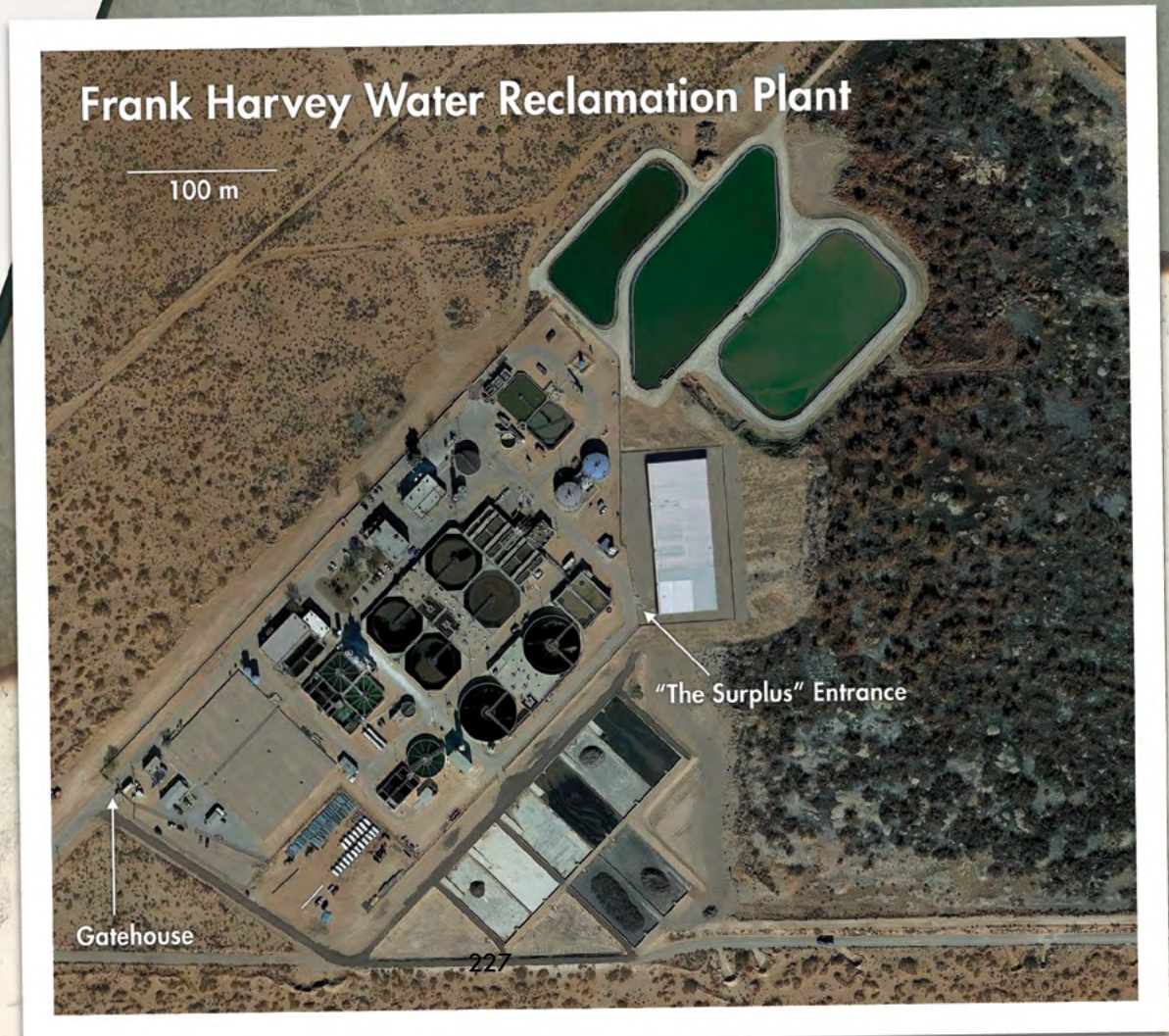
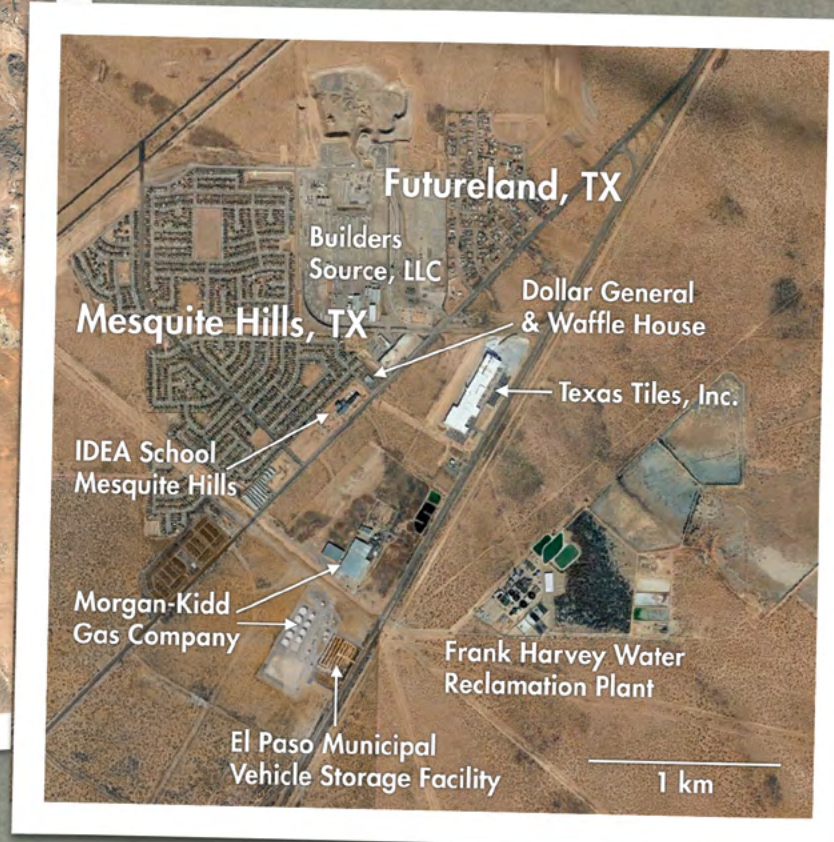
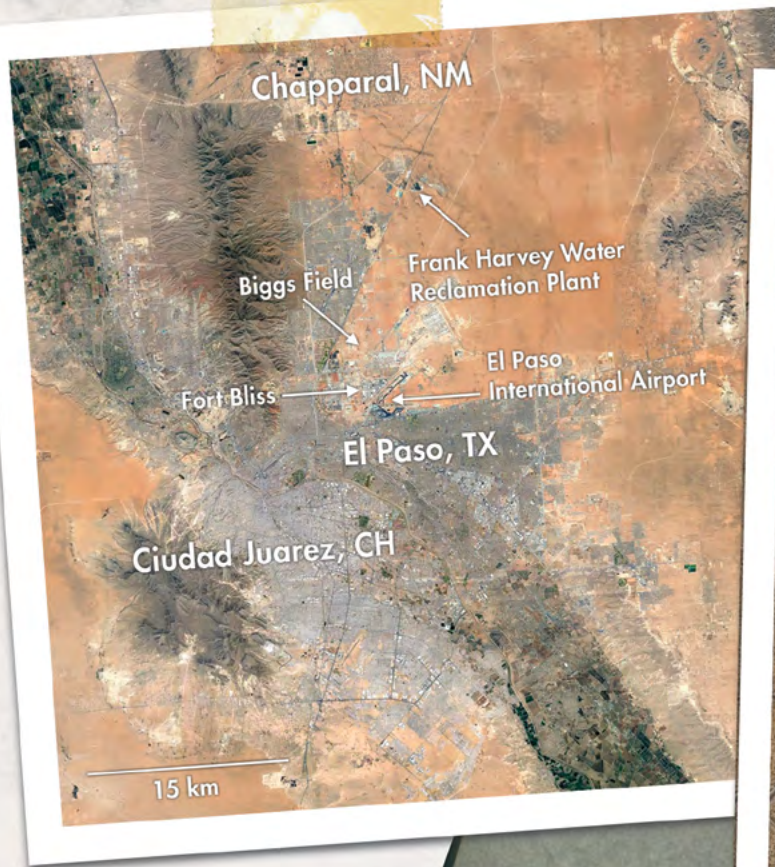
The Agents could bypass the guard completely by cutting the locks off a service gate. The Agents must then succeed in a group **Stealth** roll to avoid the cameras.

Surveillance: El Paso Water

There are, at most, three El Paso Water employees on the premises at any time. A remarkably sophisticated filtration management system was built into the junction house in 2012. It can be run by a single person but is consistently staffed by two employees for insurance purposes. A third employee can be added in instances of heavy usage. Most of the time, the two employees sit in the control room monitoring the pressure, glancing at the security cameras, and trying to resist the urge to play on their phones.

Occasionally, they take a "security check" walk around the perimeter just to stretch their legs (or in a golf cart, if the weather is bad). The patrol gathers pH and biological samples from the organic cistern clarifiers, which is the only information they must feed into the system for it to remain operational. Every few months, new stocks of chemicals must be taken in and off-loaded to replenish the huge storage tanks.

- » **BUREAUCRACY:** Using this skill while studying the access list reveals just how mundane the municipal side actually is. The employees all come up completely clean in background checks.
- » **SEARCH:** This requires a great deal of time watching with a telephoto lens from a blind atop the nearby Franklin Mountains. Each attempt takes two days. A fumble costs 1 **SAN** due to helplessness. Regardless of the roll, the Agents learn that El Paso Water employees only patrol during the morning and evening and never in bad weather. They give the security fence of the "Surplus" building a wide berth at all times. On a successful **Search** roll, the Agents see one of the employees filming a TikTok dance with his partner in the control booth using security cameras to film different angles. This reveals the locations of all cameras and negates the need to roll **Stealth** to bypass them.



Studying the Surplus

The Frank Harvey Water Reclamation Plant “Surplus” building houses an ICE black site, a detention center not listed on the public record.

Researching the Surplus

A successful **Accounting** roll made while searching government records reveal the Surplus has been operational since 30 JAN 2017. ICE leased the building from El Paso Water, getting it cheap due to camaraderie between the new White House and the company's owners. ICE initially subcontracted the facility to house dangerous “Islamic terrorists” caught by ICE raids. They prepared to receive hundreds of foreign nationals in a kind of domestic Gitmo. Since no terrorist of any kind has ever been caught crossing the southern border with Mexico, the facility remained officially unoccupied.

Focus apparently pivoted when ICE subleased the location to Laugherty Youth Facilitation Force (LYFForce), a private company owned by Kyle Laugherty and administrated by his son, Chasten Laugherty. LYFForce holds a contract with ICE “to facilitate detainment needs in the El Paso region.” The contract reserves a part of the facility to be the corporate intellectual property of LYFForce and not subject to federal inspection, which is a contractual requirement for the rest of the facility. Nobody knows what LYFForce is doing in there.

A second **Accounting** roll, or a critical success, puzzles out just how many shells protect the company. LYFForce has sub-subleased the area reserved as their corporate property to another legal entity: ICE! Maintenance for the “reserved for corporate IP” area demanded by the contract was deducted by LYFForce as a cost, thus revealing that the square footage has been rented out to a completely *different* ICE facility and at ludicrously low rates. The government has shelled ownership of the facility to the point that America is no longer aware it owns it. The chief agent listed as the contact for this storage site is Agent Esau Tillman of Enforcement and Removal Operations' Detention Management Division (DMD).

A **Law** roll uncovers that the “Surplus” is known in the local immigration law community. Some families that learned the location of their loved ones and scraped up the resources to hire a lawyer managed to secure releases for teens kept in the facility. Almost all of the captives lacked formal charges, aside from failing to staple their immigration papers to their heads. However, many families lack the means to secure any counsel, so the “Surplus” holds on to most “clients” collected by its enforcement agents and local police.

The incentives for the mass incarceration are clear. Local immigration advocates estimate LYFForce probably pays less than \$2.30 per inmate, per day, against a \$208/day stipend provided by the government. The \$205.70 per inmate profit doesn't even account for the daily bonus LYFForce receives for each “slam dunk” deportation candidate: anyone caught committing a crime, including jaywalking, fornication, minor drug possession, and underage drinking. They profit off every extension and court delay.

Surveillance: The Surplus

The barren desert surrounding the plant doesn't make for easy observation. The best option is setting up with magnification optics in the parking lot of a Waffle House off the highway. Even peering through chain link and pipes from blocks away, it's clear the site is serious about security. Access is only available through a mantrap checkpoint on the interior. The side of the building facing the desert has a garage door and motorized gate the opens toward the foot of the Franklin Mountains, but no amount of watching sees its use.

Agents on stakeout succeed at an **Alertness** roll after 24 hours of surveillance. On a success, they observe yellow-poloed LYFForce employees using passcodes and specialized key fobs to open the gate that separates the water plant from the prison inside it. The garage shutter and security door accessible from employee parking both require keycards. Exceptions to the security keycards are made for prisoner transports made by the El Paso Sheriff. The Agent watches as a driver speaks into an intercom and gets buzzed through the gate.

Any Agent with 30% or better in **Criminology** or **Military Science**, or who succeeds at a roll at +20%, recognizes that the weak point is the intercom. If Agents can get inside the water plant's perimeter, they can use **Criminology** or **Disguise** to impersonate local police and get the gate opened. From there, they need only feign a problem with dispatch and invite themselves inside "to clear up the paperwork."

Personnel: The Surplus

Hard targets reward infiltration over force. Naturally, the Teeth have instincts to thin the herd, targeting employees away from work. Descriptions focus on each employee's motivations and duties within the Surplus building, but Agents may want to make home visits before things go kinetic.

Public-Side Staff

- » Office Facilitator Deborah Richter, desperate and conflicted office manager, page 238
- » Nurse Hường Lan Phan, healthcare worker and potential whistleblower, page 239
- » CCO Jonathan Lowe, complicit DHS stooge, page 241

Private-Side Staff

- » ICE officer Esau Tillman—Conradin—page 247
- » Alan Rapp, maintenance professional and budding serial killer, page 245
- » Officer Terry Smedley, racist corrections officer and pedophile, page 246
- » ICE SRT Special Agent Kendall Duncan, sociopathic operator running protection, page 246
- » CEO Chasten Laugherty, private prison mogul and D.C. lobbyist, page 248

On an unsanctioned op, there's only enough time to approach a few of these people. Disappearances draw attention, both from Conradin and the Program. Furthermore, DDO Tillman doesn't believe in sick days—even during a pandemic—and he's quick to call ICE Special Response Team members over for 'training' if he suspects unusual absences. Encourage Agents to pick targets carefully.

Bringing the Job Home

Describe the living arrangements of Surplus employees however you wish. It doesn't matter where they live. It's about what they do and what they ignore.

Everyone listed can map any area of the facility regularly accessed for their job. They have mismatching suspicions about their peers' actions and varied rationalizations for their participation. No one has ever heard of Bast, Sredni Vashtar, or Cornucopia House. They are Americans, nothing more.

Tillman's Apartment

A good hunter tracks prey to the nest. MASTICATE's first priority is finding where Conradin rests his head.

With his finances filtered through an ICE black budget, Tillman's dwelling proves difficult to locate. An **Accounting** roll and access to the IRS DRT network is required. On a success, Agents find Tillman has never paid rent or a mortgage, but he's listed as 'manager' of a single rental property owned by a Laugherty subsidiary called SchoolShield. Failure provides the same info eventually, but Pitzerelli and the Program notice the interest and interfere.

The address is in one of the city's roughest neighborhoods: a single door in the middle of a blocks-long, crumbling row of identical buildings. Each unit's sole window is choked off by an ancient air conditioner. The security grating across the door suggests a far humbler home than what Tillman could afford. **Alertness** assures wary Agents that the only security cameras operating on the street broke long ago. **Criminology**, **Craft (Locksmith or Mechanics)**, or a prybar can open the front door quickly. It's not the sort of neighborhood where B+E gets called in.

The apartment has one room, a living/bedroom with a mattress on the floor and no other furnishings. Folded piles of clothes are stacked along the wall. A kitchenette barely used. An empty fridge. A soap-scummed shower and immaculate toilet, the towel crusty and dry from long use without a wash. Tillman is not here regularly. Only when he needs to work in private.

A laptop and journal lay on the bedsheets. See the assets on pages 230 and 231 for details.

ASSET

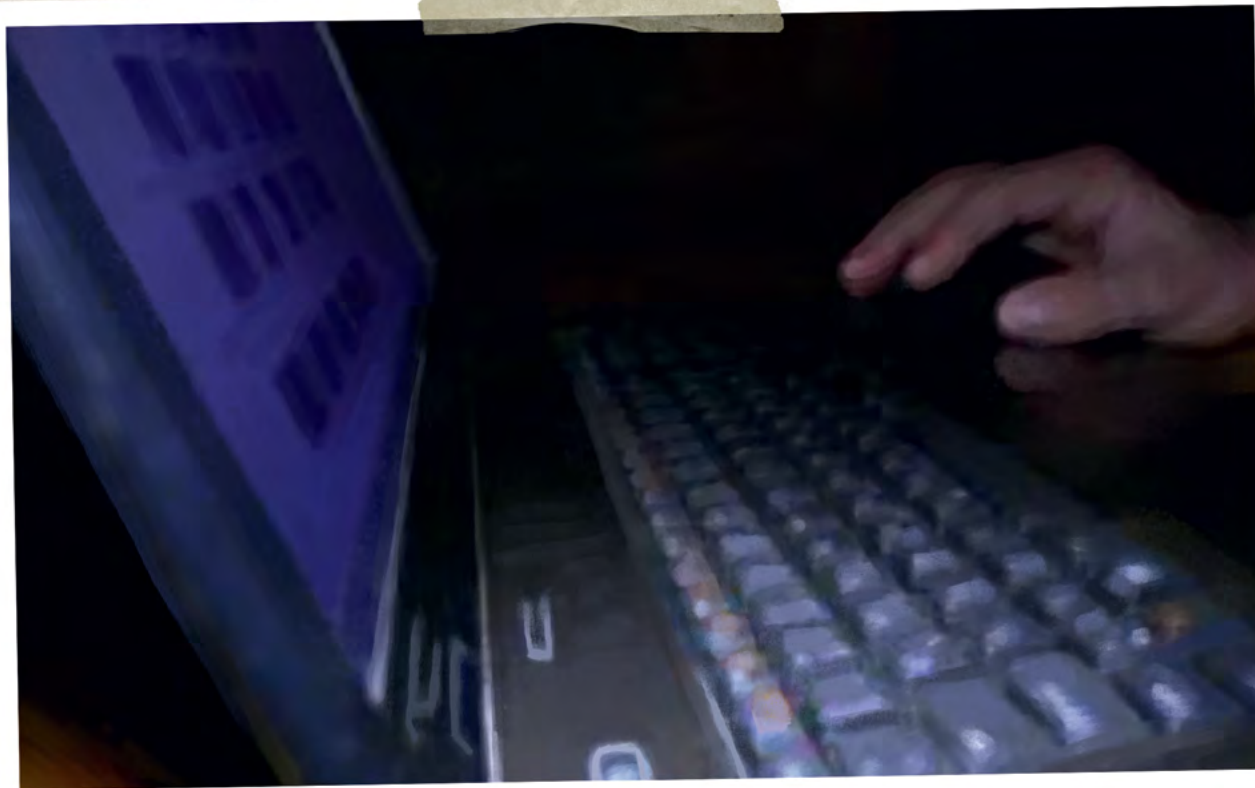
Conradin's 'Work' Computer

The laptop is old and not password protected. There is no Internet connection. The owner must have used a mobile hotspot. The machine runs a version of TOR. Viewing the browsing history costs **0/1D4 SAN** due to helplessness. *Much like the cartoon cat folder, Handlers should never describe the contents of the web history explicitly.*

In addition to lurking in Dark Web forums for child pornographers and sex traffickers, Conradin's spoofed accounts scroll regularly through hate sites, church groups, county sex offender registries, and ICE's own personnel records. The names and aliases of offenders are in a spreadsheet, the only file saved on the local drive. There's some sort of color-coded system for recruitment priority, and a second green/yellow/red tag labeled only 'TRUST'. The laptop's sole purpose is to recruit monsters.

Conradin's *modus operandi* involves impersonating a fellow traveler, sniffing out the individual's brand of sadism, and eliciting the exchange of illicit material. Blackmail in hand, Tillman then coerces, threatens, or persuades the target to join ICE in El Paso. This worked multiple times, including with Terry Smedley and Alan Rapp. Tillman's skill at diagnosing and humoring an individual's rationalizations for unforgivable crimes seems almost clairvoyant. Life experience seems to have given Conradin an eye for the talent of cruelty.

The laptop is otherwise clean. Not a single image or video downloaded. No personal vaults of deviancy or hidden files. Once logged on, Conradin did not so much as check the weather. It's a dedicated URL catcher for unspeakable sins. The work seems cold, devoid of the sadistic pleasure and desperate compulsion driving the subjects. A couple times a month, Conradin tends the accounts as methodically as a fisher checks the nets. It's a procedure for him, or some sort of joyless ritual.



ASSET

Conradin's Exercise Book

In English. Study time: days. Occult +1%, Unnatural +9%. SAN loss 2D6 plus 1/1D6 for the Teeth.

Conradin's leather-bound journal dates back to when he was 16 years old. Esau, Jacob, Conradin, whatever you call him, underwent a remarkable developmental recovery. The tortured prose indicates he only learned to decode language at the very end of his developmental stage. Though blessed by strange opportunities, Conradin struggled his whole life to obscure his difficulty with communication, to protect both his father's snake-oil education empire and his own mission. He treated every interaction and interior thought as a laborious composition exercise, in need of careful research and drafting. Though never quite achieving grade-level literacy, tutoring and Conradin's personal dedication improved his language skills profoundly over the last decade.

Entries during the college years contain concise, careful paraphrases of complex reading assignments given at Duke and completed by Lee Jarnigan. Interspersed with spelling and grammar exercises is a diary of Conradin's study of the nameless force that drives him. In his years with his father, he stumbled across Saki's famous story of Sredni Vashtar and found it beautiful. Sredni Vashtar became Conradin's first name for his nameless god.

In the journal, Conradin catalogs the strange impulses and certainties that guide him through life. He tries to piece together everything he can remember from Cornucopia House. He theorizes that his neurological damage could serve to obscure the source of that power, that influence. It connects him "to the quiet that let us first hear."

To someone aware of the events of the campaign, Conradin's exercise book contains by far the most complete accounting of the force beyond's manipulations ever assembled. With a brain partially segmented by other eldritch sorceries, Conradin retained limited access to the divine and did his level best to translate it into paltry words. Conradin studied Egyptology, history, mythology, and quantum physics—at least insofar as tutors could winnow down the specialist vocabulary into something he could manage. He used his father's wealth to buy a degree and research the history of his terrifying god on Earth.

Conradin writes that cults in mythical Atlantis and Lemuria worshiped the Nameless God before recorded history. The earliest Egyptians sacrificed and prayed to it as Bast: a protector against evil magic, against evil spirits and cruel powers. Myths named Bast among the goddesses called the Eye of Re, defender of order against the chaos serpent Apep. The Nameless God warred with the legendary Black Pharaoh, Nephren-Ka, said to be a god himself. But the Nameless God's hungers consumed even its own worshippers. Its power withdrew. It waited.

Conradin's sketches represent his beloved deity as a ferocious lioness, a sunlit guardian and hunter among the stars in the sky, made of stars and devouring stars. He writes that it—never "she"—feeds on unnatural power. Power itself is the prey of Bast, the god that hungers, the god that feeds.

Was Bast born into the universe, some strange entity that evolved with it? Is Bast an aggregate of countless weird processes of the absorption of power? An emergent property of the ways in which strange energies that we call unnatural move from state to state, from reality to unreality? Is it, like life itself in some theories, merely a byproduct of the inevitability of entropy? Is it an epiphenomenon of the unthinkable Source of all power in the universe, in all universes, blindly hungering to reclaim itself? Conradin does not know.

Bast is but one name for a cosmic need to hunt and consume. It manipulates reality and engineers causality. It singles out servants that carry out its work and marks them, scars them, and claims them its own, forever. Servants like Conradin. Servants like the Teeth.

Conradin explicitly describes how to create new Teeth and continue the cycle. That is the sole purpose of Private Side.

The latest entries record Conradin's use of federal resources to hunt for the Teeth. He's close to discovering their identities but he doesn't appear to be looking very hard. It's as if he expects the information to soon reveal itself.

The last page of the journal is dated the day before. It reads, "They are coming. You are here."

The Surplus: "Public Side"

The entrance from the interior of the water plant leads to the part strangers are allowed to see: "Public Side." The Public Side is, ironically, subleased to Laugherty's private prison company, LYFForce. As the organization is executing a contract for ICE, federal statutes make the facility available to "public" visitation and inspection. Such a visit hasn't happened since before the facility opened, but if oversight ever does arrive, it tours the Public Side.

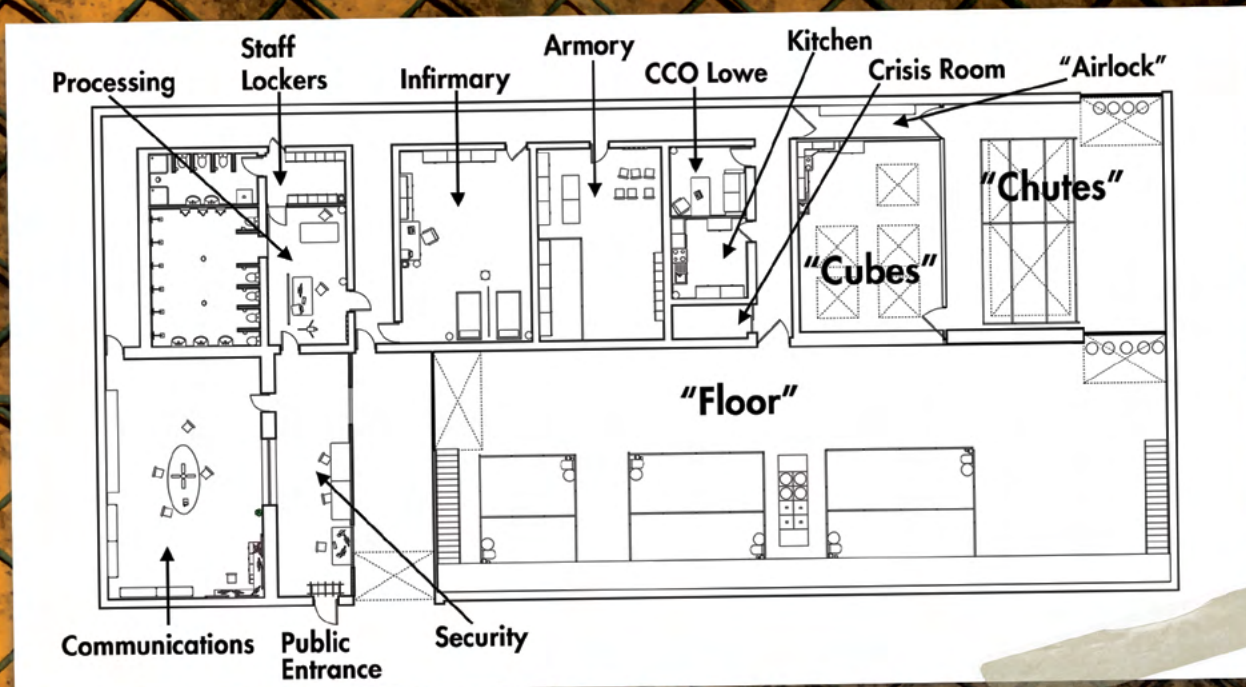
The only entrance appears to be the interior garage door facing Frank Harvey Water Reclamation Plant. The desert door has not been opened in recent memory. No side doors are visible.

Areas are listed sequentially, in the order Agents approaching from Public Side are likely to encounter them. There is a single entrance from that direction, and resistance at nearly every step of the way. It's not really a question of *if* things go wrong during an attempted entry. It's a question of *when* and *where*.

Security and Processing

The LYFForce staff are required to wear company-standard yellow polos. According to the access list, the company employs a dozen part-time "caretakers," a full-time secretary, an on-call nurse, and a corporate compliance officer. Staff is not supposed to drop below three for the purpose of maintaining a ratio to detainees, but two-man and single shifts are common due to pandemic understaffing. There are 1D4 "caretakers" working on any given shift, in addition to a door guard in charge of wandng visitors through the public entrance metal detectors. The nearby garage door—used for prisoner unloading—does not have metal detectors.

The caretakers have all the callousness it takes to hold children in cages so long as it's legal. They are armed with pepper spray and batons. If threatened, they know armed help can be found on the "Private" side of the facility, though no one has been over there. Emergency telephone numbers also dot the walls of the Communications office. Those numbers reach Kendall Duncan, an ICE Special Response Team (SRT) member with authority to call a tactical SRT from the El Paso field office.



Judging from signage in Spanish, the Surplus facility is for “accompanied” minors that “choose” to refuse refugee status and instead decide to hire their own legal counsel. The population of detainees skews heavily male and Latino, with ages ranging from nine to 17 years old. The facility houses them until their court dates, at which point they typically receive a rubber-stamp deportation and are moved to a different facility to await transfer. The wait for that court date can take months or years.

Getting a Tour

With a **Criminology** roll, the Agents can convincingly impersonate local police awaiting a prisoner transfer, Security happily provides a tour as a professional courtesy. The job is boring as shit, and they might as well talk while the paperwork gets cleared up. Conversely, Agents can get a tour by dropping off an actual prisoner, if they’re willing to take the **SAN** loss for abandoning one of their own in there.

To talk their way in using their own federal credentials, Agents must succeed at **CHA×5** at -20% or **Persuade** to get a tour. Pitzerelli could be convinced to provide legal cover for an intelligence-gathering sortie, but that makes him the person that Agents must convince. He wants assurances that the only goal of infiltration is intel.

To talk their way in with a lie related to the pandemic, Agents must succeed at **Persuade** at -20%. Most employees don’t believe the virus is real. None follow mask policy or take temperatures. They only wear PPE on the floor, saying things like “It’s always been policy to mask up around those fucking germ factories” and “You know if anyone’s got it, it’s them.”

If convinced of the cover story, LYFForce employees provide a bored walkthrough tour of the facility’s public side, explaining each section.

Communications

This office contains all of the security camera feeds from the Public Side and the Backstage area. The camera systems are high resolution with omni-directional microphones, expensive gear courtesy of DHS money. No camera watches the communications room or the Private section. Office Facilitator Deb Richter runs the Communications office. LYFForce caretakers occasionally come in to fill out paperwork, charge up a walkie-talkie, or freshen up coffee.

An Agent who makes a **Bureaucracy** roll recognizes that the file system and paperwork are hopeless. Confidential detainee documents have been left in plain sight. The handwriting on restraint and observation paperwork is illegible. Drawers in the file cabinet aren’t labeled consistently. This place either never

In the Field

Making Life Easier

An empty plastic Sourheads container in Security & Processing has a handwritten sign that reads, “\$5 to Make Life Easier.” The staff say it’s for local charities. An Agent who succeeds with **HUMINT** can tell that’s a lie. Only Agents staff consider fellow law enforcement get the true explanation. A LYFForce employee smiles talking about it. According to federal guidelines, detainees brought to the Surplus by local police qualify as unaccompanied minors once they have been separated from family. According to local statutes, a minor is considered accompanied and “awaiting representation” if they have the means to hire their own lawyer. Unlike the “unaccompanied,” minors awaiting legal representation may be held indefinitely. The municipal jurisdiction defines a solvent minor as “any minor in possession of \$5 USD, either in a federally recognized bank account or U.S. currency.” LYFForce staff donate to the pot every week in order to give \$5 to every teenager before booking. On slow weeks, staffers use the money to buy donuts for the office. If giving a tour, the guard gestures toward the can and asks if the Agents want anything from the vending machine.

heard of an audit or operates under the certainty it will never face one.

An Agent who makes a **SIGINT** roll notices that the hard drive attached to the monitors is inadequate storage for the facility's high-grade cameras. Either the Surplus is storing high-def surveillance video in the cloud (doubtful), or they delete the overwhelming majority of their footage. If there's anything juicy to be seen on cameras, it would have to be pulled to an external storage device before the hard drive got overwritten by fresh footage.

Deb Richter is supposed to delete all footage recorded when she is not in the office unless the chief compliance officer or senior DDO say otherwise. She secretly skims it first and has saved two clips from deletion in recent months. See **THE RICHTER TAPES** sections on this page and page 235. As damning as the evidence may be, she suspects worse is happening behind the walls of Private Side. The tapes are her insurance in case justice ever decides to care about what her bosses do back there.

THE RICHTER TAPES

The Crisis Room

The footage depicts a child, perhaps eighteen months old, sitting naked on the plush floor of the Recovery Room. The footage is from two months previous. It has no audio. A companion video file shows another angle: the hallway where a guard watches through a view-slit in the cell door.

The child sits terribly still, especially considering its age, facing away from the camera. After minutes, the child gets on all fours and has a bowel movement. The child uses the excrement to draw on the padded walls. No one stops this.

In the hall, the guard begins urgently talking into a walkie-talkie. A couple of minutes later, Agent Esau Tillman comes into view at a run from the direction of Private Side. Tillman quickly pushes the guard out of the way, unlocks the door, and enters.

In the cell, the child finishes painting something with filth as Tillman enters. The camera angle is too high to see what the painting depicts. Tillman drops to his knees to rejoice. He falls, dumbstruck and visibly sobbing. This frightens the naked boy, who begins crying as well. This seems to bring Tillman out of his meltdown. Tears still rolling down his face, he hugs the child despite the waste fouling his expensive suit and tie. He holds the child like a father as the baby screams and screams. Tillman takes the toddler up and carries him out of the cell and toward Private Side, leaving the other man to clean up the mess.

An Agent familiar with the events of "Go Forth" can make an **Occult** roll to intuit that Tillman is pleased because the child likely drew a picture of the Agents: a sign of savage salvation, just as before. The Agent loses 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural. If the **Occult** roll is also lower than the Agent's **Unnatural** skill, the Agent has an insight that Tillman is sobbing because his mission will soon be complete. The omens are clear. The Teeth are coming. The Agent loses 1/1D4 **SAN** from the unnatural instead.

An Agent who examines the video files' metadata, or who succeeds at a **Computer Science** or **SIGINT** roll while examining the videos, finds a note from Richter: "Boy from Pvt. Why? We dont bring Private kids to Public Side."

An Agent who succeeds at a **Bureaucracy** roll looking through communications records finds that turning on the Recovery Room cameras requires a ton of paperwork. There is no such record of these videos.

THE RICHTER TAPES

They Have Value

A video two weeks old shows Agent Esau Tillman forcing a janitor through the Private Side door into the Backstage hallway. Screams and the clanging of metal drown out all other sound. Tillman screams something unintelligible to someone behind him before the door closes and the sounds go silent. Tillman throws the janitor to the hallway floor. The janitor crawls upright. The men exchange a tense look. The janitor's name is Alan Rapp.

Janitor: Fuck! What the fuck are you—

Tillman: They have value.

Janitor: Bullshit. My fucking arm! Shit. You know what I'm here for!
You knew the moment I came here and—

Tillman's forearm pins the janitor's throat against the wall. He grabs and twists the janitor's genitals savagely.

Tillman: They. Have. Value.

Janitor: <unintelligible>

Tillman: Say it.

Tillman: Say they have value.

Janitor: ...they...have value.

Tillman: Never too much, understand? Never too far. They are worth more than you. You exist to keep this going. Make this last. But that's all. You understand, right? Right?

Janitor: <unintelligible>

Tillman allows the janitor to collapse on the floor.

Tillman: You feed here because it is allowed. There are predators and there are scavengers like you. You get scraps. No more.

Janitor: <silence>

Tillman: Show me you know!

The janitor, writhing in agony, nods desperately, trying to inch down the hallway and out of his own skin. Tillman turns and stalks back to the secure door.

Tillman: You are scheduled tomorrow. I better see you here early.

The sound of screaming again leaks through the Private Side door before Tillman slams it shut behind him.

Floor

Staffers just call it “Floor.” It’s a giant concrete space, divided into blocks of cells with cages of stainless steel chainlink fence topped with razor wire. The cages stand around a central drain.

The cages are dotted with thin, cheap rubber mattresses and foil blankets. These are the only personal possessions allowed beyond a single plastic cup and the clothes one was arrested in. Dishes must be washed in a communal concrete trough near the drain, where all bathing, dishes, and other cleaning duties are based. The copious public showers and restrooms attached to Process appear almost never used.

A trashcan full of paper plates from meager meals sits on the other side of a single, arm-sized hole in each cage. The chain link around the gap is coated in a thick film of rotted food. A single port-o-potty services each cage. The door of every one is ripped off and the interior is coated in filth.

Every cage contains 20 to 40 children of various ages, mostly boys. A single pen corrals the entire population of young girls and infants. The far side of the facility holds adult men, kept from the children at a remove of a truck lane that enters from a garage door on the desert side. There are far fewer adults than children. Most are held here only temporarily, awaiting transfer to other facilities or local court dates. The grown men whisper to each other behind thick beards and cupped hands.

The entire room is surrounded by a second-floor catwalk where guards patrol. There are firehose boxes on either wall.

An Agent who makes a **Law** roll realizes that, considering the ongoing disputes in federal appeals courts, there is nothing definitively illegal going on here.

The Guests

The El Paso “Surplus” detention center skews toward young boys. About half were picked up by Customs and Border Patrol entering the country by themselves. A few were separated from their parents during the 2018 roundups and lost in shoddy record-keeping. A few were seized during the reversals of Temporary Protective Status in 2017, when the feds suddenly

branded Haitians, Salvadorans, Cubans, and Iraqis living in the country as criminal invaders. Most were returned from ICE custody after the move was struck down in court, but not everyone had the family or means to be found after getting shipped out of state.

A few dozen girls, moated on all sides by a guard-path between cages, care for infant and toddler children of both genders. These girls provide the unpaid childcare required to make the youngest detentions possible. The rationale is that the separation keeps them safe from sexual predation from the other inmates.

Finally, a small number of grown men on the far side of the facility—balding, sallow, and silent—say nothing and stare. They are referred to as “Overflow” from other ICE facilities. These men are supposedly “dangerous criminals” awaiting transfer to more secure ICE detainment units, though LYFForce officials do not have files on them. Most guards do not even know their names, and few stick around long enough for it to matter. They are under orders to call the ICE Special Response Team in to “quell insubordination” by the adults. The men confine themselves to whispers, living as quietly as possible. Still, the guard giving the tour joyfully admits to calling SRT whenever he feels like it, as it “keeps them honest.”

Agents in the facility can glean further details with certain skill rolls.

- » **ANTHROPOLOGY OR HUMINT:** There are both new immigrants and first- and second-generation children of illegal immigrants in the cages. Many speak only English. They seem to be separated by national origin and language, likely as a means to counteract solidarity amongst the detained. The Agent would not be surprised to learn guards stand back and watch when fights inevitably break out.
- » **CRIMINOLOGY:** Everything in this facility is meant to manage the maximum number of inmates as cheaply as possible. The flatscreen TVs on walls outside the fences run PBS on mute so the facility can claim it meets the educational requirements of juvenile incarceration. Little care is provided

beyond food and water. The fluorescent lights in the room are always on. It is a system that breeds rampant inmate sickness and violence. The only reason the guests can be said to be relatively healthy is due to remarkable acts of communal care inside the pens. A sense of contained violence in the air is very real, directed at the guards but twisted inward by the endless chain link.

Backstage

Off to the side of the car lane that cuts through the floor, a door marked "STAFF" leads to an area that the tour guide calls "Backstage." That contains the riot response armory, infirmary, break room, staff locker room, and offices. It also contains a padlocked, steel-core door that opens via magnetic card reader. This is the only entrance to the "Private" side of the facility.

Crisis Room

A padded cell in which violent detainees may be restrained. It is used only for Public Side detainees. There is a camera to record video, but it has no microphone. State law protects minors in crisis recovery rooms from audio recording.

Kitchen

Despite its size, the ingredients, utensils, and equipment on hand in the kitchen appear completely inadequate to feed the population. A typical meal might include a spoonful of refried beans, a cheese sandwich, and a single moldy clementine. It's at least clean, a duty 'privileged' to trustee guests on the Floor.

Office of Jonathan Lowe

The LYFForce staff and ICE officials split the use of Backstage's small offices. Each is located off the hallway connecting the Public Side and Private Side. The doors are often unlocked and cheaply made, as the only permanent occupant is the unit holding CCO Jonathan Lowe.



Riot Response Armory

This vault contains everything needed to put down a major prison uprising many times greater than the “Surplus” facility’s population: riot shields, flash bangs, tear gas, batons, pepper spray, restraint chairs, full-body tactical armor rated for knives and blunt trauma, and six 12-gauge shotguns with “less lethal” bean-bag and rubber ammunition. The armory is closest to the door leading out to the Floor. The door is to remain closed at all times when not in use. Only caretakers (see **SECURITY AND PROCESSING** on page 232) have keys to open it.

Infirmary

If the Agents visit on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., they can find Nurse Phan (page 239) giving weekly check-ups to detainees. She directs caretakers to bring the teens to her one by one in 15-minute increments. If she’s not on duty, the infirmary is locked using the same master key that opens the armory. The room contains no cameras, a rare grant of privacy for the patients. It has too few medical supplies, but there’s some of everything that might be needed in a federal prison.

Staff Lockers

LYFForce and ICE employees use these lockers. Some come in only to whip a polo shirt on or off. Some use the staff showers. The lockers are unlabeled and locked. There are no security cameras. The staff care greatly about their own privacy. An Agent who makes a **Search** roll finds the same personal information provided by the Access List.

Hallway and Door

A hallway leading out of Backstage ends at a windowless metal security door. A sign reads “Private Property of LYFForce: Approved Staff Only.” Ironically, no one employed by LYFForce is approved. The door is protected by a magnetic key lock. Only six people have a key:

- » Chasten Laugherty (currently lobbying in D.C.)
- » Immigration Officer Esau Tillman (on site)

- » Maintenance Professional Alan Rapp (on site)
- » Juvenile Officer Terry Smedley (on site)
- » Chief Immigration Officer Kendall Duncan (at the El Paso ICE Field Office)
- » CCO Jonathan Lowe (on site)

Using Lowe’s card sends a silent alarm to Tillman’s phone. The card has never been used before.

Agents must succeed at a **Computer Science** or **SIGINT** roll to hack the door’s magnetic card reader. The process takes several minutes, requires tools, and looks obviously illegal. Security cameras watch the hallway and door from multiple angles.

Public-Side Staff

The staff presented here as full NPCs are only located together on site at various times during the work-week. Agents might encounter them anywhere: during regular business hours, as they respond to some sort of late-night emergency, or as a result of tailing them with a **Drive** test when they leave work. Handlers decide who is working and when. Agents decide how to deal with who they find.

Office Facilitator Deborah Richter

Deb Richter is the LYFForce facilitator of the communications room. She is a local woman in her late twenties, aged prematurely by terrible stress. She’s blonde, short, and heavy. She lives in a trailer on the outskirts of El Paso. Her social media presence is full-tilt Trump and emotional appeals to protect the white race.

Richter’s background is easy to look up if the Agents have government access. She graduated from Franklin High School in 2009. She worked a series of food-service and retail jobs for the next five years. Her struggling family had lost their house in 2008. She has a daughter, Kady Richter, born in 2015. The father is Clive Rollins, aka Ivan Rollo, age 37: enlisted in the Marines for four years, honorable discharge, occasional jobs as a mechanic and security officer, several misdemeanor charges for fighting and disorderly conduct. Arrest photos show Viking tattoos often associated with white supremacists. Rollins started work at LYFForce in 2015, three months before Richter began

working there, but quit in early 2017 to take a security job at a fracking company in North Dakota.

Richter needs her job. For all his talk about protecting the children of the master race, Rollins left her broke and bitter to chase women elsewhere. She tries to focus on keeping the office tidy and the phones from ringing off the hooks. She keeps her eyes down, away from the security monitors. But she knows she has landed in a bad situation.

Playing on Richter's sense of guilt can elicit her cooperation, but only to a certain point. Speaking to her politely, privately, and under the cover of authority other than ICE can get her to spill what she knows about the facility. A **HUMINT**, **Persuade**, or **Psychotherapy** success can tell an Agent the right approach.

She knows Agent Tillman is up to something awful on the Private Side. She's been gathering evidence against him from the security system. She's terrified to violate her NDA, but she says she's already promised to give the footage to a legal organization advocating for refugee rights. She claims they've already provided her a cash reward, so she must give the footage to them so she isn't in breach of contract. She could delay, giving the government time to prepare before the lawyers leak the story, if the Agents could give her a fee sufficient to pay any legal fees that might come up, the equivalent of an **Unusual** expense. She just wants to help, but she didn't have contact with the right people until now.

An Agent who succeeds at a **Criminology**, **Law**, or **HUMINT** roll while interviewing Richter recognizes that she is angling for cash out of greed rather than civic duty. An immigration defense fund can't legally bribe her to give evidence, and they wouldn't have money for it if they could. A critical success spots the micro-expression on Richter's face when she mentions being unable to safely contact law enforcement in the past. Her eyes jump toward her cellphone. If the Agents dig, they find in her email and phone records that she has been shopping the story around to media sites for at least a month. She has yet to commit to a bid or share any of the evidence.

Nurse Phan

Nurse Huong Lan Phan is subcontracted to run health checks at the facility via a private care provider that subcontracts with LYFForce. She never applied for a job in this hellhole. She was assigned it on her already crowded rounds. "Nurse Phan" is overworked, underpaid, and absolutely disgusted by conditions at the Surplus, where she works three 12-hour shifts a week.

As long as she is outside the building, she happily informs on the facility. But she wants ironclad promises of protection, and not just physical protection. The daughter of immigrants from South Vietnam, Nurse Phan is terrified of the immigration officials that employ her. She has little faith in the law, nowadays. She also has no intention of quitting her job, even if she turns informant. It would look suspicious and, in her words, "kids still get sick whether or not I like the disease."

A **Law** or **Persuade** success can convince Nurse Phan she's protected if she talks about what she has seen.

An Agent who talks to her about struggling with the pandemic in such difficult conditions and succeeds at a **Medicine** roll elicits a response even if she was previously non-cooperative. The risks of Covid-19 infection in the population frighten her. They have shipped out to a hospital unit every positive case she reported, but the caretakers have not taken steps to quarantine untested detainees. Agent Tillman won't even let her see the children in the Private Side but takes test kits to administer them himself. She has no idea how many Private Side children there even are.

Detainees regularly suffer malnutrition, sleep deprivation, traumatic shock, and other long-term conditions. Nurse Phan has an emergency number where the Surplus can reach her after hours, but it hardly ever gets used. She officially complained that LYFForce should have staff call her more often, if only to consult. No caretakers have taken her up on this offer. If Nurse Phan does talk, she informs Agents about the time Agent Tillman gave her **THE EMERGENCY CALL** (page 240).

Once cooperating, Phan reveals that she has already spoken to someone about blowing the whistle

DISINFORMATION

YELLOW CARD

THE EMERGENCY CALL

ARD

In early June, Agent Esau Tillman called Nurse Phan in for a medical emergency at 2 a.m. At the infirmary, she met Tillman with an older ICE agent she'd never seen before, and a two-year-old girl covered head to toe in ringworm.

The girl was clean from recent bathing, her skin still red from scrubbing and suds still in her hair. The fungal infection presented blisters, cracked centers, and necrotic tissue of severity not seen since the development of ringworm's treatment and cure. The child's diaper looked new. The girl fought to take it off. But she made no verbalizations. She crawled desperately toward Nurse Phan, looking at her like it was the first time she had seen her mother, uttering not a single syllable of the babble developmentally appropriate for that age.

Tillman told Nurse Phan to check the girl for Covid-19. Stunned, Nurse Phan said it would take a week to get results, and the girl was in serious condition. She obviously suffered from malnutrition and some aphasic injury or impairment, not to mention the ringworm. She needed a hospital.

Tillman came close as the older ICE agent leered and blocked the door. Tillman whispered that he could get the results faster. Nurse Phan was so shocked and baffled by what he said next that she remembers it perfectly: "This is in our care only for now. She will return to Mother soon. Don't worry. You have no responsibility here. None of us do."

She administered the last of that week's three provided Covid tests. The child did not scream during the nose swab, which chilled Nurse Phan to the bone. She gave the sealed swab to Tillman with a handwritten note for a salve to treat ringworm. Tillman told the older ICE agent to deal with them. Tillman carried the child from the infirmary with all the delicacy of a man with a bag of compost.

The older ICE agent came over and towered over Hương Lan Phan, saying what she only describes as "racist sex shit." He said she'd better have a good story about where her "kin" came from or they might wind up in Surplus, too. His description matches **TERRY SMEDLEY** (page 246).

Nurse Lan returned to the Surplus only because her patients needed her. She has not seen the child or the older ICE agent again.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

on Private Side. The nurse has been in talks with the legal action group *El Puente de la Esperanza*: “The Bridge of Hope” or just “the Bridge” in El Paso legal circles. She has worked with them to make her complaint as air-tight as possible, but has delayed committing it to the public record for fear of her family’s safety. She’s glad to have the help of other federal agents. Nurse Phan can put the Agents in touch with Nelinha Esteves and the Bridge. See **NELINHA ESTEVES** on page 222 for details.

CCO Jonathan Lowe

Jonathan Lowe is a legal appointee placed by the Department of Homeland Security as an accountability step, ensuring that their infamous child imprisonment agency doesn’t make too big a blunder. In short, he is a lawyer sent to inform on the boss’s employees, with very clear orders that he should come back having neither seen nor heard anything. All is well. All is according to plan.

Lowe’s DHS contract is inexplicably forgiving when it comes to conflicts of interest. He has also been hired by LYFForce as corporate compliance officer. His LYFForce salary is double that of his government salary. Lowe has both placards on his desk in his office Backstage. He finds it humorous.

Lowe is no fool. He got his law degree from Duke before being hired by Kirstjen Nielsen’s DHS. Since her 2019 resignation, he knows he’s on the chopping block for another White House purge. He’s here for rebranding. He’s here to do whatever Chasten Laugherty tells him to do in exchange for a consultancy gig or cushy political appointment. He’s betting that sucking up to Laugherty is enough to get in Stephen Miller’s good graces.

Anyone on the Public Side happily tells Agents that Lowe is a useless shithead. It’s a favorite topic of conversation. They don’t even worry about repercussions for mocking him, as that would require he do something besides sit behind a closed office door all day, playing online poker and listening to podcasts.

What Public Side employees don’t know is how crucial Lowe is to Private Side. Lowe keeps Esau Tillman’s program running by submitting glowing reports

to DHS, diverting or distracting every outside attempt to look into the details of the Surplus. Tillman would go to any lengths to protect him.

The Surplus: “Private Side”

The ICE facility on the interior of the Surplus masquerades as a privately-owned entity. LYFForce reserved a portion of the building to house intellectual property, and they have since rented that very space back to the U.S. government. It houses a federal detention facility, disguised as corporate storage.

No one on Public Side volunteers information about Private Side. Agent Tillman has forbidden LYFForce caretakers from knocking on the Private Side’s doors even in the event of a fire alarm. The garage door connecting the Floor and the back of the facility has been sealed since construction ended. To enter, employees pass through “the Airlock” located Backstage. Anyone else residing on the Private Side must have been smuggled through the desert garage door. As far as the rest of Surplus knows, there are no prisoners back there.

Entering Private Side is akin to breaching the inner sanctum of a cult: a cult backed up with the resources of the world’s only military superpower. There is simply no reason for anyone to be back there without Tillman’s express invitation, and everyone working in Private Side knows who is on the list. Nobody invites the Agents on a tour of Private Side.

If the Agents are crafty enough to pull Private Side names off the front-gate access list before they infiltrate, they can learn the information in the following pages. Especially thorny details might require questioning one of Tillman’s trusted employees at a secondary location. Not one willingly confesses their crimes, but they are fearful animals that understand threats and pain.

Conradin’s genius is in allowing his sadistic thugs to assign their own rationales to the evils that take place within Private Side. Their explanations are incomplete, mere snapshots of their personal demons. Only Conradin—Esau Tillman—knows the complete method behind the madness.

DISINFORMATION

YELLOW CARD

CONNECTING WITH LOWE

Lowe has connections next door that provide a significant in-road to the Private Side. But Lowe only talks to the Agents about the privileges of his corruption if tricked or coerced.

On social media, Lowe gives the impression of someone who would much rather be in Washington or back at Duke, drinking and networking. Impersonating a Duke alumnus offering to get drunk with him at the nearest Applebee's could open him up. It would require a **Disguise** roll to get the mannerisms and look right or **Persuade** at -20%. Lowe begins drunkenly bragging about his cushy position. He brags about knowing Chasten Laugherty, about how little he has to do all day, and about the huge rewards this job will reap in the future.

He says Chasten Laugherty visited the facility after the DHS put Lowe there in 2017. Laugherty, a fellow Duke alum, hired him on the spot for a consultancy position and said he was protected by the family. Lowe crows about how he has the boss's son wrapped around his finger.

Getting Lowe to talk about what happens inside the Surplus requires a **Law** roll to maintain the illusion of camaraderie, or a **CHA×5** if an Agent of any sex suggests there's romance in the offing. Lowe brags that Laugherty gave him the emergency contact number of the guy running the show: Agent Esau Tillman, Laugherty's roommate from Duke. Lowe says that shows how valuable he is. Tillman runs everything, including Private Side, the part of the Surplus nobody sees. Laugherty said Tillman would do whatever Lowe needed. Absolutely anything. All Laugherty and his ICE fixer need in return is loyalty.

After this seedy interview, an Agent who makes a **Law** roll becomes convinced that Lowe is dangerously protected and connected. If he identifies the Agents as investigators—especially if he learns real names—he knows what strings to pull to make their lives hell.

A **Criminology** roll pieces together—if the Agents haven't already—that Laugherty's and Tillman's dependence on Lowe is exploitable. If the Agents manufacture suitably damning evidence of crimes, Lowe can be flipped into an asset, or his phone's text messaging can be used to arrange a meet with Esau Tillman. Alone. Away from his fortress.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

The Airlock and the Rules

The security door blocks what appears to be just more hallway. The door requires the same magnetic key-card for entrance and exit. On the other side, a small stretch of hallway ends at another door. This portal is windowless but unlocked. There is a sign taped to the metal, printed on cheap office paper:

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. *Never talk*
2. *Keep them quiet*
3. *NO PHONES EVER*
4. *Always wear mask*
5. *Music always on*
6. *No gifts, no possessions*
7. *No play until shift end*
8. *You don't know, you call*
9. *They have value*
10. *You do not*

Next to the door is a small shoe cubby with sealed plastic bins and disinfecting wipes. It holds the cell-phones of everyone currently within Private Side. Only Esau Tillman and Chasten Laugherty are allowed to keep their phones. Jonathan Lowe has never gone past this point. When employees are not in the facility, their bins contain nondescript black hoodies, a fanny pack full of latex gloves, and plastic animal masks.

Each employee of Private Side wears an animal mask while inside.

- » Agent Esau Tillman wears a ferret mask.
- » Alan Rapp wears a rabbit mask.
- » Terry Smedley wears a pig mask.
- » Kendall Duncan wears a bat mask.
- » There is a fifth mask, dusty with disuse. It is a lamb mask that Esau gives any guest he needs to get inside the Private Side without alarming the others.



The Chutes

The Chutes are much like the Floor of the Public Side, only smaller and missing amenities like sinks and toilets. Loudspeakers play classical music at all hours, strictly instrumental. It's loud enough to drown out speech.

Each Agent loses 1/1D4 SAN from helplessness for seeing the work of Conradin.

Tiny, chain-link cages are centered around drains. Industrial-sized pill bottles sit on a food cart out of reach of the fences. Each cage holds a single child, none over the age of four. There are as many victims as there are Agents, skimmed from America's thousands of legal abductions over the last three years. They are of mixed gender and heritage, selected solely on the criteria of vulnerability. Each is malnourished, developmentally delayed, mute, and suffering from a variety of wounds and skin infections. They spend much of their time staring in deadened horror at nothing.

Waste smears the concrete floors and the chain link of the cages. Children crawl on open wounds that cover their torn knees. When they wear clothes, they are rags. Most wrap themselves in the foil blankets. They are fed infrequently and given small portions. If the children were dogs, their treatment would still be unforgivable.

The prisoners' expressions change if they see the Agents. They stare up at the Agents with mixtures of rapt awe and terror. It's clear they haven't seen a human face since entering this place. The familiarity of the expression costs each Agent 0/1 SAN from the unnatural.

Method

An Agent who succeeds at a **Medicine** or **Military Science (Land)** roll determines that the designers of Private Side's tortures learned a lot of lessons from the CIA's bumbling in Iraq. Much of the sadism seems focused on stress positions and neglect rather than active violence. It also seems intermittent and irregular, geared to cause the mind maximum trauma and stress response. The pills suggest the facilitator is pumping the children full of antibiotics to fight off opportunistic disease, not unlike factory farm animals. The goal seems to draw out the victims' pain indefinitely, though it's not clear what anyone could want a pre-verbal child to confess to.

Surveillance

Agents who set out to spy on what goes on in the Chutes can attempt a **Stealth** or **SIGINT** roll to plant covert cameras. Recordings show that employees spend their shifts masked and gloved, listening to their own music on headphones. They beat the cages with

IN THE FIELD

Expanding the Pack

Handlers who feel their Agents need a more significant combat challenge can increase the staff on the Private Side with ICE security guards. These additional cultists were recruited like Conradin's other monsters but have yet to show up in the MASTICATE investigation. They have their own masks. It's suggested the animal be reminiscent of encounters experienced by the Agents previously in the campaign. Suggestions include:

- A "zombie" dog, eerily resembling of the ancient Rottweiler that exhumed Cornucopia House's mass grave
- A cat head, stylized with an ankh like the Egyptian goddess Bast
- An alligator mask
- A lamprey's mouth, bristling with nothing but concentric rows of teeth
- Any animal that scarred an Agent in **CHIPPING THE TEETH** (page 38)

batons when the children try to verbalize anything or touch each other. If they get bored, they might call in a noise complaint to Kendall Duncan, claiming the "terrorism suspects" held in Overflow on the Public Side were attempting to break free or just getting too loud. The sadists then go over to the Public Side to watch as ICE SRT violently pacifies the adult detainees.

An alarm goes off in the cubes every day at 5 p.m. This is a sign to any sadist in the building that they have half an hour to take prisoners into the office cubicles and do with them what they will. The sound of the alarm sends the children into wild, feral panic. Agents who see this and do nothing, or who see it recorded from an earlier day, lose 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

The Cubes, like the rest of Private Side, have no cameras. The less said about what Alan Rapp, Terry Smedley, and their cohorts do inside, the better.

The Cubes

There used to be a label on a door opposite the airlock entrance into the Chutes. The name has since been stricken off with black paint, part of a general censorship of all text on the Private Side. Opening the door reveals an expansive office space, too large for the number of people working here. The whole thing is gridded by standing-height cubicles, the partitions just tall enough to obscure vision.

Some cubicles have a phone plugged in and nothing else. One appears to be a legitimate office, equipped with computer, lamps, and reams of forms on an expansive desk. This is where the employees do what little admin is required of them. They can be found here whenever they are not supervising their victims. It's next to one containing a filthy cot and nothing else.

Other cubicles contain nothing save bloodstains on the carpet. One cube holds only an office chair with a crusty scalpel sticking out of its back. One has a pile of handcuffs. There are other things. Worse things. This is where Private Side are "paid" for their real work. Each Agent loses 0/1D4 SAN due to either helplessness or violence, at the player's choice.

There's an employee bathroom off to the side. There's a full kitchen where meals for Private Side are prepared for children and adults, though it obviously hasn't been used beyond a quarter of its capacity. The kitchen is alarmingly clean in comparison to the Cubes.

Private-Side Staff

Three regulars assist with Esau Tillman's project on Private Side. Each does so for his own reasons and in his own way. There may be more. Tillman long ago learned to recognize the varied sadisms hidden behind men's eyes, and he has collected them all under ICE's convenient cover of cruelty.

Alan Rapp, Janitor

Alan Rapp was a psychopath before he showed up for orientation. If he spots Agents trespassing on Private Side, he fights to the death to defend the facility. From his perspective, they are invading his personal heaven.

Rapp only speaks if it's clear the only other option is death. He provides whatever intel his captors demand in exchange for his life, peppering in as many lies as possible.

Rapp admits that he applied for the janitorial position on a lark. He made what was inside him clear in the application. It felt good not to hide for once, and he very much looked forward to having police visit his door. The thought of lying to them was exciting. He even planned a whole persona as an Internet activist, clogging up ICE as praxis. Having delivered a toothless warning, the cops would leave with no idea about what he really was inside. He confesses the application was aspirational. He wanted to build enough confidence to go out and commit the acts he dreamed of every night. On victims larger than the usual stray cats and dogs.

Imagine Rapp's surprise when ICE called back. He went to the job interview on a lark, curious to see why they hadn't just thrown his application away.

Agent Tillman seemed very aware of everything in Rapp's head from the moment he saw him. That stirred his curiosity enough to accept the offer. It soon became clear that Rapp had been hired precisely

because Tillman wanted him to be free. He could do anything he liked...until he got carried away and killed one. Then Tillman nearly killed him. Rapp learned to regiment his pleasures.

The closest thing to gratitude Rapp is capable of feeling is reserved for Tillman. Private Side has nurtured him into true predator. The second he realizes an Agent has no intention to let him go (HUMINT 60%), he does everything in his power to kill the outsiders, escape, and warn Tillman. He prefers death to a world where he has to hide again.

Terry Smedley, ICE Officer

The strata of neo-Nazi publications found in Terry Smedley's locker indicate a vintage of white nationalism born of the militia movement of the early '90s. When leadership wanted "to infiltrate the enemy," he tried to become a cop. The closest he got was juvenile corrections officer.

The man's racist extracurriculars slowed when Terry's militia folded shortly before 9/11. Smedley had to be content abusing his authority at the El Paso Juvenile Center for fun, without the higher purpose provided by his precious 14 words. Until he got fired (see **JUVENILE OFFICER: TERRY SMEDLEY**, page 206). He was going to retire when a buddy at Border Patrol put him in contact with this ICE agent, Esau Tillman. At that point, Terry rediscovered the "activism" of his youth.

Of course, Smedley has learned to dress up his Nazism since the old brand of McVeigh-worshipping skinhead went out of style. If confronted publicly by Agents, he adds enough "crypto-" into his fascism to pass as an unremarkable modern conservative. However, if confronted at home or by intruders in Private Side, he takes up arms to defend the movement he believes Tillman is building behind closed doors. He's smart enough to alert Kendall Duncan at the first sign of trouble. He fetishizes the young man's skill with a rifle as only a fascist can.

Smedley lacks the courage to endure a fraction of the imprisonment and torture he's inflicted on children over the years. Interrogated under such threats, Agents find Smedley eager to save himself by throwing Tillman under the bus. Despite his easy

betrayal, Smedley regards Tillman as someone who "is willing to do what's necessary to protect the nation." While he's never explicitly discussed ideology with his boss, Terry's convinced that the tolerance shown toward degenerates like Rapp is merely a case of the strange bedfellows required for a successful political movement.

Smedley's time at the facility has been spent trying to recruit fellow employees into a new hate group. He hasn't had much success, but the Telegram account on his cellphone shows better luck reconnecting with his old militia contacts. He has a number of them very excited about employment opportunities at the Surplus. In an off-hours text message, Tillman replied to Smedley's employment referrals of additional white nationalists with three words: "More is merry."

Kendall Duncan, ICE Special Response Team

The Duncans made a fortune in private security and private schooling. By the time he reached college, social media presented untold opportunities for Kendall Duncan to tattle on himself. A **SIGINT** or **Computer Science** roll is enough to find incompletely scrubbed evidence of a wild college career spent drunk, high, and in trouble with the law. This climaxed in a PoliSci degree so lackluster not even nepotism could convince Duncan's powerful family to trust him with a multi-million-dollar PMC executive position. Not yet.

Chips were cashed and strings were pulled. Chasten Laugherty and his family answered the call. **Bureaucracy** and access to ICE records find the young CEO's reference letter in Kendall's file. In conjunction with his family's connections, the pressure squeezed Duncan's pitiful transcripts through the Homeland Security Investigations application process. Kendall Duncan was assigned to the El Paso Special Response Team.

Duncan is the heart of the local SRT, as his political connections ensure he's rarely given any duties beyond organizing exercises at the range. Agents that tail Kendall away from the Surplus find that he spends most of each day training for tactical shooting competitions. During the quarantine closure, he has been sending 500 rounds down range in a variety

of weapons every day. He cares for the team's military-surplus spotless MRAP (for "high-risk warrant services") like a favorite pet. He bides his time, plays with expensive toys, and waits for someone to make him a millionaire executive atop a private army.

Training in Law makes clear that Duncan can't be legally intimidated. Even before employment as an LEO, his family had already made a half-dozen sexual assault and drug charges disappear. He knows justice is an illusion. If Agents take more extreme measures to coerce cooperation, Duncan tries to convince his captors he doesn't know anything. He's only been over to Private Side a couple times, after Tillman called the El Paso SRT over to "suppress a riot" amongst the few adult detainees on Public Side. Afterwards, Tillman gave Duncan a cursory tour of the Chutes and Cubes. He admits to seeing "a couple of kids," but nothing worse. Tillman told him to pay attention to the layout in case his team was ever needed to respond to an emergency.

Kendall knows Esau and his team are up to some depraved shit. He just doesn't care. Tillman outranks him and remains protected by Laugherty, the man Duncan owes for his job. He's not about to sabotage his future because he got saddled babysitting some pervert on the way up the ladder. If Private Side is threatened, Duncan orders the ICE SRT to go in weapons hot. If successful, he ensures any reports make him look like a hero after the fact, then uses his combat experience to prove that he's finally ready to take over the family business.

Conradin

Esau Tillman, aka Conradin, spends as much time as possible in Private Side. Extended surveillance reveals he often sleeps there, preferring a cot in the Cubes to his sparse apartment across town.

By now, MASTICATE likely knows as much about Conradin as he knows about himself. If they come for his facility, he fights to defend it. This isn't because he particularly wants to stop the Agents. He just feels like it's a role he must fulfill. He gets weird feelings like that a lot. They make him very dangerous.

Did any of the Agents cause Conradin particular distress in "Go Forth"? Did they separate him from the other children of Bast? Did they prevent him from saving or keeping his ferret? He remembers those. When the time comes for bloodshed, he seeks them first.

If the Agents eliminate all his fellow conspirators, Conradin can't help but be struck by something like awe. The Agents are the closest thing he's ever seen to his god on Earth. He talks to them candidly once the shooting stops, whether that's with the duct tape removed, waiting for the sirens to arrive, or until blood loss takes its toll. His words are simple and deliberate. He takes long pauses between listening and speaking, visibly performing a process of translation the Agents can't imagine.

Conradin's disposition depends on the Agents' number and make-up.

If the group includes any 'new' Teeth—which means characters selected by the Program and the force beyond to replace fallen MASTICATE members—Conradin is quite happy. He forgives being shot, the death of his men, and everything else. His goal was always to call more Teeth. Creating his own version of Babushka's hell was means to that end. He doesn't regard his triumph with gloating so much as a relief. It worked...as he sensed it was always fated to work. He successfully served the only god he ever felt worthy of the name.

If the surviving Agents were all involved in "Go Forth," Conradin is distraught. He failed to draw new Teeth into the world. He knows with some sourceless certainty that his indulgence in human language was a weakness, a sin. His failure is punishment. God—Bast—Sredni Vashtar the beautiful—it does not need the hooting commentary of men. *It* did not need his help. His bid to guide events was hubris. He wants the Teeth to know he is sorry for having been poured into the precast mold of his life. He tried to make it mean something, but he was not strong enough. No one is. Conradin asks the Agents if the god they share can forgive him.

CEO Chasten Laugherty

The only other person with clearance to Private Side owns the contract for the entire facility. Chasten Laugherty is currently in D.C., lobbying for his private prison business. Nothing short of a kidnapping could get him to El Paso.

In March, increased scrutiny of police in schools drew attention to a two-year-old video of one of Laugherty's SchoolShield resource officers handcuffing and tasing an elementary school student. SchoolShield is yet another company in the Laugherty private prison empire, providing privatized school resource officers.

The SchoolShield scandal wouldn't have been a disaster on its own, but Laugherty's political connections have become tenuous with the uncertainty of the election year. His warm cocoon of legislative unaccountability is at risk. Politicians fear being publicly connected with the grim things they have so far supported. Laugherty is devoting every hour to reminding old patrons in Washington that they need his friendship.

Progress has been slowed by the virus. Laugherty is infected with Covid-19 for the second time. Symptoms are mild. He's confident he'll get over it and back to lobbying quickly. Agents can find him self-isolating in his D.C. apartment, watching television and texting his boyfriend.

Getting Laugherty to Talk

An Agent who makes a successful **Law** roll while interviewing Laugherty recognizes that he is legally insulated. The most Agents could accomplish would be a temporary hold in a local police facility, followed by a hurricane of lawyers storming in and drowning their careers. Laugherty has been drilled by a lifetime watching his father navigate legal threats. He is riding high, and he knows how to play that position. He has too much power to respond to most shakedowns.

Examining data in Laugherty's phone with a **SIGINT** roll gleans a whole history of his romance with Jefferson Rigby, a DNC staffer with diametrically opposed politics. The two met on Grindr two years

ago, both under assumed names. Rigby is out of the closet, but Laugherty spent most of his teens being marketed as a success story for his father's gay conversion therapy. Both men would have their careers destroyed if the media got wind of the relationship.

Threatening to make the relationship public, and making an **Accounting**, **Bureaucracy**, or **Persuade** roll to drive home the risks and convince him that they mean it, can bring Laugherty around. The effect depends on the roll.

- » **FUMBLE:** Laugherty sees his chance to escape. He attacks an Agent or harms himself for 1D6 damage in a failed attempt. Decide which based on how well Agents restrained him. Either way, problems ensue. He panics. He screams. He shakily turns over his all-access-keycard, but any promise he makes to forget about the incident is a lie.
- » **FAILURE:** Laugherty gives the Agents his all-access keycard, explaining nothing about his relationship with Esau Tillman. He contacts Tillman at the first opportunity and urges him to scramble his forces in preparation to hunt and kill the Agents. Laugherty sends a squad of his private security goons to help. He's happy to feed a strike team of retired cops into a firefight with bad intel if it means protecting his name.
- » **SUCCESS:** Laugherty reveals his history with Esau Tillman, hands over his access card and his key fob for the gates, and tries to forget all about it.
- » **CRITICAL SUCCESS:** As with a success, plus Laugherty is willing to actively participate in sting operations against Esau Tillman. His one condition is the Agents' promise to keep his secrets.

Alternately, Agents can threaten Laugherty physically. This causes him to cave almost instantly. Training in **HUMINT** or **Psychotherapy** reads the surrender as less cowardly than pragmatic. Laugherty seems deeply familiar with the absolute power of pain as a motivator.

Laugherty and Conradin

If forced to explain his financial and political support of Esau Tillman, Chasten Laugherty can only provide biography.

The second pray-away-the-gay camp that Laugherty's father sent him to was called God Runners, built out of a defunct Boy Scout camp located in backwoods Arkansas. Distraught and disgusted conservative parents around the country paid exorbitant tuition for God Runners to torture their children throughout the 2000s. Since his dad founded the place for his "cure," Chasten got a scholarship.

It was a lot of push-ups and wind sprints while screaming Timothy 1:8 and Jude 7. The "tutoring service" offered to the detained youths consisted of half-hour of NatGeo reruns and three hours of Bible study per day.

It was during "school" that Laugherty first met Jacob Tillman. The blond kid was not "in treatment" but still spent all day in the classroom, dropped off at the camp by a Laugherty family friend. The kid was just there: "Jacob never talked much." Chasten claims

he only learned of his father's babysitting arrangement from Eli Tillman's book tours long after the fact.

It was easy to hate Jacob. He sat in the lodge all day. He was never forced to do manual labor while chanting prayers. No one ever hit him. The instructors didn't even force him to do wall sits if he failed to quote Bible verses correctly. Chasten, the son of the camp's owner, received preferential treatment as well, though instructors were under orders to "sweat the fruit out of him." Their peers' loathing pushed the two boys together into one corner of the classroom.

Scrubbed Clean

One night, Laugherty recounts that he was pulled out of his bunk by the camp's archery instructor. The man reeked of booze. By the time Chasten was thrown to the floor of the sports shed, he knew what was about to happen. As the man dropped his pants, the CEO hauntedly recalls seeing Jacob from behind a rack of equipment. He must have been hiding there for hours, since the door was locked after afternoon exercises. Chasten recalls he only saw him when the glint of the



pocket knife came out. The knife sawed down the inside the man's exposed thigh. Blood gushed out in arterial spurts. The counselor's screams deflated even faster than he did.

Chasten claims Jacob was already struggling to load the fat man into a wheelbarrow by the time he came to his senses. He admits to helping. They sprayed the blood down with the hose. They covered the stained boards of the shed with sawdust. They pushed the wheelbarrow through the trails cut around the camp and up the side of the valley, racing toward the local Lover's Leap. Jacob smashed the counselor's gin bottle against the rock. He looked Laugherty in the eyes and said his first words, "Bad piss."

Then they tipped the body over the side.

Even if tied to a chair, Laugherty can't help but wax rhapsodic. The boys sprinted back down the mountain, racing the rising sun back to the crime scene. Chasten had never felt so alive, so sleek and powerful and safe. They stripped and chucked their bloody pajamas into the embers of the previous night's campfire. The garments miraculously caught and burned. By the time the rest of the campers woke up, Chasten and Jacob were in the lake. Naked. Scrubbed clean. Splashing and screaming at the dawn.

Searchers found the body that day. The corpse was shattered by enough compound fractures to hide a gash from a knife. The school announced the archery instructor suffered a bad fall on a night hike. Kids whispered that he'd died drunkenly pissing off a cliff. Jacob and Chasten were punished for the crime of succumbing to temptation, a common enough infraction. By winter, the camp shut down in the face of litigation from the archery instructor's family.

Gratitude

Laugherty has worked to ensure Conradin stayed close. The young CEO is no fool—he knows something is deeply, inexplicably wrong with his friend—but he sees no choice. That night at God Runners was Jacob's last stunning intuition. Some see Tillman as some waif Laugherty adopted as a lucky charm, but Laugherty still sees the boy with the knife. "Jacob's the real blade. He cuts through the world like butter. Always in the right place, you know? At the right time. Like magic."

Confronting Laugherty with hard evidence of his friend's activities in Private Side costs him 1/1D10 SAN from helplessness. Every picture is worse than he imagined. That is why he was careful never to look.

He offers one excuse. "Imagine you had a guardian angel. A real one. Someone who can protect you. From everything." Laugherty pleads with himself as much as the Agents, "What would you do to keep that? How would *you* show gratitude?"

Aftermath

Each surviving Agent gains 1D4 SAN for freeing Conradin's prisoners. Each gains another 1D4 SAN if they kill Conradin, the last murderous remnant of the Quiet Children.

The jailbreak makes national news. It becomes a tipping point in the conflict between police and so-called "antifa" terrorists. Agents who died infiltrating the Surplus get all the public blame. The Program's disinformation operations throw everything at the wall to see what sticks, going so far as to level false accusations at the Agents' Bonds. The media suddenly paints them as drug-dealing, political extremist pedophiles. Survivors who had Bonds with them lose 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

5. When an ICE Field Office Director, ICE Special Agent-in-Charge, U.S. Border and Customs Protection Director of Field Operations, or CBP Air & Marine

Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview

the result of the zero tolerance policy.¹⁷⁰ DOJ's policy represented a change in the level of enforcement of an existing statute rather than a change in statute or regulation.¹⁷¹

Criminally prosecuting adults (regardless of nationality) makes them subject to detention in federal criminal adult detention facilities. Under the zero tolerance policy, when a parent entered the U.S. illegally with a minor and was detained in criminal detention, DHS treated the child as an unaccompanied alien child.

The Cost of Capture

If the Agents are caught, it could expose the Program. The White House spearheads an aggressive prosecution. Review the Agents' actions. Imagine what an investigation motivated by spite and fury, and disinterested in the careful vetting of facts, might conclude. Consider where a White House that publicly embraces conspiracy theories and decries Deep State plots might exert pressure in order to gain leverage.

If this were to end with the Program's exposure, the current administration would get read into Delta Green. The Program would prepare cover stories and spin, but there is no telling what nightmares might be unleashed upon the world. White House hatchetmen would learn a century's worth of unnatural secrets.

The Program would do anything to prevent that.

Under no circumstances are arrested or identified Agents permitted to reach trial. Their reputations are publicly destroyed. Their Bonds are harassed. The misery continues until the day the security cameras in their detainment cells fail and the final bill comes due.

Always Punch Left

The Program is housed almost entirely within U.S. law enforcement, intelligence, and military communities. Many of its leaders are constitutionally incapable of passing up an opportunity to sabotage progressives. Especially when operational security is at risk.

If the Agents reveal that Deb Richter, Nurse Phan, or Nelinha Esteves have learned unnatural secrets or have ways to identify the Agents, the Program orders their assassinations and wants any evidence they have destroyed. To protect the Agents and itself, the Program tries to pin the blame for action taken against the ICE facility on the innocent women in a far-fetched "antifa" conspiracy.

That response damages human rights in the El Paso area for years. Depending on how bad the situation gets, it might even inflame ongoing protests in cities around the U.S., in turn provoking further authoritarian crackdowns. In a choice between chumming the waters of America's cannibalistic misery or dealing with an outside threat they cannot understand, the Program chooses the devil it knows. It always does.



Characters

Conradin, aka Senior DDO Esau Tillman

Conradin's history is detailed in **THE TRUTH OF CONRADIN** on page 218 and in **CONRADIN'S EXERCISE BOOK** on page 231.

Conradin

Jacob Tillman, Esau Tillman, ICE detention and deportation officer, child of the force beyond, age 26

STR 10 **CON** 8 **DEX** 13 **INT** 17 **POW** 14 **CHA** 8
HP 9 **WP** 14 **SAN** 0

ARMOR: (in armory) 5 from reinforced Kevlar vest.

SKILLS: Alertness 50%, Bureaucracy 50%, Criminology 50%, Dodge 50%, Firearms 50%, HUMINT 50%, Law 50%, History 50%, Melee Weapons 50%, Navigate 50%, SIGINT 50%, Stealth 50%, Unarmed Combat 50%, Unnatural 15%.

ATTACKS: *Sig Sauer P320 pistol* 50%, damage 1D10.

Extendable baton 50%, damage 1D6.

Pepper spray 65%, stunned and -20% to all tests for one hour.

Unarmed 50%, damage 1D4-1.

BLESSINGS OF BAST: The neurological damage caused by abuse at Cornucopia House makes Conradin uniquely attuned to the manipulations of the force beyond. This sixth sense manifests as a general, effortless competence. He often develops a 50% rating in any skill with only a few months of training. Further, if Conradin fails any skill roll on an odd number, he succeeds instead through bizarre coincidence or luck. Witnessing this more than twice costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

SCENT: Strong.



Special Agent Kendall Duncan

See **KENDALL DUNCAN, ICE SPECIAL RESPONSE**

TEAM on page 244.

Special Agent Duncan

ICE Homeland Security Investigations agent, El Paso SRT member and PMC failson, age 25

STR 13 **CON** 15 **DEX** 16 **INT** 8 **POW** 10 **CHA** 10
HP 14 **WP** 10 **SAN** 42 **BREAKING POINT** 40

ADAPTATIONS AND DISORDERS: Adapted to violence.

ARMOR: 5 from reinforced Kevlar, worn on shift

SKILLS: Alertness 50%, Demolitions 30%, Drive 45%, Dodge 55%, Firearms 75%, First Aid 25%, HUMINT 20%, Law 20%, Melee Weapons 60%, Military Science 35%, Unarmed Combat 60%.

ATTACKS: *Sig Sauer P320 pistol* 75%, damage 1D10
(in trunk) *AR-15 carbine with holographic sight* 75% (95% if no damage taken since last action), damage 1D12, Armor Piercing 3.

(in armory) *SPAS 12 shotgun* 75%, damage 1D6 and stunned (less-lethal rubber rounds).

Extendable baton 60%, damage 1D6+1.

Pepper spray 80%, stunned and -20% for one hour.

Unarmed 60%, damage 1D4.

SCENT: None.

Nelinha Esteves

Esteves and her organization *El Puente de la Esperanza* are described on page 223.

Nelinha Esteves

Crusading immigration defense lawyer and community organizer, age 37

STR 12 **CON** 10 **DEX** 8 **INT** 14 **POW** 12 **CHA** 16
HP 11 **WP** 12 **SAN** 60 **BREAKING POINT** 48

SKILLS: Alertness 45%, Bureaucracy 70%, Dodge 30%, HUMINT 60%, Law 70%, Persuade 55%, Stealth 30%.

ATTACKS: *Unarmed* 40%, damage 1D4-1.

SCENT: None.

Chasten Laugherty

See **CEO CHASTEN LAUGHTERTY** on page 248.

Chasten Laugherty

Abuse victim and heir to the Laugherty empire, age 27

STR 10 CON 12 DEX 10 INT 13 POW 12 CHA 15

HP 11 WP 12 SAN 60 BREAKING POINT 48

SKILLS: Accounting 50%, Alertness 40%, Bureaucracy 50%, Criminology 30%, Dodge 40%, HUMINT 50%, Law 35%, Persuade 65%, SIGINT 15%

ATTACKS: *Unarmed* 40%, damage 1D4-1.

SCENT: None.

Jonathan Lowe

See **CCO JONATHAN LOWE** on page 241.

Jonathan Lowe

LYFForce CCO, age 30

STR 12 CON 12 DEX 12 INT 10 POW 12 CHA 14

HP 12 WP 12 SAN 54 BREAKING POINT 48

SKILLS: Accounting 50%, Alertness 30%, Bureaucracy 60%, Dodge 40%, HUMINT 40%, Law 35%

ATTACKS: *Unarmed* 40%, damage 1D4-1.

SCENT: None.

Hương Lan Phan

See **NURSE PHAN** on page 239.

Nurse Phan

Principled nurse hired out to LYFForce, age 42

STR 8 CON 12 DEX 10 INT 16 POW 14 CHA 12

HP 10 WP 14 SAN 60 BREAKING POINT 56

SKILLS: Alertness 40%, Dodge 50%, Firearms 40%, First Aid 60%, HUMINT 50%, Medicine 40%, Pharmacy 35%, Psychotherapy 30%.

ATTACKS: .38 revolver 40%, damage 1D8.

Unarmed 40%, damage 1D4-2.

SCENT: None.

Alan Rapp

See **ALAN RAPP, JANITOR** on page 245.

Alan Rapp

Detention facility janitor and budding serial killer, age 20

STR 14 CON 12 DEX 16 INT 16 POW 6 CHA 8

HP 13 WP 6 SAN 0

SKILLS: Alertness 75%, Athletics 45%, Criminology 50%, Dodge 45%, HUMINT 60%, Melee Weapons 50%, Pharmacy 40%, SIGINT 15%, Stealth 40%.

ATTACKS: *Boxcutter* 50%, damage 1D4+1.

Hypodermic needle with sedative 50%, stunned for 1D6 hours.

Unarmed 40%, damage 1D4

SCENT: None.

persecution or an intent to apply for asylum, in which case they will be given a credible fear interview and will typically be detained in the U.S. during that process. CBP will generally send these families to one of ICE's three family detention centers (discussed in greater detail in the next section) while their cases continue. During the Trump Administration, however, numerous policies forced families to wait in makeshift camps in Mexico either to be processed into the U.S. ("metering") or for the duration of their U.S. asylum proceedings ("Remain in Mexico" policy). The Administration also implemented policies during the COVID-19 pandemic that denied unaccompanied children and families access to the U.S. to request protection, and that resulted in thousands of children being turned back to Mexico, or held in hotels or elsewhere until being expelled to their countries of origin—and the dangers they fled--without legally required protection screening and due process.ⁱⁱ

2. CBP facilities

During initial processing at the border, children are typically held in CBP's short-term detention facilities. These facilities, like all facilities housing minors in federal immigration custody, must comply with safety, hygiene, and other standards provided for by the Flores Settlement Agreement, which was signed in 1997 by the federal government and attorneys for immigrant and refugee children following a lawsuit challenging poor conditions and treatment of children in federal immigration custody. Among other provisions, Flores requires that children be held in "safe and sanitary" conditions in the "least restrictive

Deb Richter

See **OFFICE FACILITATOR DEBORAH RICHTER** on page 238.

Deb Richter

LYFForce secretary and wannabe media grifter, age 30

STR 14 CON 12 DEX 9 INT 12 POW 13 CHA 12
HP 13 WP 13 SAN 59 BREAKING POINT 52

SKILLS: Alertness 40%, Athletics 40%, Computer Science 20%, HUMINT 50%, SIGINT 20%, Unarmed Combat 45%.

ATTACKS: *Unarmed* 45%, damage 1D4.

SCENT: None.

Terry Smedley

See **TERRY SMEDLEY, ICE OFFICER** on page 246.

Detention Officer Smedley

ICE detention and deportation officer, age 49

STR 16 CON 10 DEX 12 INT 10 POW 12 CHA 10
HP 14 WP 12 SAN 50 BREAKING POINT 48

ARMOR: 4 for an ill-fitted plate-carrier, worn on shift

SKILLS: Alertness 40%, Firearms 45%, History 80%, HUMINT 20%, Law 15%, Melee Weapons 60%.

ATTACKS: *Sig Sauer P320 pistol* 45%, damage 1D10.
Extendable baton 60%, damage 1D6+1.

Pepper spray 60%, stunned and -20% for one hour.

Unarmed 40%, damage 1D4.

SCENT: None.

LYFForce Guard

See **SECURITY AND PROCESSING** on page 232.

LYFForce Guard

Complicit private security employee

STR 13 CON 10 DEX 15 INT 10 POW 10 CHA 7
HP 12 WP 10 SAN 45 BREAKING POINT 40

SKILLS: Alertness 50%, Bureaucracy 30%, Computer Science 10%, Criminology 20%, Dodge 40%, Firearms 40%, First Aid 15%, HUMINT 40%, Melee Weapons 50%, Law 5%, Stealth 30%, Unarmed Combat 40%.

ATTACKS: *Extendable baton* 50%, damage 1D6+1.

Pepper spray 75%, stunned and -20% for one hour.

CED Taser 40%, stunned and -20% for one hour.

Unarmed 40%, damage 1D4.

SCENT: None.

ICE Special Response Team

Volunteer ICE Agents trained in the SWAT tactics for the execution of high-risk warrants and riot response. Under the command of Special Agent Kendall Duncan, SRT Agents often train in the desert around the water plant. They are the first called to respond in the event of a disturbance at Surplus.

ICE Special Response Team

Tactical operators and Conradin's unwitting shooters

STR 13 CON 13 DEX 15 INT 8 POW 10 CHA 8
HP 13 WP 10 SAN 45 BREAKING POINT 40

ARMOR: 5 from reinforced Kevlar, worn on shift; 12 from ballistic shield (one per four-officer "diamond" grouping) if responding at the Surplus.

SKILLS: Alertness 50%, Bureaucracy 40%, Criminology 50%, Dodge 50%, Drive 40%, Firearms 60%, Forensics 30%, Heavy Weapons 50%, HUMINT 60%, Melee Weapons 50%, Law 30%, Search 50%, Stealth 40%, Unarmed Combat 60%.

ATTACKS: *Sig Sauer P320* 60%, damage 1D10.

AR-15 carbine with holographic sight 60% (80% if no damage taken since last action), damage 1D12, Armor Piercing 3.

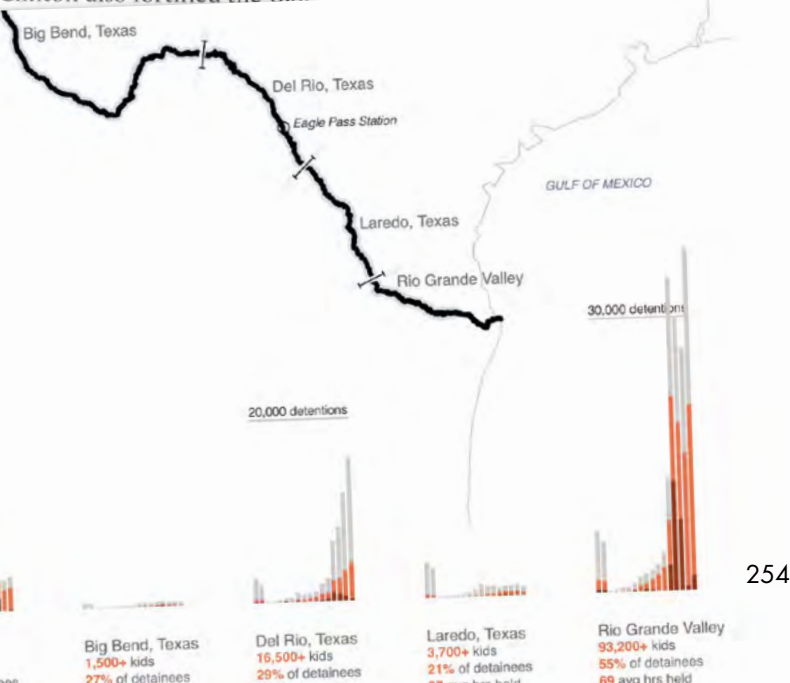
Extendable baton 50%, damage 1D6+1.

CED Taser 75%, stunned and -20% for one hour.

Unarmed 60%, damage 1D4.

SCENT: None.

t notably, in April 2018, the Justice Department announced a
zero-tolerance policy, which directed authorities to
Clinton also fortified the U.S.-Mexico border, sent



Outlaws

Any Outlaws brought in to help MASTICATE keep their distance and communicate almost solely through the initial contact. They never use real names or swap stories. They favor violent hit-and-run tactics and err on the side of overkill. They obsessively sit with their backs to the wall and never stop scanning the room.

Typical Outlaw

Veteran of the original Delta Green looking to sabotage the Program, age 60

STR 10 CON 10 DEX 12 INT 15 POW 11 CHA 8
HP 10 WP 14 SAN 45 BREAKING POINT 40

DISORDERS: Take your pick—they all have at least one; adapted to violence; adapted to helplessness.

ARMOR: 3 from Kevlar vest.

SKILLS: Alertness 71%, Athletics 45%, Bureaucracy 60%, Criminology 60%, Dodge 55%, Demolitions 60%, Disguise 30%, Drive 50%, Firearms 65%, Forensics 30%, Heavy Weapons 40%, HUMINT 50%, Law 20%, Melee Weapons 60%, Military Science (Land) 50%, Search 60%, Stealth 70%, Unarmed Combat 60%.

ATTACKS: Pick two plus unarmed.

Saiga-12 shotgun 85%, damage 2D8 (1D8 beyond base range; double armor).

AR-15 carbine with holographic sight 65% (85% if no damage taken since last action), damage 1D12, Armor Piercing 3.

Dragunov sniper rifle with night-vision telescopic sight 65%, damage 1D12+2.

Halligan bar 60%, damage 1D6.

Garrote 60%, silent, only attacks from surprise, damage 1D6 per turn until death or escape.

Improvised explosive device 60%, Lethality 15%, Kill Radius 10 m.

Hand grenade 65%, Lethality 10%, Kill Radius 10 m.

Unarmed 60%, damage 1D4–1.

SCENT: Strong.

The Program: Security

The Program might determine that only killing an Agent can protect its mission. It sends a pair of operatives of the Security department, typically current or former special forces. They take their grim job with deep seriousness. They know the target is an Agent. One of their own. Someone who's given everything for the cause but went bad. Someone who deserves the end to be quick. They prefer to engineer an apparent accident so as to reduce scrutiny. If it has to be violence, they try to make it look like a mugging or home invasion gone wrong, "suicide by cop" during an arrest, or betrayal by supposed partners in crime.

Typical Security Operative

Special operator dressed to blend in, age 40

STR 14 CON 13 DEX 12 INT 11 POW 12 CHA 7
HP 14 WP 12 SAN 50 BREAKING POINT 48

DISORDERS: Adapted to violence.

ARMOR: 3 from Kevlar vest.

SKILLS: Alertness 60%, Athletics 60%, Demolitions 50%, Craft (Electrician) 50%, Driving 60%, Firearms 70%, Heavy Weapons 50%, Melee Weapons 60%, Military Science (Land) 60%, Navigate 50%, Occult 20%, Search 40%, Stealth 70%, Survival 50%, Swim 50%, Unarmed Combat 60%.

ATTACKS: *Stolen Glock-17 or police duty pistol* 70%, damage 1D10.

AR-15 carbine with holographic sight 70% (90% if no damage taken since last action), damage 1D12 or Lethality 10% at full automatic, Armor Piercing 3.

Hand grenade 80%, Lethality 10%, Kill Radius 10 m.

Fighting knife 60%, damage 1D6+1, Armor Piercing 3.

Unarmed 60%, damage 1D4.

SCENT: Strong.

5. In response to the June inspections, Denier devised an action plan regarding their use of physical management. This plan included retraining staff on when to walk away from an escalated situation, and on de-escalation techniques.

Appendix

Camus said something about suicide being the only choice that matters. Was he right?



Appendix

The Fate of the Hunt

The true horror of *God's Teeth* hinges upon the players feeling as if their every choice was decided before the stars were born. No matter which complex variables forge the story's conclusion, everyone should leave suspecting that constellation of events was engineered by a vast power beyond this existence.

Because it was.

Choice is an illusion brought about by our myopic understanding of time. No one finished a *Delta Green* campaign. All of you just checked off another meaningless box in a grim list of chores, completed to the exacting specifications of a power no one else understands.

In short, while the specific conclusion of *God's Teeth* encompasses more variables than can be described here, the general arc of the story was always going to crash into a limited set of terminus points.

Star-Crossed

Agents might disagree on how to end things, specifically regarding the fate of those they rescue. This is natural. They were meant to disagree, placed at odds from birth so their clash might serve the inscrutable plan of a force from beyond.

This is why the Agents have access to guns. They help navigate such impasses.

The Handler should sit back and facilitate while the Agents work things out amongst themselves.

Succumb to Hunger

All that we understand of life serves the force from beyond. All of existence is locked within the cage of its consumption. Everyone and everything is trapped; the Teeth are cursed to see the chains and locks of fate.

The Surplus is only the latest in a parade of nightmares. Surviving means more to come. Each task set before the Agents grows more sanity-blasting than the last. Their god prowls on like a blood-hungry lioness.

An Agent might perceive the madness of service as a relief. Succumbing to the hunt promises a warm,

simple embrace of savagery and atavism. Quieting the madness of choice, of anxiety. But even those who continue to struggle cannot hope to "win." They may even be forced to embrace the Nameless God, once the Program figures it knows how to exploit it.

There's no need to get into the specifics of pacing, but leave the campaign certain that those who "escape" still hunt forever. A combination of fate and bureaucratic incentives forces the Teeth to feast on the unnatural *long* past 0 SAN. Whether trapped in a cage or back inside their normal lives, the Teeth live out their days fighting something else's war.

Pretend the Choice Matters

Philosophically, people have worked in this space before. They just didn't know the fatalism arose from a force harvesting life from an entire universe of death. An insignificant oversight in the grand scheme of existential dread.

Camus said something about suicide being the only choice that matters. Was he right?

Does the Agent have a better idea?

Extinction Event

Considering what they've seen, Agents may be reconsidering the impossible request made by Agent Clove in "Go Forth." They may have come to fancy themselves "sin-eaters," finally willing to do what is necessary to protect humanity from the thing beyond for another thousand years, to slaughter innocents who had the misfortune to come to the attention of Bast.

If the Agents agree to do this unanimously, the Handler should inform everyone that no one is walking away from the decision. The act forfeits humanity. The Teeth become everything Delta Green purports to fight against.

Anyone participating in infanticide at Surplus agrees to die in justified revenge, shameful suicide, or madness worse than death. Handlers should give the groups committed to this course of action a scene to say goodbye. Then, fade out before the unspeakable begins.

This is the end.

Afterword

God's Teeth came from a lot of places.

Much of it was born from my work in American public education. During all the active shooter drills, maybe. Or the training sessions by Family Services, where they taught us to look for the signs of the unspeakable in children terrified into silence.

I taught English for over a decade. The cries for help came smuggled inside short stories and poems and essays. I found parts of this thing there and stitched them together. Read the collective nightmares of enough children, it's hard not to personify the monster that keeps coming back. The "who" stops mattering. The names of those responsible for fantastic, unforgettable crimes fade. Cousin, sibling, father, mother, it becomes less and less surprising. You start to read them all as the same Beast.

Then there are stories passed down the trenches. The ones educators aren't supposed to tell. The ones that force themselves out anyway. Anonymized and spilled out like bile over a therapist, colleague, or spouse. Secondhand trauma bonding, passed around the teacher's lounge like the last cigarette.

I did additional research, unable to look away. The juvenile correctional facilities, the boys' homes, police raids. The shit you couldn't imagine doing to anyone, not to mention a baby. The stories that make you thankful you weren't the mandated reporter on duty that day.

Of course, I also had to talk about all the ways those reports can fail. The ways the state can sometimes make it worse. Sloppy allegations and inevitable reprisals. Ferrying victims between one abuser's lair to the next within the foster system. "Bus therapy." Snatching kids from the streets to fill quotas in private prisons or troubled-teen camps.

Regrettably, Trump had his say in the content. In time, all those difficult questions the conservatives fear to answer make their way to teachers. I had to explain the kids in cages to young boys and girls who looked just like them. I couldn't parrot the lies my state legislature demanded, so I had to stand in front of

innocents and tell the truth every day: The cages are nothing new. They are as old as America, descended from the slave block and the prison system. This is the inheritance of Empire...at least until the world boils.

The pandemic. Dead teachers. Dead families. Missing students. Enough to keep a head spinning, even before tallying the dizzying statistics. A "9/11" becomes a unit of measurement. They start adding up with the regularity of a metronome.

Not that all of the students believe in 9/11. Some of their parents have "corrected" them. They often screamed about such "conspiracies" during conferences. In person. Unmasked. Spittle flying into my face.

And who can forget the realization that your portion of this pain is counterfeit? No matter how real it may feel, it pales in comparison. It's *nothing* compared to the real suffering that inspires all this quaint compassion fatigue. Nothing compared to what a nurse or social worker may go through in a single day. The cold comfort that someone else is suffering more. That feeling of being disgraced and mocked by your own empathy...I tried to put that in here, as well.

God's Teeth came from a lot of places. Too many places.

Like everyone, I can only process so much. The brain is eager to turn horrors too numerous to count into something easier to grasp. Something monolithic and god-like. Sufferings weigh down on the mind until it compresses the myriad horrors into a singular, terrible One. Variables become the constant. Exceptions solidify into law. Chaos grows patterns and becomes construct.

This book started in a lot of places. It coalesced at the edges of my vision, beneath and between. A malevolent intellect behind every violation. An entity immutable. An inescapable savagery, reproduced by life itself.

This book is an attempt to write the poison out of my body. To give it a name. To make it a fiction.

I hope it works.

I hope such a god isn't real.

Caleb Stokes
February 28, 2023

Playtesters

Dylan B. with Meredith L., Jeff M., Swati S., and Danny W.; Chad Bowser with Byron Grimes, Michael Jackson, Nathaniel Johnstone, and Theodoros Kabisios; Bill Fugler with Steph Bisson, Jim Buchanan, Trent Cross, Dan Driedger, Scott Hadaller, and Rod Salm; James "Mad Gav" Gavin with Chuck, Jeme, and Lil' Eric; Evan Hallman with Alexander M. Haller, Nilda Haller, Christian M. Santos, Fiana Spangler, Jayson Spangler; HPLustcraft with Cameron the Accountant, Charlotte the Bounty Hunter, and Judy the Shrink; Pete Nixon with Ducky, McIntosh

Harrington-Sweithelm, Jack Hilton-Centa, Karen Orr, and Cameron Schneider; Rachael B. Randolph with Scott Clark, Matt Holochwost, Zac Pavlowski, and Heath Ryan; Andrew Rivett with Charles Farru-Hill, Teena Hanson, Robert Heather, and Ian Whitehead; Karl Rodriguez with Amy Lee Rodriguez, Jason Connerly, and Wyatt Connerly; Ross Payton, Aaron Carsten, Fae Kells, Tom Church, Shaun Greenwald, and David Dobleman; Andrew Baswell, Jason Brown, Kara Brown, Jessica Crimes, and Claire Higginbottom; Mike Daisey, Allan Goodall, Kevin Ham, and Jeremy Kush.



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CASEWORKERS

Assigned	Name	CAUSE of Death
1972-1977	Linda Brown ('72-'77)	Natural causes
1977-1982	Barbara Lewis ('50-'82)	Suicide
1982-1984	Carol Brooks ('46-'84)	car accident
1984-1989	Michael Martin ('60-'89)	Suicide
1989-1989	Lisa Powell ('59-'89)	Cancer
1989-1999	Franklin Price ('58-2016)	Homicide
1998-2001	Kerry Houghton ('75-2001)	Homicide



How to Survive a Bear Attack

Stand and face the bear directly. Never run away from or approach it.

Make yourself look as **big** as possible by spreading your arms or, better yet, a coat.

Make as much **noise** as possible by yelling, banging pots and pans or using other noise-making devices.

If the bear approaches and you have bear spray, **spray** the bear as it approaches.

In the very rare case that a black bear does attack you, **fight** back (don't play dead).

After the bear leaves, remove whatever attracted him to the location (barbecue grill, feeder, pet food, or garbage).



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Huntsville, AL and Palo Alto, CA, September 1, 2017 — Altamont Capital Partners (Altamont) today announced a majority equity investment into Sequel Youth & Family Services (Sequel), a leading, national provider of diversified behavioral health programs across the U.S. Founded in 1999, Sequel currently operates 44 distinct programs, ranging from residential treatment to community based programs, across 19 states.

Sequel will continue to be led by CEO John Stupak, who has been a part of the company's leadership since 2007. Sequel's co-founder, Jay Ripley, will remain involved with the business as Chairman of the Board through its next phases of growth. John Stupak, commenting on the investment, said, "We are excited to partner with Altamont Capital Partners to help Sequel continue its mission of providing high-quality behavioral health services to children and families in need."

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WORLD FIBRE™



~~WHAT~~ WHAT THE RIDER SAID
It has been too long since you've been up,
my pet. I've missed you. I admit, the fault
is partly mine. My attentions elsewhere.
My thoughts divided. But my affections,
forever with you. You must be so hungry.
There was more fuel for your tiny fires in other
climes, more willing flesh to carry your majesty
on a palangin tour of this strange place.
Perhaps we may play again before you decide
beneath and between. I can always spare some
of myself to feed a interesting machine. I do so
miss the games we played ~~the~~ ~~to~~

re: translate

1 message

to:

Hi, good to hear from you. Where did you get that crazy phrase you transcribed?? Anyway it turned out to be Middle Egyptian. Nobody has spoken that in like 3,000 years. Our best guess for the translation: "I do so miss the games we played in our dalliance amongst the children of Atlantis." I told you it was crazy. Wait is this a goof? Am I getting Punk'd? Haha see you soon.