

CTHULHU
Confidential

**HIGH
VOLTAGE
KILL**



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

HIGH VOLTAGE KILL		ANTAGONIST REACTIONS	32
Setting the Stage	4	PROBLEM CARDS	33
Cast	4	EDGE CARDS	37
Timeline	4	DEXTER'S FULL SHEET	38
Dexter "Dex" Raymond	5		
Mi-Go Puppeting	6		
Relationship Map	7		
Scene Flow Diagram	7		
GRAND THEFT	8		
THE DEPO	9		
FAKE PLATE	10		
PAWN STORE LEGWORK	12		
CROSS-REFERENCED ID	12		
FIRST COP KILLING	12		
IRWIN'S APARTMENT	13		
THE GARAGE	14		
TARGET: GRAND DAME	15		
TARGET : NURSE	16		
INTEROGATING IRWIN	21		
GIVING CHASE	22		
SARAH RESTRAINED	23		
KELM AGAIN	23		
SECOND COP KILLING	24		
GETTING THE GUN	25		
TARGET : OUTDOORSMAN	25		
THE SPACECRAFT	28		
DENOUEMENT	31		
GRIM CODA	31		

HIGH VOLTAGE KILL

"High Voltage Kill" puts Dex on the case of missing and dangerous movie props, the laboratory set pieces from 1931's *Frankenstein*. His search crosses his path with that of a man scarred by his abduction by fungi from Yuggoth. Unfortunately, in his determination to strike back, he's willing to kill anyone who gets in his way, be it bystander, cop, or hardboiled private eye.

This scenario heavily fictionalizes the 1945-1946 crime spree of WWII vet Erwin Walker, who committed a string of robberies to finance the purchase of electronic equipment. In separate incidents he wounded two LAPD officers and killed a California Highway Patrolman. Walker planned to use the stolen gear to construct a disintegration ray, with which he could extort the military into raising soldiers pay so much that war would no longer be economically viable. The 1948 film *He Walked By Night* rearranges Walker's crimes into an alternately noirish and documentary-style police procedural. It's in the public domain, so you can find it on YouTube, though not in the gorgeous restored print that occasionally shows up on Turner Classic Movies. The film omits the weirdness of Walker's weird motivation to portray him as a new breed of conscienceless criminal.

Cast

Ken Strickfaden, 41 (1896-1984), the client. Builder of the electrical props used for *Frankenstein*'s laboratory, he calls on Dex after a machine-gun wielding robber holds him up for his equipment.

Paul Irwin, 28, the robber. A withdrawn LAPD dispatcher and army reservist who steals from the evidence room to finance his electronics hobby.

Recently abducted by mi-go. Rejecting the serum was meant to transform him into their remote-controlled puppet; he wages a murderous one-man war against his former captors.

Staff Sergeant **Homer Lesky**, 35. On duty at the National Guard depot when Irwin robs it of weapons and a truck to use in his anti-alien crime spree.

Virgil Kelm, 48, license plate counterfeiter and lifelong petty crook, now a remote-controlled puppet of mi-go invaders. Before their transformations, he sold electronics components to Irwin, sometimes taking payment in goods stolen from LAPD evidence lockers.

Jaromir Zylka, 53, ex-con with powerhouse build and a protective attitude toward Kelm.

Lew West, 35, pawn shop owner who dealt with Irwin as late as six weeks ago.

Ethel Hagenow, 70, fading society matron, now a mi-go host.

Sarah Hagenow, 30, nurse, her daughter-in-law, also a host.

Gerry Malcor, 35, debt collector for bookies affiliated with the System, also a host.

Danny Stullenberger, 29, likewise.

Timeline

The following events occur before Dex meets Strickfaden.

28 days ago, while hiking near his hunting lodge in the San Gabriel Mountains, Everett Ohler stumbles upon a crashed alien craft. He digs up its buried nose cone, awakening its occupants from suspended animation. They inject him with a serum turning him into their parasitized puppet. Searching his memories, they identify a handful of



DEXTER “DEX” RAYMOND

Hard-boiled Shamus

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

Accounting
 Assess Honesty
 Bargain
 Cop Talk
 Cryptography
 Evidence Collection
 Intimidation
 Inspiration
 Law
 Locksmith
 Photography
 Reassurance
 Research
 Streetwise

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics
 Cool
 Conceal
 Devices
 Driving
 Filch
 Fighting
 Preparedness
 Sense Trouble
 Shadowing
 Stability
 Stealth

STORY

Archetypal hardboiled private investigator Dex Raymond prowls Los Angeles' haunted streets as an outsider by choice. With his smarts and grit, he could have wormed his way into its corrupt power structure. Instead, he operates on its fringes, righting wrongs for a modest fee, plus expenses. In addition to his contacts, he counts one more key friend—LAPD Detective Sergeant Ted Gargan, a rare honest man in a town where cops can be bought by the barrel.

individuals meeting their standards of usefulness to the opening stages of their invasion plan. They select Ethel Hagenow, the best connected woman Ohler knows, along with her daughter-in-law Sarah, who can supply them with the brains they need to power their craft's computers. They also choose Virgil Kelm, known to Ohler from the shadier side of his affairs as a businessman affiliated with the System.

27 days ago, Ohler invites Kelm to his lodge, then to the saucer, where he is injected. From Kelm's memories, they identify a trio of rootless low-level crooks no one will miss: enforcers Gerry Malcor and Danny Stullenberger, plus thief and electronics whiz Paul Irwin.

25 days ago, Ohler lures Malcor and Stullenberger to the saucer, where they undergo the treatment.

24 days ago, Ohler has difficulty locating the peripatetic Irwin. The mi-go turn the two Mrs. Hagenows into puppets.

17 days ago, Malcor and Stullenberger find a resistant Irwin and take him to the saucer. Irwin's injection does not quite take. Psychic backwash floods him with information about the mi-go. He escapes and hides in the woods, eluding Malcor and Stullenberger. Based on their experience with subjects on other planets, the mi-go expect that resisting the serum will kill him. They leave him to die in the woods and press on with their plans.

15 days ago, Irwin makes it back to the city on foot and decides to wage a one-man war against the aliens. He starts looking for a gun, a task that takes him longer than he expects.

13 days ago, having finally secured a weapon, Irwin goes to Kelm's shop and shoots him in the head, to no effect. He does manage to get away with some fake license plates. The mi-go now know that he's alive and seeking vengeance. They dispatch Malcor and Stullenberger to hunt for Irwin, to little avail.

12 days ago, Irwin sufficiently assimilates the alien knowledge leaking into his mind to design a gun capable of killing the hosts. Now all he has to do is find the parts.

11 days ago, Irwin begins stealing electronic parts from stores and the homes of hobbyists he knows.

9 days ago, Irwin continues to steal parts and attempt to build his machine, evading both the LAPD and the mi-go controlled Malcor and Stullenberger.

7 days ago, Irwin takes possession of the garage of a nearby home, breaking its lock and replacing it with his own padlock. He robs an army depot in Burbank, returning to the garage with the weapons and truck taken in the raid.

4 days ago, When homeowner Clarence Etchell's discovers that his garage has been occupied and makes a fuss, Irwin kills him.

3 days ago, Irwin reads about Strickfaden in an old issue of *Variety*.

2 days ago, Irwin tracks down Strickfaden's address.

1 day ago, Irwin robs Strickfaden. Once home with the devices, he begins to cannibalize Strickfaden's parts into his ray gun. He is now ready to kill the mi-go hosts.

How Mi-Go Puppeting Works

The mi-go turn people into puppets by injecting them with a serum that rewires their brains into transmitter/receiver devices. Over a range of about a hundred miles, a mi-go using a mechanical psychic radio can control the thoughts and actions of a puppet. This particular radio is located in the buried spacecraft on Ohlers property in the mountains. The mi-go, trapped in the craft, can't

move it. It can access the victims memories, personality, knowledge (including language) and skills. Using these it can skillfully impersonate the victim, with only a few telltale signs reading as odd to a keen observer. Most notably, the control process degrades motor skills, giving the puppet a very subtle stiffness of movement. One mi-go can control multiple hosts, but must split its concentration between them. The more hosts it controls at one time, the less effective each impersonation becomes. They'll face that problem only if they move further along on their plan to turn Los Angeles elite into hosts. (Though not yet an issue, Dex might ask about this during the final scene.)

The mi-go landed here before humans evolved. Ohler and the others are the first of our species injected with the serum. The fungi don't understand how Irwin's resistance works and are hoping it proves a rare anomaly.

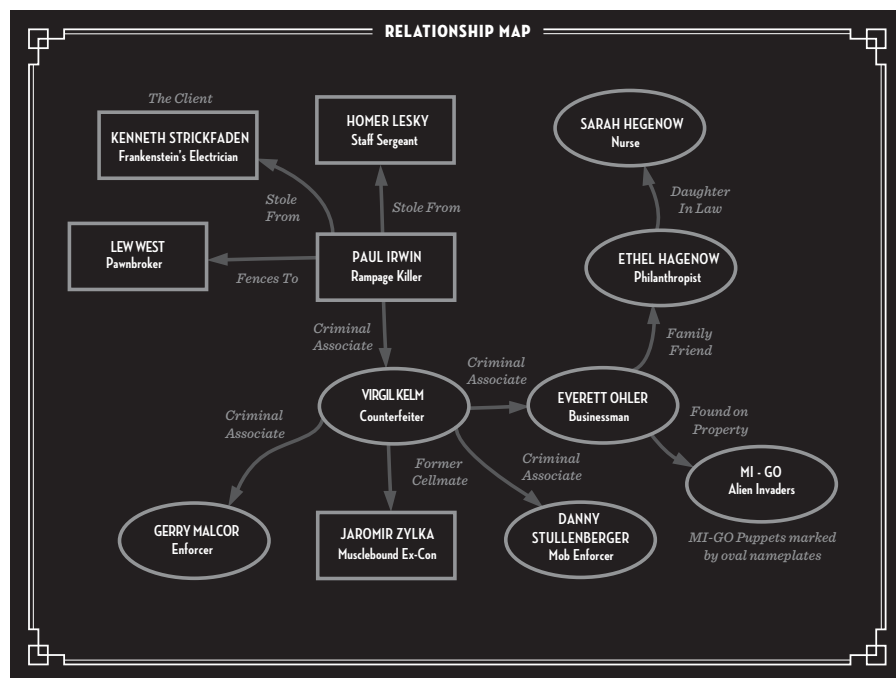
After a while the resistant victim undergoes a physical transformation as the fungal spirochetes in his system attempt to overcome its defenses on the DNA level.

Whether it fully takes or fails, as it does for Irwin, the process remains irreversible.

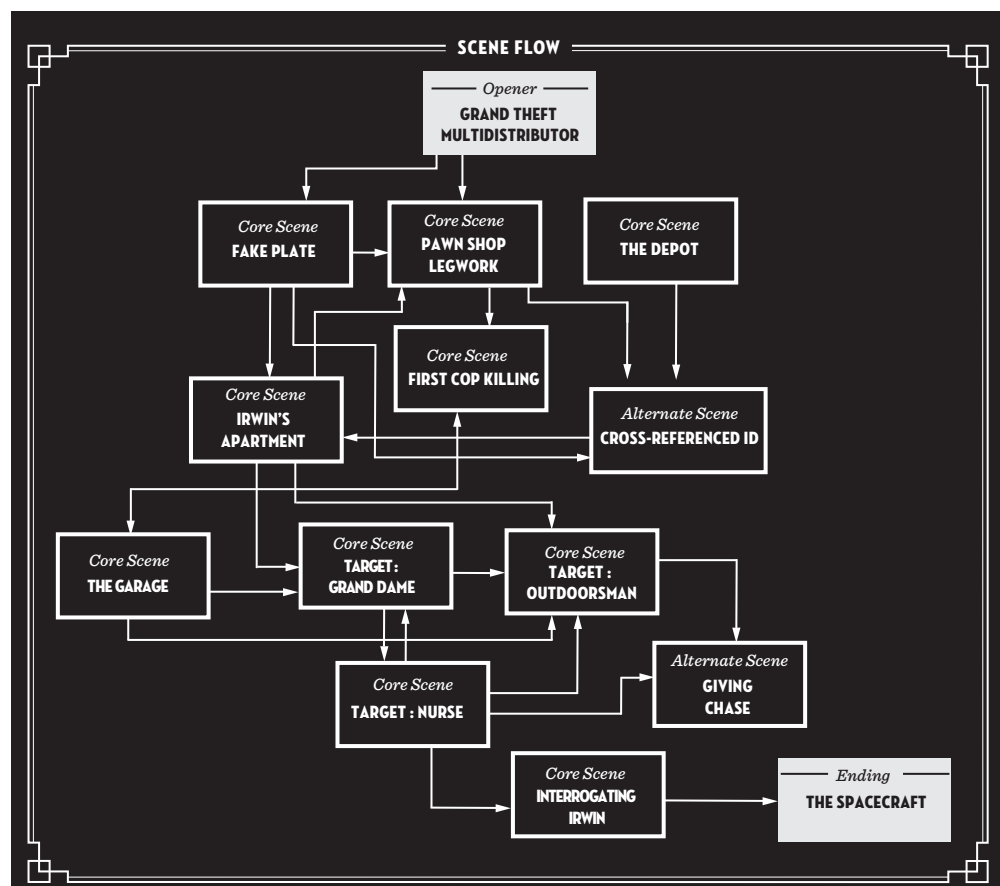
Hosts gain eerie regeneration powers against the kinetic impact any form of earthly weaponry can dish out. Only a ray-gun tuned to a particular frequency can kill them.

The mi-go might explain as much of this as they themselves understand, should Dex ask, in "The Spacecraft," p. 28. This form of mind-control differs from that given in the Lovecraft story "*The Whisperer in Darkness*." Those concerned about future fungal alien continuity issues might look for a spot to slip in the fact that this particular version of the technology is not possessed by all mi-go.

RELATIONSHIP MAP



SCENE FLOW DIAGRAM



SCENES

GRAND THEFT MULTISTRIBUTOR

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-Outs: The Depot, Pawn Shop Legwork

Dex's production designer Source, Max Weyl, calls him with the offer of a case. You can play this as a phone conversation or have Dex drop by the studio on the way to the client's place. A colleague who works as a freelance special effects man and prop designer has suffered a robbery. The victim doesn't want to call the cops, for reasons he'll explain when Dex goes to visit him. Max gives him the address: 853 26th Street in Santa Monica. Max instructs Dex to knock on the garage door, where the client keeps his workshop. His name: Ken Strickfaden.

Library Use prior to the visit identifies Kenneth Strickfaden as the man who built the mesmerizing electronic equipment seen in the 1931 movie *Frankenstein*, and such other titles as *Murder at Dawn*, *The Lost City*, *Bride of Frankenstein* and of course *The Amazing Exploits of the Clutching Hand*. Strickfaden can fill in resume details as needed if Dex heads straight to his place.

When Dex rolls up, he finds himself in a pleasant middle-class neighborhood. A worried Strickfaden answers Dex's knock, sweating, with goggles perched over his head. Fit, balding and middle-aged, he comes across as a fascinating guy having a terrible day. He keeps working as he fills Dex in on the story, trying to get his ransacked lab back in order. A notebook lies open on a work bench: it contains Strickfaden's handwritten inventory. Bits of hardware lie higgledy-piggledy across the floor. Shelves have been upended and stripped of whatever gear they held. Strickfaden starts his story with the first bullet-point. Suitably prompting questions yield the rest.

- He was in his workshop, sometime between 3 and 4 am, improving the wiring on his retrogressive wave charger, when a heavy knock came at the door. He answered only to get the business end of a Thompson machine gun poked into his sternum. The crazy look in the robbers eyes told him not to try anything. The

guy backed him into the shop, then started asking questions about his equipment. At first it seemed like he was looking for one particular part or machine, but soon he decided to steal all the choice pieces. He forced Ken to load them into the crates he uses to transport props to the studio, then marched him repeatedly to a truck he had parked outside. The bandit never took his eyes off Ken or his fingers off the trigger. Ken had no choice but to load most of his livelihood onto the man's truck and watch him drive off with it.

- Ken doesn't want the cops involved. Some of his equipment might be considered dangerous. Especially if anyone else attempts to operate it. He doesn't want nosy officials trying to take it away from him out of some daft concern for public safety. Even if no one cares about that, he doesn't want his equipment collecting dust in a police locker, where items notoriously get damaged or disappear, never to be seen again.
- Ken has always resisted pressure from Universal Studios to let it purchase his equipment. If they find out about the robbery they may start asking again, putting him in a difficult professional position.
- The man's outfit disguised his identity. He wore a slouch hat and a scarf that covered most of his face. What little of his features Ken could see were pink and puffy, as if he had suffered a recent burn or something. He wore heavy gloves, so it was hard to tell, but the hand on the trigger of the machine gun seemed crippled or claw-like in some way. Ken confidently describes him as five feet nine inches tall.
- The robber spoke with a harsh, raspy voice. His questions betrayed a detailed understanding of electronics. He came to the correct conclusion, for example, that the voltage-boosting device Ken calls a multistributor would interfere with radio waves for several blocks around when switched on. Ken tried to figure out what he was looking for but the man was too edgy to be drawn in, and Ken too nervous to push him.
- He knew what he was looking for and who he was dealing with. The robber referred to Strickfaden by name and recognized the props from *Frankenstein*.

- On one hand he did ask about the resale value of some of the items. On the other, he gave the definite impression of looking for a part or parts he needed to make a some sort of device.
- (Core, "The Depot") The truck looked like a military transport vehicle. **Cop Talk** reminds Dex of overheard scuttlebutt from his last gab session with a police officer: a nearby National Guard equipment depot suffered a recent break-in.
- (alternate, "Fake Plate") Ken memorized and jotted down the truck's license plate number. Dex can subsequently check this with **Cop Talk**, discovering that the number is a fake. Either Ken misremembered it, or it was a counterfeit.
- (Core, "Pawn Store Legwork") Strickfaden regularly buys used electronics to cannibalize for his devices. He can supply a list of the dealers and pawn brokers one might go to to fence such equipment. He would contact them himself but is afraid to alert people to the fact that his equipment has been taken. Certain hobbyists might try to find and buy it before he does. Someday, he says, nutty as it sounds, this stuff could become valuable to collectors.
- The supernatural? Sheer craziness. Ken is a man of science. In fact, he doesn't even like monster pictures! The part of his work he truly enjoys is traveling to schools to teach kids about electricity.

Evidence Collection: a clear, slightly viscous liquid appears in spatters along the floor of the workshop.

🔍 (Virginia Ashbury can later analyze it, discovering what resembles amniotic fluid. But not human amniotic fluid, or that of any animal she has a sample for. It also contains a high concentration of fungal spores. That last bit must surely be contamination of some sort, Virginia ventures.)

But that's later. Right now, Ken urges Dex to recover his equipment as quickly and discreetly as possible. Used unwisely, it could result in injury or even death. He then tells the story of how he was thrown across the studio floor while wielding one of his props, a ray gun, while standing in for Boris Karloff in *"The Mask of Fu Manchu."*

Ken's neighbors can shed little light on the robbery. The real mystery around here, they say, would be the areas chronic power outages, which the utility company can never explain.

THE DEPOT

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Grand Theft Multistributor

Lead-Outs: Fake Plate, Pawn Store Legwork

Cop Talk allows Dex to connect the depot robbery story to an Army ordnance warehouse in Burbank. At the warehouse, he goes through channels of military bureaucracy to eventually talk to Staff Sergeant Homer Lesky. A round-faced man whose clipped military formality barely conceals a deep well of shame and anger, Lesky turns red as he tells the story of his hold-up by a masked figure.

- He describes the robber as between five eight and five ten, of medium build, wearing a trench coat, slouch hat, and scarf.
- Lesky did not notice any signs of disfigurement. He does not remember anything unusual about the man's hands.
- The robbery took place fifteen days ago, at 0420 hours. The man was in and out quickly, wielding a .38 automatic. He spoke very little, but his voice seemed familiar. Lesky has racked his brain trying to place it, but didn't get enough to go on. The bandit knew what to expect in the depot, grabbing particular items. He took the keys to a particular truck and went straight to it. (Combined with the core clue from Fake Plate, this leads to "Cross-Referenced ID")
- In addition to the truck, he took six Thompson submachine guns, a dozen .45 pistols, five .38 revolvers, plus holsters, ammo and additional magazines for the pistols and tommy guns. As Dex leaves, Sergeant Lesky says that if he finds the guy, he would very much like the opportunity to strangle him with his bare hands.

FAKE PLATE**Scene Type:** Core**Lead-Ins:** Grand Theft Multidistributor**Lead-Outs:** The Depot, Pawn Store Legwork, Irwins Apartment

Streetwise tells Dex that there is only one guy in town running a counterfeit license plate shop at the moment: a career criminal named Virgil Kelm. While asking around the usual haunts for Kelm's current place of illicit business, Dex attracts the attention of his cellmate, former wrestling champion Jaromir Zylka. Jaromir regards Kelm as a father figure and looks unkindly on efforts by obvious private dicks to make trouble for him.

A **Reassurance** Push convinces Jaromir that Dex means Kelm no harm. Otherwise Jaromir decides to teach him a lesson by subjecting him to a few classic holds, culminating in a piledriver. If Dex tries to fight back, he automatically suffers the Setback in the following Challenge. In Jaromir's case evading his grasp and running like hell is the better part of valor.

EVADING JAROMIR**Athletics**

Advance 5+: You duck out of Jaromir's way before he can get a grip on you, and beat a hasty, almost dignified path to the tavern's exit.

Hold 2-4: Jaromir roughs you up a little, but you get away from him and out the door before he can do any real damage.

Setback 1 or less: Jaromir grabs you, subjects you to his patented piledriver, and stalks out of the tavern, delighted to have meted out justice. Gain Problem 2, "*Bruised Dignity.*"

Your player may want to try to defeat Jaromir in a fight rather than simply get away from him. Explain that Dex has been in enough scrapes to understand that he would be badly outmatched against this mountainous pro wrestler.

Also, **Streetwise** tells him that winning would gain him little. Having issued this warning, the player retains the option of needless aggression.

DEFEATING JAROMIR**Fighting**

Advance 13+: Using Jaromir's weight against him, you toss him into a table. Gain Edge 9, "*Outsized Confidence.*"

Hold 5-12: The towering Jaromir gives you a thorough and sadly predictable thumping, culminating in his most devastating wrestling move. Gain Problem 1, "*Piledriver*" and Problem 32, "*Shattered Confidence.*"

Setback 1 or less: As above, but gain Problem 1, "*Piledriver*" and Problem 32, "*Shattered Confidence.*" And Extra Problem 2 "*Bruised Dignity.*"

With or without this dust-up, Dex in the end finds a skid row barfly willing to say that Kelm has set up operations in the back of Breslaus, a hardware store at 1751 7th Street, west of the downtown core and south of the Chavez Ravine. **Streetwise** allows him to act like he's a client of Kelm's, and gets Dex past the store's clerk to the backroom. Kelm has been injected with the mi-go serum and now hosts an otherworldly consciousness. Portray him as ever so slightly off without doing a blatant alien/robot voice.

What Really Happened

Four days after Kelm arranged for Irwin to be injected, Irwin showed up in Kelm's workshop and shot him. Irwin stole an armful of fake plates before Kelm rose unscathed, the hole between his eyebrows knitting itself back together. Irwin fled as Kelm fumbled in a drawer for his weapon. Though momentary, Kelm's wound left behind a scar. It sure looks like a bullet wound—but that's impossible, as no wound in that location could be anything but fatal. If asked, Kelm says it's a childhood injury from falling out of a tree. The scar looks odd because the country doctor who sewed him up botched the stitching.

Assess Honesty flags this (and other departures from the real story below) as deceptive.

If Irwin Has Already Slain a Mi-Go Host

In this version of the scene, Kelm wants Irwin dead or at least stopped. He feeds Dex information that might lead to that result, feigning just enough reluctance to avoid coming across as overly eager to sell out a client. Careful not to appear overeager, the mi-go puppeting Kelm lets Dex lead the questioning. He claims not to know Irwin's name, (**Assess Honesty** flags this as deceptive) referring to him only as that guy.

- He says that guy came to him two weeks ago to purchase eight fake license plates.
- The guy did not specify what they were for and Kelm knew better than to ask. But eight is a lot of license plates.
- He was a regular, on and off. License plates weren't his usual line of interest. Until this last transaction, he always bought electronic equipment and components. A real nut for that Popular Mechanics stuff, he was.
- (leveraged clue, if combined with a clue from "The Depot"; leads to "Cross-Referenced ID") He sometimes paid cash, and sometimes traded guns and other valuables for them. A couple of times Kelm found stickers from the LAPD evidence locker on the goods. But the guy didn't speak, look, or hold himself like a cop.
- (core, "Irwin's Apartment") The guy never gave his name, but he did supply a phone number to Kelm so he could call when the plates were ready. Kelm supplies this to Dex after a token show of resistance. Dex can use the reverse phone book he keeps in his office to find the address to which it corresponds.

If Irwin Has Not Yet Slain a Mi-Go Host

In this instance, the mi-go want to dispose of Irwin without outside attention. Kelm denies having seen Irwin recently, a statement that sets **Assess Honesty** ablaze even if the player does not ask to use it. After Dex leaves, Kelm decides to go to Irwin's apartment—which he has tried before, not knowing that Irwin has vacated it. Dex can find Irwin's old apartment by shadowing him.

SHADOWING KELM

Shadowing

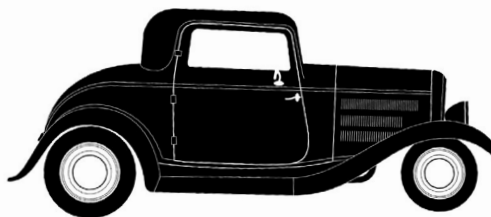
Advance 7+: Kelm leads you straight to a Santa Monica apartment building, remaining oblivious the whole time. Also, you notice something awry with Kelms movements. No one would notice it without studying him for a good while, but both his driving and walking seem ever so slightly jerky.

Hold 3-6: Kelm leads you straight to a Santa Monica apartment building, remaining oblivious the whole time.

Setback 2 or less: Kelm leads you straight to a Santa Monica apartment building, but spots you at the last minute. He heads down the corridor, avoiding a confrontation. (Possible trigger for Antagonist Reaction #1)

Extra Problem: 30, "Mental Fatigue."

If at this point Dex corners Kelm to ask him why he held out, Virgil says that Irwin owed him money. He figured if he sent some unknown troublemaker to roust him, Irwin might skate, never to be seen again. So he came to make another collection attempt. Not that it matters anyway; as usual, he ain't answering the door. **Assess Honesty** flags this as deceitful, but does Dex want to make a fuss about it here? (Segue from here to "Irwin's Apartment," p. 13.)



PAWN STORE LEGWORK**Scene Type:** Core**Lead-Ins:** Grand Theft Multidistributor,
Fake Plate, The Depot**Lead-Outs:** Cross-Referenced ID, First Cop
Killing

Dex's canvas of pawn shops known to deal in unusual electronic equipment takes two days. As always, don't make it feel like days slowly passing. Instead, quickly mention the legwork and then move on to the next interesting event.

From the pawnbrokers he speaks to before he gets to West, Dex learns that a rash of electronic thefts have occurred over the past week or so. The cops have been coming around asking about them. So far none of them have been approached by anyone seemingly connected to the robberies. Twitchy, intent-eyed Lew West, owner and operator of Western Pawn, 167 East Vernon Avenue, in the rough part of downtown, has not had anyone come in with any of the Strickfaden items. Dex might ask him who he might suspect in such a theft, giving **Reassurance** that he won't tell anyone who tipped him.

- (core, "Cross-Referenced ID") Lew's mind goes to one guy, who always boasted about his deep connections to both the cops and the army. He called himself John Ferguson, but always paused a beat before answering to either name, suggesting that it was a phony.
- He was five eight, the kind of face you'd overlook in a crowd, a local accent, talked in a clipped, arrogant tone.
- Lew has a few pieces of sound equipment, studio cast-offs probably, that Ferguson left here on consignment. Ferguson declined to provide a phone number, instead saying that he would swing by every so often to collect on any sales. Lew has fifty bucks for him, from an item he sold about six weeks back. Lew can promise to call Dex's office if Ferguson shows up, but doesn't expect to be able to keep him around for long.

Unless Dex does something later that leaves Irwin desperate for cash, the possibility of a consignment sale is the last item on his mind right now. Stake-out attempts at Western Pawn merely waste time.

CROSS-REFERENCED ID**Scene Type:** Alternate**Lead-Ins:** The Depot plus Fake Plate, Pawn Shop
Legwork**Lead-Outs:** Irwins Apartment

Cop Talk prompts an LAPD clerk to check his list of employees who also serve in the National Guard. They must maintain the list to coordinate mandated leaves for guard service. Only four names come up. The other three all boast burly cop physiques. Only one matches Irwin's height and unremarkable frame. Even more telling, Irwin stopped showing up for work nearly a month ago and has been fired in absentia. During the early days of his disappearance, has neither answered his phone nor came to the door in response to patrolmen sent to check up on him. (core, "Irwins Apartment") The clerk provides Dex the address.

Irwin worked as a night dispatcher. Cops and civilian workers alike complain of his smart-alec attitude and aloof, arrogant manner. One special point of annoyance was his pride in his pistol marksmanship. He shot far better than any police officer and wasn't shy about rubbing that in. (As a period aside, Dex knows that, despite a concerted effort by the chief, the LAPD generally can't shoot worth a damn.)

If Irwin has killed one or more police officers at this point, Dex must somehow obscure the reason for his interest in him, with either a **Cop Talk** spend or some very convincing lying. Failing that, an entire squadron of cops shows up, led by Ted Gargan, and tromps all over the next scene before Dex gets access to it.

FIRST COP KILLING**Scene Type:** Core**Lead-Ins:** Pawn Store Legwork; (also trigger
between any other two scenes if it becomes
apparent that the player isn't
going to initiate Pawn Store Legwork)**Lead-Outs:** The Garage

The morning edition of the L.A. Times confronts Dex with a shrieking headline: MACHINE GUN KILL BRINGS DOWN HERO COP.

The story reveals few details:

- The murder occurred in Santa Monica in the early morning hours.
- The Santa Monica PD has called in an ace from the LAPD homicide squad to head the investigation—Dex’s pal on the force, Ted Gargan.
- The victim is Officer Tim Jackson, 29. He had a wife and two young kids.
- He was killed while sitting in his vehicle, by what looks to be a spray of machine gun bullets.
- The investigation remains in its early hours and the department can as of yet supply no further details.

If Dex has checked out “The Depot” and knows about the stolen machine-guns, he can gain some time with Ted Gargan, who otherwise can’t spare it. A case this hot prevents him from having his usual leisurely chin-wag with his private dick pal. (leveraged core clue, “The Garage”) Dex might also by this time have Irwin’s address, which is within walking distance of this killing. A leveraged core clue becomes fully relevant only when combined with information gained in another scene. Here Dex can find The Garage when he gets to “Cross-Referenced ID.”

In either instance, Dex faces a tough choice. Bringing Ted in will add a level of police involvement that will complicate the rest of his own investigation. Having Ted find out later that he withheld information relevant to a cop killing strains their alliance. In that event, Dex gains Problem 6, “Gargan Distrusts You.” A talk with Gargan about the crime scene yields the following:

- Jackson was found sitting in the vehicle, hit by multiple rounds from what looks like a tommy gun, his own weapon still holstered.
- Gargan won’t let Dex inspect the body but will allow him a look at a morgue photo if requested. Ted recaps what the Forensics fellas told him: the pattern of bullet hits on Jackson’s right arm and chest suggest he had his arm out, in a beckoning position, when the killer opened fire. The killer changed range while shooting, with some strikes hitting from as far as 28 feet away, and others, the wounds to the head, striking at point blank range. (The player might then deduce that Jackson beckoned the killer to approach him, prompting him to open fire.)

IRWIN’S APARTMENT

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: Fake Plate, Cross-Referenced ID

Lead-Outs: Target: Grand Dame; Target: Nurse,
Target: Outdoorsman, Pawn Store Legwork

Irwin lives in a small three-story apartment building on Rose Avenue in Santa Monica. Dex might be here because he shadowed Virgil Kelm here, or with an address in hand from the police department. **Locksmith** gets him in the front door. Or he can use **Bargaining** and a bribe to talk cigarette-puffing landlady Violet DeMundo into letting him in.

An oil-spotted drop-cloth covers the wooden floor of the apartments small living room. Various electronic components lie in tiny pieces all around it. On a series of ruled notebook pages stapled together Dex finds a sketch for a device resembling a strange sort of gun encircled by a hoop. With **Mechanical Repair** and a check against Strickfaden’s list suggests that the weird gun could have been made mostly from pieces on the list, plus an assortment of basic parts purchasable at any hardware store. None of the pieces needed to construct the gun can be found here. Even when the jumble of parts is taken into account, several major large prop pieces remain missing.

Later Dex may take the plans to Kenneth Strickfaden or Virginia Ashbury. Neither can work out how the gun is supposed to work, except to observe that it doesn’t seem to launch a physical projectile. One could assume that it shoots energy of some kind—but science says that’s impossible!

(core, all listed lead-outs) Under the drop-cloth lies another sheet of ruled paper, this one containing the following names, in this order:

Virgil Kelm

Ethel Hagenow

Sarah (nurse) Hagenow??

the big one

the other big one

Everett Ohler

The names of any characters on this list who are now dead have been crossed out, in what looks to be the same hand. An inspection of other workaday documents stuffed in the drawers of a side table show that the handwriting must be Irwin's.

(alternate, "Cross-Referenced ID") **Evidence Collection** turns up pay stubs from the LAPD and assorted paperwork concerning Irwin's National Guard duties. They also reveal his name, if Dex doesn't have it. Of course, lots of other documents in a person's apartment, like Irwin's subscription copies of various electronics magazines, contain his name as well.

In Gargan's Wake

Are Gargan and a dozen other cops traipsing through the apartment? Ted lets Dex stand in the room and watch his boys manhandle every clue in sight, warning him that he's out on his ear if he touches anything. They gather all of the above clues but one.

Observing with his superior eye for **Evidence Collection**, Dex sees the officer Gargan orders to check under the drop-cloth do a perfunctory job, apparently anxious to avoid oil spots on his uniform. This enables Dex to get the core clue with the various mi-go names on it. Other clues mentioned above he must persuade a reluctant Gargan to quickly show him. Uniformed officers carelessly pick up bits and pieces of Strickfaden's disassembled equipment, tossing it into a series of cardboard boxes. Dex hears the tinkle of glass as a delicate instrument breaks. If Dex misleads Ted about his part in the investigation, and Ted finds out about it you may find it appropriate to slap him with Problem 6, "Gargan Distrusts You." This does not apply if Ted finds out only after Dex can assure him that the situation has been handled, and anyone implicated in cop killings permanently dealt with. Decide how to deal with this as the context of the scene(s) in which it arises seems to suggest.

THE GARAGE

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: The First Cop Killing

Lead-Outs: Target: Grand Dame; Target: Nurse, Target: Outdoorsman, Pawn Shop Legwork

Evidence Collection: A check of the area around Officer Jackson's murder finds one subtle detail out of place: a brand new padlock on the door of a garage. This detached structure faces the street on a lot containing a modest house.

In "First Cop Killing," Dex may have determined the spot Irwin stood on when he started shooting. It is a few houses down from this spot.

What happened: Jackson drove his patrol car along this street when he saw Irwin exit the garage, padlock the door and walk away down the street. This unusual activity, plus his tense body language and odd attire, led Jackson to stop his vehicle and beckon Irwin over. Irwin drew his machine-gun and started firing. **Locksmith** gets Dex through the door discreetly, without having to resort to the obvious brute force of a bolt cutter. Even if police officers remain on the scene, he can choose to slip in without their noticing.

The unmistakable smell of bodily decomposition strikes Dex as soon as he opens the door. Inside he detects:

- Piles of woodworking equipment pushed up against a wall, making space for a large vehicle that is not now present.
- Devices: Positioning of recent oil stains in the spot are consistent with the make of army transport vehicle stolen from the depot.
- Lying in the backseat of a second vehicle, a Plymouth sedan, is the body of a man in his late fifties.
 - **Evidence Collection:** He was shot in the head and chest with three shots from what looks like a .45. The state of decomposition says he has been dead for three to five days.
- (core, "The Depot") About half the arsenal stolen from the National Guard depot lies neatly arranged and ready for action on a workbench. This may lead Dex to follow up on that robbery if he has not already checked it off his list.
- Alongside them lies a silk scarf soiled with a dried fluid of some kind.

- ④ Virginia Ashbury can match it to the weird mixture of unknown amniotic fluid and fungal material possibly found in Strickfadens workshop.
- (core, "Target: Grand Dame") A road map of L.A. lies on the garage floor near the workbench. Ethel Hagenow's address has been circled. (If that scene has already occurred, the map leads to Sarah's house, "Target: Nurse.")

TARGET: GRAND DAME

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: Irwins Apartment, The Garage,
Target: Nurse

Lead-Outs: Target: Nurse, Target: Outdoorsman,
Kelm Again

Ethel Hagenow lives in a gothic-styled manor in Bunker Hill, on Bunker Hill Ave between 2nd and 3rd. Though some of its neighboring structures have fallen into poor repair and have been cut up into cheap apartments, her home retains its original Victorian splendor.

Library Use prior to the visit finds references to the prominence of the Hagenow family in the city dating back all the way to the 1880s.

When Dex climbs the wooden steps to the manor door, he finds it ajar. Just on the other side of the threshold lies the body of a middle-aged man in a butler's uniform. He has been shot through the head and in the chest. If less than that amount of time has passed and Irwin remains at large, the body is still warm. Otherwise, place the time of the slayings somewhere in the window between Dex's taking the case and Irwin's death or apprehension.

A check of the servants quarters finds his wallet and identification: this is Gennosuke Nishina.

The parlor contains what's left of Ethel Hagenow, who spent the last days of her life as a mi-go puppet. The blackened stumps of her lower legs, still in their tasteful Italian leather shoes, stand upright in the middle of a circular ash pattern. Scorch marks spatter the rest of the room. Shards of a coal-colored material, none of them larger than a thumbnail, penetrate the rooms plaster walls and wooden molding. They're smoking, half-melted chunks of bone, crazy as that sounds! In other words, Dex is looking at a not-at-all spontaneous

combustion. Depending on the information gathered so far, the player might intuit that this is what happens when Irwin fires that gun of his. Seeing this strange death tableau might jangle the nerves.

A metallic tube lies not far from Ethel's calf-stumps. Another piece of metal, crudely welded to it, resembles the stock of a pistol. (This is not the

DEAD ETHEL

Stability

Advance 9+: Though this is definitely a bizarre setup, so little of the victim remains that it seems less gruesome than fascinating. Gain Edge 1, "*Forensic Detachment.*"

Hold 5-8: This sure is troubling, if you think about it too much. You successfully think of something else. Mostly.

Setback 4 or less: This sight leaves you nauseated and unable to focus. Gain Problem 7, "*Nausea.*"

Extra Problem: Problem 8, "*Repression Gets a Bad Rap.*"

gun Irwin designed and built from the Strickfaden parts, but a mi-go ray device retrofitted to work with a human hand instead of a fungal claw. Only mi-go or their puppets can fire them.)

Ethel's study adjoins the parlor. **Locksmith** makes short work of its locked door. Ethel's desk overflows with party invitations, for an event to be held here in one week. The invitation list reads like a who's who of Los Angeles old establishment. It includes such movers and shakers as L.A. times owner and real estate mogul Harry Chandler and District Attorney Buron Fitts, philanthropist and oil empire heir Estelle Doheny, and Archbishop John Joseph Campbell. All in all the guest list appears to number about a hundred.

A shipping box labeled as being from Ursus Medical Supplies in Orange County sits in the corner. It contains 144 syringes. From this the player might at some point intuit that Ethel and the other mi-go puppets planned to inject her powerful guests with the serum that would turn them into puppets as well.

(core, "Target: Nurse") The label shows that the box was not originally shipped to this address, but rather to the address of a Sarah Hagenow

TARGET: NURSE

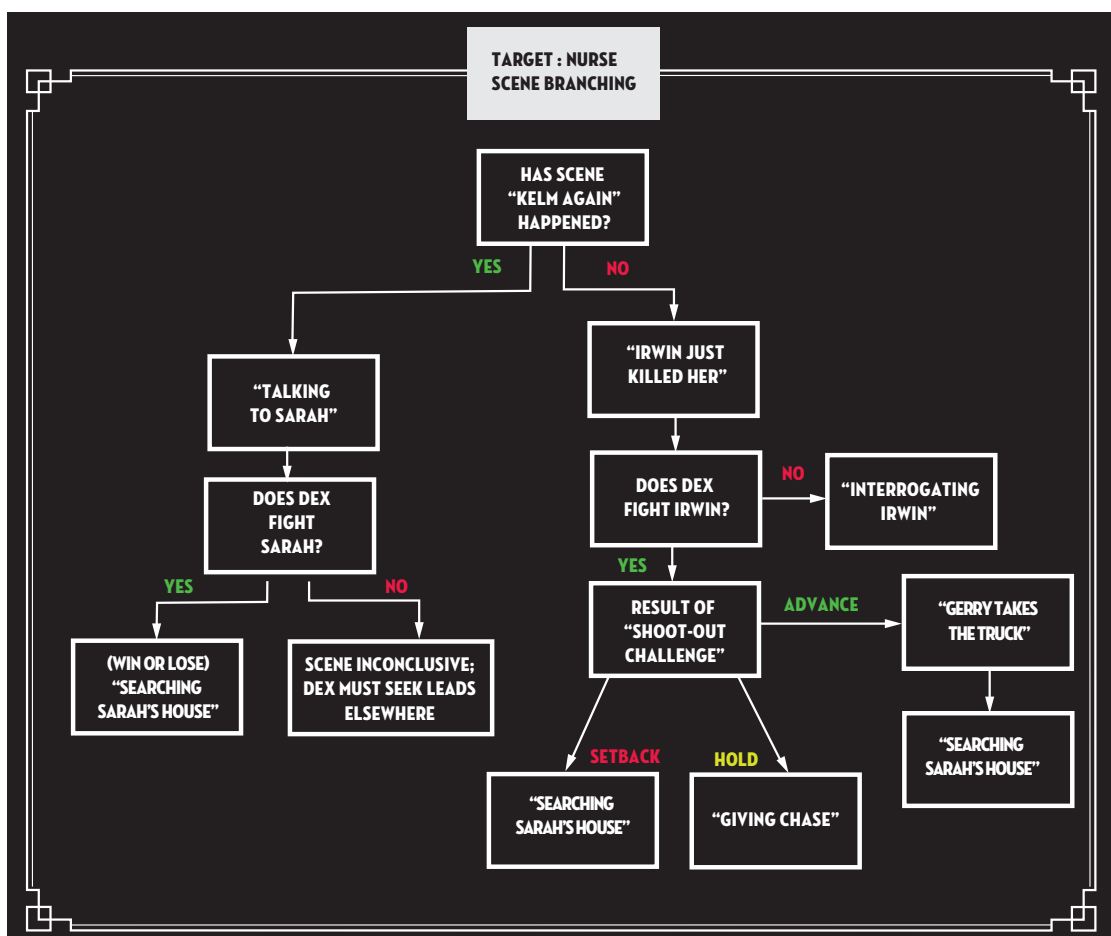
Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: Irwin's Apartment, Target: Grand Dame

Lead-Outs: Target: Outdoorsman, Target: Grand Dame

Dex might have Sarah Hagenow's name but not her address, but **Library Use** fixes that. She lives in yet another quiet bungalow-lined street, Glendales Magnolia Avenue. If the player has already triggered the scene "Kelm Again," Hagenow is alive and present when he comes to call, as per "Talking to Sarah." Otherwise, see "Irwin Just Killed Her."

Target : Nurse Scene Branching



Sarah tries to pass herself off as an ordinary person unless and until Dex's questions suggest that he knows too much about the mi-go plot. Before that point her uninformative answers go something like this:

- Ethel Hagenow is her mother-in-law.
- Ethel's party will be a fundraiser for a local hospital. In keeping with this theme, cocktails will be served in syringes, which Sarah ordered for her.
- If told Ethel is dead, she shows alarm but not grief. (The mi-go controlling her fears that the plan is beginning to unravel, and this reaction registers in the demeanor of the puppet.)
- Other than her mother-in-law, the only name associated with the case that Sarah recognizes is that of Everett Ohler. A friend of her husband's late father, she has occasionally dined with him at Ethel's house.
- Her husband? Oh, he's out of state. His job as an auditor requires extensive travel.
- She knows nothing of robberies, electronic equipment, cop killings, weird amniotic fluid, or any other weirdness or crime Dex might be looking into.

Assess Honesty says that something is off about her, but it's hard to tell if she's lying. Offer an **Interpersonal Push**; if the player spends the token, reveal that her odd affect matches Kelm's. (If the player asks without prompting, confirm this without asking for a Push.)

Sarah asks questions in return, trying to work out how much of a threat Dex might be to the mi-go plot. He might portray himself as more of a threat to Irwin than to them, in which case she tries to bluff her way through the encounter without escalating it. However, if he comes off as another source of trouble that needs to be neutralized, she pulls her modified mi-go ray gun and opens fire.

Which Challenge you use to resolve this depends on whether Dex already has Irwin's own ray-gun (or a copy of it; see "Getting the Gun," p. 25.)

MI-GO RAY GUN (WITHOUT IRWIN'S GUN)

Fighting

Advance 8+: You shoot her dead before she can even raise her weapon. Oh, but wait, she's getting up again, the wound sealing itself shut. She reaches for her odd weapon, now on the floor. You kick it away from her. You sock her in the jaw, to no effect. Apparently, you can't hurt her, so instead you attempt to physically restrain her. After overpowering her, you tie her to a chair. Gain Edge 3, "*More Than One Way to Skin a Cat.*"

Hold 4-7: Her strange device fires a searing ray at you. Ducking behind a piece of furniture, you draw your own piece and plug her right between the eyes. Oh, but wait, she's getting up again, the wound sealing itself shut. She reaches for her odd weapon, now on the floor. You kick it away from her. You sock her in the jaw, to no effect. She socks you in the jaw, to great effect. When you regain consciousness, she is gone.

Setback 3 or less: Her strange device burns your flesh with a searing ray. Through eyes watered with agony, you draw your own piece, but then lose consciousness. When you regain it, she's gone. Gain Problem 9, "*Ray Gun Wound.*"

Extra Problem: : Problem 10, "*Easily Spooked.*"

MI-GO RAY GUN (WITH IRWIN'S GUN)

Fighting

Advance 9+: You draw and fire

Irwin's unwieldy gun contraption.

A deafening wave of visible sound booms out of its barrel. It strikes her, blowing her to fiery bits. You duck behind a sofa, shielding yourself from the resulting rain of molten bone. Gain Edge 2, "*Triumph Over Weirdness*."

Hold 4-8: As per Advance, but do not gain the Edge. Take the Stability Challenge, "*You Blew Her Up*" below.

Setback 3 or less: Her strange device burns your flesh with a searing ray. Through eyes watered with agony, you draw your own piece, but then lose consciousness. When you regain it, she's gone. Gain Problem 9, "*Ray gun Wound*."

Extra Problem: 9, "*Easily Spooked*."

YOU BLEW HER UP

Stability

Advance 9+: You had a good guess of what would happen when you fired that gun. Sure, it was horrible to behold, but better her than you, right? Gain Edge 4, "*Could Have Been Worse*."

Hold 5-8: As per Advance, without the Edge.

Setback 4 or less: Sure, she was trying to kill you, and you're no stranger to rough stuff. But the sight of her exploding like that has burned itself into your imagination. Just like the smell of her incinerated flesh will never come out of your suit. Gain Problem 20, "*Gruesome Victory*."

Extra Problem: Problem 21, "*Numbed to It All*."

IRWIN JUST KILLED HER

In this version, Dex pulls up to the house to see the stolen army truck out front. As he parks his car, he sees Irwin rushing out the door, dark smoke pluming from the barrel of his Strickfaden gun.

ANTICIPATING IRWIN

Sense Trouble

Advance 7+: You have your gun out before Irwin sees you. You have the drop on him and can now ask him questions. (Enables Scene, "Interrogating Irwin.")

Hold 3-6: A gunfight ensues. Initiate Challenge "*Shoot Out*" below.

Setback 2 or less: As per Hold, but with a -2 penalty during "*Shoot Out*" on an Outcome of 1 or -1 or an Outcome of 2.

Extra Problem: 11, "*On Edge*."

In the event of a shoot-out, Irwin shifts his strange weapon to his left hand and pulls out a pistol with his right. He makes a break for his truck, firing at Dex.

SHOOT-OUT

Fighting

Advance 9+: Irwin collapses, hit in the gut, and falls at the foot of the porch, gasping. Go to "*Gerry Takes the Truck*," p. 19.

Hold 4-8: You're too exposed to avoid a fatal blast and so take cover. Irwin takes advantage of this movement to rush into the truck and drives off. Go to "*Giving Chase*," p. 22.

Setback 3 or less: Irwin shoots you. The next shot could be fatal, so you take cover, giving him time to jump into the truck and drive off. Gain Problem 12, "*Shot*."

Extra Problem: Problem 13, "*Too Close to the Fray*."

GERRY TAKES THE TRUCK

If Irwin collapses in the wake of their gunfight, Dex presumably rushes to his side to check on his condition. He sees that Irwin is conscious but too far gone to save. "I don't wanna die. I don't want to be a monster," Irwin gasps. On a **Reassurance Push**, he will answer one question, then expire. (He expires without the question, too.) For answers he might give, see "Interrogating Irwin," p. 21. As Dex deals with Irwin, another mi-go puppet, burly mob enforcer Gerry Malcor, approaches. He came to pick up the brains in Sarah's house and drive them up to the crashed saucer in the mountains. Now he takes the initiative.



GERRY INTERVENES

Sense Trouble

Advance 6+: You see a burly figure approaching, his manner clearly menacing. If the player describes Dex responding with force: When you pull your gun on him, he laughs and keeps coming. If Des tries to talk or signals willingness to cooperate: He seems uninterested in talking, but very interested in using his hammer-like fists on you. Depending on player response, narrate something along these lines: You reach for Irwin's ray gun contraption. The mug abruptly retreats. He runs back around the hood of the army truck, gets in the driver's side, and drives off. You try firing the ray gun but can't work out what triggers it. You resort to your pistol, putting a round right in his chest. He staggers back from the force, recovers, but keeps on coming. No point in trying to chase him; but the time you get to your car he'll be long gone. The loss of the truck may be a tough break, but clearly you stopped him from doing something you'd like even less.

Hold 4-5: A burly figure suddenly looms up behind you. He raises his fist and suddenly the world goes dark. You regain consciousness fifteen minutes later, your head pounding. Both the truck and Irwin are gone.

Setback 3 or less: As per Hold, but gain Problem 14, "*Knocked on the Head.*"


Extra Problem: : Problem 15, "*Permanent Flinch.*"

SEARCHING SARAH'S HOUSE

Did Irwin just kill Sarah? Then she, like her mother-in-law, suffered not-so-spontaneous human combustion. Here the bone shards thrown like shrapnel into the wall are still too hot to touch bare-handed. In this case one of her arms remains in one piece, from the elbow on down. The mi-go ray-gun, warped by the heat, lies not far from her hand.

Dex can find the two most notable items in Sarah's home by looking in the kitchen and the basement.

In the basement Dex finds a travel trunk, recently divested of its contents. Old books and mementos sit neatly piled off to one side. In their place a fresh male human corpse has been stuffed. From photos seen elsewhere in the house this must be Sarah's husband (and Ethel's son), Perry Hagenow. His skull has been expertly opened and the brain removed. Needle marks on his arm suggest that he died from an injected toxin.

 (If Dex takes some of the blood spatter to Virginia Ashbury, she can test it, confirming that the toxin was chloral hydrate—which a nurse would have access to.)

Looking in the icebox in the kitchen, he finds it packed nearly to the brim with human brains.

Forensics: all were harvested postmortem. Many show malformations. Most of the people who belonged to these brains were middle-aged or older. One however looks younger and fresher than the rest. (That brain belonged to her husband. The rest she stole, post-autopsy, from deceased patients at the hospital she works at. Their age spread suggests that they died of natural causes.)



The scene's gruesomeness triggers a Challenge :

BRAIN THIEVES!

Stability

Advance 9+: A less boiled egg than yourself might find an icebox full of brains and an empty noggin alarming. For you, these days, it feels like everyday routine. Gian Edge 1, "*Forensic Detachment.*"

Hold 5-8: Fortunately, the nausea is only temporary.

Setback 4 or less: This bloody tableau is gonna feature in your nightmares for the next little while. Until the next horror comes along, that is. Gain Problem 33, "*It Takes a Toll.*"

Extra Problem: Problem 21 "*Dead Behind the Eyes.*"

(core, Target: Outdoorsman) A small box of 12 syringes sits on the kitchen counter top. A small piece of notepaper taped to the top reads

Gerry: take to Everett at the lodge.

Beside it a piece of paper not attached to a box reads

For mother. Gerry, do not take.

Over in the living room, framed photos line the mantel. The only one that depicts a lodge is a four shot of her, Ethel, Perry and Everett Ohler posed in front of a rustic hunting lodge in wooded terrain consistent with the nearby San Gabriel Mountains. **Library Use** finds the property records containing the exact address of Everett Ohlers lodge.

Did Dex get a Hold or Setback on

Gerry Intervenes? The brains and box of syringes are not present. He took them away, up to Ohlers lodge. The note about the lodge remains but may make less sense without the box of syringes.

Has Dex restrained Sarah? See "Sarah Restrained," p. 23.

INTERROGATING IRWIN

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: Target: Nurse, Target: Outdoorsman

Lead-Outs: Target: Outdoorsman, The Spacecraft

By the time Dex catches up with him, Irwin's formerly slim frame has contorted itself, gnarling his fingers and warping his bones. The serum rejection process shows on his face, a puffy welter of bruises. During the conversation several of his teeth fall out, and new subcutaneous wounds well up on his cheeks and throat.

The best way to get Irwin to talk is to convincingly agree to help him wipe out the alien menace (**Inspiration.**) If that's the argument, Dex might want to skirt the issue of Irwin's ruthlessness toward the cops, or innocent citizens like Claude Etchell.

He could also get Irwin to spill by threatening to destroy his ray-gun (**Intimidation.**) Whatever the method of persuasion, Irwin decides he has nothing to lose at this point and explains everything, recounting his part in the timeline given on p. 4. Other answers he might give to relevant questions:

- He knows he's done for. The serum is irreversible, whether you succumb or resist. He just wants to kill the monsters who did this to him before he goes.
- The puppets are dead already. Their brains have been replaced by alien meat circuitry. Killing them ain't murder. It's a public health measure.
- That old man in the garage he took over had it coming. He got mouthy. Ain't no time for pleasantries with space monsters running amuck. And if he's got to go, he might as well take some stinking cops with him along the way. It's their fault for getting in his way.
- The flood of alien knowledge stopped after a while and did not include the specifics of their plan to take over the city. They would have developed that later, after searching the memories of their various puppets.
- None of the other serum recipients are suffering bloated faces or having their mitts turn into claws, so this must be something that happens only when the mind-stealing juice fizzles.

- (core, "The Spacecraft") The mi-go space ship is buried in the San Gabriel Mountains.
- (core, "Target: Outdoorsman") It's near a hunting lodge belonging to a businessman, name of Everett Ohler. Getting to the craft means taking care of Ohler first.
- Before all of this, he hadn't heard of Ohler. But he knew Kelm, who did. And if Ohler knew Kelm it means he was crooked in some way. Just like most of the city's muckety-mucks.
- Two of the other puppets are low-level muscle types, Gerry Malcor and Danny Stullenberger. Both do collections for bookies. Which bookies? Different guys who kick up to the System.

(If the player does not know what the System is from prior scenarios such as The Fathomless Sleep, explain that this is L.A.'s dominant crime syndicate, made up of business-connected Anglos. See the main Cthulhu Confidential book for further details.)

Did Dex just shoot Irwin, or cause him to smash into a tree while driving? Irwin expires when Dex runs out of questions. Otherwise, letting Irwin go allows him to show up again at Ohler's lodge to shoot down hosts as the case draws to a close. Imprisoning him means that he will cleverly escape and show up at the lodge anyhow. Unless the player seems very determined to keep him locked down, in which case he is found dead of serum poisoning during the denouement.



GIVING CHASE

Scene Type: Alternate*Lead-Ins:* Target: Nurse, Target: Outdoorsman*Lead-Outs:* Target: Outdoorsman, Kelm Again

On a successful Difficulty 5 **Driving** or **Athletics** Test, Dex gets to his car quickly enough to either chase or shadow Irwin in the truck.

CHASING IRWIN

Driving

Penalty: May apply if you came here from Shadowing Irwin.

Advance 8+: You pursue the truck through the Glendale's residential streets, harrying it from behind until the driver makes a mistake and runs off the road. The truck smashes through a fence and into the side of a house. The driver staggers from the vehicle to collapse on the well-manicured lawn. (Permits Scene: *"Interrogating Irwin."*)

Hold 4-7: You pursue the truck, but see children playing up ahead, playing catch. One lobs a ball over the other's head. Sensing that one of both of the kids is about to dart into the street, you have no choice but to hit the brakes. The driver gets away.

Setback 3 or less: As per Hold, but also: You bump your head on the steering wheel. Gain Problem 16, *"Forehead Bump."*

Extra Problem: Problem 17 *"Reckless Driving."* amend narration to describe Dex nearly hitting one of the kids described in the Hold entry.

SHADOWING IRWIN

Shadowing

Advance 5+: Keeping enough distance to avoid spooking your quarry, you follow him to his next destination.

Hold 2-4: You try to keep a good distance between you and the truck, but the driver suddenly accelerates. You could still chase him, but are less likely to succeed than if you'd started off trying to do that. (If player chooses to go to *"Chasing Irwin"* Challenge, they take a penalty equal to 5 minus your final result.)

Setback 1 or less: The driver realizes right away that you're tailing him, and accelerates at a moment when you can't pursue him without plowing through a group of teenagers strolling across the street.

Extra Problem: Problem 18, *"Prayer to Yog-Sothoth."* Available only if Dex has or has ever had a Mythos Shock Problem (including previous run scenarios.)

Irwin's next destination depends on what has happened so far. If the scene "The Garage" has yet to occur, Irwin drives to that location, opens the padlock, and (if uninterrupted) drives the truck into the garage. Still, he has to worry about the dead neighbor stashed nearly in plain sight. Without an **Interpersonal** Push on **Intimidation** or **Inspiration** (see "Interrogating Irwin," p. 21, for lines of approach), the following Challenge occurs. ("Shoot-Out Reprise.")

SHOOT-OUT REPRISE

Fighting

Advance 9+: You shoot him in the chest.

He collapses. (Continue with a scene combining the information in "*The Garage*" and "*Interrogating Irwin*."

Hold 5-8: Irwin aims his strange ray-gun at you. You flinch. The beam hits you, to no effect. But the distraction has given him the time he needs to clobber you. You briefly black out, regaining consciousness only when he and the truck are gone. (Continue with "*The Garage*" adjusted as necessary.)


Setback 4 or less: As per Hold, but Gain Problem 14, "*Knocked on the Head*."

Extra Problem: 13, "*Too Close to the Fray*."

SARAH RESTRAINED

Scene Type: Alternate

If Dex restrains Sarah her mi-go controller in the crashed space ship cuts its connection to her. She slumps in her chair like a rag doll, losing all volition.

 Dex might take her to his medical source, Mack Mackintosh, for examination. Running non-invasive tests, including a blood sample, he determines that her biochemistry has been radically altered by a variety of unidentifiable compounds. She does not respond to treatment or return to her past self, suggesting that whatever happened to her is irreversible. Now and then she opens her eyes and appears to survey her surroundings. This is the mi-go checking back in to see if she has any chance of escaping.

Maybe Dex lets his guard down with her at some point. Given a chance to harm Dex, the mi-go tries that. Failing that, it directs her to escape, reasoning that it can't be helpful to the mi-go to let humans study the serum and its effects.

If this escape attempt occurs in Dex's presence, modify this Challenge to suit the circumstances.

SARAH ESCAPE ATTEMPT

Fighting

Bonus +2 : If Dex has taken steps to ensure she can't possibly get any kind of weapon.

Advance 9+: You stop Sarah from getting away. She once again slumps into a dead-weight, ragdoll posture.

Hold 5-8: Sarah fails to injure you, but succeeds in getting away.

Setback 3 or less: Sarah injures you. Avoiding duplicate Problems when possible, the GM selects one of the following Problem cards as best fitting the sort of harm she could have dished out: Problem 12, "*Shot*," Problem 14, "*Knocked on the Head*," Problem 16 "*Forehead Bump*," or Problem 29, "*Stabbed*."

KELM AGAIN

Scene Type: Alternate

Once Dex has more information regarding the weirdness of this case, he may choose to return to Kelm to confront him with it.

This scene plays out as the flipside of the possibilities offered in "Target: Nurse." If this scene occurs before that one, Kelm is present and alive in his back room workshop (or wherever else Dex goes to find him.) Otherwise, Dex arrives to find Kelm dead, shot by Irwin's ray-gun.

A living Kelm has little to offer Dex in the way of new dope. He tries to tell Dex he's been dosed somehow by a strange chemical Irwin has been working on. From some kind of cactus the natives use out in the desert. "He's scrambled his brain, and now he's done it to yours, too."

Dex might buy this and go away again, but more likely hell keep pressing. In this case, it's Kelm who whips out the ray-gun to shoot at Dex. Adapt the details of the "Mi-Go Ray-gun" Challenge on p. 17.

Otherwise Dex arrives to see Kelm freshly killed, with Irwin escaping through the back door into a parking lot (or wherever else makes sense in context.) Adapt the "Irwin Just Killed Her" sequence from "Target: Nurse" to Kelm's circumstances.

SECOND COP KILLING

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

This scene takes place between "First Cop Killing" and Dex's trip to Ohler's mountain lodge in "Target: Outdoorsman." Space it out so that something else, if only a Time-Taking, happens between it and "First Cop Killing." It does not occur if Irwin has already been taken out of the picture. If Ted Gargan knows that Dex's case connects to the first cop killing, Dex learns about the latest incident from him. Otherwise he sees another hardboiled headline blazoned on the latest edition of the Times: MACHINE GUN KILLER STRIKES POLICE AGAIN. The subhead reads: ONE OFFICER DEAD, ANOTHER CLINGING TO LIFE.

Knowing that bodies will continue to fall until he cracks the case may lend Dex additional resolve, or bend him under the pressure.

THE PRESSURE BUILDS

Cool

Advance 6+: Righteous rage fills you.

You resolve to put this down quick, before any more innocents die. Gain Edge 5, "*Grim Determination*."

Hold 2-5: As per Advance, without the Edge.

Setback 3 or less: You can't help thinking that if you'd moved faster, thought harder, you could have stopped this from happening. Gain Problem 22, "*Self-Recrimination*."

The incident occurred the previous night (adjust as needed for your timeline) in front of 3164 Dona Marta Drive in Laurel Canyon. A resident of this tony, quiet neighborhood called LAPD to complain of an army truck parked in his driveway. Officers Andy Kilcollins and John Sims arrived shortly thereafter and walked to the truck.

As the badly wounded Kilcollins told Gargan before falling into a coma, they turned upon hearing the cocking of a gun bolt. Kilcollins vaguely recalls a man in a trenchcoat with something covering his face, but the main thing he remembers is the flash of machine-gun fire. Sims was found dead at the scene; Kilcollins remained alive as backup patrol cars and ambulances arrived. Kilcollins had time to describe the above to Gargan before doctors put him under. He has yet to regain consciousness; the docs estimate his chances of pulling out as no more than fifty-fifty.

Gargan repeats one other fact: the killer didn't seem to be coming from the house where the truck was parked.

Does Dex already have the truck? Adjust the description to put Irwin in a freshly stolen car, with a counterfeit plate taken from Kelm.

Does Dex have Everett Ohler's name? **Library Use** shows that Ohler lives a few doors down. (Dex might have previously come here looking for Ohler, only to have his butler tell him that he was not at home.)

Gargan can get a warrant to enter Ohler's house, allowing Dex to accompany him. The butler is only in during the daylight hours.

Or Dex can sneak in on a Difficulty 4 Stealth Quick Test. Failure means that he spots a nosy neighbor and aborts the attempt before the situation escalates.

The house's contents throw scant light on the case. Most notably, the walls show photos of Ohler with an array of L.A. notables, especially those associated with the System, including top mob boss Guy McAfee and Mayor Frank L. Shaw.

GETTING THE GUN

Scene Type: Alternate

By the time he's ready to head off to Ohler's lodge, Dex should realize that the mi-go hosts can only be harmed by Irwin's gun. If he acquired it during "Target: Nurse", "Kelm Again" or a new scene improvised by you in response to the players choices, they're good to go.

Otherwise, if he has Irwin's sketch from "Irwin's Apartment," he can go to Kenneth Strickfaden and ask him to build it. Strickfaden says this is possible, using components from a few remaining pieces that were on set at Universal Studios when the workshop was robbed.

Has the player skipped that scene? Find a new likely spot to place the map: say, on Irwin's person during "Interrogating Irwin," or dropped when he flees the scene after having killed Kelm or Sarah Hagenow. (Several hairs too obvious, but sometimes a Keeper's gotta do what a Keeper's gotta do...)

Strickfaden's crazy genius allows him to make the necessary intuitive leaps to build a version of the gun in about a day. Shorten this interval if Dex has nothing left to investigate, allowing Strickfaden to quickly assemble it before his eyes.

The puppets can also be destroyed by wrecking equipment in "The Spacecraft," so Dex can still successfully complete the case without getting his hands on the gun.

TARGET: OUTDOORSMAN

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: The Garage, Irwin's Apartment, Interrogating Irwin

Lead-Outs: The Spacecraft, Fake Plate Everett

Ohler will be found at his hunting lodge in the San Gabriel Mountains, about a 25 minute drive from downtown L.A. For notes on an unilluminating attempt to find him at his Laurel Canyon home, see the tail end of the previous scene. Once Dex has his name, **Library Use** turns up the address. (Trips to his Laurel Canyon home find only the butler, Akins, who tells him Ohler is not presently in residence.)

Accounting research prior to a meeting shows that Ohler made his fortune as an executive specializing in turning around troubled firms in widely varying fields: auto parts, water purification, snack foods. He often took over for the entrepreneurs who founded companies but couldn't run them after they grew to meet demand.

The scene can unfold in one of two ways: it can happen early, before either "Target: Nurse" or "Kelm Again" or late. In the first, Dex lacks the leverage to force Ohler to crack, and sees his questions deftly deflected. In the late version, incriminating evidence forces Ohler's hand. Undergoing the first version does not prevent him from coming back later for the second.

EARLY VERSION

The urbane Everett Ohler receives Dex politely, offering him a slug of quality scotch in a Nova Scotia crystal tumbler. He makes clear his horror at the machine gun killings and hopes his friends on the force will quickly find the madman responsible. He admits only to the following:

- He met Ethel Hagenow through her late husband, a business associate of his. He is godfather to her son Perry.
- He might have met Virgil Kelm at one point, but the name rings no bells. One meets all kinds, running a company in this town.
- Ohler has never heard of Paul Irwin.
- Nor has he any awareness in Kenneth Strickfaden. Though now that you explain who he is, that scene in *Frankenstein* certainly was a corker.
- The Hagenow's cant be mixed up in anything untoward. There must be some misunderstanding. [if confronted with the evidence of their sinister activities] They must have been coerced by that cop-killing lunatic.
- His property extends for some distance. He enjoyed the good fortune of buying before mountain lodges became fashionable.
 - **Assess Honesty:** His odd manner makes it hard to tell whether he's lying or telling the truth. Confirm, if asked, that his slightly delayed reactions match those of others Dex has encountered so far: Kelm, Sarah Hagenow, and/or Malcor.

LATE VERSION

Did Gerry Malcor take Irwin's truck? It's parked back behind the lodge, out of the way but still in view.

Is there any possibility that Gerry Malcor could have taken Irwin's truck, even though Dex doesn't yet know it? Yep, its parked around back.

Dex can either stroll right up to it or try to approach it with a Difficulty 5 Stealth Quick Test. On a failure, Ohler sees him from the lodge; Dex then gets a Difficulty 5 Sense Trouble Quick Test. Success on this test allows Dex to see the curtains moving aside in a high window, so that he knows that someone inside knows. On the stroll right up option, Ohler spots him but he does not spot Ohler.

When Dex heads to the house, the direction of the scene depends on whether Ohler has reason to believe that he knows too much. If not, Dex can play dumb and have the interaction described above, in which Ohler blithely feigns blithe obliviousness. It could still get nasty as soon as Dex appears to be a threat.

In that case, the other surviving hosts appear from another room. Sarah Hagenow (if shes still alive) or Ohler produces a syringe and tries to jab Dex with it.

SYRINGE JAB***Fighting***

Penalty: -1 if both Kelm and Sarah Hagenow are still alive

Advance 12+: You evade the jab, and escape from them despite their attempt to surround you. They give chase' see below. Counter any Problem that penalizes Cool or Stability.

Hold 3-11: You evade the jab, and escape from them despite their attempt to surround you. They give chase; see below.

Setback 4 or less: You get jabbed and fall to the floor. You awaken in a large metallic tube inhabited by bizarre alien beings. The case ends in the dread conclusion Grim Coda: Jabbed, p XX.

Extra Problem: Problem 22, "Winded."

Is Irwin still at large? He shows up during Dex's escape from the lodge. He blasts the hosts with his ray-gun, unconcerned about the red hot bone shrapnel their deaths will send Dex's way. The hosts switch to firing their ray weapons at him, but hes' a better marksman than they are and downs them one by one.

HOT BONE SHRAPNEL***Athletics***

Advance 9+: You hit the deck as Irwin opens fire. Hot ash drizzles onto the back of your neck, but you brush it away before it can scorch your skin or set your hair alight. Counter any Problem that penalizes Cool or Stability, Mythos Shocks excepted.

Hold 3-7: As above, but without the Counter.

Setback 2 or less: You hit the deck, but not before red hot bone fragments hits your right shoulder, badly burning it. -1 to General/Physical tests until the end of the scenario.

The smart play has Dex treating Irwin as an ally until he can figure out what's going on. Dex can ask him questions, gaining information found in "Interrogating Irwin." (core, The Spacecraft) Irwin plans to hit the spacecraft next. Give the player time to suggest this, so they doesn't feel dragged to the next plot point. However if the player makes no such suggestion, he heads off there nonetheless. Irwin waits, somewhat peevishly, if Dex wants to search the lodge first.

As a supporting character, Irwin doesn't make Challenges to succeed. Whether he does or not is simply a matter of description on your part. When he tries to do things that would let Dex off the hook, or otherwise steal his thunder as protagonist, he fails. Other actions that help Dex move to the climax more quickly and impressively succeed.

Is Irwin out of the picture? Dex can either try to escape the pursuing hosts, or if, he has Irwin's ray-gun, blast them.

ESCAPING THE HOSTS

Athletics

Advance 9+: Ray-gun blasts landing all around you, you reach your car and peel out of there. Counter any Problem that penalizes Cool or Stability, Mythos Shocks excepted.

Hold 5-8: As per Advance, without the Counter.

Setback 4 or less: A ray gun blast strikes you in the leg. You see everything from the knee down shear away from you, then lose consciousness. Some time later, you awaken in a metallic tube inhabited by strange alien beings. You see white light and blurry flash of a syringe being plunged into your flesh. Alien magic is repairing your leg, so that's good. But you're no longer Dex Raymond, Not really, anyhow. So your old self would regret that, you presume. The case ends in the dread conclusion: "Grim Coda : Jabbed" p 31.

Extra Problem: Problem 24, "*Shame of Retreat.*"

BLASTING THE HOSTS

Fighting

Whatever the outcome, invite the player to describe Dex using the strange ray-gun device to shoot down the hosts one by one. Remember that they combust on impact.

Advance 9+: Gain Edge 6, "*Penultimate Showdown.*"

Hold, 5-8.

Setback 4 or less: The red hot bone shrapnel from one of your hosts strikes you in the shoulder. 1- to General/Physical tests until the end of the scenario.

SEARCHING THE LODGE

The only information relevant to the case can be found in Ohler's office, in plain view on his desk. It's a handwritten list of a dozen names, including Guy McAfee, the mayor and his bag-man brother Joe, and police chief Jim Two Gun Davis. These appear under the header Poker Night.

Could Gerry Malcor or Danny Stullenberger have picked up the small box of syringes and brought them here? It sits on a nearby sidetable, and the entry at the bottom of the list, "Get Syringes From Sarah" has been crossed out. Otherwise, the entry is not crossed out.

If Dex has yet to recover all of Strickfaden's equipment, that means Malcor stole the truck and brought it here. The rest of it has been piled in a corner in the lodges central den area. An overly literal-minded player might have Dex reckon that the case has now been solved—no need to worry about murders, hosts, aliens, or anything else. An eye-roll should suffice to show that Dex ought to want to solve a broader mystery concerning the fate of the entire city. If the player still resists, one: resolve not to play with this person again. Two: present a Difficulty 6 Cool Quick Test. On a success, Dex realizes that he must solve the broader mystery. On a failure, he still realizes that, but also gets Problem 31, "Turning Punk All of a Sudden."

On a separate small piece of note paper appears the words Invigoration Formula – "No More Than 24 hrs."

If Dex checks the contents of Ohler's medicine cabinet in his bathroom, he finds a long thin metallic vial. As soon as he touches it, a pill rises from the top of the vial and hovers, an inch above the rim. Taking the pill provokes the following Challenge:

INVIGORATION PILL

Athletics

Advance 5+: You feel a rush of power thrum through your veins. Gain Edge 7, "*Invigorated.*"

Hold 2-4: You feel a little more awake and alert, but then again that could just be expectation.

Setback 1 or less: You feel woozy and ill. Gain Problem, "*Enervated.*"

Dex can keep the vial as a souvenir, but it never emits another pill.

THE SPACECRAFT

Scene Type: Conclusion

Lead-Ins: Target: Outdoorsman

Dex can find the spacecraft by letting Irwin lead him to it, or by methodically searching Ohler's mountainous, heavily forested spread. Should he try the second without first neutralizing Ohler and the other surviving hosts, they intercept him before he reaches the craft.

Has Dex's case not progressed far enough to make him seem like a threat? Play out an adjusted take on "Target: Outdoorsman," Early Version. Otherwise, adapt the threats of the Late Version to a wooded setting.

The mi-go spacecraft is a long cylindrical tube, it's science-defying metal a scorched gunmetal color. It's dented cockpit cone juts up from a pile of rocks, the ones Ohler disturbed when he found the ship and awakened its occupants.

To enter, screw off the nose cone and clamber on in. Irwin instinctively knows how to do this, thanks to the alien information sloshing around in his damaged brain. Dex can figure it out using **Locksmith**. Due to a peculiarity of its onboard gravity system, once a person has entered the ship it looks and feels as if it is level and parallel to the ground, instead of on a steep angle.

Is Irwin present? He insists on taking the lead and heading in first. Dex watches from behind as a thin beam of energy projects toward Irwin, striking him on the side of the next and then sawing across it, decapitating him.

SEEING IRWIN'S HEAD LASERED OFF

Stability

Penalty: The number of Mythos Shock cards in your hand.

Advance 12+: This appalling sight drives you not to madness but to renewed determination to destroy the horrors before you. +1 to all tests for the rest of the case.

Hold 5-11: Pumping adrenaline blocks you from fully acknowledging what you've seen.

Setback 4 or less: Gain Problem 26. "Technophobia."

Dex can stop Irwin from going in first by spending an **Interpersonal** Push and an argument keyed to one of his interpersonal abilities. When Dex is the one to go in first, the beam passes harmlessly through him. He hears the laser going through Irwin's neck. If the player specifies that Dex doesn't turn around, he still does so involuntarily, after Irwin's head thunks onto the spacecraft's metallic mesh floor. He still takes the above Challenge, but at a +3 bonus.

Whether he came in alone or with Irwin, Dex sees six mi-go, bat-winged, lobster-clawed aliens with pulsing exposed brains. Despite their resemblance to arthropods they are actually composed of a fungal material.

Filmy filament threads connect all six of the creatures to a central gizmo that looks not unlike a Kenneth Strickfaden movie prop. The outer ring of the big gizmo consists of a collection of human brains, each of them connected to the main unit with a piece of insulated rubber wire. The wire looks not like space monster technology but something acquired for them at a hardware store, no doubt by one of the puppets.

Did Gerry take Irwin along with the truck?

Irwin is here, in the form of a severed head impaled on a metal spike, with various wires feeding into his skull. The mi-go are testing him in search of the genetic variation granting humans to resist the

serum. So far they've discovered that he possesses a genetic variation giving him higher than normal levels of amylase, a sugar-digesting enzyme, in his saliva.

Mi-go are no picnic to look at; nor is their brain-powered gizmo.

BEHOLDING THE MI-GO

Stability

Penalty: Number of Mythos Shock cards in hand; +1 if Irwin's impaled head is part of the craft apparatus.

Advance 12+: You're not afraid of no damn lobsters. +1 to all tests for the rest of the case.

Hold 5-1: You go into a fugue state. You can deal with these oddball things now, but afterwards, you're pretty sure the whole shebang will resolve into a foggy blur in your memory.

Setback 4 or less: Gain Problem 27, *"The Sky is Full of Horror."*

The mi-go spare Dex because they're in a bind. Their puppets are now all dead and they can't leave the craft. Dex, one assumes, holds a weapon on them, and they'd prefer to turn him into the first of a new wave of hosts without risking harm to themselves. So they communicate with him telepathically, offering him the same deal they did Everett Ohler: immortality and power.

Unlike Ohler, Dex perhaps understands that the cost of this will be his free will. But while mi-go telepathy can translate English to fungal, they can't delve into his mind to realize that he's stringing them along.

In other words, he can use this dialogue to tease out any loose ends of the case he has yet to work out. The aliens try to withhold the fact that their treatment will replace Dex's brain. He can't test these statements with **Assess Honesty**, as telepathic pseudo-crustaceans don't have the same tells you'd see around a poker table. They can speak to anything any of the puppets did before or after the treatment, but can offer no explanations for Irwin's actions.

Their ship crashed here aeons ago, longer than deluded human scientists think possible. Far before the advent of the species you call sapiens. On impact, the ship's gravitic field placed them in suspended animation.

They came from a planet called Yuggoth. Apparently you sapiens discovered it but a few years ago, and know it as Pluto.

The first vanguard of sapiens servants will grant them control over the nearby city, from which they can extract the resources necessary to build other key equipment.

With their vastly superior intelligence they easily and immediately assimilated the trivial details of human culture, from party invitations to criminal enforcement activities to the potential usefulness of fake license plates.

The technology they intend to build will free them from the life support system that presently restricts them to the craft.

Also, they will make a beacon to summon their compatriots, who will feast on the fruits of sapiens civilization.

They knew Irwin resisted the serum and escaped. But without the maintenance of their mind machines, it's toxicity should have killed him within hours. All other species behave that way. What wretched unpredictable life forms you sapiens can be!

If Dex has any other loose end questions about their actions, they can supply any information from the Timeline reflecting their point of view and awareness of events.

You, as a specimen far superior to the Ohler, shall also sup at the table of conquest! "That is what you sapiens desire above all else, is it not? *Conque-e-e-e-est?*"

Once he's heard about enough of this, Dex will likely want to destroy the mi-go. If he chooses to shoot the main life support unit the aliens are attached to, it blows up, killing all of them. Any gun will do—Irwin's or the garden variety. This works automatically, no test required. However, Dex then has to scramble out of the craft before it blows. The shaking and hissing of the central gizmo, as the mi-go writhe and wither and die, tells Dex he ought to scram.

ESCAPING BEFORE IT BLOWS

Athletics

Advance 8+: You turn and run towards the nose cone. Hot debris showers you, thrusting you out of the opening. A strange reorientation occurs as you leap head-first through it, altering your perceived trajectory from horizontal to diagonal. You land on rocky ground several feet from the opening. An explosion turns the burned craft into a smoking crater. You are left pretty much unscathed. Counter any Mythos Shock cards.

Hold 5–8: As per Advance, up to until a smoking crater. Then : Though bruised and battered, the leap does not appear to have seriously injured you.

Setback 3 or less: You turn and run towards the nose cone. Hot debris showers you. You leap head first thought he opening, but the explosion overtakes you. As you are devoured by flame, leaving your incinerated remains buried amid the wreckage of the craft and the corpses of the space monsters, your last thought is of having saved the world from apocalyptic invasion.

Attacking them individually is less likely to work, but if it does, it spares Dex the necessity of scrambling out of the soon-to-explode craft. The mi-go fire back at Dex with the laser guns of the same design as those carried by the hosts. These examples lack the crude pistol attachment adapting them to human hands.

MI-GO SHOOT-OUT

Fighting

Advance 12+: Invite the player to narrate Dex making short work of the mi-go, even as they rain laser blasts upon him. If player has Problem 27, "*The Sky is Full of Horror*," it is discarded. Otherwise, player may discard another Mythos Shock card.

Hold 5–8: In a back-and-forth with the player, describe a shoot-out in which Dex takes multiple laser blasts before finally downing all the mi-go. These injuries feature in the description of the denouement but have healed up by Dex's next appearance.

Setback 4 or less: In a back-and-forth with the player, describe a shoot-out in which Dex takes multiple laser blasts before finally downing all the mi-go. Dex finishes them all off but then collapses and slowly dies from his wounds. His final thoughts are of the apocalyptic aline invasion he has, through the ultimate sacrifice, averted.

Denouement

As per usual, wrap the case by inviting the player to describe a denouement arising from the worst Problem card left in hand. Or a coda of unadulterated success if the player has finished problem-free. Perhaps he might watch as a happy Strickfaden demonstrates his returned and repaired devices to a school group as part of his science-in-the-classroom sideline.

If Dex captured Sarah Hagenow and left her with someone (Mack Mackintosh probably) she has expired by the time he gets back to town to check in on her. Without the machine on the craft, the serum's toxic effects overwhelm her already ravaged body.

Grim Coda: Jabbed

If Dex suffered a Setback in the Syringe Jab Challenge, narrate the loss of his volition and the replacement of his brain with an organic receiving mechanism. During this transition he shuffles to the ship and, before he has been fully converted, learns from the aliens the final details of the case. He solves it even as he becomes the vanguard of a second host wave. Perhaps he becomes a problem for the player's next investigator to solve in a sequel episode.



ANTAGONIST REACTIONS

Trigger	Reaction	Setback	Hold	Advance	Extra Problem
Kelm saw Dex Shadowing him	Kelm sends (non-host) underworld mugs to demand that he explain himself	1 or less: Problem 4, "Bad Beating."	2-4: Dex gets away	5+: Dex drives them off	Problem 3, "Smashed Knuckles."
Any host is aware of Dex's snooping	Malcor and/or Stullenberger come round to warn him off the case.				
Above has already taken place	Stullenberger waylays Dex and tries to stab him <i>Fighting</i>	2 or less: Problem 29, "Stabbed"	2-5: Dex gets away	6+: Dex bruises him good. Gain Edge "You Tuned Him Up."	Problem 3, "Smashed Knuckles."
At least one other scene or time taking has taken place since "First Cop Killing"	Trigger Scene "Second Cop Killing," pXX.				
Any Time Taking	Invoke a Challenge or hassle from a Continuity Problem card left over from earlier scenario.				



High Voltage Kill Problem Cards

PROBLEM 1

Piledriver

Jaromir's favorite wrestling move leaves you with a sore neck.

-1 on General/Physical tests.
Discard after a Setback on a General/Physical test.



PROBLEM 2

Bruised Dignity

Running out on that lug was smart, not cowardly. But you let a whole bar full of lowlives see your ungraceful exit, and that stings.

You can't make Pushes when testing Interpersonal abilities. Discard the first time you score an Advance on any Challenge.



PROBLEM 3

Smashed Knuckles

The rest of you is glad you smashed that guy in the jaw, but your right hand begs to differ.

-1 penalty on all General/Manual tests. Discard this card the first time you suffer a Setback on a General/Manual test.



PROBLEM 4

Bad Beating

You've been beaten within an inch of your life.

Until you Take Time to recuperate, all General tests result in automatic Setbacks.



PROBLEM 5

Strickfaden's Gear Damaged

The eventuality your client most feared has come to pass. The cops have seized a substantial quantity of Ken's unique electronic equipment, handling it none too gently. Who knows what will happen once it lands in an evidence locker?

Weave a suitable sour note into the coda if you still have this at the end of the scenario.



PROBLEM 6

Gargan Distrusts You

Holding out on Gargan when you had information relevant to a cop killing has left him distrustful. Getting out of the doghouse with him will require an extra big favor.



PROBLEM 7

Nausea

The sight of that weird death scene leaves a sickly, distracting feeling in your gut.

Roll a die each time you want to make a Push. On an odd result, you can't make that Push, but can discard this card.



PROBLEM 8

Repression Gets a Bum Rap

Push that distressing image down, deep inside you. It won't come out at an unfortunate time, surely.

Whenever you take a Stability Challenge, you may choose to take an -X penalty and discard. Value of X starts at 1 and increases by 1 each time you decline to take the to take the penalty. On the last Stability Challenge of the case (Keeper decides) you must take the penalty.



PROBLEM 9

Ray Gun Wound

The ray burned a hole in your jacket and shirt and left a bubbled burn below your collarbone, the size of a hamburger bun.

-2 on all General/Physical tests until you Take Time. -1 thereafter. Countered only at the end of the scenario.



PROBLEM 10

Easily Spooked
Continuity

Adrenaline can save your life, but it doesn't always turn off when you want it to.

Gain +X bonus on Sense Trouble and a -X penalty on Cool and Stability. Discard after your next Sense Trouble Advance or Cool/Stability Setback.



PROBLEM 11

On Edge

Excessive vigilance can wear you down.

If you have an Edge granting a benefit to any General/Mental ability, discard it and this card. If not, wait until you get such an Edge, then discard it, along with this card.



PROBLEM 12

Shot

Time to call the ambulance.

You must convalesce for a day, giving other figures in the case time to move without you. Does not trigger Antagonist Reactions, unless they can happen while you're in the hospital. -2 to Fighting, -1 to other General/Physical tests. Discard after next General/Physical Setback.



PROBLEM 13

Too Close To The Fray
Continuity

You stared death in the face. And it stared back.

When you counted a Problem that penalizes any General/Mental ability, roll a die. On an odd result, regain the Problem.



PROBLEM 14

Knocked On The Head

You regained consciousness, but are still seeing stars.

-1 to General/Mental tests. Each time you make a Push, penalty increases by 1. Counter by Taking Time for prolonged bed rest.



PROBLEM 15

Permanent Flinch
Continuity

Your unconscious instinct to protect yourself goes into overdrive. You lose the ability to relax.

Before Taking Time to Counter any other Problem, you must Take Time to counter this one.



PROBLEM 16

Forehead Bump

You've taken worse lumps than this. But lumps add up.

-1 on your next Challenge (Cool and Stability excepted) Then discard.



PROBLEM 17

Reckless Driving

In your determination to keep this chase, you came within an inch of mowing down a child.

If your next Challenge is a Cool or Stability Challenge, take a -3 penalty on it. Otherwise, take -1 on your next test. Discard after taking penalty.



PROBLEM 18

Prayer to Yog-Sothoth

 **Mythos Shock**

In a jam, you suddenly hear yourself saying, "By the rancid spheres of Yog-Sothoth, cut me a break on this!" Where the hell did THAT come from? What's happening to your mind?

-2 to Stability tests in which a Setback gives you a Mythos Shock. -1 to all other Stability tests.



PROBLEM 19

Gun Shy

You've been in one too many dust-ups lately.

In a situation where you can choose to enter a Fighting Challenge and decide to do so, roll a die. On an odd result, you must choose not to, then discard this card.



PROBLEM 20

Gruesome Victory

You used that alien weapon to good effect. Now you wish you could forget the results.

Make a Difficulty 4 Stability quick test before any Fighting Challenge. On a failure, -1 penalty on that Challenge.



PROBLEM 21

Numbed To It All

To avoid cracking up, you're just going to start ignoring certain implications.

-2 to your next Sense Trouble test; -1 to all subsequent such tests.



PROBLEM 22

Self-Reckrimination

You have no time for remorse, but it sure has time for you.

Treat your next Hold on a Cool or Stability Challenge as a Setback, then discard this card. Counter by Taking Time to do something stupid and self-destructive.



PROBLEM 23

Winded

You go all out to prevail, but it will cost you.

-1 on Fighting tests. Counter by Taking Time, or spending an Edge that benefits Fighting or General/Physical abilities.



PROBLEM 24

Shame Of Retreat

Running away saved your life, but you aren't sure you'll be able to fully control yourself when you confront the aliens again.

-1 on all tests in the presence of space monsters, their puppets, or people you suspect of being their puppets.



PROBLEM 25

Indelible Sight

 **Mythos Shock**

To destroy the alien puppets, you have to look at them. And to look at them, you have to see their bodies explode. You won't soon forget that bizarre horror.



PROBLEM 26

Technophobia
Continuity

It will take some fancy head-shrinking to cure your new-found fear of anything alien or futuristic.

-1 on all tests in any situation reminding you of space, space monsters, or advanced technology.



PROBLEM 27

The Sky is Full of Horror

☆ Mythos Shock

*We aren't alone in the universe.
We share it with others.
Impossibly alien, hostile others.
The night sky alarms and
distracts you, as you obsessively
scan it for glimpses of alien craft.*

-1 on all tests when you are outside and able to see a starry sky.

PROBLEM 28

Enervated

You can tell the pill you just took comes from another planet, on account of it's left you feeling spacey.

-X penalty to Athletics tests. X=1, or the number of Mythos Shock cards you have, whichever is greater. Discard after 24 hours game time.

PROBLEM 29

Stabbed

This case has grown so strange that a knife wound in the abdomen seems refreshingly normal.

-3 to your next General / Physical test; -2 to all subsequent tests until Countered. Counter by Taking Time at a hospital or doctor's office. If you're still holding this by the end of the story, you die of internal bleeding.

PROBLEM 30

Mental Fatigue

Following a man required unrelenting mental attention. Afterwards your brain can turn to mush.

The next time you make a Push with at least one Push still in reserve, roll a die. On an odd result, lose an extra Push and discard this card.

PROBLEM 31

Turning Punk All Of A Sudden

For a minute there, you wanted to shirk your responsibilities, to let weird horror destroy the city you love. Just like the victims of the alien serum, you're not even yourself anymore.

Treat your next Advance as a Hold, then discard.

PROBLEM 32

Shattered Confidence

After this debacle, you're gonna think twice before letting your fists do the talking.

Your next Fighting Challenge costs you a Push. If you don't have a Push to spend, take a -3 penalty on that Challenge. Either way, you then discard this card.

PROBLEM 33

It Takes A Toll

If you only saw one horrible sight per case, maybe that would be alright. But seeing so many of them starts to wear on you.

The next time you gain a Problem card from a Stability Challenge, trade that card and this for Problem 34, "Cosmic Malignity."

PROBLEM 34

Cosmic Malignity

Suddenly you realise - the universe is indifferent to most men. But your case is different. You, it conspires to destroy!

-1 to all General/Mental tests. Discard when you kill a Mythos creature.

PROBLEM 35

Dead Behind the Eyes

You've seen a lot of darkness. That's starting to show.

Before making an Interpersonal Push, roll a die. On an odd numbered result, you are unable to make the Push, and get to discard this card.

High Voltage Kill Edge Cards

EDGE 1

Forensic Detachment

You're learning to look at gruesome sights not as horrors, but as examples of the wonders of science.

Spend to Counter any (non Mythos Shock) Problem gained during a Stability test.



EDGE 2

Triumph Over Weirdness

Bizarre enemies don't seem so daunting after you've out-drawn them.

+1 Fighting vs Mythos adversaries.



EDGE 3

More Than One Way To Skin A Cat

Ingenuity isn't about getting it right the first try. It's about trying until you get it right.

Spend for an extra die on any General/Manual test, or to gain a Technical Push.



EDGE 4

Could Have Been Worse

Seeing a gruesome corpse is better than becoming one.

Spend for an extra die on any General/Mental test, or to gain an Interpersonal Push.



EDGE 5

Grim Determination

You eat pressure for breakfast.

Spend for an extra die on any test other than Cool or Stability.



EDGE 6

Penultimate Showdown

Victory floods your senses. You're ready to give these space monsters a taste of their own cosmic indifference.

Treat the number of Mythos Shock Cards you have as bonus to all tests. Discard when used.



EDGE 7

Invigorated

That pill has your body humming like a Bugatti engine. You feel like you could punch your way through an elephant.

Spend for an extra die on an Athletics Challenge. Discard after 24 hours in game.



EDGE 8

You Tuned Him Up

You left that mug seriously contused. He'll be banged up for a while.

+1 Fighting in any Challenge where Stullenberger is one of your opponent. Discard after 48 hours in game.



EDGE 9

Outsized Confidence

If you can tackle a man-mountain like Jaromir, why, there ain't no fight you can't handle.

Spend to gain +2 on any Fighting Challenge. If you get a Hold, it instead becomes a Setback.





DEXTER “DEX” RAYMOND

Hard-boiled Shamus

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

Accounting
Assess Honesty
Bargain
Cop Talk
Cryptography
Evidence Collection
Intimidation
Inspiration
Law
Locksmith
Photography
Reassurance
Research
Streetwise

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics
Cool
Conceal
Devices
Driving
Filch
Fighting
Preparedness
Sense Trouble
Shadowing
Stability
Stealth

STORY

Archetypal hardboiled private investigator Dex Raymond prowls Los Angeles’ haunted streets as an outsider by choice. With his smarts and grit, he could have wormed his way into its corrupt power structure. Instead, he operates on its fringes, righting wrongs for a modest fee, plus expenses. In addition to his contacts, he counts one more key friend— LAPD Detective Sergeant Ted Gargan, a rare honest man in a town where cops can be bought by the barrel.

SOURCES



VIRGINIA ASHBURY, Scientist
Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Forensics, Geology.

A slim, somewhat birdlike woman typically seen in her white lab coat, Dr. Virginia Ashbury dotes on Dex as she would on a younger brother.



MADAME EVA, Fortune Teller
Cthulhu Mythos, Occult.

This harmless grifter can assist Dex with information on the world of cults, spiritualism, and hermetic magic.



DR. JEFF “MACK” MACKINTOSH, Shrink
Medicine, Outdoorsman, Pharmacy, Psychology.

Dex bounce questions off him, provided he can sit in his chair and puff on his pipe while doing it.



ALFRED KELHAM, Professor
Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Languages, Oral History, Theology.

Proudly pedantic and a touch paternalistic, Kelham sees in Dex an echo of his own son, a soldier killed in WWI.



MAX WEYL, Production Designer
Architecture, Art History, Bureaucracy, Craft, Flattery.

He’s always willing to entertain Dex’s questions on the art world or movie gossip, provided he doesn’t have to stop moving.