

**D20  
Modern**

Get Your  
Sleuth On!

# Detectives The Agency



**Avalon Games**



**An Avalon Games Product, All rights reserved, Version 1.0, 2010**

**All comments, suggestions and contacts can be made at...**

**Avalon Games Company, [avalon@comstar-games.com](mailto:avalon@comstar-games.com)**

**Or visit  
Avalon Games at...**

**[www.avalon-games.com](http://www.avalon-games.com)**

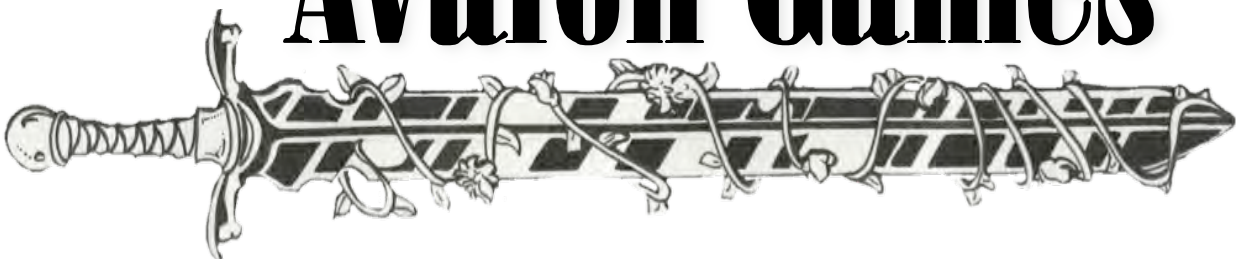
**Written  
David Caffee**

**Art and Layout  
by  
Robert Hemminger**

**Some Art by  
Tamas Baranya**



# Avalon Games



## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>The Periphery Detective Agency</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>The Question Box</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Crystal Lenses</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Pocket Watch</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Goals and Methods of Operation</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Enemies</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Genres</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Near Future Sci-Fi</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Space Hopping Sci-Fi</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>Modern</b> <b>Paranormal</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>Urban Fantasy</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>Tools</b>	<b>Page 10</b>
<b>Death by Misadventure (Sample Adventure)</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>The Victims</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>Cast of Characters</b>	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>Adventure Synopsis</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>INVESTIGATION INTERLUDE</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>LOCAL LAW: SOCIAL ENCOUNTER 1</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>ZED: SOCIAL ENCOUNTER 2</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>TOUGH GUYS: COMBAT ENCOUNTER 1</b>	<b>Page 16</b>
<b>THE LACOUL HOME: EXPLORATION ENCOUNTER 1</b>	<b>Page 17</b>
<b>THE LOST BROTHER: SOCIAL ENCOUNTER 3</b>	<b>Page 17</b>
<b>CONFRONTING JACOBY: COMBAT ENCOUNTER 2</b>	<b>Page 18</b>
<b>CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE</b>	<b>Page 19</b>
<b>Mystery Adventure Worksheet</b>	<b>Page 19</b>
<b>Blank Mystery Adventure Worksheet</b>	<b>Page 23</b>

## Introduction

The Agency is a sourcebook for use in investigation campaigns that feature a paranormal or science fiction twist. This book details the Periphery Detective Agency, a private investigation firm that specializes in cases that have a supernatural, otherworldly, or just plain bizarre twist. You can create an entire campaign based on the agency where the player characters are rookie detectives in the employ of Periphery. Alternately, you can feature agency personnel as NPCs that occasional enter into the campaign to work with (or against) the characters.

You can use this sourcebook for a number of different genres, from near future science fiction to urban fantasy and more. Any adventure setting that combines investigation with supernatural or science fiction elements can be a home for the Periphery Detective Agency.

### The Periphery Detective Agency

The Periphery Detective Agency was founded in 1934 by a man named Gerald Rogers. Young and inexperienced, Rogers took out a small loan from his father in order to start his own business. The family was shocked to find out that the business in question was a detective agency. Gerald was a fan of novels and movies that depicted private investigators so he decided to make that his life's work. Having no relevant training and no established reputation; Rogers found paying customers to be few and far between. Opening his doors in the midst of a depression did not make things any easier for the would-be detective. Desperate for money, Gerald Rogers took on any and all clients that walked through his doors. The situation seemed so hopeless that the fledgling private eye agreed to investigate the most outrageous claims. He took money from eccentrics, crack pots, and the gullible.

Something very strange happened next. Gerald began to notice that the wild stories that he was chasing down weren't all wild stories. While other people might have just taken the money and gone to lunch, Gerald Rogers put forth a serious effort to investigate the things his clients brought to his attention. If nothing else, the detective wanted to be thorough enough in his work to prove to his customers that their concerns were unwarranted. However, some of his cases led the detective to uncover a strange and mysterious world that is hidden away from the sight of everyday people.

## Organization

Periphery is headquartered in a run down building in a neighborhood full of empty factories and unused retail space. The signs in the lobby would lead one to believe that the agency simply rents out a small office on the basement level. In reality, the agency owns the entire building and rents out the above ground spaces to various small businesses and fly-by-night hustlers. Periphery's front office looks unimpressive enough but venturing past the reception area will take you to a hidden space that is filled with modern office equipment, meeting rooms, and file storage. This secret area takes up most of the basement level and is where the real work of Periphery is done.

The head of the agency is Tori Park, a veteran investigator who runs the day to day operations. Periphery is owned by Jonathan Rogers and two silent partners. The youngest member of the Rogers dynasty takes little interest in the agency's investigative work and is generally content with handling the financial aspects of the business. Though he rarely comes into the office, Jonathan Rogers does occasionally show up with sudden and often bizarre requests made on behalf of "the partners." Ms. Park generally obliges her boss now matter how strange the request may seem. She does chafe at instructions that interfere with on going investigations, however.

The front office is run by Mrs. Rose, an older woman who seems to have worked at the agency her whole life. Mrs. Rose is extremely dedicated and efficient, if a bit eccentric. She refuses to learn how to use a computer and keeps all of the agency's files and records in a huge paper vault adjacent to her office. Mrs. Rose is very polite and pleasant but she does tend to work the receptionists and office personnel like an iron fisted tyrant. Though she only appears to be in her forties, Mrs. Rose has a habit of using slang and cultural references that date back to a much earlier age.

New clients are sorted by the front office into two categories; fluff and juicy. Fluff cases are people who wander into the agency looking for standard detective services, such as spying on unfaithful spouses or investigating insurance fraud. These people are either assigned to rookie detectives or whoever is currently on Ms. Park's bad side at the moment. Because Periphery intentionally keeps a low profile, these cases are rare but they do come up. Juicy cases are the ones in which the agency specializes. These cases involve bizarre coincidence, strange events, or unexplained phenomena. Juicy cases are assigned to a team of three to five investigators from the detective pool.

Periphery detectives always work in teams. The agency has discovered the hard way that this line of work is too dangerous to send agents out solo. The detective pool is run by a rotating list of senior detectives who oversee all of the teams in the field. The agency likes to keep a team of investigators together if they can help it. If a group works well together then management will try to continue assigning those detectives to the same cases.

### Equipment

There are a number of unique pieces of equipment that Periphery detectives may have access to. Over the years the agency has encountered a great number of strange technologies and controversial scientific research. Many of Periphery's clients have been scientists of one stripe or another. The unusual circumstances that the agency deals with on a regular basis have allowed them to collect some rather unorthodox gear.

### The Question Box

The question box is an electronic device that can answer seemingly impossible questions with unnerving accuracy. However, the answers that come from the box are often undecipherable and wrapped in esoteric riddles. As frustrating as it is, the box has helped out many detectives whose cases had hit a dead end.

This odd device was invented by one of the Agency's clients in the 1960's. The prototype was recovered from the client's house shortly after he was found murdered. The original box used a rudimentary computer that ran an eclectic combination of algorithms and data filters combined with principles derived from the I Ching, numerology, and other exotic sources. Questions submitted to the box had to be encoded using arcane symbols and mathematical codes. At first the question box was thought to be a useless curiosity but as computer technology advanced, some members of the agency staff began giving the box a second look. In the late 1980's a project was begun to transfer the formulas from the original box to a more powerful mainframe. The massive effort stalled several times due to the fact that the people working on the project were unable to completely understand the equations that they were encoding. Still, they muddled on until the new and improved question box was ready for operations.

The current incarnation of the question box sits in an oversized metal container that houses an array of twenty year old computer components. A number of more modern gadgets have been retrofitted to be compatible with this dinosaur, such as a device that converts spoken questions into the special code that the box analyzes. Another new addition feeds the box a stream of current events data from the internet. However, most of the equipment that is used in the box is part of an outdated legacy system that no one at the agency really knows how to work on.

The software that works with the box takes spoken questions and converts them into the mathematical code that the box is designed to process. The results are then translated back into semi-coherent sentences of spoken English. The asker must present a simple question to the box in plain English. Asking "Where is Dr. White and what is he up to?" counts as two questions and the box will not be able to answer. Asking the same question in a slightly different way leads the box to respond in the exact same way. Some player characters may want to abuse the box by questioning it about every single detail of their investigation. A GM can keep this in check by having the box respond in increasingly disjointed gibberish until it is clear that the answers are all nonsense.

Using the question box can grant a character a bonus to an appropriate skill check or give him an important clue (see the Mystery Information Worksheet for more information about clues). Roll a d20 and consult the chart below to determine how the box responds to the question.

#### **Roll Result**

- 1-5** The question box shuts down due to a hardware or programming error. Getting the box operational again requires 8 hours worth of work and either a Computer Use or Repair check (DC 25).
- 6-14** The answer is unclear.
- 15-19** The asker receives a +5 bonus to a skill check.
- 20** The asker receives a +10 bonus to a skill check or an important clue.

**Size:** Large

**Weight:** 200 lb.

**Purchase DC:** N/A

### GM Notes

A game master that allows the characters access to the question box should try to anticipate the questions that the PCs might ask and prepare appropriately cryptic responses. The answer that the box spits out may take several forms. Several examples are provided below.

*Single Word:* Coffee (the characters end up finding the suspect in a coffee shop)

*Riddle:* Go to the place where fire meets water. (A lake with geo thermal vents below it)

*Cryptic Poem:* The blade cuts...the blood flows...  
men in masks...a heart beats slowly. (Someone is having surgery)

### Crystal Lenses

These dark glasses are more than a fashion statement. Agency detectives learned long ago that specially treated lenses can pick up a certain type of energy that is associated with dimensional travel. This energy is invisible to the naked eye and will not show up on conventional scientific instruments. The energy that is picked up by the crystal lenses can be associated with ghosts, aliens, magical creatures, or whatever strange creatures that the GM has decided to include in the campaign. Useful as they are, not all strange creatures and paranormal events show up on the lenses. A detective who relies on his eyewear to often is likely to get a nasty surprise when he overlooks a threat because it lacks an energy signature. A character wearing crystal lenses gains a +4 bonus on Spot checks to notice people and animals that are tainted by dimensional energy and a +2 bonus to Survival checks used to track such creatures. The lenses also grant a +2 to Search checks used to find places that are saturated with this energy.

Size: Tiny

Weight: N/A

Purchase DC: N/A

### Pocket Watch

This small device is much more than a timepiece. Used properly these pocket watches can be used to determine if someone is telling the truth or not. No one knows exactly how the watches work or who invented them. All that is known is that Gerald Rogers began ordering them from a specialty craftsman in Europe sometime

before the start of WWII. The Periphery Detective Agency still receives a small package of new watches every few years. Remarkably, each package contains the exact number needed to replace all of the watches that were broken or lost since the last shipment, plus a few extras to outfit newly hired detectives.

Pushing a button on the side of the device causes the watch face to swing up and reveal a second dial. The interior face of the watch has a single needle that spins to point at one of two icons; an angel and a devil. The needle points to the devil if someone in the vicinity is being dishonest and points to the angel if someone is being forthright. If the needle spins rapidly around in circles then the watch is receiving mixed signals. Consulting with this device is a full round action that grants a character a +6 bonus to Sense Motive checks. If there are multiple people talking at once, the pocket watch will not be able to determine which people are telling the truth and which ones aren't. The Sense Motive skill does not detect untruths that are spoken through ignorance, mental illness, or due to any form of mental influence or enchantment.

Size: Tiny

Weight: .5 lb.

Purchase DC: N/A



## Goals and Methods of Operation

As a private enterprise, the primary goal of the Periphery Detective Agency is to make money. Obviously the agency generates income by charging fees to their clients. Though they are a business, the owners of the agency are not heartless and will work with their clients in order to set up a payment plan that will work with their income levels. On rare occasions, the agency has agreed to take on a case *pro bono* for a client who desperately needed help. Naturally, those clients that are better funded can expect to pay a much less reasonable rate for the agency's services. Overcharging their well heeled clientele is what allows the management to be so generous when it comes to their more needy customers.

The agency has a long standing tradition of taking on any and all clients. This tradition, combined with their reputation for investigating unusual phenomena, attracts a large number of conspiracy theorists and

people with fringe beliefs. Periphery is more than happy to take money from people who believe that a missing girlfriend was kidnapped by aliens or that leprechauns are ruining their flower beds. Though the claims of these clients may seem ridiculous, agency policy states that detectives must complete a thorough and professional investigation of each and every case. After all that agency detectives have encountered over the years, it is hard to dismiss anything out of hand. After all, there may very well be leprechauns in that flower bed. However, most of the crazy sounding clients turn out to be genuinely crazy. These people tend to get very angry when Periphery informs them that their outrageous claims are false. No one likes to hear that his girlfriend really ran away to Hawaii with a surfer named Bug. Unfortunately, it is part of the agency's code of conduct that detectives are required to report the whole truth, no matter how strange, crazy, or painful it might be.

## Enemies

The agency has made many enemies over the years. Some of these enemies are serious threats, others are merely annoying. Detectives entering into the service of Periphery should be warned that they will inherit the foes of their employers.

*Conspiracy Theorists:* The agency enjoys a very bad reputation among conspiracy theorists and people who believe in the paranormal. Periphery has taken on more than a few such clients over the years and more often than not the agency debunks their beliefs rather than validating them. Most people who have had real contact with the paranormal prefer to keep their experiences secret. The people who run paranormal web sites and publications are generally well intentioned but misguided. This sub culture considers the Periphery Detective Agency to be nothing but a bunch of frauds who bilk money from the true believers. Some even believe that Periphery is part of the big cover up that keeps the public from learning the truth.

The fringe believers and their followers are generally harmless, though they can be a nuisance when an investigation leads the detectives to cross paths with this crowd. Considering the types of cases that the agency takes on, it is only a matter of time before the investigators run into someone who is out to prove his or her latest pet theory. The fringe belief crowd will generally not cooperate with detectives from Periphery and may actively attempt to block an investigation.



When they do choose to cooperate with the agency, these people are not generally helpful. Some of them may even be a bit too helpful, tagging along with the detectives in the hopes of teaming up with them.

*Government Agents:* The agency has a long standing rivalry with a number of government agencies. Part of this animosity stems from contract work that Periphery has performed in the past. There are those within the government that accuse Periphery of blatantly defrauding the government. These people think that the entire agency is an elaborate con game. Other government personnel have a more personal grudge against the agency. These people have brushed against the bizarre and paranormal while performing their duties and, when this happens they always seem to find people from Periphery to be involved. It drives these agents crazy thinking that Periphery detectives know more than they do but refuse to share this information.

*Shadow Masters:* Over the years Periphery detectives have foiled a number of dark plots and evil conspiracies. There are rumors that some, if not all of these schemes are hatched by the same entities. Older agents tell stories about mysterious puppet masters manipulating events from behind the scenes. It is said that the Shadow Masters prefer to enact their schemes through “accidental” deaths or a series of bizarre coincidences. It is said that they can drive people insane and erase memories. Some go as far as to say these hidden forces have taken their revenge on individual investigators, arranging for very violent and painful demises.

## Genres

This organization can appear in a number of different genres. The following sections detail four possible genres in which the Periphery Detective Agency might appear. The genre notes include suggestions for building your campaign world and examples of the kinds of mysteries that the investigators might run across in that world.

### Near Future Sci-Fi

The near future campaign is the default genre for a campaign that revolves around the Periphery Detective Agency. This campaign takes place an unspecified number of years from now. The technology in this future world may be better than what we have in modern times but the basic social and political norms are the same.

Creating a near future campaign is relatively straight forward. All that is needed are a few technological tweaks and a number of new developments in the future history of this world. You can draw on current trends in the news and the world of science as inspiration for these small changes. Television shows, movies, and books are also a good place to look for ideas. Relatively minor changes in the landscape of this future can go a long way toward defining your setting. Try to focus on a few really interesting characteristics of the setting rather than bogging down the story by introducing a lot of small details.

#### *Examples of future developments:*

- A highly addictive new drug has sparked a massive crime wave.
- Cell phones have been replaced by pocket video phones that double as personal computers.
- Fossil fuels have been outlawed and all vehicles are now electrically powered.
- Every local police department has access to a city wide network of security cameras.
- An ultra conservative political party seeks to impose major restrictions on scientific research and science education.
- A pharmaceutical company has introduced a “miracle pill” that can set a person's biological age back by ten or twenty years. Demand for the expensive treatment regimen has skyrocketed and caused a widespread shortage of the drug. Many people have bankrupted themselves in the pursuit of restored youth.
- On line games have become so addictive that they have produced a violent youth subculture. Gangs of dysfunctional teenagers steal and commit other crimes in order to keep their accounts active.

The central themes of a near future campaign tend to relate to the idea of abusing technology and scientific advancement. A number of real world scientific disciplines such as genetics, biotechnology, and nanotechnology can be harnessed for ideas about how science can be abused by the unethical. Other areas of interest include surveillance technology, computers, and military hardware. The villains in this campaign are often rogue government agencies, corporations, and obsessed scientists. These bad guys use technology in morally questionable ways to create things that should not exist. Sometimes this transgression is intentional,

such as a defense contractor that creates genetically altered super soldiers or human animal hybrids. This crime against nature might also be accidental, like a physicist who mistakenly opens a portal to another dimension.

*Examples of mysteries in a near future campaign:*

-A city wide epidemic of sleeplessness is driving people to the brink of sanity. The culprit is an intelligence agency that is experimenting with a new device that can infiltrate people's minds while they are sleeping. This experiment is inadvertently preventing many people from dreaming normally and causing others to be tormented with bizarre nightmares.

-A biochemist has stumbled upon a drug cocktail that can turn people into mindless slaves. He has been recruiting his hapless victims through a paid medical trial and then programming them to commit acts of violence against people he has a grudge against.

-A number of teenaged kids have been disappearing in recent months, many of them runaways or drug addicts. These adolescents are being indoctrinated into a fringe cult that claims to help them with their social problems. The "religious leader" at the head of this cult has developed a device that triggers profound "spiritual" experiences in the minds of his followers. The cult leader began his mission in order to help these kids get over their addiction or other destructive behaviors. However, this leader has become enamored by the power he holds over his young flock and has no intention of letting any of them leave the cult.

## Space Hopping Sci-Fi

In this campaign, Periphery is an interplanetary detective agency that has offices on Earth as well as other planets. This setting is a future at least 100 years in the future where some means of interplanetary travel is available. The characters in this campaign might be catching cyro-freeze shuttles to Mars, booking passage on interstellar passenger flights, or stepping through dimension portals that cross light years in an instant.

Creating this campaign requires a good bit of world building on the part of the GM. The setting is going to be a good deal different from the real world of here and now. Even if the social and cultural environments have not changed much, the technology will be radically different. First and foremost you have to determine what kind of space travel is available in this future.



The mode of transport is the single most important factor in this setting because all other elements fall in place behind it. Explaining how the technology works is insignificant compared to the practical concerns of how far the characters can travel and how long it takes for them to get there. A setting where it takes six months to get to Mars is vastly different from one where one can travel to distant stars in a matter of days.

*Sample far future settings:*

-A seemingly benign alien species has given human beings the technology to travel the stars. However, many people suspect that the aliens are manipulating us and using our exploits in space for their own purposes.

-Mining colonies on Mars and in the asteroid belts have become lawless boomtowns where claim wars, murder, and theft run rampant.

-The planet Earth is part of a multi-species parliament that is tasked with maintaining a fragile peace between worlds.

-A former Earth colony has come under the control of religious extremists. These militants have begun threatening neighboring planets and launching terror attacks at their “godless” home world.

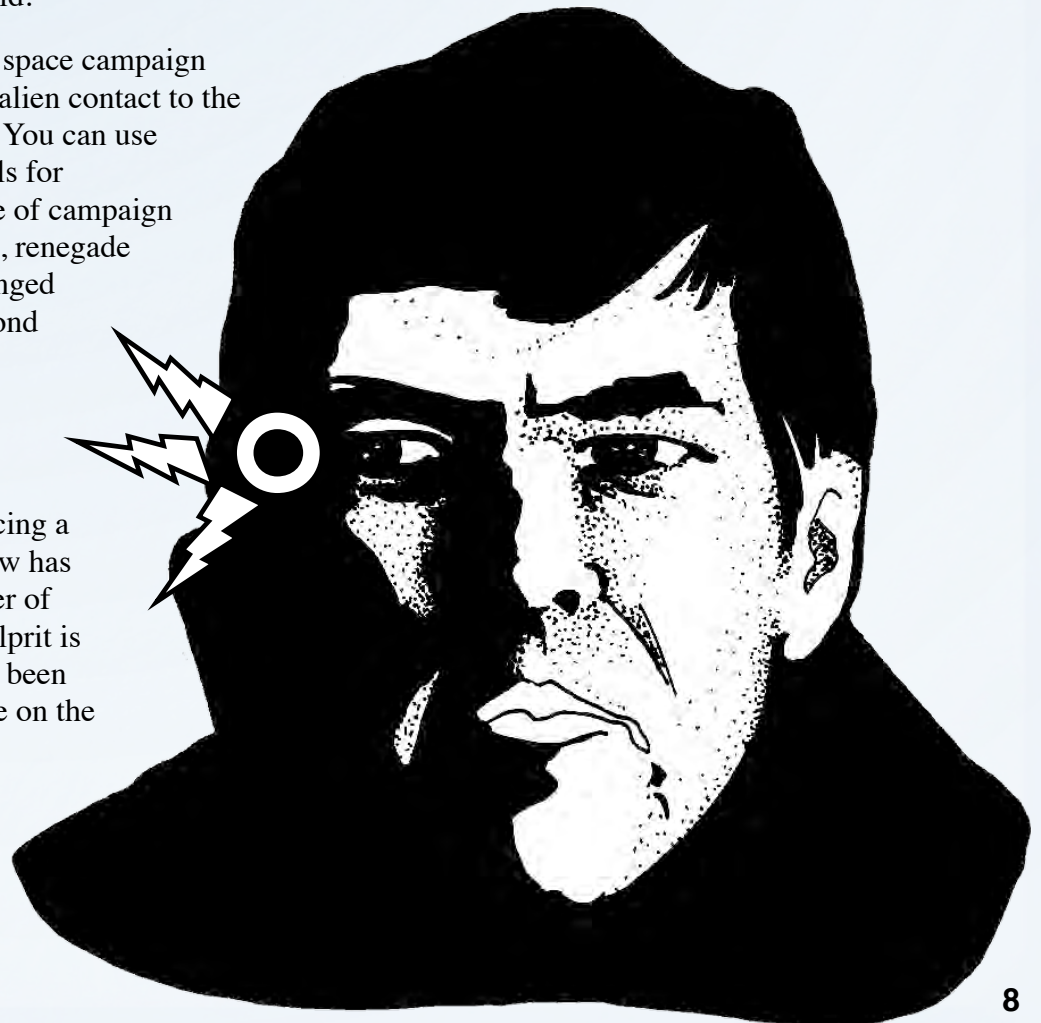
The themes explored in a far future space campaign can range from the complexities of alien contact to the dehumanizing effect of technology. You can use movies, television shows, and novels for inspiration. The villains in this type of campaign are often greedy mega-corporations, renegade computers, sinister aliens, and deranged scientists that have seen things beyond what the human psyche can handle.

*Examples of mysteries in a space hopping campaign:*

-A remote space station is experiencing a rash of unexplained events. The crew has also been showing signs of a number of severe behavioral problems. The culprit is an unknown alien life form that has been telepathically influencing the people on the station.

-A scientist has been murdered while conducting research on a primitive alien world. The primary suspect in the killing is a member of the enigmatic species that he has been studying. The truth is that the scientist discovered the foundation funding his work has been using his data as part of a plan to economically exploit this species. One of the research staff was ordered to kill the scientist in order to keep him quiet.

-The daughter of a wealthy corporate oligarch has disappeared from her father's private space ship. After resurfacing, she begins hopping from ship to ship and running frantically from planet to planet. No one can make any sense of her sudden and very determined flight. It is eventually discovered that she was implanted with a nano-tech virus that influences her nervous system. The virus is compelling her to keep moving toward her ultimate destination, a colony that has been founded by the similarly infected children of the rich and powerful. The culprit is a cybernetic intelligence that wants to take control of human occupied space.



## Modern Paranormal

A Periphery campaign set in modern times is likely to involve dark conspiracies, curses, people with paranormal powers, cults, and the like. This setting exactly mirrors our modern world on the surface, but digging deeper into the shadows reveals hidden dangers and terrible secrets. A large number of television shows, movies, and literature are based in a modern paranormal setting.

Building this campaign world requires a bit of careful tweaking of the real world. Any major changes that differentiate this world from reality begin to drift into the realm of urban fantasy. The paranormal twists that you add to this setting have to be things that are hidden from the view of everyday people. Try not to overburden the campaign with too many otherworldly elements, an adventure that involves aliens, ghosts,

### *Examples of paranormal twists:*

- Vampires, werewolves, and other creatures of legend are real and live in hidden enclaves in our society.

- The US government has long known about the presence of alien visitors to our planet. There exists a secret cabal of politicians and bureaucrats that have forged a secret alliance with the aliens.

- Some people are born with psionic abilities. Most people ignore these powers but others use them to foul ends. A few people cannot control their abilities and end up going insane and become extremely dangerous.

- Time travelers from the future visit our time for a yet unknown reason. They appear to be attempting to change the course of their history.

The central theme of a modern paranormal campaign usually has something to do with conspiracies and unseen dangers. The members of the Periphery Detective Agency are aware of strange things that the general public does not comprehend. There are powerful forces in the world that wish to maintain this secrecy. These conspirators will actively work to hamper Periphery's investigations. The fact that the agency keeps a low profile is the only thing that keeps the secret power brokers from taking down Periphery altogether.

### *Examples of mysteries in a modern paranormal campaign:*

- A reporter who resigned in disgrace has been reported missing. She has gone on the run after discovering the truth about a government cover up. His bank assets have been frozen and a warrant has been issued for his arrest on charges of identity theft and wire fraud. A secret branch of the US intelligence apparatus has been working to ruin this woman's life and reputation ever since her discovery became known to them.

- A scientist has been injecting pregnant women with strands of alien DNA in order to create children with inhuman intelligence. These kids have been disappearing one by one, usually after reaching the age of eight.

- A man with psionic powers has been using his abilities to cheat at poker. This "lucky" individual has been drifting from cities city and running the tables at underground poker clubs. However, this string of extraordinary wins has not gone unnoticed by the club owners or by the pro players that he has taken money from. The suspicion of cheating has drawn the attention of some very bad people.

## Urban Fantasy

In this genre the Periphery detectives are investigating strange events in a setting filled with magic, horror and creatures of legend. Magic is a very real thing in this campaign. This world might look much like the real world or it can be completely infused with magical elements.

Like the modern paranormal campaign, the urban fantasy setting is a twisted reflection of the real world. Unlike a modern paranormal setting, the urban fantasy campaign is not necessarily a world of dark secrets or twisted conspiracies. Urban fantasy is broad term that encompasses any fantasy or magical story set in a city. This type of campaign can feature storylines that range from demon-slaying witches, to paranormal romance, to high fantasy epics so long as the primary action takes place in an urban area.

### *Examples of fantastic twists:*

- Fairies, spirits, angels, demons, and other magical creatures have the ability to cross over into our world.
- Elves, dwarves, and other fantasy races live side by side with modern humans.
- Magic is real and there are a few people who can teach it to others. However, this power comes with a steep price.
- Every generation a “chosen few” are destined to defeat a great evil that threatens the world.

You can bring up a variety of themes and moods when putting together an urban fantasy campaign. This world can be dark and treacherous, filled with evil spirits and black magic. Or it could be a light hearted, even humorous mirror of the real world. Urban fantasy can mean a lot of things and it is completely up to you how to put this world together. The fantastic elements can be hidden from public view or they can be right out in the open, part of everyday life. There are a great number of ways to get inspiration for this setting. Your campaign can draw upon fantasy novels, occult beliefs, or horror movies/novels.

### *Examples of mysteries in an urban fantasy campaign:*

- A young woman is haunted by visions of an attractive, yet frightening, man who appears both when she is dreaming and when she is awake.
- A number of murders have been committed by someone with unnatural strength. The victims all fought back with guns and knives to no avail. It turns out that a local gangster is using black magic to create zombie enforcers.
- A practitioner of magic has been killed and his spell book is missing. An ambitious student of his murdered him for the power in the book. Now this inexperienced spell caster is using that power to mess with forces beyond his control. He plans on unleashing a powerful demon, though he has no way of controlling it.



### *Examples of mysteries in an urban fantasy campaign:*

- A young woman is haunted by visions of an attractive, yet frightening, man who appears both when she is dreaming and when she is awake.
- A number of murders have been committed by someone with unnatural strength. The victims all fought back with guns and knives to no avail. It turns out that a local gangster is using black magic to create zombie enforcers.
- A practitioner of magic has been killed and his spell book is missing. An ambitious student of his murdered him for the power in the book. Now this inexperienced spell caster is using that power to mess with forces beyond his control. He plans on unleashing a powerful demon, though he has no way of controlling it.

### **Tools**

This section contains tools that a GM can use to build mystery adventures. Several sample adventures are given here to help guide your own ideas or for a time when you just want to put a quick game together. Also included is a Mystery Adventure Worksheet that you can use to guide your own adventures. This worksheet can help you organize your notes and vital information about the adventure. Investigation games can be very challenging for a GM. This worksheet was designed to help the task of creating and running mystery adventures easier.

# Death by Misadventure

## (Sample Adventure)

### Introduction

A frightened young woman stumbles into the front office, sobbing for help. Jeannine LaCoul explains to the receptionist that her family has been placed under a curse. She says that she has lost four relatives to unexplained illnesses and bizarre accidents in just the past month alone. She hasn't heard from her brother since their father died two weeks ago. She wants to hire the detectives to go down to Colline de Rouge, Louisiana and find out what is happening.

Death by Misadventure is a modern paranormal adventure for use with the Periphery Detective Agency. The adventure is meant for a group of characters of 1st level. You need the d20 Modern Core Rulebook or any other d20 rulebook that contains basic character creation rules.

### Background

The LaCoul family has a long history in southern Louisiana. One of the wealthiest families in the region, the LaCouls collectively own a large share of the local businesses. The family made its original fortune as the owners of a large plantation. After the Civil War, the family lost almost everything that they owned. The patriarch of the clan sold the family's land holdings and invested the proceeds in lumber yards and other businesses. Eventually these investments grew into a large financial empire that peaked in the 1920's.

The LaCoul's are very influential in Colline de Rouge, having a great deal of sway in local politics, business, and even the schools. May Ann LaCoul once raised an objection to a play that was being put on by the high school drama club. Though she has no children enrolled in the school, her complaint was all that was required for the principal to order the production stopped. It was never even made clear why May Ann objected to the performance in the first place.

The family's influence has helped members of the clan escape public scrutiny and legal woes on more than one occasion. One particular incident in the early 1970's sparked off a bitter feud that simmers to this day. Wellington LaCoul, father of the agency's client, was once accused of sexually assaulting an African

American woman in the family's employ. The power and money of the LaCoul family, combined with the region's history of racial prejudice ensured that the incident was kept quiet. Soon afterwards, the victim disappeared without a trace.

The missing woman's son was raised by his aunt, Grace Jacoby. A serious and determined youth, the young boy excelled in school both academically and athletically. After high school he won a scholarship to a local university where he majored in criminal justice. Several years later, he ran for the office of County Sheriff and won; partially buoyed by the fame he gained playing high school sports. Marcus Jacoby is the county's first African-American Sheriff. Though he has obtained a great deal of power, his position in law enforcement was never enough to allow him to take his revenge on Wellington and the rest of the Jacoby family. Since he has failed to find the evidence that linked Wellington to his mother's disappearance, Sheriff Jacoby has decided to get revenge using a more unorthodox method.

### The Victims

Four members of Jeannine LaCoul's family have died in a surprisingly short time. She believes that the family has come under some kind of curse due to the strange and sometimes unexplainable nature of the deaths. She provides the investigation team with everything she knows about her deceased relatives.

### Wellington LaCoul

Patriarch of the family and primary manager of the LaCoul's financial holdings. He was killed two weeks ago while visiting a machine shop that he owned. One of the drill presses broke while it was running and sent a chunk of metal flying into Wellington's head.

### Jeremiah LaCoul

The elderly uncle of Wellington LaCoul was a retired judge. He died a month ago after falling down the stairs.

### Sara Donaldson

Wellington's sister and the aunt of the agency's client, Jeannine. This former beauty queen had a reputation for heavy drinking. She died in her sleep due to unexplained causes shortly after Wellington's funeral.

## **Vincent White**

Jeannine's second cousin (cousin to Wellington and Sara). He worked as a bank manager and helped run the family's finances. Wellington and Vincent went to school together and were the best of friends. He died of a heart attack upon hearing that his cousin Wellington had been killed.

## **Cast of Characters**

This adventure involves a number of characters, many of whom have a complicated relationship with the others. Due to the non-linear nature of an investigation adventure, the GM will be required to do a good bit of improvising as the game unfolds. This character summary should be useful in keeping track of the various NPCs that the investigators will come into contact with. A GM is encouraged to use this summary as a guide for improvising social interactions between the player characters and the NPCs.

## **Jeannine LaCoul**

The agency's client is frightened young woman in her late twenties. She moved to the city after an argument with her father, who is now deceased. Jeannine knows nothing about her family's feud with the Jacoby clan. The investigators can contact her by phone during the course of the adventure.

## **Sheriff Marcus Jacoby**

The county Sheriff is seeking revenge on the LaCoul family because Wellington LaCoul attacked his mother. The rest of the family helped cover up the crime and his mother disappeared shortly afterwards. As a child Jacoby thought that he was going insane but he later learned that his family has a history of possessing psionic abilities. Marcus Jacoby begged his aunt to teach him how to use these powers so he can use them to take revenge on the LaCouls.

## **Deputy Paul**

Jacoby's only deputy knows nothing about the murders but he is unquestioningly loyal to his boss. He is an honest lawman, though he can be a bit arrogant and is prone to use excessive force.

## **Grace Jacoby**

The matriarch of the Jacoby family, Grace raised her nephew Marcus after his mother's death. This elderly woman is rumored to practice voodoo but this rumor is untrue. Her frightening reputation in Colline de Rouge comes from an innate psionic ability which she has harnessed and mastered but rarely uses. She does not approve of Marcus' revenge plot but she has agreed to go along with it because she understands his anger and pain. Grace misses her sister dearly but she has personally forgiven the LaCoul family for their past misdeeds.

## **Beau LaCoul**

Jeannine's ne'er-do-well brother is a spoiled child in a man's body. Beau believes in the family curse and thinks that he is next. He has spent the two weeks since his father's funeral on a wild rampage of drinking and other self-destructive behaviors. He hasn't returned home since. Instead he can be found frequenting back room poker games and houses of ill repute.

## **May Ann LaCoul**

Jeaninne's sister in law and the estranged wife of Beau LaCoul. She knows about the crimes of Wellington LaCoul and other family members and wants to keep these crimes a secret. The last thing she wants is for a group of out of town private investigators to go snooping into the family's business. She hires a bunch of local toughs to run the PCs out of town.

## **Zed**

The town drunk. Zed is often harassed by the sheriff and his deputy. He is deathly afraid of Grace Jacoby but won't say why.

## **Clara Gates**

Beau LaCoul's former mistress. She has been involved in several physical confrontations with Beau the required police intervention. She later accused other members of the LaCoul family of harassing her and getting her fired from her job.

## **Kent Harvey**

The proprietor of the Dragon Massage Parlor is the town pimp. He has been letting Beau LaCoul pass out in the back lot of his establishment for the past week or so.

## Adventure Synopsis

The investigators must travel to Colline de Rouge, Louisiana and determine what, if anything is killing off members of the LaCoul family. Upon arriving in town, the characters have several options open to them. It is impossible to predict how the investigators will proceed once they get into town but there are a number of likely possibilities; visiting the scenes of the mysterious deaths, talking to the sheriff, searching public records, and talking to the local populace. Inevitably, the investigation will draw the attention of both Sheriff Jacoby (Social Encounter 1) and May Ann LaCoul (Combat Encounter 1).

Further investigating may lead the characters to the LaCoul family home. If the investigators learn that May Ann LaCoul hired the gang that attacked them then they could decide to sneak into the family home in order to learn more about her (Exploration Encounter 1). They might also try to track down Beau LaCoul, brother of their client who has gone on a two week drinking binge since his father's death (Social Encounter 3).

As the investigators begin piecing together the clues they uncover the ongoing feud between Sheriff Jacoby and the LaCoul family. If they get enough information then it is likely that the investigators will be able to conclude that the Sheriff is the culprit, though they probably will not know how he committed the murders. Other possible suspects are May Ann LaCoul and the sheriff's aunt, Grace Jacoby. If the investigators try to lay the blame on May Ann then the sheriff will gladly go along with it and may even try to produce "evidence" that links her to one of the deaths. If the investigators direct suspicion on Grace Jacoby then the sheriff will laugh it off and tell the team that they are grasping at straws. However, if too much attention is directed at his aunt then Jacoby may decide that it is time for the team to have an accident of their own.

### Colline de Rouge, Louisiana

The quiet town of Colline de Rouge is a former industrial town that is slowly shrinking due to stagnation and decay. Most of the town's young people leave soon after they get out of high school, leaving behind a population that is older on average than most places. The rural area is very out of the way and far from the tourist areas around New Orleans.

## INVESTIGATION INTERLUDE

After arriving in town, the investigative team will have a number of ways to proceed with the investigation. Listed below are a few different ways that characters can use their skills to gain important clues.

### Computer Use

When the investigators first arrive on the scene they will find the Computer Use skill to be ineffective toward helping their investigation. Without any solid leads, they will simply have no idea of where to look for evidence. However, if they begin to suspect Sheriff Jacoby, the team may try to hack the sheriff's personal computer in order to gain privy to his secrets. A Computer Use skill check (DC 20) uncovers a copy of an e-mail that Jacoby received from a mental hospital in Florida. The director of the hospital assures him in the letter that the records pertaining to his stay at the facility are completely sealed and cannot be accessed. A copy of the records is attached to the e-mail. It appears that Jacoby has removed from school at the age of twelve and ordered to undergo psychiatric counseling. It was widely believed that Jacoby's emotional issues stemmed from his mother's disappearance but some of the doctors suspected that an unrelated disorder was to blame. The young man repeatedly claimed that he could hear other people's thoughts and sometimes he saw inanimate objects moving on their own accord. Jacoby expressed the concern that he was being possessed by a demon.

### Investigate

It is only natural to assume that the investigators are going to visit the places where the members of the LaCoul family fell ill or had their accidents. A thorough analysis of the scenes can reveal an important clue. An Investigate check (DC 25) reveals that one member of the LaCoul family (Jeremiah) fell down the stairs in a very suspicious manner. One of the steps appears to have broken under the man's weight. However, looking at the wood, the characters determine that the wood strong and the broken board should not have given out.

## LOCAL LAW: SOCIAL ENCOUNTER 1

### Encounter Level 1/4

#### SETUP

#### Research

Researching through the parish clerk's records requires a Research skill check. The information that is uncovered depends on the check result.

DC 10: Beau LaCoul has been arrested several times for domestic disputes involving a woman named Clara Gates. Ms. Gates filed a lawsuit against Beau and several other members of the LaCoul family several months ago but it was dismissed.

DC 15: A distant ancestor of the Jacoby family was accused of witchcraft and lynched back in 1876.

#### Gather Information

A Gather Information check will give the player characters access to the local rumor mill. One or two bits of hearsay sound like they may be relevant

DC 10:

1. Many people in town believe that May Ann LaCoul is killing off her relatives to gain access to the family fortune.

2. Sheriff Jacoby's aunt is rumored to practice the religion known as Voodoo. The rumor is that she has delved into a dark side of this religion and has the power to put curses on people. Many people dismiss this talk of voodoo as the ridiculous gossip of small minded people. The local minister swears that Grace Jacoby is a devout Baptist and a pillar of his congregation.

DC 15: If the investigators have gained possession of the photograph from the LaCoul manor, they can use this skill to learn the identity of the mystery woman. A Gather Information check reveals that the woman is actually Beth Jacoby, the Sheriff's mother.

DC 20: Beau LaCoul has been spending his nights at a "massage parlor" on the outskirts on town.

Sheriff Jacoby likes to greet all newcomers to the town. He is especially likely to talk to the investigators if they start asking questions about the LaCoul family. While his demeanor is professional and courteous, he will not listen to any mention of a family curse or foul play. He dismisses these notions as the hysterical grasping of a woman who has suffered a lot of tragedy.

The PCs begin the encounter shortly after they arrive in town. Sheriff Jacoby drives up next to the characters as they walk through the streets. He greets them and offers to help with their investigation but he subtly hints that they are wasting their time.

This encounter includes the following characters.

#### Sheriff Jacoby

#### Deputy Paul

#### When the investigators get out of their car, read the following:

*A black and white sheriff's car pulls up alongside you. A muscular African-American man in his forties gets out of the driver's side. From the passenger seat you see the deputy flashing you a fake smile. The driver speaks, "Hey there. How you folks doin'? I'm Sheriff Jacoby, I hear ya'll came down here for Miss LaCoul, that so? Little Jeannine hired ya to look into her pa's death. Sad thing that. And just after that her aunt passed, too. Well I just wanted ya'll to know that you can come knock if ya'll need anything. My office is just right there next to the courthouse. I can imagine that Jeannine'll feel a lot better once all this nonsense gets put to rest".*

#### Sense Motive

**DC 20:** *You get the feeling that Jacoby knows something about what's going on.*

#### Listen

**DC 10:** *You overhear the Sheriff and Deputy discussing how Beau LaCoul has been going crazy lately. He's been tearing up the local bars and spending his after hours time at houses of ill repute and back room poker games.*

## ZED: SOCIAL ENCOUNTER 2

### Encounter Level 1/4

#### SETUP

Zed is the town drunk and he can often be found on main street bothering people for spare change. Sheriff Jacoby and his deputies discourage him from panhandling but he is hard to dissuade from his primary source of drinking money.

The PCs begin the encounter as they are exploring the town of Colline de Rouge. It is impossible to go very far in town without bumping into Zed and his seemingly endless hard luck stories that always end in a request for funds.

This encounter includes the following characters.

#### Zed

As the investigators travel around town, read the following:

*An older man in a battered Army jacket stumbles toward you. He begins talking in a slurred voice, "Scuse me there. I'm sorry to bother you but my car just ran out of gas. I got to get out to Baton Rouge for this job interview. My cousin said he'd get me this job cleaning office buildings but if I don't get up there today they're gonna give it to someone else. Can ya help me out? This job means a lot to me, anything'll help...I just gotta scratch up some money to put in the tank so I can get down there."*

#### Talking to Zed

Zed doesn't know anything about the LaCoul family or their recent string of bad luck. However, any mention of Sheriff Jacoby causes him to shudder with fear. *"The sheriff is a decent sort, I guess. He gives me a hard time sometimes. But that aunt of his...she scares me something fierce."* If pressed for an explanation he will not elaborate further.



## TOUGH GUYS: COMBAT ENCOUNTER 1

### Encounter Level 1

#### SETUP

After the investigators have had a chance to look around the town and ask questions they attract the wrong kind of attention. A crew of local bar fighters has been paid to run the team out of town.

These four men are unemployed construction workers who frequent a local bar called 'Gator Run. Down on their luck, the men survive by working odd jobs and collecting government benefits. They are not bad people or professional criminals but their desperate need for money has caused them to accept a job offer from May Ann LaCoul. She wants the group to beat the tar out of the investigators and discourage them from asking any more questions about her family.

The PCs begin the encounter when they are confronted outside of a bar, hotel, or restaurant.

This encounter includes the following adversaries

4 local bar fighters

When the adventurers (area), read the following:

*You see a group of four men walking across the parking lot toward you. They are trying to act casual and ignore you but something about them seems odd. As you pass each other, one of them bumps into you and then become belligerent, demanding an apology. It soon becomes obvious that a fight is inevitable.*

#### Intimidation

**DC 15:** *Questioning the men who attacked you produces a name, May Ann LaCoul. They don't know why she hired them because she refused to talk about it. She simply gave them a description of your team and paid them 100 dollars each, with a promise of more if you decide to leave town.*

### Local Bar Fighters (4) (CR 1)

**Tough Ordinary 2; Medium size human**

**HD 2d10 +4; hp 15; Mas 15**

**Init +1; Spd 30 ft.**

**Defense 14, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +2 class, +1 leather jacket),**

**BAB +1; Grap +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+2 non-lethal, unarmed strike), or +4 melee (1d4+2, broken bottle); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+2 non-lethal, unarmed strike), or +4 melee (1d4+2, broken bottle)**

**FS 5 ft. sq.; Reach 5 ft.**

**SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0**

**AP 0; Rep +0**

**Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.**

**Occupation:** Blue-collar (class skills: Drive, Intimidate)

**Feats:** Brawl, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

**Skills:** Craft (structural) +6, Drive +6, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (popular culture) +2, Knowledge (street-wise) +6, Profession +4, Read/Write English, Repair +2, Speak English, Swim +3.

#### TACTICS

The fighters come at the team with their bare fists and try to brawl with them one on one. If the fight turns against them then they will resort to using clubs, broken bottles, or anything else they can get their hands on. If three of them are taken out then the fourth man will turn and flee.

## THE LACOUL HOME: EXPLORATION ENCOUNTER 1

### Encounter Level 1/2

#### SETUP

The LaCoul family manor is a large antebellum house on the outskirts of town. Fruit trees such as fig and satsuma dot the expansive property. The property is surrounded by a brick wall topped by wrought iron spikes. An electronic gate blocks entry to the long winding drive that leads up to a four car garage.

The inside of the home is dusty and filled with taped up boxes. It seems that parts of the house haven't been lived in for years. Someone has been going through Wellington's things and preparing them for storage. Tarps cover much of the furniture and antiques.

The PCs begin the encounter when they enter the LaCoul family home.

When the adventurers reach the LaCoul manor, read the following:

*The LaCoul family home looks like something from a historical novel. A massive swath of land surrounds an immaculately kept manor house that is at least two hundred years old. As you approach you notice that a half dozen servants are gathering up their things and preparing to leave for the night.*

#### Spot

**DC 15:** *You realize that the doors and windows of the house are protected by a top of the line alarm system.*

#### Disable Device

**DC 25:** *The family has spared no expense protecting their home from would be burglars.*

#### Search

**DC 20:** *Among the boxes and collected mementos from Wellington's room, you find a folded black and white photograph. The picture shows an attractive African American woman in her early thirties. The photo has been set aside and kept apart from the things that are being crated up for storage.*

*If the player characters are discovered inside the manor or if they trip the security alarm then the sheriff will be summoned and the team will be placed under arrest for breaking and entering. If they attempt to flee*

*from the authorities then a manhunt will be called and the Louisiana state patrol will become involved in the search.*

*If the characters are discovered and caught and surrender themselves without a fight then they will have to spend the night in jail. Then next day the agency, with a lot of help from Jeannine LaCoul, will be able to get the charges dropped. However, a reputation for breaking into houses will not sit well with the local population and the investigators can expect to have much less cooperation from people in town.*

## THE LOST BROTHER: SOCIAL ENCOUNTER 3

### Encounter Level 1/4

#### SETUP

Jeannine LaCoul has not heard from her brother Beau since they talked briefly at their father's funeral. She knows he has a self destructive streak and she is worried that he may hurt himself. She would be greatly relieved to know where he is and that he is okay. The investigators might also want to talk to him to see what he knows about the deaths of his family members.

This encounter begins when the player characters learn the whereabouts of Beau LaCoul. A Gather Information check (DC 20) reveals that he is usually found at the Dragon Massage Parlor, a thinly disguised brothel staffed by Chinese immigrants. The owner, Kent Harvey, is reluctant to cooperate with the investigators. However, the women who work here are tired of the trouble that Beau has been causing and hope that the investigators can get him to leave. Shortly after conversing with the team, Beau disappears again and does not resurface.

This encounter includes the following characters.

Beau LaCoul

Kent Harvey, proprietor of the Dragon Massage Parlor

Several Chinese-American sex workers

When the investigators get out of their car, read the following:

*You find Beau puking his guts out in the back lot of the massage parlor. Several mobile homes fill the lot. Beau is leaning against one of them as he heaves violently into a storm drain. When he finally becomes aware of your presence he tells you to leave. Beau insists that he wants to be left alone and becomes belligerent if you don't leave. His face, covered with bruises and fresh cuts, is testimony to his violent disposition.*

## Diplomacy

**DC 15:** *With a little prodding you get Beau to talk to you, though most of what he has to say is incoherent “drunk talk.” Occasionally you pick out a meaningful phrase, usually involving the family curse and how he is certain that he is the next to die. You also hear him mention that the whole family is no good and how they are being punished “for what pa did to that lady.”*

### CONFRONTING JACOBY: COMBAT ENCOUNTER 2

#### Encounter Level 5

#### SETUP

Sheriff Jacoby lives in a modest country house outside of town. The property is filled with willow trees and neatly trimmed hedges. The back end of the property is bisected by a small river that flows into a nearby marsh. At the edges of the property the land becomes thickly wooded and leads off into a section of woodland.

The PCs begin the encounter when they cross onto Jacoby's property. The sheriff greets them warmly and expresses concern that they came to visit him when he was off duty. Something about the way Marcus acts might lead the player characters to suspect that he is nervous about the meeting. The sheriff has no desire to kill the player characters but he doesn't want his secret to get out. Jacoby doesn't think a criminal court will ever believe that he used his mind powers to kill the LaCoul's but he fears becoming a pariah like his aunt.

When the adventurers reach the property, read the following:

*A short gravel drive leads you through a patch of willow trees and winds across the yard to Jacoby's front porch. The sheriff walks out to the front steps and waves at you as you approach. “Bit late for a social call.” he says nervously.*

#### TACTICS

When the encounter starts, Sheriff Jacoby will attempt to convince the investigators that they are just being ridiculous. If the player characters mention his feud with the LaCoul family or his missing mother, Jacoby will snap and attack the team in melee combat. If the battle does not go his way, the sheriff will draw his pistol and start a gun fight with the characters. If the battle becomes a running fight then Jacoby will attempt to hide in the woods near his property and track the investigators, hoping to pick them off one at a time.

Should Jacoby become severely injured, he will flee from the player characters. If at all possible, he will make his way to the river behind his house and dive in. The sheriff is a decent swimmer but the river has a strong undercurrent that may drag him under.

## Sheriff Jacoby (CR 5)

**Strong 2, Smart 1, Telepath 2; Medium size human**

**HD 2d8 + 2 plus 1d6 +1 plus 2d6 +2; hp 31; Mas 13**

**Init +1; Spd 30 ft.**

**Defense 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +3 class, +2 light undercover vest),**

**BAB +3; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+2 non-lethal, unarmed strike), or +4 melee (1d6+2 19-20, metal baton); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+2 non-lethal, unarmed strike), +4 melee (1d6+2 19-20, metal baton), or +4 ranged (2d6, 9mm pistol)**

**FS 5 ft. sq.; Reach 5 ft.**

**SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +5**

**AP 7; Rep +2**

**Str 13, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 8.**

**Occupation:** Law Enforcement (class skills: Gather Information, Intimidate)

**Talents:** Melee Smash, Trick

**Feats:** Athletic, Brawl, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Wild Talent, Personal Firearms Proficiency.

**Skills:** Autohypnosis +7, Bluff +5, Climb +3, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (streetwise) +7, Psicraft +11, Swim +3.

#### Psionic Powers:

0-Burst (wild talent), Daze, Far Hand, Verve

1-Control Object, Lesser Body Adjustment (trigger power)

**Power Points: 3**

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

### SUCCESS

The investigators discover Sheriff Jacoby's secret and stop him from using his powers to harm people in the LaCoul family. If the player characters kill him during the fight then they will have a lot of explaining to do. If Deputy Paul hears about the sheriff's death then he will shoot first and ask no questions. If Marcus Jacoby survives then he will suffer a nervous breakdown and will be committed for his own good.

Soon after the conclusion of the case the investigators will get a call from headquarters informing them of another case, this one taking them to East Texas. This begins a string of five more adventures that all take place in small American towns and remote rural areas.

### FAILURE

If the investigators are not successful then the sheriff will continue to use his psychic powers to kill off every last member of the Jacoby clan that remains in Colline de Rouge. The next victim will be Beau LaCoul who will have a car accident while trying to leave town. After that May Ann LaCoul will die from an apparent "suicide."

### Mystery Adventure Worksheet

The following worksheet can help you put together the basic outline of your mystery adventure and keep the information organized during game play. Think of this outline as the "character sheet" for your adventure. More than any other adventure, a mystery or investigation game is going to require a lot more improvisation and thinking on your feet. The structure of an investigation adventure is by its very nature non-linear. One encounter or scene will not naturally lead to another and it is very hard to predict what the players will do from one minute to the next. Therefore a collection of notes will be much more useful than a fully planned out adventure. Keep in mind that this worksheet is not meant to replace all of your GM notes; it is simply a way to help you keep things organized during the game.

The first part of the worksheet is the space for the name of your adventure and what campaign the adventure is part of. Giving your adventure a descriptive or evocative name can help inspire you and keep you focused as you put the adventure together. The campaign name should simply denote the general ideas behind your campaign (*example: New York/Near Future*).

Sometimes a campaign is built from a series of linked adventures. If this is the case then indicate what part of the campaign this adventure comprises (*Part 1 of 4*).

The next line gives you a place to list the themes and mood of your adventure. Theme and mood can color many different parts of the adventure so it is best to determine them first. You may have an idea for a humorous NPC, but if the rest of the adventure is dark and built on a theme of desperation then this character simply won't fit. Theme and mood can inform your choices about everything from the settings that the characters explore to the type of clues that they find.

Next is a place to detail the primary mystery of the adventure. You probably already have a decent amount of back story all ready thought out before you begin with the worksheet. Therefore, it is not necessary to rewrite everything in this space. Keep it brief and simply describe what the characters need to figure out. "Who killed Dr. Watsisnaem and why?" is a perfect example. Underneath this space is a line for denoting how the characters get involved in the mystery. One easy way to accomplish this is simply having a new client walk into the agency and asking for help. There are others ways to do this, of course. The way that the characters are introduced to the mystery helps set the tone for the rest of the adventure some it merits some consideration.

The culprit(s) behind the primary mystery are listed on the next line. These are the bad guys that the player characters have to catch or foil. Only the main villains should be listed here. Notes for lesser bad guys and henchmen can be saved for a later section. Below this line is a place for you to describe how the characters are introduced to the culprit(s). Obviously the player characters are not going to know that they are meeting the primary antagonists when they are introduced to them. It is important that the group is made aware of this character's existence before it is revealed that he or she is the culprit. Otherwise the ending of the adventure will seem arbitrary and anti-climatic.

The worksheet also includes a place for you to list the primary non-player characters and jot down a few notes about them. Again, this is not meant to replace your normal GM's notes, this is only a reference to help you keep them straight in game. A detailed description of the NPCs is not necessary, just one or two lines that can be used to help you role play that character. Example: *Jenny Smith, Dr.'s assistant, gambling problem, acts nervous when questioned.*

The next three sections of the worksheet provide spaces for you to list the possible encounters that you may use in the adventure. These encounters are divided into three types. Social encounters are ones that are centered on talking to NPCs and using social skills to gain access to information. Exploration encounters involve searching through a set location in order to find clues. Any encounter that involves fighting is considered a combat encounter, even if it also has elements of the other two types. The most important things to list in your notes is which clues (if any) lead to this encounter and which clues (if any) can be found after successfully completing the encounter. This worksheet includes a section for you to list ten clues so you can reference them by number instead of writing them out. Rounding out this section is a space for you to list random encounter groups that the player characters might run into if they get off track or if the story gets bogged down. These encounters are usually, but not always, combat encounters. A random encounter must include a science fiction or paranormal twist that relates to the primary mystery. It should never involve a random street crime or a run in with everyday threats. A random encounter should always include at least one potential clue that the characters can gain by defeating the bad guys. Including clues this way makes a random encounter a good way to provide an extra clue to a group that is struggling.

The heart of the adventure worksheet is a section for you to list ten clues that relate to your primary mystery. It should require no more than six clues for the players to unravel the mystery and identify the culprit(s). However, it should be assumed that most groups aren't going to find every clue that you plant in the adventure so it is wise to have extra. Designing clues requires good judgment and creative thinking. No one clue should give then player characters too much of the mystery. On the other hand, there are times when a group might find all ten clues and still not be able to put together and answer. It is almost impossible to predict how much information it will require for your players to solve the mystery.

The clues section has a place to write the name of the clue, the type of clue it is, the information learned from it, how it is found, and, if needed, the skill check required to find it. There are two primary types of clues; physical and knowledge. Physical clues are things that a character can pick up and put in his pocket such as a pendant with arcane markings or a knife covered in fingerprints. A knowledge clue is something

that provides information such as a rumor, a scrap of paper with an address, or a computer file. Feel free to create your own clue types as needed.

Of course a clue isn't worth anything if the characters learn nothing by finding it. Each clue should provide a small piece of the puzzle and the information gained should be relatively straight forward. Sometimes a clue provides more than one piece of information, one when it is discovered and then more pieces are gained by further analysis or research. Remember that you can't give away too much information with any particular clue. "The killer drove a red car" is a good clue. Providing a license plate number might be too much unless you have already decided that the car doesn't lead directly to the bad guy.

Almost as important as what the characters learn from a clue is how and where they find it. This is where the adventure worksheet becomes really useful. Sometimes characters dash from one scene to the next and make a dozen skill checks in a row as they try to unearth the clues. The worksheet can help you keep track of when the characters will potentially find clues even if the story proceeds at a breakneck pace. Be flexible when it comes to doling out clues. If the characters try something you didn't expect and are successful, reward them by giving them a clue they would have found elsewhere.

Skill checks for finding clues are pretty straight forward. There are a number of key skills that are essential to an investigation adventure; Gather Information, Intimidate, Investigate, Research, Search, and Sense Motive. Most of the clues that require skill check to find will use one of these skills. However, there are other skills that might come into play. A Search check might reveal a hidden safe but it requires a Disable Device check to crack it open and retrieve the clue. Some clues give out multiple bits of information based upon multiple skill checks. These clues should be listed once for each skill that may be used. A strangely inscribed ring might be listed once with Search when a character first finds it, a second time in conjunction with Research when a character looks up the symbols on it, and a third time with Gather Information when a character starts asking around to see who has been seen with that ring.

The final section is a place for you to list a number of red herrings that you can use to throw the player characters off course. A red herring is a clue that leads the group in the wrong direction. A group of characters that follow a red herring to its logical conclusion should immediately realize that they have been taken astray. If the red herring doesn't lead to an obvious dead end then the players may end up wasting a lot of time and become frustrated with the adventure.

Below you will find a completed adventure worksheet based off *Death by Misadventure*, the sample adventure from the previous section.

## Mystery Adventure Worksheet

**Adventure Name** Death by Misadventure Campaign Small town/paranormal Part **1** of **6**

**Genre** modern paranormal Level 1st

**Theme** greed, lust, family secrets.

**Mood** dark

**Primary Mystery** Why are members of the LaCoul family dying from bizarre accidents and unexplained illnesses?

**How are the players introduced to the mystery?** Jeannine LaCoul contacts the agency because she fears that a family curse has been killing her relatives in Louisiana. She is convinced that she will be next.

**Culprit(s)** Sheriff Jacoby. He has a long time grudge against the LaCouls and he has convinced his aunt to teach him how to use his psionic powers to inflict harm upon them.

**How are the players introduced to the culprit(s)?** They meet Sheriff Jacoby when they first arrive in town.

### Primary NPCs/Notes

**Jeannine LaCoul**, frightened young woman in her 20's moved to the city after an argument with her father, now deceased. Jeannine knows nothing about her family's feud with the Jacoby clan.

**Deputy Paul**, Jacoby's only deputy knows nothing about the murders but he is unquestioningly loyal to his boss.

**Grace Jacoby**, matriarch of the family, elderly woman is rumored to practice voodoo.

**Zed**, the town drunk, often harassed by the sheriff and his deputy. He is deathly afraid of Grace Jacoby but won't say why.

**Beau LaCoul**, believes in the family curse and thinks that he is next. He has been on two week long drinking binge as he bounces around back room poker games and houses of ill repute.

**May Ann LaCoul**, Jeaninne's sister in law, does not want the PCs snooping into the family's business, she hires a bunch of local toughs to run them out of town.

## Encounters

### Social Encounters/ Notes

**Local Law.** Upon meeting the Sheriff, he quickly dismissed the notion that anything unusual is happening to the LaCoul family. All talk of a family curse is nonsense. Clue 1, 3.

**Zed.** The town drunk pesters the group for spare change. After talking to him they learn that he is scared to death of Lorena Jacoby but he refuses to say why. Clue 7.

**Lost Brother.** Beau Jacoby is found at a shady massage parlor. He thinks the curse has something to do with his father's misdeeds. Clue 9.

### Exploration Encounters/Notes

**The LaCoul Home.** Lead here from red herring 1. The characters search the LaCoul home. Everything old and dusty. Lots of taped up boxes and furniture covered in tarps. Clue 4.

### Combat Encounters/Notes

**Tough Guys.** A group of local men pick a fight with the player characters. Red herring 1.

**Confronting Jacoby.** The investigators battle the sheriff at his rural homestead.

### Clues

<i>Clue/Type</i>	<i>Information</i>	<i>Found By</i>	<i>Skill Check (DC)</i>
1. Sheriff/Knowledge	Jacoby knows something	Talk to him	Sense Motive (20)
2. Records/Knowledge	Jacoby ancestor hung: witchcraft	County Clerk	Research (15)
3. Beau/Knowledge	Beau LaCoul acting crazy	Overheard	Listen (10)
4. Photo/Physical	B&W photo, attractive woman	LaCoul home	Search (20)
5. Records/Knowledge	Sheriff in psych ward as a child	Hacking	Computer Use (DC 20)
6. Voodoo/Knowledge	Grace Jacoby rumors: voodoo	Rumor	Gather Information (10)
7. Lorena/Knowledge	Zed is afraid of Grace Jacoby	Talk o him	N/A
8. Photo/Knowledge	Picture is the Sheriff's mother	Ask around	Gather Information (15)
9. Father/Knowledge	Wellington did something	Talk to Beau	Diplomacy (DC 15)
<b>Red Herrings</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Found By</b>	<b>Skill Check (DC)</b>
1. Toughs	May Anne LaCoul hired them	Question them	Intimidation (15)
2. Clara Gates	Problems with LaCoul family	County Clerk	Research (10)

# Mystery Adventure Worksheet

**Adventure Name**

**Campaign**

**Genre**

**Theme**

**Mood**

**Primary Mystery**

**How are the players introduced to the mystery?**

**Culprit(s)**

**How are the players introduced to the culprit(s)?**

**Primary NPCs/Notes**

**Social Encounters/ Notes**

**Exploration Encounters/Notes**

**Combat Encounters/Notes**

**Random Encounter Groups**

<i>Clue/Type</i>	<i>Information</i>	<i>Found By</i>	<i>Skill Check (DC)</i>
<i>1.</i>			
<i>2.</i>			
<i>3.</i>			
<i>4.</i>			
<i>5.</i>			
<i>6.</i>			
<i>7.</i>			
<i>8.</i>			
<i>9.</i>			
<i>10.</i>			

<i>Red Herrings</i>	<i>Information</i>	<i>Found By</i>	<i>Skill Check (DC)</i>
<i>1.</i>			
<i>2.</i>			
<i>3.</i>			
<i>4.</i>			
<i>5.</i>			
<i>6.</i>			
<i>7.</i>			
<i>8.</i>			
<i>9.</i>			
<i>10.</i>			

**Notes:**



**All games available at  
(Click on the name to visit their site)**

**RPGNow.com**

**e23.sjgames.com**

**wargamedownloads.com**

**wargamevault.com**

**Yourgamesnow.com**

**Drivethrustuff.com**



**Click here for a free  
catalog and coupon  
book. Inside you will  
find links to all of our  
great games and some  
coupons for 20% or  
more off selected  
games.**

## **If you like this product, try other games from Avalon Games**

### **Arcanum**

An exciting adventure game of magic, glory and exploration. Set for 2 or more players, the game uses a unique chip system to resolve all events and encounters. Now with four great expansions.

### **Board Games**

Avalon makes some great board games, great games at a great price. Arcanum, Mystic Adventures, Dragon Lords and Junkyard Wars are but a few of our great titles.

### **Battle Tiles**

Battle Tiles, Avalon Games, is a fun, and exciting way to improve your gaming experience. Use these high quality map tiles to create new and challenging battle arenas for your miniature gaming, or use them to create maps for role playing games of all types.

Each square is set to a 1" to 5 foot scale, and each tile is created so you can interconnect them with other tiles to create massive settings for adventure and battle.

At a cost of less than fifty cents a page, and hundreds of possible combinations, you can't go wrong with Battle Tiles, so get started and have a battle to remember.

### **Avalon Clip Art**

Avalon has tons of artwork, all ready for you to use. Great art for a great price is our goal, so grab a handful right away.

### **Character Portraits**

Need a fast picture of what your character looks like. These professional, full color works will fit the bill.

Each set comes with 10 full color portraits of different fantasy characters, each suitable for use in all of the most popular role-playing games.

Sets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are all ready for download, so go get 'em.

### **Mini-Games**

Avalon Games is happy to offer tons of little games, that we like to call Mini-Games, and with over 30 titles, you are sure to find one or more games that will blow your mind. Little, however, does not mean lame. No, these are great gaming gems, just in small bite sized forms. Fun, fast and cheap, they are a great way to get some gaming fun into a short block of time. Have a look, you might be surprised at what you find.

### **Worlds of Wonder**

Worlds of Wonder is a fast, simple to play RPG system designed for use by advanced players who wish to create detailed characters without having to roll on endless charts and deal with endless rules.

After 30+ years of playing, running and designing games, be they RPG's or board games, we at Avalon have come to one conclusion. Its not the game's rules that make it enjoyable, but the people you play with. With that in mind, Worlds of Wonder takes the most important aspect of any RPG, the character creation, and tries to offer players, and their GM, the tools needed to make the time spent playing together well worth the time spent creating the characters.

### **Worlds of Wonder Expansions**

Want more Worlds of Wonder? Try one of the many expansions for the system. More monsters, foes, magic, skill sets and gaming stuff to keep you occupied for weeks, months, hell maybe for a lifetime. Ever expanding, the WoW system is made for gaming fun, so don't wait, have an adventure and enter Worlds of Wonder.

### **Arcana**

Arcana is generic world, designed for use with any Fantasy RPG System, and so the information presented here and in other Arcana expansions will of course be a bit vague as to stats, levels and powers. The intention is to give the GM and players a world rich in personality, history and depth, one where they can seek adventure, but use any RPG system they feel most conferrable with.

The basics of the game world are presented here in the core book, but as expansions are released, the complexity of the world will grow as more and more of its history, dangers and wonders are explored. When it is all said and done, Arcana will become a vast world of detailed and expansive depth, one where that you and your friends can full explore.

### **Game Geek**

Avalon's Monthly game magazine, inside you will find tons of gaming goodness, free games, add on materials for many of Avalon's titles, and a monthly sections dedicated to S&G, Battle Axe and Arcana. Great game stuff each and every month.

**Avalon is a proud participant of Kiva,  
making loans that change lives.**



loans that  
change lives

# S & G Battle System

Avalon's premier game system the S&G battle system allows you to play skirmish level engagements, and do so with a fast, easy to learn system that also allows for endless expansions and genres. With S&G you can fight battles between fantasy based elves and orcs, or blast off into the cold hard future with space marines and aliens.

2

## Warlord Grom

2

4

**Strength** 3

**Speed** 8 / 1

**Movement** 4

**Adrenal** 4

**Will** 4

**Health**

### Weapons and Armor

Weapons	As mod	Damage mod	Notes
Scimitar	-1	+1	-
Dagger	+0	-1	-

### Special Abilities

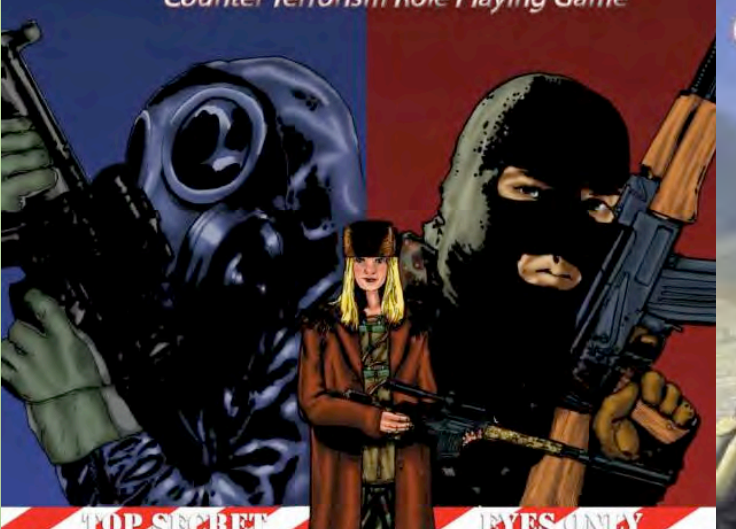
- 1. Savage Blow (Attack, 3)**  
 Grom can make a single savage attack, often killing a foe outright with a single blow of his deadly scimitar. You must declare this ability is being used before Attack Dice are rolled. On a single attack, Grom may add +2 Attack Dice to his total for that attack. (With no limit to the number of dice that can be rolled)
- 2. Command (Move, 2)**  
 Grom may use his loud demanding bellows to command other orcs near by. When this ability is used, Grom may activate any one orc character, who is within five squares. This activated character may perform one action. (Note that the character may still take their normal actions when their turn comes up.) Gram may perform this ability but once a turn.
- 3. Shatter Shield (Attack, 1)**  
 Grom often shatters shields and weapons with his mighty blows. Declare this ability before the Attack Dice are rolled. If Grom scores a hit, instead of doing any damage, he may shatter, and thus destroy, a foe's readied weapon or shield (Your choice.) If the foe does not have a readied weapon or shield, then this ability has no effect.

Magical items gain a save. Roll 1D6, and on a roll of 6+, the item resists the effect. Per five points of the item's cost, over the first five points, adds an extra +1 to the die roll is gained.


Spirit Tiger

# BEDROCK GAMES™

**TERROR NETWORK**  
*Counter Terrorism Role Playing Game*



**TOP SECRET** **EYES ONLY**



Endorsed by  
Sol Bradman  
Director of Training, Counter Terrorism Operations  
Security Solutions International

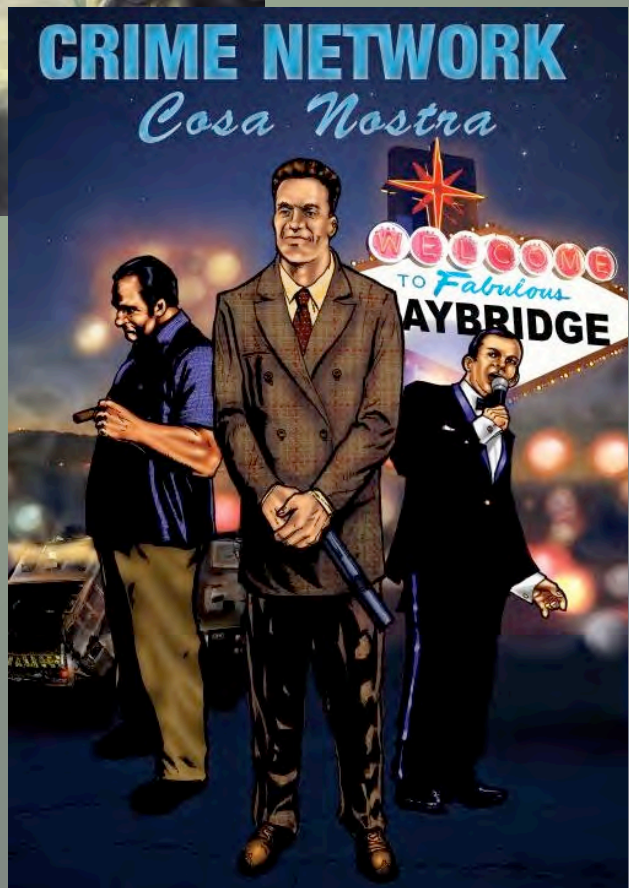
**Operation Hydra Den**  
*A Terror Network Game Module*



**CRIME NETWORK**  
*The Old Country*



**CRIME NETWORK**  
*Cosa Nostra*



Battle Axe is a simple to play tabletop system for skirmish level battles. Using cards instead of dice, you will find the game to be less luck based and much more tactical in nature. The rules and cards provide here will be enough to get you started, and new characters and rule expansions are on the way so you can continue to increase both the size and composition of your War Bands.



If you liked the game, then try one of Avalon Game's Mini-Games, such as Dept 13, a great genre set for the S&G game system.

(Click [here](#) to visit this product's page at RPGNow)

Agent D spun around as the Nazi ghoul rushed her. With a sure hand she fired off three quick shots from her pistol and then, turning again, she delivered a hard kick to the groin of the Nazi soldier trying to grab her from behind. "We might want to hurry my dear," offered Agent Y as he cut another of the Nazi undead down with his cane sword, "We have to stop that fool Field Marshal Knonner before he finishes the ritual and summons one of the elder gods."

This is Dept.13 another Mini-Games from Avalon Games. Taking the S&G skirmish game system and add to it super spies, Nazi undead, occult horror and high tech science. Dept. 13 is a great mix of genres, all creating the wild world of a hidden war of occult and high tech suspense.

