

Dead PRESIDENTS



CHRISTOPHER MCGLOTHLIN

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DEAD PRESIDENTS

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Author's Thanks to: Hal Mangold, Shane Hensley and Steve Long, for making my dream of a game-writing career a reality; John Goff, Fred Jandt and Tony Lee, for enabling said career to continue; and most of all, Jesus Christ and my Beloved Wife, Tanith McGlothlin, whose love and understanding knows no bounds.

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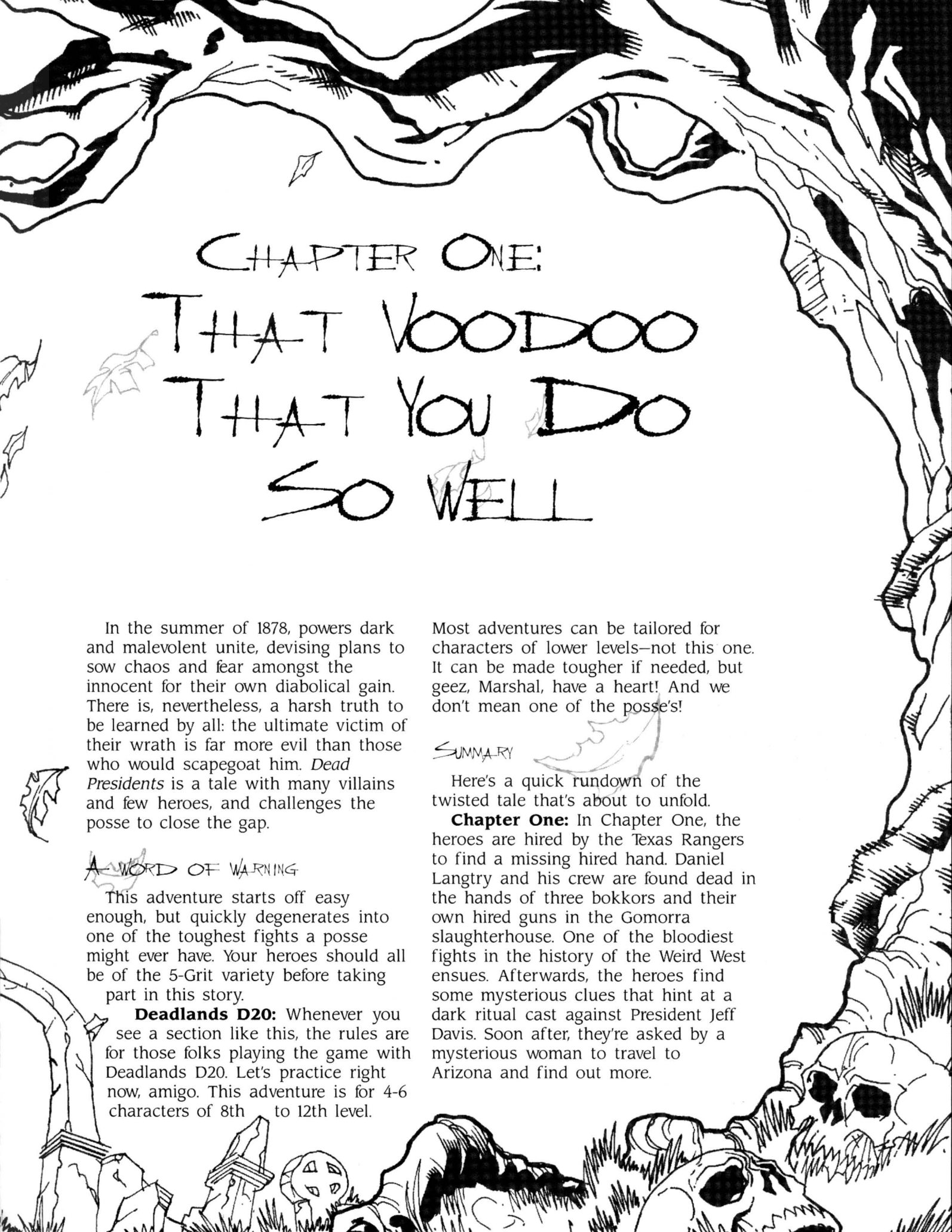
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CHEY
ENNE



CHAPTER ONE: THAT VOOODOO THAT YOU DO SO WELL



In the summer of 1878, powers dark and malevolent unite, devising plans to sow chaos and fear amongst the innocent for their own diabolical gain. There is, nevertheless, a harsh truth to be learned by all: the ultimate victim of their wrath is far more evil than those who would scapegoat him. *Dead Presidents* is a tale with many villains and few heroes, and challenges the posse to close the gap.

A WORD OF WARNING

This adventure starts off easy enough, but quickly degenerates into one of the toughest fights a posse might ever have. Your heroes should all be of the 5-Grit variety before taking part in this story.

Deadlands D20: Whenever you see a section like this, the rules are for those folks playing the game with Deadlands D20. Let's practice right now, amigo. This adventure is for 4-6 characters of 8th to 12th level.

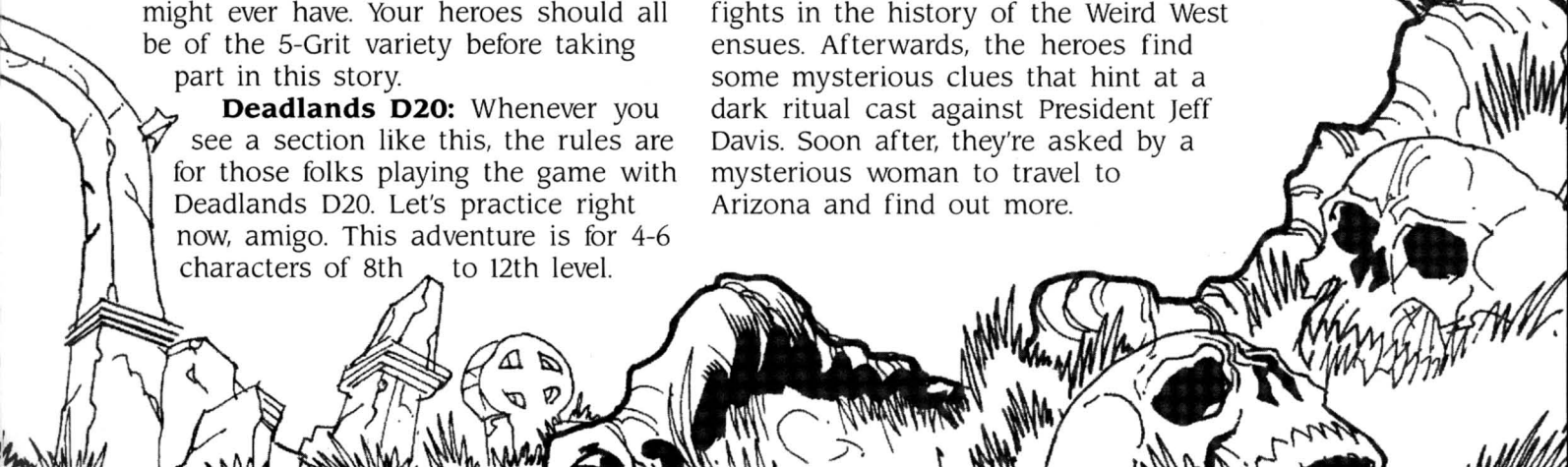
Most adventures can be tailored for characters of lower levels—not this one. It can be made tougher if needed, but geez, Marshal, have a heart! And we don't mean one of the posse's!



SUMMARY

Here's a quick rundown of the twisted tale that's about to unfold.

Chapter One: In Chapter One, the heroes are hired by the Texas Rangers to find a missing hired hand. Daniel Langtry and his crew are found dead in the hands of three bokkors and their own hired guns in the Gomorra slaughterhouse. One of the bloodiest fights in the history of the Weird West ensues. Afterwards, the heroes find some mysterious clues that hint at a dark ritual cast against President Jeff Davis. Soon after, they're asked by a mysterious woman to travel to Arizona and find out more.



Chapter Two: The mysterious "woman" turns out to be a code name for Confederate General Robert E. Lee! "Marse Roberts" himself meets with the heroes and asks them to undertake a grave mission. He believes Jefferson Davis is not himself and hasn't been for some time. The man seems intent on war. Lee asks the heroes to travel to Davis' estate in Mississippi and talk to the President's wife, who seems to be a prisoner there. Lee and his men have been quietly banned from Davis' circle of influence, so he needs competent freelancers to do the job for him.

Soon after accepting the job, Lee's personal train steams east towards Mississippi. The journey ends suddenly when Lee's car explodes! A group of men in black dusters appears on horseback and guns the survivors down, including Lee himself.

Chapter Three: Lee's train continues to Mississippi as ordered, running from the doomed fight behind it. At Davis' estate, the heroes find the President's wife, Varina Davis, is indeed a prisoner in her own home. They rescue her, and after gaining her trust, are told that her husband has not been the same since a trip to Kentucky in 1870. Varina asks that the posse take her there before going further so that they might learn what has befallen her husband. The trip to Kentucky ends with the discovery of a lair of dopplegangers. Varina and the heroes now realize what Davis is, and are urged to finish this business by assassinating the thing posing in his place. Before they can begin however, the posse is bushwhacked by Davis' men—the Nightwatchers.

The heroes are taken to Richmond where they are confronted by Davis himself. After suitable exposition and maniacal gloating, the posse is taken to a local prison and tortured like there's no tomorrow by the vicious Colonel Robert Alexander. The inevitable escape occurs either by the heroes' actions or

the arrival of a rogue airship manned by unseen allies.

After the posse escapes into the night, they rally with the unknown freedom fighter who calls himself the "Southern Sentinel" The Sentinel helps the party formulate a plan to assassinate Davis at the only place he knows they can get at him—the funeral of Robert E. Lee himself! With luck, the party is successful and Davis is slain. One last act remains to be played out, however. Davis has given Colonel Robert Alexander instructions to destroy the city and the heroes' families if he is killed. The posse must chase their former torturer on one last wild ride to save the city and their own lives!

THE STORY SO FAR...

President Jefferson Davis and his Dixie Rails railroad have become a major pain in Simone LaCroix's evil backside. A few weeks ago, the Baron decided a new President might be more friendly to his own efforts in the Great Rail Wars. He has a powerful ritual capable of killing Davis from afar, but it involves gathering some magical relics associated with his famous victim.

With Davis' famous past, it wasn't hard to come up with two relics right away. But a third was needed to complete the ritual. The Baron's allies in Black River and the creepy Whateley family turned up a third magic item right under the Whateley's nose in Gomorra, California—otherwise known as Doomtown.

A hired gun for the Texas Rangers has one of the President's rifles from the Mexican-American War of 1848. With it and thirteen fresh sacrifices, LaCroix's bokkor could do what an army of assassins could not—kill Jeff Davis.

Unfortunately for LaCroix, voodoo magic is very selective in its targets, and Jeff Davis is not actually Jeff Davis. The real President is long dead, and the doppleganger serving in his place since 1871 is thus immune to the bokkor's misdirected spell.

DARK MINION

The Davis doppleganger is a favored servant of the Reckoners. It uses its usurped office to prolong the Civil War and wage it with the most horrific weapons available. This foments dissent among the populace, but until recently, the Davis regime thwarted its opposition by imposing tyrannical rule martial law. In any event, few live long enough to voice any strenuous objections thanks to the Doppleganger's lethal coterie of Harrowed enforcers, the Nightwatchers.

Ironically, LaCroix's mistake is what draws the heroes into the tale, and changes the course of the Weird West forever.

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL

Every effort has been made to make *Dead Presidents* as complete as possible, but the following *Deadlands: The Weird West* books are recommended as especially useful in running this scenario. Various arcane powers and inventions mentioned in this book are fully detailed in *Book o' the Dead*, *Hucksters & Hexes*, *Fire & Brimstone* and *Smith & Robards*. While *Dead Presidents* is playable without them, substitutions may have to be made in some characters' Profiles if you don't have these books.

Back East: The South (now available from our website) and *Doomtown or Bust!* include thorough descriptions of Richmond and Gomorra (respectively), and while neither tome is required, both are useful in presenting those locations in all their glory. Also, *Back East: The South* contains background information on the Davis doppleganger's regime, including the Nightwatchers.

Again, a Marshal can run *Dead Presidents* with just the *Player's Guide* and *Marshal's Handbook*, but like a twist of lemon in your sarsaparilla, the sourcebooks listed above add a whole lot of extra flavor.

Deadlands D20: Marshals using the D20 system must have *Deadlands D20*. The books mentioned above are also useful for background and maps when needed.

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THE SETUP

Our story begins in Gomorra, California, a brief time after Knicknevin's rampage detailed in the *Doomtown* trading card game storyline. Still exhausted from that battle, the Texas Rangers and Agency operatives in town have reached a peaceful accommodation of sorts, and (coupled with their mutual shortage of able bodies) are less fussy than ever about the allegiances of their freelance operatives. Therefore, while this scenario is written with Ranger (or Southern-affiliated) characters in mind, fudging things to include Yankee sympathizers of sufficiently noble repute shouldn't be too hard.

In this case, the Rangers hire the team because they know and trust them—at least in the greater scheme of things. If that doesn't fit your posse, the Rangers can always blackmail the heroes. In the beginning, the case doesn't really involve natural security, so there isn't any concern there. As things progress, the party is in deep enough that the Rangers must trust them—or blackmail them into this dangerous game.

YOUR NAME HERE, TEXAS RANGER

If the posse already contains a Ranger character, orders reach him through appropriate channels to assemble a band for an assignment. Otherwise, a non-player character, Texas Ranger Hank Ketchum, contacts the posse members. If you've read our award-winning Dime Novels, you should know all about "One-Eye." If not, he's a rough, gruff, one-eyed Ranger who looks not a little like Kenny Rogers. He lost his right eye to a scalpel-wielding horror called the "Butcher."

Ranger Ketchum approaches the heroes around dinner time in their favorite drinking establishment (or

CHAPTER ONE SUMMARY

The heroes are hired by Texas Ranger Hank Ketchum to investigate the disappearance of one of the Ranger's top guns—Daniel Langtry. Hank tells the heroes that Daniel was last seen in the company of three black strangers from New Orleans—likely bokkors working for Bayou Vermillion.

A little footwork next leads the posse to the Collegium, where they get to test a new weird science gizmo and learn that the bokkors likely took Langtry to the town slaughterhouse.

At the slaughterhouse, the heroes attempt to stop the bokkor's ritual, fighting the battle in a slippery pool of putrid blood!

The bokkors defeated, the heroes find a trio of magical relics used for in the dark ritual. The relics point to a famous target—President Jefferson Davis. Unfortunately, for the bokkor, Davis isn't Davis and the selective voodoo spell fails.

some other locale in case you have the world's only teetotaling posse), and buys them a round (or some other appropriately friendly gesture). He uses this as an icebreaker so he can sit with the characters and talk business as quickly as possible.

If the posse has previously worked for the Rangers or has proven their Confederate leanings in a similar fashion, Hank expresses gruff admiration for the characters and their devotion to the Cause, and informs them a similar chance to serve the Confederacy is at hand.

If the heroes have Union leanings, or if they've been involved in shady adventures (i.e. saving the world without the Rangers' approval), Hank basically blackmails them into his service.

In either case, Hank's appeal probably falls on greedy ears, so when someone asks about compensation, Ketchum says they stand to make \$50 apiece up front, and \$100 upon successful completion of their assignment.

If any character haggles, he must make an opposed roll, using his *persuasion* against Ketchum's *scrutinize* of 4d8. Hank offers an additional \$10 for every raise the player gets, up to a \$200 maximum. (Note that actual Rangers aren't eligible for this payday—Jeff Davis has already handed over their monthly allotment of graybacks!)

Ketchum explains the posse's help is needed to investigate rumors of potential trouble in town, and, if necessary, to nip said trouble in the bud, butt, or slimy reptilian tail, as is appropriate. This is about all the detail he can provide, but Hank assures them "We expect it's the type of trouble y'all encountered on yer previous job(s)."

Deadlands D20: The heroes get an additional \$50 if they beat Hank in an opposed Diplomacy check.

THE JOB

Once all the negotiating is out of the way and the posse accepts Ketchum's offer, One-Eye starts with the details. Read or paraphrase the following:

"As you know, the Rangers and Agents in town are workin' together around here for the most part. We ain't invitin' each other to company picnics, and I'm sure we're each keepin' more secrets than we're sharin', but for the most part, we're all playin' nice."

"But what with the Whateleys, Maze Rats, and God-Knows-What-Else operating around here, we've all got our hands full. Now I got a serious missing persons issue. See, we've got a few—hired hands—around here to help out in case the bad guys or the bluebellies stop playing nice. One of 'em, a wily old veteran named Daniel Langtry, has gone missin' along with a few o' his 'associates.' There are also a number of other folks missing around town. That happens

around here so often it might have been missed if it hadn't happened all at once."

"I'm workin' on this case too, but I've got something else I gotta finish first. So I'd like you to track down one of my leads. Three tall black fellas with French accents came into town last night."

Hank waits to see if the heroes realize what he's saying. If not, he adds "Y' know. New Orleans? Bayou Vermillion? Voo-freakin'-doo?" When the posse gets it, Hank continues.

"I don't know if they're related to this Langtry business or not, but I've messed with these types before and I know they ain't here to see the sights. I'm lookin' for a devil bunny myself an'-well, never mind. Anyway, find out what these jokers are up to and get 'em outta here afore they do any harm. They've got a half-dozen hired guns with 'em, so be careful and try not to spill any blood around here if you can help it. Think you can handle that, heroes?"

"I don't know where these fellas are now. They were hangin' around the Waterin' Hole earlier. Like they was waitin' on somethin'. If they're not there, you might want to sidle up to the bar and talk to Charlie Landers. That snoop knows more about what's goin' on aroun' here than I do sometimes."

Hank really is after Clovis the Devil Bunny (see *The Black Circle*). Besides, the Rangers also like to put a little distance between themselves and investigations into Bayou Vermillion's activities. The owner, Baron Simone LaCroix, is one of the South's leading citizens, after all, and his railroad might just win the Great Rail Wars for the Confederacy.

Posse members receive their up-front payment in Confederate bills before they depart on their mission. Any further attempts at negotiating for a higher fee are emphatically rebuffed. There are plenty of other hired guns in

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the Gomorra area who would gladly take the job for half the posse's fee.

CHARLIE KNOWS ALL

The Waterin' Hole is just another of Gomorra's seedy bars. When the heroes arrive, it ought to be shortly before dusk as their meeting with Ketchum took place at dinner time. A dozen or so patrons are about having a few bites of Doomtown mystery meat when the posse walks in.

Charlie Landers is present as promised and knows a few things about the three strangers from down South. He heard they came to town in the dead of the previous night with a well-armed gang in tow. Three well-dressed black men with French accents aren't exactly inconspicuous, so he



knows more, but Charlie expects a decent tip (at least \$25) for more than kind of information.

Assuming Charlie gets his pay, he serves up a few drinks to cover the exchange and starts blabbing. Charlie says the three men were here earlier. They spoke a few words with Daniel Langtry (a regular) and his crew of four men, then the entire group went outside and didn't come back. (The bokkor puppeted Langtry and his men and had them walk to their dooms at the slaughterhouse—see below). Charlie doesn't know why, but he has a bad feeling that something awful is going to happen to Langtry. Soon. The man had a pale, blank look on his face as if he'd seen a ghost when he left. The normally friendly veteran didn't even say bye.

Charlie and Daniel have swapped stories on several occasions, so he knows quite a bit about Langtry. If asked, he'll happily tell all he knows. Read or paraphrase the following should this come up. If it doesn't, the posse might get the information from any other local who knew the Southern veteran.

"Yeah, Dan's a veteran. He fought Back East in the Rail Wars, but he's been around a long time. Dan always bragged he'd fought under Jeff Davis himself in the Mexican War back in '48. He even has one of Davis' rifles he got for savin' the man's life. Told everyone about it. Seems some Mex was about to run Davis through with a bayonet when Langtry plugged 'im."

Charlie knows Daniel was here to help the Rangers, but doesn't say so unless given a good reason to. Charlie's other information is that the strangers were seen leaving the Collegium later on. Langtry and his men weren't with them.

HI, DOCTOR NICK!

The posse has only one solid lead—the Collegium. Someone is present at all hours, so the group should head there immediately. The first person they meet is Doctor Nicholas Zachariasen, who just happens to be the very scientist who spoke to the strangers earlier that day. Dr. Nicholas Zachariasen is a new addition to the Collegium's ranks.

"Dr. Nick," as he is called, has thick spectacles and frazzled hair which clashes with his impeccably tailored suits. He is obsessed with proving himself to the local scientific community and becoming a full member of the Collegium.

Zachariasen listens intently to all the characters' questions, but refuses to divulge what he knows until someone volunteers to test the latest product of his genius—*Dr. Nick's Patented Personal Good Grooming and Depilatory Device*. The doctor is immune to counteroffers. In his estimation, the party should be honored to be some of the first men of the modern age to try his new device. Besides, he's just made some adjustments after a recent mishap and is anxious to see how it works.

HAIR IT COMES!

Dr. Nick's alleged wonder bears a passing resemblance to a flamethrower, consisting of a large, cylindrical canister (which is worn like a rucksack) attached to a flexible hose. The hose connects the tank with a foot-long metal nozzle, whose rectangular opening is partially covered by a fearsome set of iron teeth. Dr. Zachariasen's invention is admittedly still in the development stages, but he predicts it will soon revolutionize the barber's trade by allowing the speedy and perfect cutting of hair!

The cylindrical canister powers the razor-sharp metal teeth, and generates tremendous suction to draw the shorn hair into the ghost-rock core where it's instantly incinerated: no muss, no fuss, and no bother. If one character consents to a haircut, the posse's questions are answered. Should a successful first cut tempt any

additional posse members into volunteering, Dr. Nick happily obliges.

The device has a Reliability of 15, and if that's successfully rolled, Dr. Nick's device performs as advertised. In addition, if Dr. Nick succeeds at a Fair (5) *trade: barber* roll, the brave volunteer receives a fantastic new 'doo and +1 to his *persuasion* rolls (similar to the *purty* Edge). This bonus lasts until his hair grows back out naturally, about a month later. A failed Reliability roll is resolved on the table below.

Deadlands D20: The device has a Reliability of 5! If that's successfully rolled, Dr. Nick's device performs as advertised. In addition, if Dr. Nick succeeds at a DC 10 Craft (barber) roll (he has one rank and an Intelligence bonus of +4), the brave volunteer receives a fantastic new 'doo. His Charisma is raised by +1 for the next month. A failed Reliability roll is resolved on the table below.

MALFUNCTION

Minor Malfunction: Rule #3 Says: Never Get Involved

The cutter goes a bit awry, giving the posse member a really bad, Kevin-Costner-in-*The Bodyguard* cut. The unfortunate character has a -1 to all *persuasion* rolls whenever his appearance comes into play, at least until his hair grows back out.

Deadlands D20: The character suffers -1 Charisma for one month.

Major Malfunction: I Pity Da Fool!

The cutter goes *very* awry, giving the hero a Mr. T. He's either *ugly as sin* or loses the *purty* Edge if he has it.

Deadlands D20: The character's Charisma is reduced by two points.

Catastrophic Malfunction: Way Too Much Off the Top

The cutter goes crazy-ape bonkers and scalps the character. This is the same as a Major Malfunction and inflicts a Serious wound to his noggin.

Deadlands D20: The device inflicts 3d6 damage to the unfortunate hero and suffers the results of the Major Malfunction.

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Regardless of how well or badly the test goes, Dr. Nick upholds his end of the bargain and tells of an occurrence that took place earlier today around noon. Two men and a woman of African extraction came to the Collegium in search of a cutting mechanism. They were referred to Dr. Nick, who was pleased to demonstrate his hair-cutting device for them. Even the test subject's thick, heavy hair proved short work for the grooming device.

Much to Dr. Nick's surprise, after a very minor malfunction requiring the most minimal of adjustments, the gentleman jumped up and cursed at him in French.

Another of the gentlemen apologized for his companion's behavior, but then



asked if the device could be modified to slaughter livestock.

Dr. Nick said removing the safety guards would do the trick, and thought it a wonderful and humane way to quickly remove the head from even the largest steer. He performed the work on one of his devices and delivered it to the town slaughterhouse just a short while ago.

THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE

The town's small slaughterhouse is rarely used as there is little fresh beef around Gomorra. It sits near the corner of Main and Hill Street. If you need a map of the surrounding block, look in *Doomtown or Bust!*

The large wooden doors on the building's eastern side are secured by a heavy iron bar. Only dynamite or arcane means can open them in a timely fashion. The windows are all shuttered, but can be opened with an Impossible (II) *Strength* roll. Their small size permits only one posse member through at a time though.

The door on the northern side has but a simple key lock holding it closed. It can be defeated in a variety of ways. An Onerous (7) *lockpickin'* roll or an Impossible (II) *Strength* roll all gain the posse entry.

Deadlands D20: A Strength roll of 25 is required to break down the door or the shutters. An Open Lock check of 20 also opens the door.

CRIMSON TIDE

The slaughterhouse interior is even more gruesome than usual. The carcasses of thirteen headless men hang inverted throughout the room, discoloring the walls with a viscous red splatter. The building's drains are clogged shut, and as a result, an inch-deep pool of steaming blood covers the floor. Adding to the eeriness, the blood

radiates a deep crimson light, which illuminates the building interior. This is the magic of the ritual, already begun.

DOORWAY TO HELL

Several rough-looking armed men are scattered about the room (three for every two heroes is recommended).

The three bokkor stand before the suspended cadavers whispering an arcane chant. Before them sits one of Dr. Nick's "grooming machines," now broken as it's clogged with human bone. Their recitations conclude with emphatic gestures and shouts, provoking a vivid red flare from the walls and floor.

PRE-MATCH STIPULATIONS

The sanguineous panorama inside the slaughterhouse forces each posse member to make a Fair (5) *guts* Check on first entering, which Gomorra's Fear Level 4 boosts to TN (9). Any movement within the slaughterhouse requires a *Nimbleness* roll to avoid slipping and falling, as per the chart below.

Deadlands D20: The heroes must make Will saves when first stepping into the blood. The DC is 14 due to Gomorra's Fear Level 4. The appropriate Dexterity DCs for moving about the floor are listed on the table.

BLOODY FLOOR

Action	TN	DC
Turning in place	3	5
Moving	5	10
Running	9	20
Getting up	7*	15

*(-2 TN (cumulative to -6) on each consecutive attempt—both systems)

The darkness hides Bayou Vermillion's hired guns from view, giving them +4 to their *sneak* rolls.

In addition to being unnerving, the glowing blood is an inadequate source of illumination. The resulting poor visibility inflicts a -4 modifier to all *shootin'* rolls.

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Deadlands D20: The gunmen get +4 to their Hide skill. The moderate darkness grants a 20% miss chance to all attacks.

BLOOD CALLS OUT FOR BLOOD

There are three hired goons for every two posse members present, stationed roughly around the building's interior (they don't want to be too close to the bokkor during their ritual). Once the fighting begins, they use the hanging corpses as cover. Given the slippery conditions, they remain in place and shoot at the heroes until given a compelling reason to move. The goons fight as long as the evil voodooists do, but flee if the magicians are beaten.

The three bokkor animate the dead hanging on the hooks to grab at the heroes, then launch volleys of black magic. Treat the dead as normal walkin' dead. They can free themselves from the hooks in 1d4 rounds if they forfeit their attacks.

The bokkor and gunmen run for it if the battle goes badly, their foul work in Gomorra done. The bokkor are fanatically loyal—they'll slit their own throats to avoid capture. The gunmen are more willing to surrender, but don't know anything particularly useful (see **Resolution**, below).

PROFILE: THE BOKKOR

Corporeal: D:3d6, N:2d6, Q:4d6, S:3d6, V:2d8

Fightin': knife 3d6, sneak 4d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:3d8, M:2d6, Sm:2d8, Sp:3d8

Academia: occult 3d8, faith 4d8

Edges: Friends in high places 4 (Baron LaCroix)

Hindrances: Loyal (to LaCroix)

Pace: 6

Size: 6

Wind: 16

Special Abilities:

Black Magic: Cloak o' evil 3, puppet 2, bolt o' doom 4, zombie 3

Gear: Daggers (treat as Small Knives)

Description: The bokkor wear the familiar raiments of voodoo priests: bone necklaces, skull-like face paint, etc.

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Deadlands D20: Bokkor (3): Black Magician: CR 5; Level 5; Medium-size Human; HD 5d6; hp 25; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +4 melee (ceremonial dagger 1d6+1/19-20/x2); AL LE; SV Fort +5 Ref +2 Will +5; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 10.

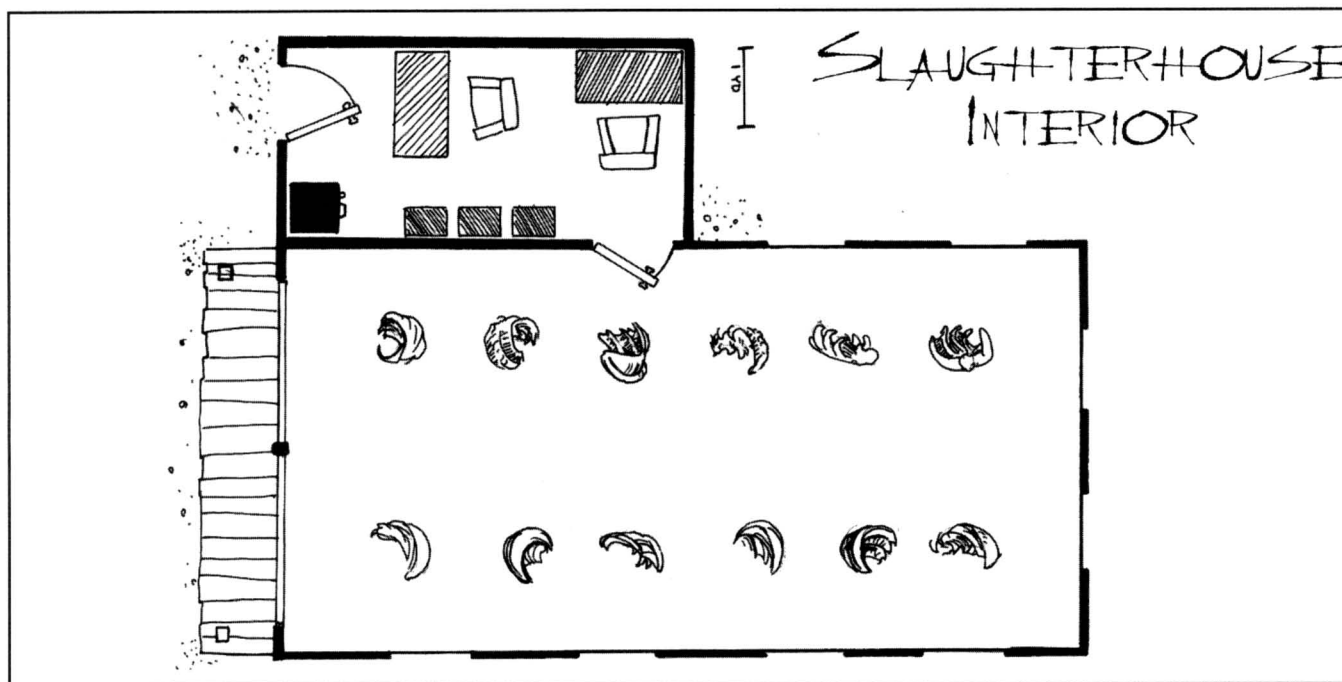
Skills and Feats: Black Magic +10, Concentration +9, Gather Information +4, Heal +4, Hide +3, Knowledge (occult) +11, Listen +6, Spellcraft +11, Search +5, Spot +4; Empower spell (soul blast), Empower spell (animate dead), Firearms, Simple Weapons.

Spells: 1—charm person, mage armor, soul blast, 3—animate dead

Possessions: As above.

Description: As above.





PROFILE: HIRED GOONS

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d6, Q:3d6, S:3d6, V:3d6

Climbin' 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 4d6, horse ridin' 4d6, lockpickin' 2d6, shootin': pistol 4d6, sneak 4d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:3d8, Sm:3d6, Sp:3d6

Area knowledge: Gomorra 3d6, gamblin' 3d6, guts 3d6, overawe 2d8, ridicule 2d6, search 2d6, streetwise 2d6, trackin' 2d6

Edges: Brave

Hindrances: Greedy, mean as a rattler

Pace: 6

Size: 6

Wind: 12

Gear: Double-Action Colt Peacemakers with 50 rounds of ammo, 3d6 dollars each.

Description: Dirty and disreputable, these unwashed, unkempt and unshaven louts are nothing more than typical guttersnipes hired by Bayou Vermillion for jobs in towns where walkin' dead aren't acceptable. Most are from New Orleans, but a few have been picked up between there and Gomorra.

Deadlands D20: Gunmen: Warriors; Level 3: CR 3; Medium-size Humans; HD 5d8; hp 28; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +5 (Colt double-action pistols 2d6/20/x2); AL NE; SV Fort +5 Ref +3 Will +0; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +1, Move Silently +3, Ride +3, Spot +1; Firearms, Improved Initiative, Intimidate +2, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Simple Weapons

Possessions: As above.

Description: As above.

RESOLUTION

Ranger Ketchum and reinforcements arrive if and when the Marshal deems it appropriate, saving the posse's bacon if required. If things are that rough for the heroes, though, you'd best rethink this whole adventure, Marshal, because it gets a whole lot worse from this point forward.

Any captured goons who are persuaded to talk have little of use to relate. They're just gunmen hired by the bokkor directly to stand guard over the ritual, and nothing more. They know nothing about the ritual itself, except that it was important to capture Daniel Langtry and get his old souvenir rifle intact.

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CURIOSITIES

Besides the gore and corpses, the slaughterhouse contains three objects of interest on the floor beneath the bodies: Langtry's rifle, a framed painting, and an old family Bible. All are drenched in blood, but if properly cleansed, contain clues to their origins. All three of these items are relics, and radiate faint, good-natured magic if so detected.

These are Jefferson Davis' personal effects. Precisely, they are the rifle Davis carried as a Mexican War hero; a picture of his late, trusted elder brother Joseph, and a painting of his beloved first wife "Knoxie".

The Rangers have no problem with the characters examining the items, but are adamant about keeping them.

Anyone who makes a Hard (9) *academia: occult* roll realizes that black magic instead of true *vodoun* was involved here.

Deadlands D20: Realizing black magic instead of true voodoo was used is a Knowledge (occult) or Spellcraft roll of DC 25 or higher.

JEFF DAVIS' RIFLE

The rifle is an old percussion-cap model. It's a short-barreled, two-bander model (as opposed to the longer-barreled, three-band rifle muskets more widely carried), which has not been fired in some time. An Incredible (11) *shootin': rifle/Smarts* roll identifies the weapon as a U.S. Model 1841 Rifle, the famous "Mississippi Rifle" so-named because of that state's volunteers employing them with conspicuous success during the Mexican War.

Power: The rifle does 4d10 damage. Double that to Mexicans.

Deadlands D20: Identifying the rifle is a DC 15 Knowledge (History) roll. The rifle has a x3 critical, or a x4 critical if used against a Mexican.

THE PORTRAIT

The painting appears to be several decades old. It's a portrait of a lovely young woman; one of apparent aristocratic means (based on the gown she's depicted as wearing). An

inscription reads, "Sarah Knox Davis-1835."

Power: Any true Davis (not the doppelganger) within 20 feet of the picture is not affected by disease or poison, and suffers only half damage from normal attacks.

Deadlands D20: As above.

THE BIBLE

The Bible has an inscription on the inside that reads, to Joseph, from your beloved brother. A family tree is also inscribed, making it very clear this once belonged to Joseph Davis, brother to Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

Power: Joe's Bible acts like a battery for the blessed, holding 15 Wind points that may be used for powering miracles. The used Wind returns at the rate of one point per hour.

Deadlands D20: The Bible contains 15 spell points. These recharge at the rate of one point per hour.

AND NOW, A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS

Ranger Ketchum urges everyone to clear out before the local law arrives on the scene. The posse is told to report back to the Rangers' camp the following day where they are paid in full. The heroes are thanked for their invaluable assistance and reminded to remain discrete about the previous night's events. Hank thinks the posse's intervention stopped the ritual in the nick of time.

He is quite mistaken.

THE BOUNTY

Volunteering to be the first test

subject for Dr. Nick's device: 1 red chip to the trusting soul.

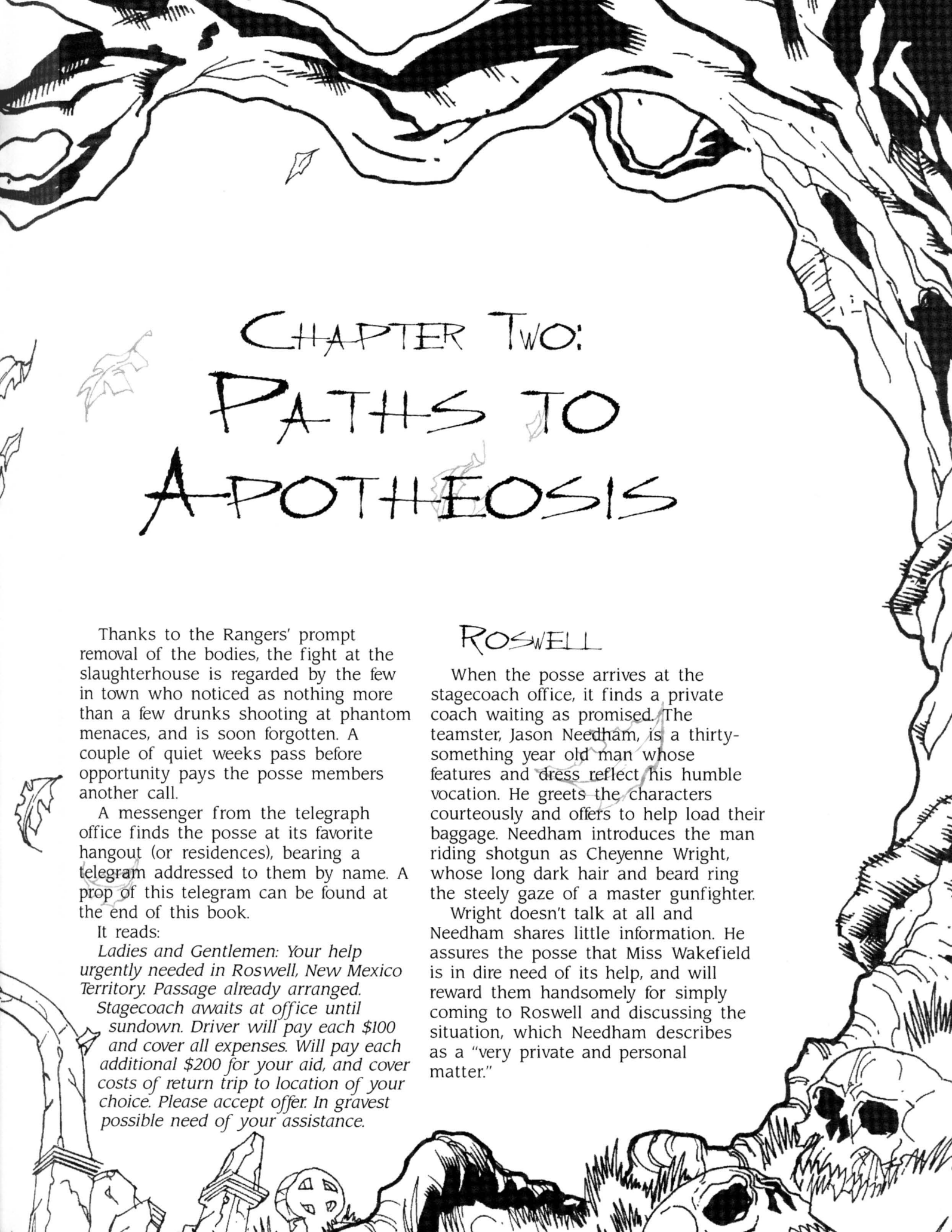
Defeating the *bokkor* and the hired goons: 1 red chip each.

Identifying the relics as belonging to Jefferson Davis: 1 white chip to the first to state this theory.

Detecting magic on Davis' effects: 1 blue chip to the spellcaster.

CHEY
ENNE





CHAPTER TWO: PATHS TO APOTHEOSIS

Thanks to the Rangers' prompt removal of the bodies, the fight at the slaughterhouse is regarded by the few in town who noticed as nothing more than a few drunks shooting at phantom menaces, and is soon forgotten. A couple of quiet weeks pass before opportunity pays the posse members another call.

A messenger from the telegraph office finds the posse at its favorite hangout (or residences), bearing a telegram addressed to them by name. A prop of this telegram can be found at the end of this book.

It reads:

Ladies and Gentlemen: Your help urgently needed in Roswell, New Mexico Territory. Passage already arranged.

Stagecoach awaits at office until sundown. Driver will pay each \$100 and cover all expenses. Will pay each additional \$200 for your aid, and cover costs of return trip to location of your choice. Please accept offer. In gravest possible need of your assistance.

ROSWELL

When the posse arrives at the stagecoach office, it finds a private coach waiting as promised. The teamster, Jason Needham, is a thirty-something year old man whose features and dress reflect his humble vocation. He greets the characters courteously and offers to help load their baggage. Needham introduces the man riding shotgun as Cheyenne Wright, whose long dark hair and beard ring the steely gaze of a master gunfighter.

Wright doesn't talk at all and Needham shares little information. He assures the posse that Miss Wakefield is in dire need of its help, and will reward them handsomely for simply coming to Roswell and discussing the situation, which Needham describes as a "very private and personal matter."

CHAPTER TWO SUMMARY

The heroes travel to Roswell only to find that their mysterious employer is actually the legendary Robert E. Lee. "Marse Robert" asks the posse for help in a most grievous situation—to discover what has happened to CSA President Jefferson Davis.

Moments after the meeting, Lee's rail car is attacked and the heroes witness the general's tragic demise.

The party continues on what remains of Lee's train to Davis Island in Mississippi. There they rescue Davis' wife and daughter from the clutches of the President's Harrowed bodyguards, the Nightwatchers.

The grateful Mrs. Davis tells her saviours that to discover what is wrong with the President, they must travel to the last place he seemed himself—Kentucky.

After discovering Davis' killers—a group of hungry greater dopplegangers, the weary heroes are captured by more of Davis' Nightwatchers.

Needham wants to leave as quickly as possible, but if kept waiting, follows instructions and doesn't leave Gomorra until sundown. When the characters finally agree to go, Needham pays them each \$100 in Confederate graybacks just after their baggage is loaded.

A BONNY TRIP

The stage-ride to Roswell takes a little more than two weeks if all goes well, and for maybe the first time in the history of the Weird West, it does. The posse members' entire journey is relatively agreeable and pleasant, and trouble never finds them, even if they go looking for it. You see, the posse has acquired some new friends, and friends don't let friends get devoured by Mojave rattlers.

First of all, there are Needham and Wright. They're wholly devoted to delivering the posse safely to Roswell, at the cost of their very lives, if need be. Such dedication stems from loyalty to their employer, about whom more is revealed later. Needham's skills and experience as a teamster enables him to avoid known trouble-spots, and Wright's a deadly gunslinger who's well-armed in anticipation of robbers, bushwhackers, and abominations. He needn't have bothered, as it turns out. The second of the posse's new group of "friends" has seen to that.

GUARDIAN DEVILS

Reverend Ezekiah Grimme's operatives got word to him of the slaughterhouse raid. Despite the ritual's apparent failure, if it were commonly suspected that Jefferson Davis had been corrupted by black magic, the resulting scandal would further Grimme's designs on the Great Maze. Therefore, he has taken steps to guarantee the posse's safety en route. A sizable contingent of Grimme's Guardian Angel soldiers live up to their billing and deal with potential trouble before the posse ever gets close to it. In addition, some of the Reverend's elite shock troops, the Avenging Angels, are present to add their magical firepower to the mix.

In sum, the posse spends two weeks subjected to the most unnerving quiet imaginable. The Marshal is encouraged to milk this foreboding silence for all the player paranoia it's worth.

A TRAIN TO CATCH

The long journey ends at the rail lines just outside of Roswell proper. A passenger train awaits there, and the posse is led inside the mail car. The car is empty save for the requisite postal tools and a small wooden table with sufficient chairs for the posse and one other person. Needham and Wright ask the characters to be seated, and then stand guard outside by the door. Moments later, a most unexpected figure appears inside the car.

MARSE ROBERT

As Robert E. Lee enters, his imposing and regal presence fills the room with a palpable magnetism. Lee, dressed in civilian finery, asks the posse to be seated (assuming the heroes remembered their manners) as he occupies the lone available chair.

You know the drill, Marshal.

"A most good day to you, ladies and gentlemen. I pray you are all well. I ask your forgiveness for the deceptions used in bringing you here, but it was necessary to confound our enemy's intelligence. Please be assured I am most thankful for your presence."

Ranger Ketchum, Lee's contact in Gomorra, informed the General the posse might have knowledge of interest to him (the "Serena Wakefield" signature in the telegram was in fact a coded reply indicating he should take steps to ensure the posse came to Roswell). Due to security considerations, Ketchum was unable to include details about the slaughterhouse raid, and thus Lee is anxious to question the characters.

Since Lee remains General-in-Chief of all Confederate armed forces, the Rangers' order to keep quiet is countermanded by his inquiries, so they have no binding reason not to share what they know (and two hundred very good reasons each, to share). Lee is particularly interested in the three objects found at the scene, and knows Davis' history well enough to deduce the President is their former owner based on the posse's descriptions. As a result, the General's normally unexpressive visage becomes noticeably grim after reaching this weighty conclusion.

DEMANDS OF HONOR AND DUTY

After the posse concludes its account of the raid, there is a lengthy pause before Lee breaks the silence.

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"There are many who have long suspected that all is not well with the President's state of mind. Your report adds great weight to such suspicions. Still, we cannot be certain if the President is under the influence of some bewitchment or not. Duty and honor demand these doubts be either proven or laid to rest, and no alternative remains but to act in accordance."

"Gentlemen, my own agents cannot get close to the President. I believe he knows we are suspicious and has shunned contact. My men are followed and watched as they move about our homeland. I need independent freelancers, reliable men interested in the good of all



mankind to help us in this quest. Though it shames me to admit it, I even have reason to believe that President Davis is deliberately extending the war. Every time we get close to peace, our own agents instigate or provoke some new hostility."

"Should we discover something is wrong with our President, and find away to set things right, there is a small chance we can heal the wounds of our bleeding nations. I need not speak of courage, or duty, or honor to ones such as you. May I count on your assistance?"

If the posse refuses to help the General, he says to it:

"As you wish. My subordinates will see you are compensated as promised. However, conscience demands I tell you that, in the past, many who have learned too much of the President's affairs have come to bad ends. This I know from firsthand experience, so I urge you to be evermore on your guard. May God bless and keep you all."

With that, Lee departs.

Agreeing to aid Lee's investigation elicits the following response instead.

"There is one person who can remove all doubt surrounding the President's fitness. My intentions are that you should proceed to Mississippi and seek her advice. I shall remain here and marshal my resources for whatever course of action becomes necessary thereafter."

When the posse asks about the woman's identity, the famously inscrutable General says only:

"This train shall convey you directly to her residence, and the point of your arrival shall inform you at once of whom you seek. Conscience demands I tell you that, in the past, many who have learned too much of the President's affairs have come to bad ends. This I know from firsthand experience, but I offer you whatever safeguards are at my disposal."

He hands the nearest character a sealed envelope. Inside is a simple noting reading "Second Presbyterian Church. Look for a sentinel." General Lee then says:

"Guard this at all hazards. Should disaster befall our efforts, proceed to Richmond, Virginia at all haste and heed the instructions within. Heed the instructions and do what is necessary thereafter in accordance with honor and the Almighty."

The General then rises and departs, saying to the posse, "May God bless and keep you all."

Jason Needham pays the posse its bounty and conducts the characters either back to the stagecoach (if they refused to help Lee) or to an adjoining railcar (if they agreed) one ahead of Lee's own. If the characters are Mississippi-bound, they travel in their own private car (see the map on the following page), equipped with comfortable and elegant furnishings, a fireplace and even a well-stocked bar. Their baggage is soon transferred from the stagecoach, and the train departs.

A FLEETING GLIMPSE OF CALVARY

Whether the posse is aboard the stage or the train, the next scene plays out just before its conveyance pulls out of sight. The end car decouples from the rest of the train, and remains behind. Lee and several of his men are

visible and there is much activity and discussion amongst them. Suddenly, a massive explosion bursts forth from the center of the railcar, shattering the vehicle in a shower of wood splinters.

When the thunderous roar subsides many terrible seconds later, there is left only a blazing inferno. Behind the smoke and fire are visible a phalanx of mounted men clad in obsidian longcoats, striding slowly and deliberately toward the wreckage. A few half-dead survivors try to stand and fire at the dark figures, but are quickly gunned down.

CANDIGRAM

At that moment, "Cheyenne" Wright casually enters the posse's railcar, carrying what appears to be another piece of the characters' baggage. This pretense is dropped after he suddenly opens the bag and from it draws a Colt Revolving Shotgun. His visage then changes to that of a pallid corpse, and his garb is similar to that of Lee's black-clad assassins.

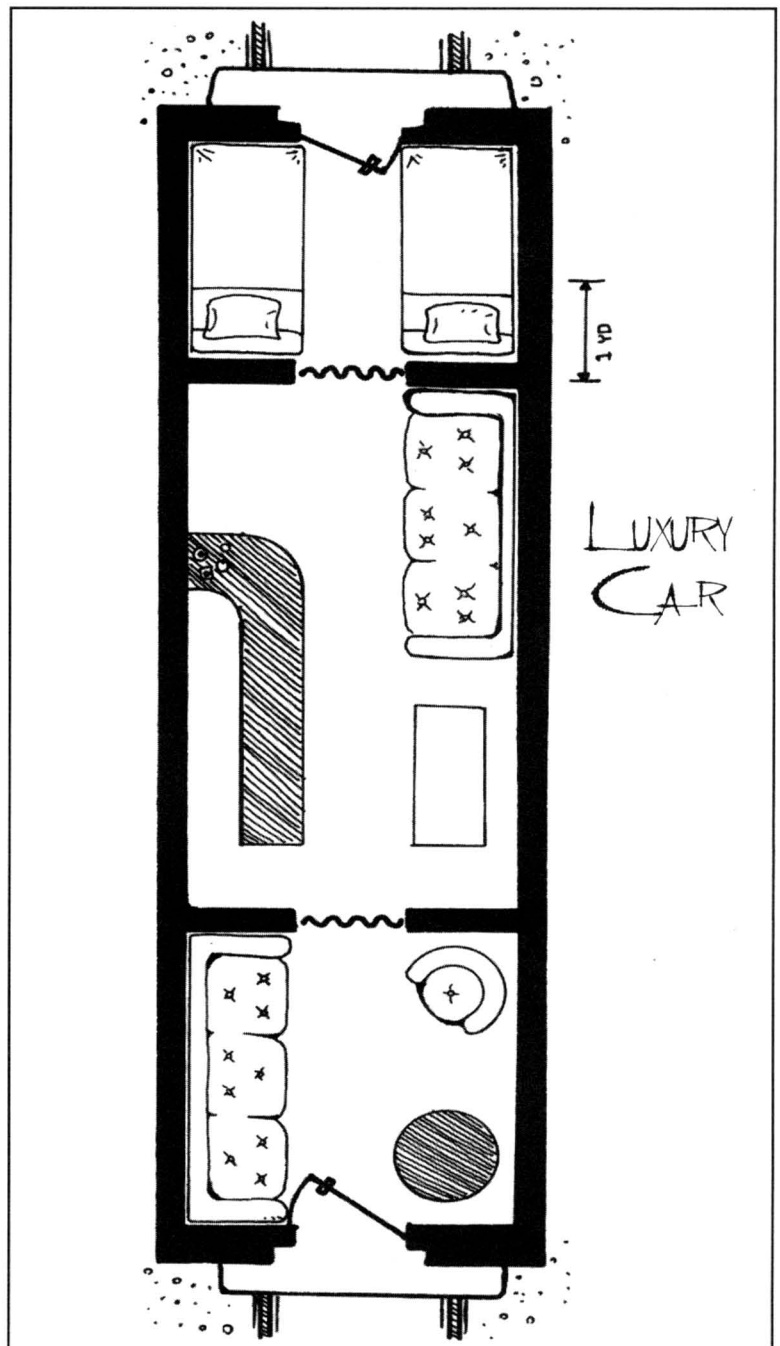
In truth, Wright is dead in the car ahead. The killer who borrowed his face, Lt. Max Trebilcock, now looks to add some of the posse to today's tally. Like Lee's murderers, Trebilcock is one of the Doppelganger's covert police, the Nightwatchers, who permanently silence its most outspoken opponents. Each member is a Harrowed veteran whose manitous have complete Dominion over their hosts, and operates with the full backing of the Davis administration.

Ideally, Trebilcock wants to kill everyone aboard the train, but he'll take whatever homicides he can get and leap from the speeding railcar when the battle goes against him. However, if it's the posse that's in danger of extinction, Jason Needham appears in the nick of time with his pair of scatterguns and convinces the Nightwatcher to flee. In the unlikely event Trebilcock (or any other Nightwatcher encountered during this scenario) is captured, his only response to questions is "All of you are dead. You just haven't stopped breathing—yet." The captured man tries to escape until he is forcibly destroyed by the party. The

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demon inside can't parlay his way out of this one (unless by a trick of some sort). The thing isn't happy about it, but the Reckoners care little for such small sacrifices when the reward is so high.

If the characters are aboard the stagecoach, Trebilcock (disguised as Wright) rides shotgun and sucker-punches Needham unconscious (until



and if he's needed to save the posse). The battle then takes place in and around the stagecoach. With luck, even heroes who refused Lee's plea now realize they must participate or be hunted because Lee's mysterious enemy *believes* they are acting against him.

LT. MAX TREBILCOCK

Use the statistics for the Nightwalkers on page 27. Trebilcock has the following powers: Death mask 5, unholy reflexes 5. He carries a Colt Revolving shotgun with 10 buckshot shells in it, a Colt Army revolver with 50 rounds, and a large knife. Trebilcock has all the standard looks of a Nightwatcher: pale flesh, all-black clothing, the smells of death, etc. He wants to teach the heroes a lesson, hopefully killing at least one before having to retreat.

JUST SAY "NO"

Should the posse want to go back to the scene of the explosion and tangle with the rest of the Nightwatchers, Needham regrettably refuses to allow it. In his estimation, there's no one there the characters can help now, and stopping the train (or stagecoach) severely endangers their chances of completing their mission in Mississippi.

Needham's is next in charge now, so the train's engineers take orders only from him. If the posse's dead-set on mixing it up with the Corpses in Black, they will have to commandeer the locomotive by force and turn it around themselves. Use comparable character archetypes in the *Weird West Player's Guide* for the Dixie Rails men if events warrant, but if the heroes lack the skills required to operate their specific conveyance, point out the potentially disastrous consequences. In any event, they're quite sure Lee is dead and there's not much point in joining him.

Assuming they follow Needham's advice, move on to the next section, **Gone to Texas.**

If a stubborn posse manages to jump off the train to fight with the Nightwatchers, they quickly find themselves alone in a losing fight against a score of experienced Harrowed (whose statistics are found on page 27). It's not likely even an experienced posse can beat these odds, especially since the Nightwatchers are smart enough to retreat on their horses and pick off the posse from a distance if need be. If this is the case, Grimme's ever-watchful Guardian Angels intervene and create a diversion before the posse is completely wiped out, providing them a golden opportunity to make a run for it. (If the characters fail to take the opportunity, you have our permission to inflict an official PEG-brand TPK.: Total Posse Kill). The characters are then left to hoof it into Roswell on their own, and must use their own wits and means to get Back East. Otherwise, the scenario can continue apace from there.

GONE TO TEXAS

Just across the Texas border, the engine stops to reveal its true Dixie Rails colors and resumes a normal passenger route as a cover for the posse's mission. As the train leaves the empty spaces of West Texas for the isolated forts and towns of the state's central region, the signs of a nation in mourning grow omnipresent.

The heroes are off to Mississippi.

IN SORROW'S WAKE

The countryside is grim as the train passes through Dallas, the rest of East Texas and then Louisiana.

By the third day of the four-day long trip, news of Lee's death has reached the public. Flags fly at half-mast and women wear black. Men display their gray uniforms no matter how old and tattered, and every eye is tear-filled. All across the Confederacy, people struggle to come to grips with the enormity of their loss. The South's greatest hero is now transformed into a legendary, almost Christ-like, iconic figure.

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After crossing the Big Muddy into Mississippi, the train's course changes near the forsaken city of Vicksburg and parallels the River southward for about twenty-five miles. There, the four-day-long flight from Roswell comes to an end.

Just before midnight.

ISLAND OF TERROR

The train comes to a halt on a track beside the Mississippi near midnight. Needham points west through the darkness to a large, dark island just off the near bank of the Mississippi. Read or paraphrase the following.

"Here it is, ladies and gentlemen. That hunk o' darkness out in the river is Davis Island. The President's family lives there, though Davis himself is in Richmond. General Lee is—was—not allowed on the island, but he suspects—damn, suspected—that the President's family is being held there against their will. If that's the case, find out why. Rescue 'em if you think you can and maybe they'll tell us what's wrong with the bastard. If they're all fine and dandy, then we'll have to look elsewhere. But I got a sneakin' suspicion that just ain't the case."

"It ain't in me not to go along, but someone's got to look for new help if things go too bad."

"One word of warning. The house is protected by Nightwatchers—likely more of those fellas that killed the General. They're, um, special. Harrowed if you know what that means. They're also mean as Hell. If you get in a fight with 'em, make it hurt. An' go for their heads."

The characters head to the island unescorted, but before they go, Needham allows them to take along anything they require from the train's arsenal. It contains an ample supply of

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shotguns, rifles (mostly Winchesters), pistols (mostly Colts) and even 2d6 sticks of dynamite, as well as all the ammunition the posse could want. Needham says he was told to expect trouble here, but it remains the posse's call what to carry.

DON'T PAY THE FERRYWOMAN

The heroes exit the train and make their way down a hill on a rugged path toward the river's edge. Near the path lies a small rustic cabin, located a safe distance up the hill from the Mississippi's frequently flooding waters. Closer to the river, a large wooden winch connects to a sizable pulley on the island with a hefty gauge of hempen rope. Anchored to the rope is an empty flatboat, which is beached on the near banks.

No safer or drier means of getting to the other side is visible, so the posse probably heads in the ferry's direction. As the characters advance toward the operating mechanism, a pair of winsome forms emerge from the cabin. Two plainly dressed but extremely lovely women approach the heroes and welcome them warmly, especially the males. They introduce themselves as Marguerite Frey and Lisa Kenison, war widows in the employ of Mrs. Jefferson Davis, charged with operating the island's ferry system.

Any questions the posse puts to them are cheerfully answered, and the two ladies report that all is sweetness and light in the Davis household. Between answering queries, Frey and Kenison do their best to charm and beguile the heroes, and present themselves as wholly innocent and unthreatening. So it seems when the characters finally board the ferry to Davis Island.



THE CROSSING

Frey and Kenison adamantly resist any and all proffered assistance from the posse in operating the winch. It might hurt some character's sense of gentlemanly obligation, but if anyone stays behind to help the ladies, the posse is then split. In all likelihood, the players long ago learned what a really bad idea that is in *Deadlands*, so any offers of help probably die on the vine.

A character who makes an Onerous (7) *Cognition* roll notices the brown wood of the flatboat's floor is darkly stained in numerous places. It reminds the sharp-eyed hero of bloodstains, but any suggestion to that effect is charmingly laughed off by Frey and Kenison. The stains are merely the result of their clumsy attempts to

improve the ferry's appearance with cheaply made wood stain.

The 20' by 60' flatboat has ample space for the characters and all their gear, and once under way, makes a leisurely pace across the Big Muddy. Despite their slight stature, Frey and Kenison operate the winch with vigor and relative ease. Unless a character specifically states he's maintaining a vigilant eye on the two ladies, the posse members' minds are focused elsewhere, perhaps on their mission or on the raging river beneath them.

The total distance across is about one hundred yards. At the halfway mark, things take an interesting turn.

FEMME FATALES

Frey and Kenison's background story was true, up to the point where they omitted selling their souls (effectively) in exchange for increased acumen in the huckster's game. After their husbands' demise in the war, consequential bitterness drove the two friends to master Hoyles' secrets together, and to seek greater arcane power at all costs.

Their success in dealing with some meddlesome suitors brought them to the Nightwatchers' attention. One of them, Colonel Pat Phalen, sought out the girls and put them to work in exchange for several juicy secrets of the occult.

The two huckstresses' treachery and supernatural abilities also make them invaluable for occasions when interlopers have to be disposed of quickly and quietly.

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU

As the ferry reaches the midpoint of its voyage, Frey and Kenison stop the winch and begin throwing hexes at the stranded characters. The heroes have no controls by which to manipulate the boat and no real cover to hide behind.

At 50 yards away, the huckstresses make for elusive targets. To make matters worse for the good guys, the ladies also have the hefty winch mechanism for cover.

As they laugh madly and mockingly at the characters' plight, the huckstresses pursue a simple strategy: kill the entire posse as quickly as possible. Their *chain lightnin'* spell is ideal for this purpose, but they're certainly willing to employ different hexes as the situation changes (for example, casting *hard water* as a character tries to swim for safety).

Deadlands D20: The ladies use *chain lightning* to attack the hapless heroes.

PROFILE: THE HUCKSTRESSES

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:2d6, Q:3d8, S:3d6, V:4d8

Climbin' 2d6, dodge 3d6, sleight o' hand 4d8, sneak 3d6, swimmin' 5d6, teamster 2d6

Mental: C:3d10, K:2d8, M:2d10, Sm:4d10, Sp:1d8

Academia: occult 5d8, area knowledge: southwestern Mississippi 4d8, bluff 5d10, guts 3d8, persuasion 5d10, scrutinize 4d10, search 3d10

Edges: Arcane background: huckster, friends in high places 2 (the Nightwatchers), old hand, purty, "the voice" (soothing)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, loco -1, yearnin' -3 (greater arcane power)

Pace: 6

Size: 6

Wind: 16

Special Abilities:

Hucksters: Hexslingin' 5; Tricks: Beggar's banquet, groom, likker up; Hexes: Air bubble, black lightnin', critter ward, hard water, pardners, silver-tongued devil, soul blast, watchdog

Gear: One copy of *Hoyle's*, 1805 Edition

Description: The two ladies are never anything but plainly dressed, but until they turn on unwary travelers, still seem to be the most lovely, charming ladies in all of Dixie.

Deadlands D20: Marguerite Frey and Lisa Kenison: Huckstresses; Level 5: CR 5; Medium-size Humans; HD 5d6; hp 27, 32; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +5 ranged, +3 melee; AL NE; SV Fort +2 Ref +6 Will +4; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 14.

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Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Concentration +6, Decipher Script +9, Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +7, Hexslingin' +11, Hide +4, Innuendo +2, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Search +5, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +7, Swim +2; Extra Spell Points, Firearms, Iron Will, Simple Weapons.

Spells: *Spell Points 43; 0—detect magic, mage hand, resistance, 1—animate rope, charm person, color spray, grease, mage armor, shield, 2—blur, cat's grace, summon swarm, 3—dispel magic, 6—chain lightning**. (5th level hucksters cannot normally cast 6th level spells—the girls get this spell because it's roughly equivalent with the black lightnin' spell from Deadlands.)

Possessions: As above.

Description: As above.

WAIST DEEP IN THE BIG MUDDY

If the two lil' ol' Southern girls are kicking the big, bad posse's collective hindquarters too heinously, the Avenging Angels can put in an early appearance and save their skins. As a courtesy, Rev. Grimme's little helpers even winch the characters over to the island before they depart.

The huckstresses have a backup plan of their own, in the event the heroes prove more than a match for them, one of the ladies simply cuts the winch-line. (If possible, the other attempts to keep the posse pinned down with her hexslinging.) The rope takes 10 points of damage before it's severed, and at that point both the flatboat and its passengers are at the mercy of the river. Of course, the rope is attached to a winch on the opposite side of the river as well, so the heroes could use it to pull themselves across. One character moves the ferry at a Pace of 2. Each additional hand, up to four other individuals, adds one point of Pace to the raft's speed.

A posse with high *swimmin'* Aptitudes may try to Mark Spitz its way across the intervening 50 yards, but faces an applicable TN (5) and the certain ruination of its ammo. If the characters remain on the untethered flatboat, they may find themselves in a tug-o'-war with Ol' Man River himself.

The less heroic alternative is to stay aboard the flatboat until it either runs aground and smashes itself to toothpicks or winds up in the Gulf of Mexico, whichever comes first. Given those choices, the characters probably start looking for their water wings.

Posse members with available Action Cards can attempt to seize the severed rope prior to the boat slipping free of it, which it does on the round after being cut. Grabbing and holding onto the rope requires a *Strength* roll against TN (13).

Deadlands D20: The thick rope takes 5 points of damage to sever. Pulling the raft via the rope gives it a Speed of 5. Each additional character adds two to the Speed. Swimming the river has a DC of 15 (rough water).

MISSISSIPPI TWO-STEP

Once the characters reach Davis Island, they find the walk to meet their contact is a spooky one as the sounds of the river provide a pervasive and haunting aural accompaniment. Impenetrably thick brier patches surround the plank road on both sides, and the boards sink deep into the mud when trod upon.

Davis Island's Fear Level is currently at Level 4, and as one might expect, that attracts abominations just like blood in the water draws sharks. Among the creatures so enticed are a pair of will o' the wisps hovering around the plank road after nightfall, waiting to hypnotize unwary travelers into self-destructive acts.

A THORNY SITUATION

The will o' the wisps' favorite tactic is to convince victims to pull a Brer Rabbit. Any character who succumbs to their spell charges into the briers, suffering 3d4 Wind damage per round.

These abominations want to feast on the delicious pain for as long as possible, but if the heroes manage to damage them seriously, they retreat to the sanctuary of the briers. (For complete details on the Will o' the Wisp, see the original *Rascals, Varmints & Critters*.)

Deadlands D20: Victims in the brier patch lose 1d4 hit points per round.

PROFILE: WILL O' THE WISPS

Corporeal: D:3d6, N:4d12+4, Q:3d6, S:2d4, V:4d8

Dodge 3d12+4

Mental: C:3d4, K:3d6, M:2d6, Sm:4d8, Sp:2d10

Bluff 4d8, overawe 3d6, persuasion 5d6

Pace: 16 (Flying)

Size: 2

Wind: 18

Error: 5

Special Abilities:

Captivation: A will o' the wisp may enthrall anyone who looks at it by winning an opposed *Spirit* roll. If the abomination wins, it takes control of the viewer's actions for the next 10 minutes. The victim violently resists all attempts to prevent him from obeying the abomination's instructions, but may attempt another opposed *Spirit* roll (with a -2 penalty) if a comrade succeeds at an Onerous (7) *leadership* roll. Each will o' the wisp may only captivate one victim at a time.

Insubstantiality: Will o' the wisps have only one hit location: the guts, but their plasma-like forms are equivalent to Armor Value 3. If "killed" by sufficient wounds, they vanish, only to reappear the following night.

Pain Drain: These creatures feed on the physical pain of others, and whenever any creature within 100 yards moves to a higher Wound Modifier level, the will o' the wisp

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automatically heals one wound level. If a will o' the wisp accumulates 10 surplus wound levels, it divides itself into two of its kind.

Weakness: Electrical attacks inflicting sufficient wounds permanently destroy will o' the wisps.

Description: These creatures resemble glowing spheres of light about the size of a person's head. They communicate by "blinking", and may convey messages to humans via Morse code.

Deadlands D20: Will o' the Wisps:

CR 6: Small Aberration (Air); HD 9d8; hp 40; Init +13 (+9 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd Fly 50 ft (perfect); AC 29 (+1 size, +9 Dex, +9 deflection); Atk+16 melee (shock 2d8); AL CE; SV Fort +3 Ref +12 Will +9; Str —, Dex 29, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Listen +17, Search +14, Spot +17; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Initiative

Special Qualities:

Captivation: At will, a will o' the wisp may cast *charm person*. The creature may only have one victim charmed at once.

Incorporeal: Will o' the wisps can only be hurt by magic weapons and spells. Even when hit by magic weapons, the creature has a 50% chance to avoid the damage. It may pass through solid objects and makes no sounds.

Pain Drain: When a character is wounded within 100 yards of the will o' the wisp, it regenerates half that value in its own hit points.

Weakness: Electrical attacks do full normal damage and ignore the creature's incorporeality.

Possessions: None

Description: As above.

MISSISSIPPI BURNING

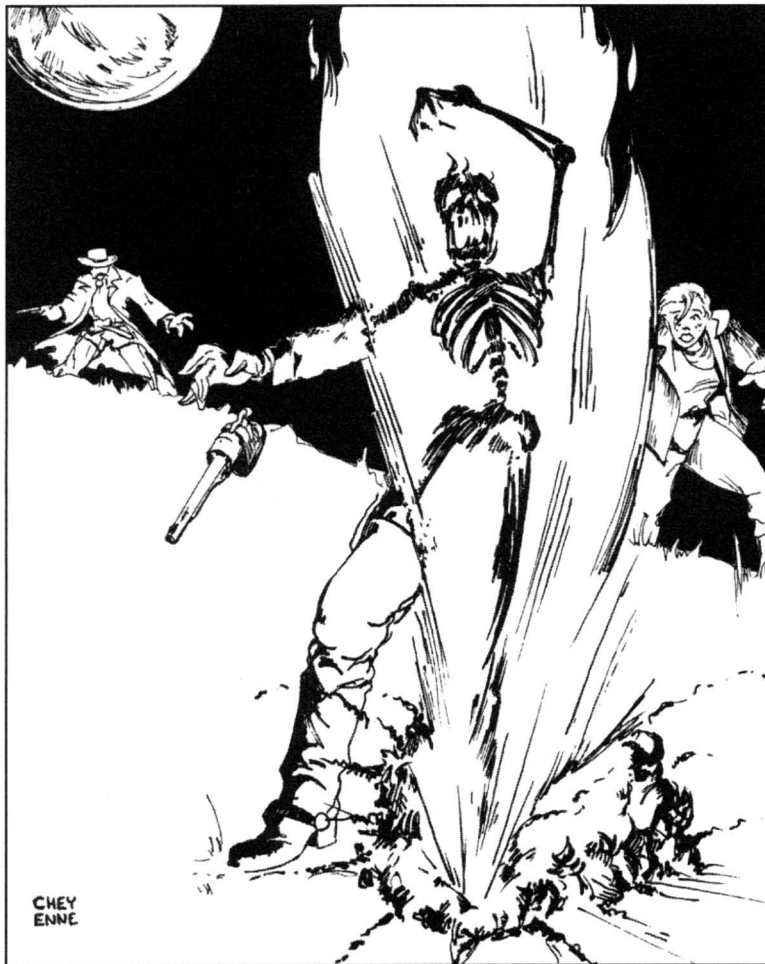
The plank road leads the characters through several thousand sprawling acres of once-cleared land on the island's west side, and past the ruins of two large mansions that were once the homes of Joseph Davis and Mississippi's

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former governor John A. Quitman. A rambling, single-story plantation house (named "Brierfield," according to a sign) remains standing at the end of the road, surrounded by several smaller outbuildings. The adjacent fields once used for valuable crops are now home to the warped, twisted vegetation characteristic of Fear Level 4 areas.

The new tenants have put out a nasty welcoming mat for any potential visitors. A ring of Infernal Land Torpedoes (land mines, to more modern folk) surrounds Brierfield out to a 100-yard radius. The Nightwatcher sentries are quite familiar with the safe routes through the minefield, and if necessary can operate there with relative safety. The 50-yard radius area around the plantation house itself is a mine-free safe zone for them to deploy within.





The road leading to the house is safe, but the area just to either side is mined.

To detect the mines in the darkness, a posse member must make an Incredible (11) *search* roll. If the roll is successful, a character can discern a safe path by making a Hard (9) *trackin'* roll, and may also guide their comrades through the mines without hazard. However, if all characters fail the *search* roll, roll 1d6 for each of them; a roll of 1 means the hero has discovered the minefield the hard way.

Needless to say, if a character triggers one of the mines, the posse's chances of surprising the Nightwatchers are reduced to nil. That, of course, will be the least of worries for the poor soul who set the thing off.

Deadlands D20: Spotting the land mines requires a DC 25 Spot check, or a

DC 15 if the heroes are aware of what they're looking for. Finding a safe path through the torpedoes once detected requires the Track feat and a Wilderness Lore roll of 20.

INTERNAL LAND TORPEDOES

These insidious devices consist of a one-foot diameter iron disk enveloping a supply of methane gas, and a pressure-activated igniter containing a tiny fragment of ghost rock. The mines are typically buried under about three inches of dirt, and at that depth any being of 100 pounds or more that steps on one can potentially detonate it.

If a mine gets stepped on, roll against its Reliability score of 17. A successful roll means the victim suffers 6d10 points of Massive Damage from the erupting column of flame. Failed rolls are resolved on the Malfunction Table below. After detonation, an Internal Land Torpedo expends all its fuel and becomes inert.

MALFUNCTIONS

Minor: *Who Cut the Cheese?*

The igniter fails, and a portion of the methane gas is expelled harmlessly. An open flame of any kind ignites the gas for half damage.

Major: *The Bic Don't Flick*

The igniter breaks, and the mine absolutely will not detonate until it's dug-up and repaired.

Catastrophic: *Nuthin' like a Good Hot Shower*

The mine activates, but instead of a cremating flame, it emits a warm jet of noxious air. Those within 10 feet must make a Fair (5) *Vigor* or be nauseated for the next 1d4 rounds. An open flame within 10 feet ignites the gas for half damage.

Deadlands D20: The land mine does 6d6 damage. Minor and Major Malfunctions are unaffected. Catastrophic Malfunctions require a Fortitude save of 10 or the victims are stunned for the next 1d4 rounds.

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BLINDSIDED

If the posse tries to sneak up to Briarfield and fails, the Nightwatchers take up firing positions within the outbuildings. The posse is quite likely surprised unless they somehow spot the defenders or take special or supernatural precautions.

If the heroes make it within 50 yards of the house undetected, they spot Colonel Pat Phalen on the porch just beneath an oil lamp mounted high beside the door. He wears a black outfit similar to the one worn by Lt. Trebilcock back in Roswell.

Colonel Phalen isn't immediately hostile. He's too clever for that. He first tries to find out exactly what the heroes want at this time of night. This is extremely improper in the hospitable South. Phalen engages the heroes in conversation for a bit while his men take up firing positions. The heroes may notice these movements—pit their *Cognition* rolls (or *search* if they are specifically looking for others) against the Nightwatcher's *sneak* skills. Give the Nightwatchers a +5 bonus thanks to the night and Phalen's distractions.

There is one Nightwatcher present for every posse member, plus one inside the main house guarding prisoners. Two of them take up positions in the window above. Any others move to the woods beside and behind the posse to snipe with their rifles. Most can see in the dark with their *cat's eyes* abilities, so when the shooting starts, Phalen's first action is to knock the lantern out above his head.

The Nightwatchers have orders to kill intruders without mercy, and if the posse breaches the safe zone, attempt to prevent it from entering the main building. Major Koehr remains inside Briarfield throughout (see **Women and Children First**, below).

A Marshal who doesn't have *Law Dogs* lying about may wonder about the Winchester '66 rifle listed in the Nightwatchers' Profile. If that's the case, rest easy, partner, and just treat that shootin' iron exactly like it was a Winchester '73, except the '66 holds sixteen .44 rounds.

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Wondering about that *seen the elephant* Edge, too? Well, until you get yourself a copy of *Back East: The South*, just add the number of points a character has in that Edge to all their *guts* checks against non-supernatural sources of fear.

Deadlands D20: Phalen can extinguish the lamp as a move-equivalent action.

PROFILE: NIGHTWATCHERS

Corporeal: D:4d10, N:4d8, Q:4d8, S:4d10, V:4d10

Climbin' 3d8, dodge 3d8, fightin': brawlin' 5d8, quick draw: pistol, rifle, shotgun 3d8, horse ridin' 4d8, shootin': pistol, rifle, shotgun 5d10, sneak 5d8, speed-load: pistol, rifle, shotgun 4d10

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d6, M:4d10, Sm:2d8, Sp:2d6

Area knowledge: the Confederacy 2d6, gamblin' 2d8, guts 5d6, overawe 5d10, ridicule 2d8, search 5d8, trackin' 5d8

Edges: Brave, law man 2, rank 3, seen the elephant 2, "the voice" (threatening)

Hindrances: Aura o' death -5, mark o' the devil -3, mean as a rattler

Pace: 8

Size: 6

Wind: 14

Special Abilities:

Harrowed: Dominion: Manitou 6
Harrowed 0

(The powers of each Nightwatcher are as follows:)

Lieutenant Colonel Patrick

Phalen: Cat eyes 2, marked for death 5

Major David Koehr: Claws 2, unholy reflexes 5

Captain Richard Ranallo: cat eyes 2, rigor mortis 5

Lieutenant Ole Ingvar Stene: Bad mojo 4, cat eyes 2, claws 1

Lt. Dirk Ringersma: Berserker 1, cat eyes 2, claws 4

Lt. A.J. Solis: Cat eyes 2, claws 1, devil's touch 4

Lt. Sandor Silverman: Cat eyes 2, claws 3, silent as a corpse 2

Gear: LeMat Grapeshot Pistols, scatterguns, and Winchester '66 rifles with 50 rounds of ammo

Description: The undead Nightwatchers invariably wear black uniforms and grim expressions.

Deadlands D20: Nightwatchers:

Gunslinger; Level 10: CR 10; Medium-size Undead Human; HD 10d8; hp 80; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+3 Dex); Atk +13/+8 ranged (repeating shotgun 1-3d6/19-20/x3), +10 melee (Bowie knife 1d4+1/19-20/x2); AL LE; SV Fort +7 Ref +10 Will +3; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Gather Information +1, Hide +5, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (occult) +3, Listen +1, Move Silently +6, Spot +3; Combat Reflexes, Fannin', Firearms, Greased Lightning +4, Improved Critical (shotgun), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Rapid Shot, Simple Weapons, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Specialization.

Special Qualities:

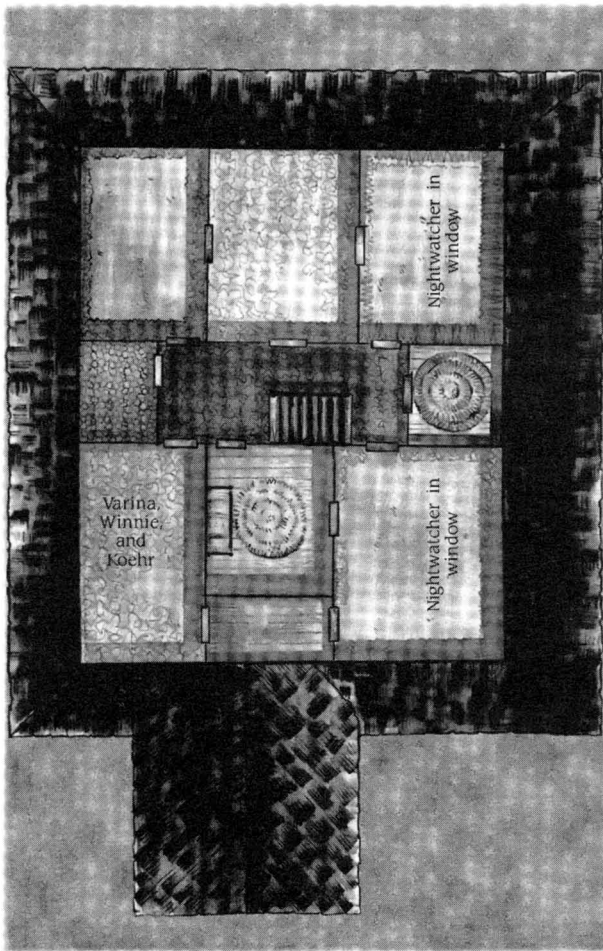
Harrowed: Dominion: Manitou 5
Harrowed 0

(The powers of each Nightwatcher are as follows:)

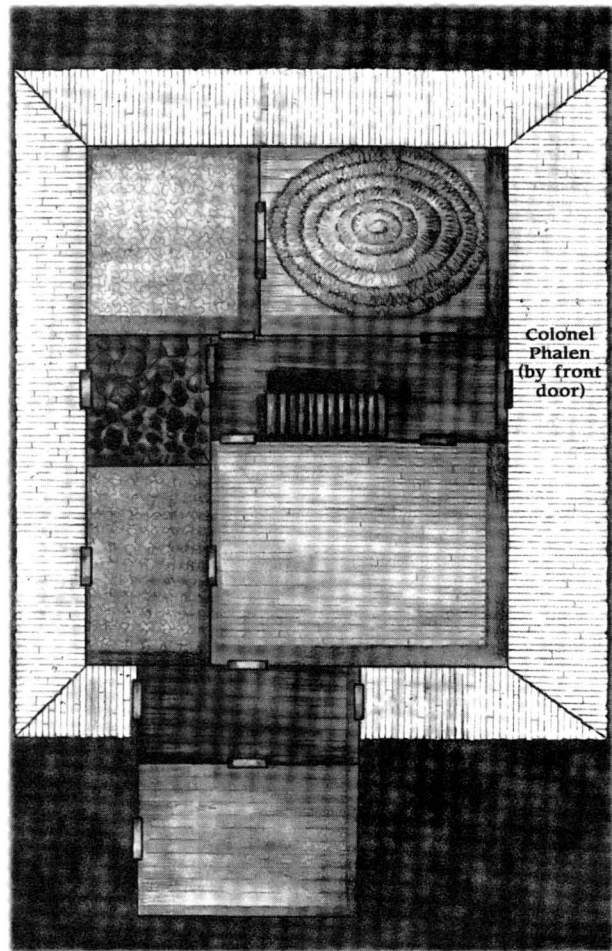
Lieutenant Colonel Patrick

Phalen: Cat eyes, marked for death

THE DAVIS HOME



DAVIS HOME, TOP FLOOR



DAVIS HOME, BOTTOM FLOOR

Marshals with access to *Boomtowns* should use the Large House, first and second floors for the President's home. Furniture and other accessories may be added as appropriate.

Major David Koehr: Claws, unholy reflexes

Captain Richard Ranallo: cat eyes, rigor mortis

Lieutenant Ole Ingvar Stene: Bad mojo, cat eyes, claws

Lt. Dirk Ringersma: Berserker, cat eyes, claws

Lt. A.J. Solis: Cat eyes, claws, devil's touch

Lt. Sandor Silverman: Cat eyes, claws, silent as a corpse

Possessions: As above.

Description: As above.

ANGELS' REVENGE

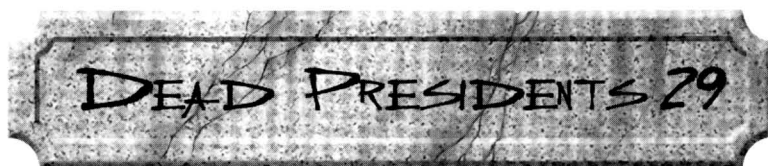
If the Nightwatchers orchestrate an absolute beat-down on the posse, the cranky corpses get ambushed by a flight of Avenging Angels, doing a run-in to save the heroes from the undead sentries. Grimme's lackeys should defeat the Nightwatchers in a timely fashion, but what happens next depends on the posse's past dealings with the Church of Lost Angels.

The Angels avoid contact with known enemies of the Church, but the posse gets a good enough look before they disappear into the briars to realize exactly to whom it owes its salvation. They're then left to wonder exactly why the Bad Guys are helping them.

If the posse bears the Lost Angels no grudge (or even thinks favorably of them), their leader, Captain Scott Hacker, carefully approaches the posse to parley with it. Hacker doesn't answer many questions, but does claim he and his men are here on behalf of the Church of Lost Angels to aid the characters' mission.

The posse may be puzzled why the Lost Angels are assisting a Dixie Rails operation, given the Church's hostility toward all the Great Rail War's factions. If asked about this, Hacker attempts to convince the characters their current mission serves a Higher Power, far above the petty squabbles of the rail barons. With that, Hacker extends the Reverend's blessing upon the posse, and then vanishes into the briars along with the other Angels.

The Angels now take their leave and don't return—in this adventure anyway.



WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST

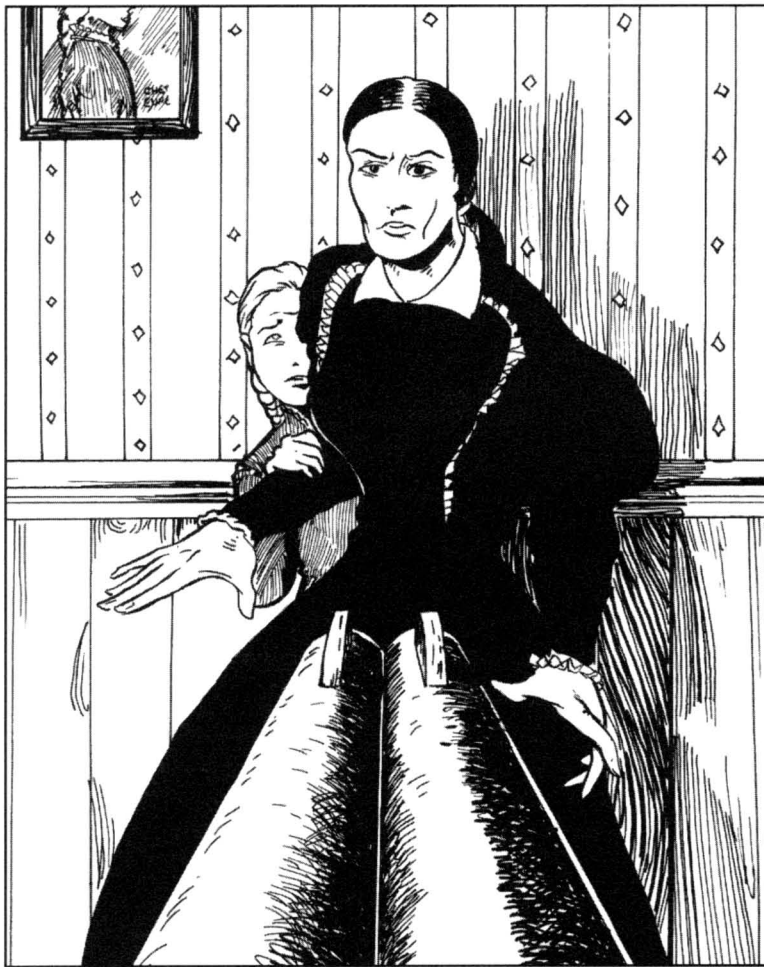
When the characters finally fight their way inside Brierfield House, its interior shows characteristic signs of being lived in. No signs of trouble are evident (save for any collateral damage from the battle). In the upstairs rear bedroom, Major Koehr, last of the Nightwatcher sentries, levels a sawed-off shotgun at a still-lovely (though concerned-looking) fifty-something woman who shields a dark-haired teenage girl behind her. Though the older woman has rarely been seen in public during the last six years, an Onerous (7) *Smarts* roll confirms she is indeed Varina Howell Davis, First Lady of the Confederacy.

Koehr is waiting for trouble with an Action Card up his sleeve, so anything the characters try is dicey at best. The Major offers the posse a simple exchange: drop its weapons, turn and leave, and no one gets hurt. Even if she must die herself, Varina insists the posse save her daughter. In any event, Koehr is lying, and plans on shooting the posse in the back.

The posse likely has ideas on rescuing the ladies, but unless the characters' plan prevents him, Koehr discharges both barrels at Varina and her daughter at the first hint of trouble. As the posse may learn, the Nightwatchers' orders demand first and foremost the ladies never be taken from the island alive. In the grim possibility the heroes fail, Varina intercedes to take the full force of the shotgun blasts herself, and begs the posse to take her daughter Winnie to safety with her dying breath.

Deadlands D20: A DC 15

Intelligence roll recognizes Varina Davis. Koehr waits with a readied action to shoot the women. Unless distracted somehow, he may perform a coup de grace attack on them. Varina is AC 10



and has 25 hit points with a Fortitude save of +3. Winnie is AC 10, has 13 hit points, and has a Fortitude save of +0.

THE LADY SPEAKS

If Varina survives her hostage ordeal, she briefly inquires who the posse members are and why they're here. Words to the effect of "General Lee sent us" are a far more pleasing answer than she expects. She's then happy to answer the characters' questions, but prefers to do so in a place of greater security, away from this "accursed island."

Varina directs the posse to the stables where draft horses and a dusty carriage are available to hasten their departure. The First Lady (or a panicked Winnie if Varina was slain) guides

them to a flatboat moored on the far side of the island that bypasses the huckstresses' cabin. (If the posse goes there anyway, it finds those premises completely deserted.) The flatboat is large enough to carry the carriage and horses and gets the heroes to the Dixie Rails train without further incident.

In the event of Varina's death, Winnie becomes hysterical and unresponsive to inquiries. Winnie's agitation persists until the Dixie Rails train reaches the switching station southward at Grand Gulf and turns north toward Vicksburg. By that time, despite her anguish, Winnie can answer questions and relate the story (told to her by Varina) in the sections following.

A MOST FATEFUL JOURNEY

If asked about Jefferson Davis or his state of mind, Varina recalls the last time he seemed himself was after the Confederate capture of Washington back in 1871. The Southern army had paid dearly for that fleeting success, and despite his general infirmity, the President embarked on another national railroad tour to bolster both morale and recruiting drives. Varina and the children stayed behind in Richmond to care for her youngest son Billy, who had fallen ill with diphtheria, and the President wrote daily to inquire about his condition.

The President's correspondence abruptly ceased after a late-October letter sent from Kentucky. In it, he expressed joy at the news of Billy's improving condition, and his anxiousness to come home after a final stop in Lexington. That he sent no further mail was most uncharacteristic, but it seemed insignificant after the President's return to Richmond.

Varina noticed her husband behaved distantly, but assumed it was a result of fatigue from his long journey. When he asked to see Billy, now fully recovered from his illness, Varina was sure her husband would soon be his old self again.

Before Varina's horrified eyes, Jefferson Davis took ten-year-old Billy onto his lap, and with one hand snapped the child's neck with sickening ease. Dangling Billy's lifeless,

rag-doll like body in front of her, the President coldly informed Varina her family's lives hereafter depended on her silence and continued obedience. She and her remaining children were ushered to Brierfield by corpse-like men in black longcoats, but by summoning every ounce of her will, Varina concealed her anguish from her unsuspecting progeny.

The general populace was told Billy had succumbed to diphtheria, and gossips assumed the well-documented tensions in the Davis' marriage had finally led to a separation. Fearing her husband's retaliation, Varina did nothing to dispel these notions in her children's minds, and acquiesced whenever she was asked to make a public appearance in support of her husband and his administration's policies. As a reward for her cooperation, she was allowed to send her eldest children Maggie and Jefferson Jr. overseas to the safety of London boarding schools.

Winnie Davis, then too young to be away from her mother, remained with Varina throughout her past six years of captivity at Brierfield. As Winnie grew into her teens, the inquisitiveness she inherited from her mother led her to question why their pallid "bodyguards" never allowed the two of them to leave unescorted, or the rest of their family to visit. When Varina felt her daughter was mature enough, she relented and shared the truth with her.

HELLHOUND ON MY TRAIL

If the posse hasn't hypothesized anything themselves, one of the Davis women shares her suspicions. Something happened to Jefferson Davis during his visit to Kentucky. The Nightwatchers were formed to protect him just afterwards, and therefore must be in on whatever dark secret he harbors. That means the Nightwatchers cannot allow the posse to live given the knowledge it now possesses. The Davis women know these fiends are not normal (though they don't understand just what Harrowed are), and that they are vicious enough to hunt the characters to the literal ends of the earth. The only way to stop them,

DEAD PRESIDENTS 31

Varina believes, is to somehow restore Jeff Davis to his former self. Then he can disperse the dead men himself.

When the inspiration to investigate the events of six years ago strikes (courtesy of Varina or Winnie, if necessary), one of the Davis women recalls the President's final letter was written at the home of a family friend in Lexington, Dr. Matthew DeForrest. Jason Needham and Varina are now convinced this is the source of the President's change, and all sorts of wild theories are bandied about. "Maybe the President was captured and replaced by an imposter at DeForrest's house!" Needham states. "Maybe he was hypnotized! DeForrest is a doctor! Maybe he controls the President and the Nightwatchers are his men, keeping an eye on poor Jeff!" "Maybe Daddy's still there!" chimes in Winnifred. The Marshal is encouraged to direct the postulations in whatever way is necessary to get the heroes to Kentucky. If they are reluctant to chase this lead on their own, Varina asks the posse to help once again (and pays them if necessary). In any event, the Dixie Rails train is soon on its way to the Bluegrass State.

RIDIN' THAT TRAIN

The posse spends the next three days on the notoriously circuitous Confederate rail lines. The heroes' odyssey takes them east to Jackson, Mississippi, then northward through west Tennessee. From there they swing northeast through Bowling Green, then north to the immolated ruins of Louisville, and finally head southeast to Lexington. Whenever they stop, observant characters catch fleeting glimpses of black-clad figures at the train station, seeing them just long enough to create an unrelenting sense of tension.

After arriving in Lexington, the Davis ladies patently refuse to leave the train, but instead offer to compose a letter of introduction for the posse to present to Dr. DeForrest. Before disembarking, Jason Needham gently reminds the characters that folks Back East are much more squeamish about unconcealed weapons, and urges them to hide their firearms completely and thoroughly. (Texas Rangers do have the legal authority to go around openly packing heat, but are taught to maintain a low profile in these situations.)

If the characters follow Needham's sage advice, they encounter no problems. Otherwise, the Lexington police at the station provide the characters with an involuntary tour of the City Jail, and the Nightwatchers appear soon after with a Presidential warrant for the posse. After that, Marshal, go directly to Chapter Three; do not pass "Go" and do not collect 200 (Confederate) dollars. Should the party decide to tour Lexington, the local police remain ever-present.

HOUSE CALL

At least one hackney cab is available at the station to take the characters to the doctor's home. Any number of passersby can direct them if they prefer to heel-toe it there, or have their own horses aboard the train. Either way, the doctor's abode is located well outside the city and consists of an elegant two-story home and a smaller two-story outbuilding which serves as his office.

Dr. DeForrest greets the posse members at the door, and warmly invites them into his home after reading the letter from the Davis ladies. He hasn't had any contact with the Davis family in a very long time, but the great affection DeForrest retains for them makes him anxious to ask the posse how they are all faring.

The characters are likely impatient to get right to the heart of the matter, but

Dr. DeForrest is insistent on extending them every amenity at his disposal first. Any character familiar with the Southern aristocracy (those with the *honorable* Hindrance from *Back East: The South*, for instance) knows their elaborate codes of etiquette dictate the characters should graciously accept Dr. DeForrest's hospitality. If the posse is bereft of such background knowledge, a Fair (5) roll against the *Smarts* Trait lets the characters know being obliging guests is their smartest move.

If the characters just can't bear to sit through an exquisite dinner, a round of exceptional cigars, and the finest Kentucky bourbon, DeForrest responds to their insulting behavior by throwing them out of his house. Any talk of the doctor's dear friend Jefferson Davis murdering his son provokes a similar reaction. Whatever the cause of their ejection, the Nightwatchers are waiting for the characters, as detailed in "The Highwaymen" below.

Deadlands D20: The heroes must use Diplomacy to charm their way into DeForrest's good graces. DeForrest's total Diplomacy check is made at +9.

GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT

If the posse manages to act like proper ladies and gentlemen, DeForrest invites the male characters to his study for more cigars and bourbon. The female characters likely insist on coming along, and though the idea visibly flusters the good doctor (it's a big no-no in Southern aristocratic circles), he's had just enough liquid spirits to prevent him from protesting to any great extent.

With some gentle prompting, DeForrest recounts the last night of the President's visit, and can even provide its exact date: October 31, 1871 (like all Southern aristocrats, he keeps a journal). The doctor remembers that evening progressing very much like the present one, but after dinner, drinks, and smokes, the President excused himself for a contemplative stroll in the crisp autumn air. DeForrest remembers it well. He walked with him for a ways while Davis quoted from a small Bible he often carried with him. DeForrest

stopped when the President decided to stroll down an old trail DeForrest's slaves (now freed) used to use to fetch water. The pond they used went stagnant, so the trail has not been used since well before Davis' walk.

DeForrest warned the President to be careful of the mosquitos and went on to bed. Davis tapped his Bible, said the Lord was with him, and vanished into the woods. He had not returned when DeForrest awoke, but just as the doctor began to organize a search party, the President reappeared, looking tired and distraught but also filled with excitement—as if he had had a revelation while on his all-night walk.. Refusing any breakfast, Davis hastily ordered his aides to gather his baggage, then bade his host a rather perfunctory farewell before boarding a train bound for Richmond. DeForrest has not seen or heard from any of the Davis family in the six years hence, for which the doctor knows no explanation.

A MAJOR AWARD

Before departing, Davis presented the doctor with a most unexpected and generous gift, the LeMat revolver carried by the late General "Jeb" Stuart. The General's widow Flora Cooke Stuart presented the weapon to President Davis in hopes it would serve as a tangible reminder of Southern sacrifice and a boon to the President's recruiting drive.

DeForrest felt most unworthy, and refused to accept the revolver multiple times before the President's stubborn insistence won out. The doctor does not know how it could be so, but says it was as if Davis was anxiously trying to rid himself of the LeMat.

BEG, BORROW OR STEAL

If the evening has progressed pleasantly, DeForrest is happy to remove the revolver and its ornate wooden storage case from his mantle and show it to the posse. The characters likely guess Stuart's LeMat is the key to unlocking the mysteries surrounding the President, and if so there's more than one way for them to take it off the good doctor's hands. A few of the



more likely ones are outlined below, but as always, a good Marshal should be prepared for anything.

The doctor can't be *overawed* into forking over the LeMat, but can be *persuaded* or *bluffed* into doing so, provided he's convinced the posse intends to return the revolver to worthier hands (i.e., the Davis or Stuart families). A raise in an opposed roll using the appropriate skill does just that.

Failing that, the posse may have to 'jack DeForrest for it. Robbery at gunpoint is unsubtle (not to mention rude), but it gets the job done. If cat-burglary is more their style, the posse can take advantage of the doctor's hospitality after he graciously offers to put the characters up for the night. They'll have to sneak back into the study and then out the front door without waking the household. (This isn't hard unless someone fumbles during the robbery.) If the doctor is roused, he investigates the source of the disturbance immediately. The characters must subdue him to prevent him reaching for his pistol and/or calling out to his servants for help. A Marshal with an eye toward future complications will be disappointed in this instance. Short of maiming his person, the doctor comes to understand the posse's actions (or is made to understand by one of the Davis women) at a later date.

PROFILE: DR. MATTHEW DEFORREST

Corporeal: D:4d8, N:2d6, Q:2d6, S:3d6,
V:2d8

Dodge 3d6, fightin': brawlin' 2d6,
shootin': pistol, shotgun 2d6, teamster
2d6

Mental: C:3d8, K:4d10, M:2d6, Sm:2d6,
Sp:3d8

Area knowledge: Lexington 5d10, faith
1d8, guts 2d8, languages: Latin 3d10,
medicine: general, surgery 5d10,

science: biology, chemistry 3d10,
scrutinize 2d8

Edges: Dinero 5, light sleeper, renown
3, "the voice" (soothing)

Hindrances: Bad eyes -2, honorable,
oath -1 (Hippocratic)

Pace: 6

Size: 6

Wind: 16

Gear: Doctor's bag, surgical tools, a
supply of medicinal drugs and a Colt
Navy revolver

Description: As a born-to-the-purple
Southern aristocrat, Dr. DeForrest
dresses to the hilt, and is never
without his doctor's bag (in case of
an emergency). Encroaching years
only make him appear more
distinguished.

Deadlands D20: Dr. Matthew

DeForrest: Aristocrat; Level 5: CR 2;
Medium-size Human; HD 5d6; hp 15;
Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +3
ranged (Colt Army, 2d6/20/x2), +4
melee (kitchen knife 1d4+1/19-20/x2);
AL LG; SV Fort +1 Ref +4 Will +4; Str
12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha
14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +6, Diplomacy
+12, Gather Information +6, Handle
Animal +6, Heal +7, Innuendo +5,
Knowledge (biology) +8, Listen +5,
Search +6, Speak Language (French)
+4, Spot +3; Skill Focus (Diplomacy),
Skill Focus (Heal)

Possessions: As above.

Description: As above.

RELIC: STUART'S LEMAT REVOLVER

Confederate General James Ewell
Brown "Jeb" Stuart became the
legendary "Cavalier of Dixie" through
his bold leadership and personal daring.
His mortal wounding on May 11, 1864 at
the Battle of Yellow Tavern was both
tragic and befitting, as Stuart charged
alone into scores of surrounding
Yankee troopers after ordering his staff
to ride to safety. Stuart fought with

supreme valor, even after the felled
bluebellies arose and attacked anew.
Emptying his LeMat into them proved
to be Stuart's final act in this world.

The General shed the mortal coil the
following day, just before his beloved
wife arrived to bid him a last farewell.
Stuart's dying prayer was that no one
else should share his fate, and as a
response, his trusted sidearm became a
fearsome weapon against even the
darkest forces of the Reckoning.

Power: In all other respects, Stuart's
Revolver functions exactly like a cap-
and-ball version of the LeMat
Grapeshot Pistol listed in the *Weird West
Player's Guide*. However, abominations
and other, similarly evil, supernatural
creatures shot by it suffer double
damage, even if such creatures are
usually unaffected by normal weapons.

In addition, anyone carrying Stuart's
LeMat gains the *cavalier* Edge (see
Back East: The South, page 70), suffering
no penalties for Firing while Mounted
as a result.

Taint: Anyone who fires Stuart's
LeMat gains the *big britches* Hindrance
for as long as they continue to carry it.

Deadlands D20: The weapon does
double damage against supernatural
evil creatures, and while wielded, gives
its user the Mounted Archery feat. The
character is overconfident and must
make a DC 15 Will save to back down
from a fight.

THE HILLS HAVE EYES

If the posse's curiosity leads them to
follow in Davis' footsteps, it discovers a
gently winding path leading through
the wooded hills in back of the doctor's
abode. Just as the characters wander
out of sight of the DeForrest House,
they find themselves heading into a
gully formed by a lazy stream that must
have once been much larger. Eventually,
the trickling stream leads to a large
pond surrounded by lush vegetation—
with twisting, grabbing vines, thorns,
and grasping claw-like limbs. Those
with enough experience should
instantly realize the area is drenched in
fear (a Deadlands, to be exact).

As the heroes trod the soft ground near the water's edge, they find exactly what became of Jefferson Davis.

Emerging from behind the trees and the swampy muck, the long-dormant cousins of the greater doppelganger that devoured the President six years ago surround the posse, one for each member. Their tactics are simple—poison the characters and duplicate them—and they pursue this goal single-mindedly. If the posse escapes the gully, the surviving horrors disappear into the densest part of the forest, but if the battle goes against the heroes, the Nightwatchers arrive to “rescue” them, as per “The Highwaymen” below.

PROFILE: GREATER DOPPLEGANGER

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:2d8, Q:3d10, S:3d8, V:4d6

Fightin': brawlin' 4d8, sneak 4d8

Mental: C:2d8, K:1d6, M:2d4, Sm:1d6, Sp:1d4

Search 4d8

Pace: 8

Size: 7

Wind: 10

Terror: 7 (11)

Special Abilities:

Acidic Maw: Greater doppelgangers' only orifice is a gaping mouth lined with acid-excreting glands, which inflicts STR+2d10 damage. On a raise, the doppelganger can maintain its grip and inflict damage on the same Hit Location automatically on each of its following actions, until the victim breaks free by winning an opposed *Strength* roll. They refrain from using this attack unless seriously threatened.

Body Snatchin': Greater doppelgangers carefully strip helpless foes naked before devouring them alive in large, bloody chunks. For a number of hours following (equal to the victim's Size), the doppelganger's interior fluid mass dissolves and assimilates it's physical form. During this time, hunks of body parts visibly float around inside their transparent skin, temporarily boosting their Terror to 11.

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Afterwards, the doppelganger dons the victim's clothes and becomes outwardly indistinguishable from them. The doppelganger's corporeal Traits are either raised one die type or become equal to the victim's, whichever is higher. Its mental Traits either remain unchanged or become equal to the victim's, whichever is higher. Finally, the doppelganger gains all of the duplicated person's Aptitudes and memories, and its personality becomes a twisted, mocking reflection of the victim's. This special ability does not work against undead.

Gelatinous Form: Doppelgangers' ooey-gooey innards lower the damage from guns and piercing weapons to half-normal. (Shotguns,



however, still inflict full damage). Once a doppelganger assimilates another's form, their bodies firm up accordingly and forfeit this special ability.

Poison: For every success and raise a doppelganger achieves on a *fightin': brawlin'* roll, the victim is struck by one of its many sticky, poisonous pseudopods, and must resist the venom with a Hard (9) *Vigor* roll. If he fails, the victim falls to the ground helpless, overcome by excruciatingly painful convulsions and unable to take any action for the next 1d6 hours. This ability does not work against the Harrowed and other undead.

Regeneration: Doppelgangers regain one wound level per location at the end of each round if the damage was inflicted by guns (except for shotguns) or piercing weapons. All other damage must be healed normally.

Description: Greater doppelgangers appear to be sickly, shambling things with white, wet skin in their natural forms.

Deadlands D20: Greater

Doppelganger: CR 5: Medium-size Humanoid; HD 5d8; hp 28; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 Natural); Atk +6 melee (2 claws 1d6+1/20/x2 crit), +6 melee (acid bite 1d6/20/x2 + Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer additional 2d6 damage) ; AL CE; SV Fort +4 Ref +3 Will +3; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Climb +4, Disguise +10, Hide +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Search +4

Special Qualities:

Acid Bite: As a full round action, a greater doppelganger can attack with both claws and its poisonous bite. Those bitten must save or suffer an additional 2d6 damage.

Body Snatchin': The doppelganger immediately stabilizes an opponent who is between 0 and -10 hit

points. The helpless foe is then digested alive as described above.

The doppelganger's physical abilities are raised by two points, or the fiend's abilities are raised to that of his prey's, whichever is higher. Its mental abilities and existing skills remain unchanged or raised to the victim's, whichever is higher. The doppelganger gains any new skills from the victim had at their present level. Doppelgangers may not devour undead such as the Harrowed.

Gelatinous Form: Greater doppelganger's take half damage from piercing weapons.

Poison Pseudopods: If a greater doppelganger strikes with both claws and its bite (a full round action), and hits with any two of these attacks, the victim is struck by a number of slimy pseudopods and must make a DC 15 Fortitude save. If failed, the victim falls to the ground, paralyzed with wracking pain for the next 1d6 hours. This special ability does not work against the Harrowed.

Regeneration: Regeneration 5.

Possessions: None

Description: As above.

I'M A DOCTOR, NOT
A...

The greater doppelgangers dissolve into puddles of white goo when slain. Clever characters may think to collect a sample of it for scientific examination. Assuming they're on good terms with him, Dr. DeForrest won't mind performing such a task, and is even grateful once he completes his studies. Bear in mind that even if the posse earned DeForrest's wrath, he's still duty-bound to treat its wounded. (Of course, the Marshal should adjust the doctor's humor to suit his prior experience.)

If the doctor examines the doppelganger ooze alone, Marshals can relate the following information to the posse through him. Characters with the *science: biology* Aptitude and access to the proper equipment (a microscope, etc.) can study it on their own, and a

successful roll against TN (11) reveals the data below.

The fluid contains cells which are apparently animal in nature. However, when placed in contact with any other tissue type, the doppelganger cells slowly absorb it and restructures themselves into perfect duplicates. If the posse doesn't realize the implications regarding Davis' fate, the doctor can provide some hints in that direction.

Deadlands D20: A Knowledge (biology) roll of 25 is required to analyze the doppelganger remains.

THE HIGHWAYMEN

No matter the time or circumstances, the posse is ambushed when it attempts to return to the train station. Check for surprise as the Nightwatchers make their reappearance.

The Corpses in Black outnumber the posse three-to-one, and have the heroes caught in a crossfire. For a change, the Nightwatchers are Hellbent on taking the characters alive. Each of them carries six glass jars filled with four doses of Slumber Gas apiece (see *Smith & Roberts*).

If you don't have S&R handy, each thrown jar envelopes an 11-yard-radius area in the gas for the next 2d6 rounds. Everyone inside the cloud must make an Onerous (7) *Vigor* roll each round or get some Z's for the next 1d6 hours. Anyone overcome by the gas cannot be awakened before that time.

The manitou inside a Harrowed is smart enough to know death is at hand if the host doesn't surrender. The Marshal might want to take the poor deader over at this time, and can even use him as extra muscle against the posse if needed.

The Nightwatchers (reuse the statistics on page 27) employ only nonlethal attacks against the posse, who should go down hard and fast. This is both intentional and integral to the plot, so feel free to use whatever "dirty tricks" are at your disposal, Marshal, to make sure this happens. The Nightwatchers are quite smart, and they know something of the party by



now. If they need to hire 50 extra hired guns, they will. If they need to draft some bokkor with the *puppet* power, they do. In short, overwhelm the party. Sure, you're railroading them, but they *are* fighting the President of the Confederate States, after all.

Characters who go down fighting are healed up to consciousness (but no more) if possible and imprisoned (as detailed below). The dead are burned. The Nightwatchers don't need any Harrowed coming after them.

Deadlands D20: The slumber gas requires a Fortitude Save of 15 to avoid sleeping for the next 1d6 hours. The heroes must make this save every round they stay within the cloud.

THE BOUNTY

Destroying Lee's Instructions after reading them: 1 white chip

Defeating Lt. Trebilcock: 1 white chip each

Defeating the Huckstresses: 1 white chip each

Defeating the Nightwatcher

sentries: 1 red chip each

Saving Varina Howell Davis: 1 white chip each

Accepting Dr. DeForrest's

hospitality graciously: 1 white chip each

Getting Stuart's Revolver without

force or theft: 1 red chip

Getting Stuart's Revolver by any

other means: 1 white chip

Defeating the greater

doppelgangers: 1 red chip each

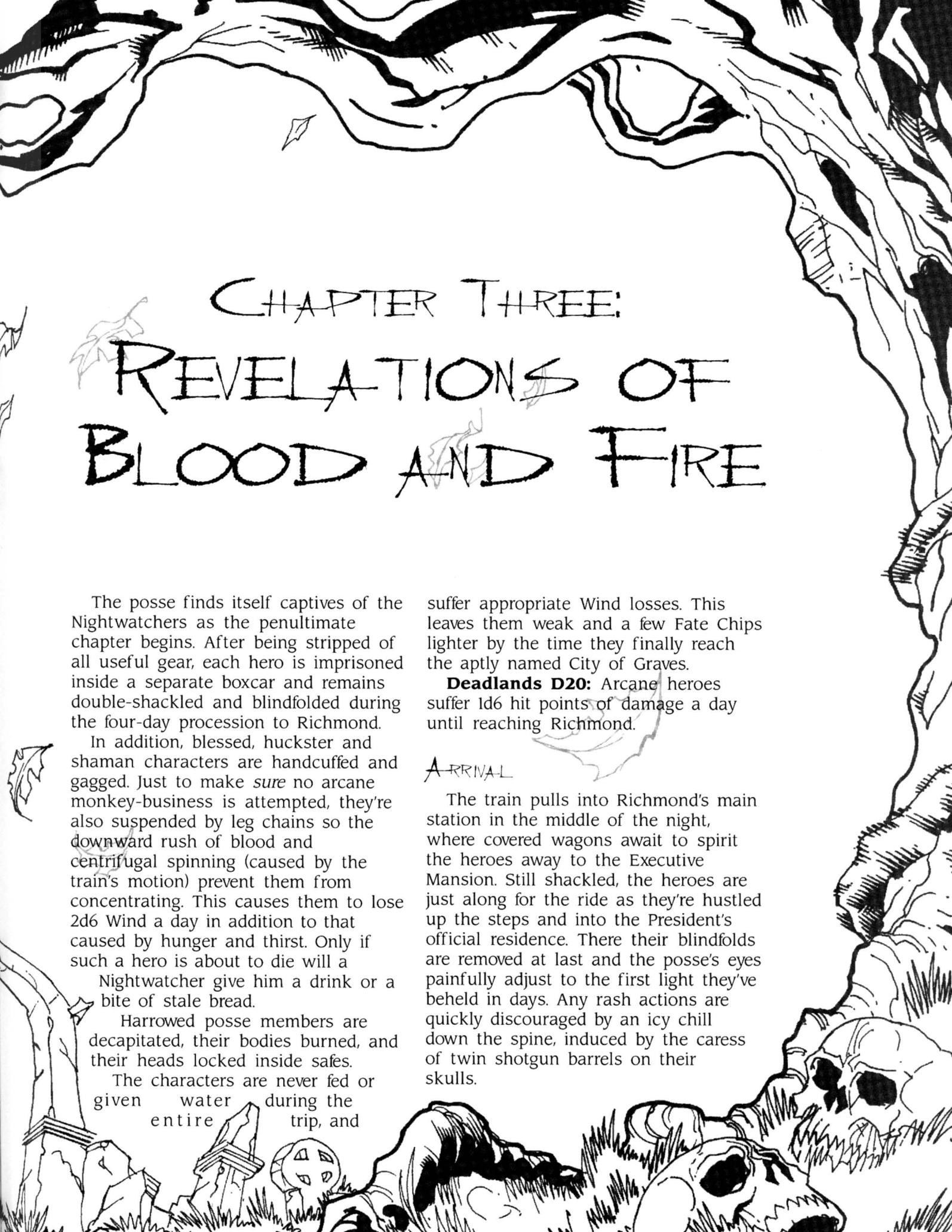
Taking Doppelganger goo for

scientific examination: 1 white chip

Examining the Doppelganger goo

and determining its nature: 1 red chip





CHAPTER THREE: REVELATIONS OF BLOOD AND FIRE

The posse finds itself captives of the Nightwatchers as the penultimate chapter begins. After being stripped of all useful gear, each hero is imprisoned inside a separate boxcar and remains double-shackled and blindfolded during the four-day procession to Richmond.

In addition, blessed, huckster and shaman characters are handcuffed and gagged. Just to make *sure* no arcane monkey-business is attempted, they're also suspended by leg chains so the downward rush of blood and centrifugal spinning (caused by the train's motion) prevent them from concentrating. This causes them to lose 2d6 Wind a day in addition to that caused by hunger and thirst. Only if such a hero is about to die will a

Nightwatcher give him a drink or a bite of stale bread.

Harrowed posse members are decapitated, their bodies burned, and their heads locked inside safes.

The characters are never fed or given water during the entire trip, and

suffer appropriate Wind losses. This leaves them weak and a few Fate Chips lighter by the time they finally reach the aptly named City of Graves.

Deadlands D20: Arcane heroes suffer 1d6 hit points of damage a day until reaching Richmond.

ARRIVAL

The train pulls into Richmond's main station in the middle of the night, where covered wagons await to spirit the heroes away to the Executive Mansion. Still shackled, the heroes are just along for the ride as they're hustled up the steps and into the President's official residence. There their blindfolds are removed at last and the posse's eyes painfully adjust to the first light they've beheld in days. Any rash actions are quickly discouraged by an icy chill down the spine, induced by the caress of twin shotgun barrels on their skulls.

CHAPTER THREE SUMMARY

The posse is in for some serious Hell now, Marshal. They're captured by the Nighthatchers and taken to Castle Thunder, a Richmond prison home to the notorious torturer Colonel Robert Alexander, head of the Nighthatchers. Alexander tries to find out where the Davis women are and how much the posse knows, then plans to execute them.

Fortunately, the heroes escape in the nick of time and meet up with the Sentinel, a mysterious hero trying to overthrow Davis' evil regime.

The Sentinel and the posse must attack Davis at the only function guaranteed to draw him out of his well-guarded mansion—the funeral of Robert E. Lee!

After successfully "assassinating" the President, the heroes get some payback by chasing Colonel Alexander down the James River in an exciting finale aboard submersibles and fast-moving torpedo boats!

Once their vision returns, the heroes find themselves in an ornately furnished office, facing several large windows through which scattered gaslights shine amidst the all-consuming night. A quick look around enables a character to notice the once ivory walls and ceiling now exhibit ghastly cardinal stains. Slowly, a door to the left opens and reveals the iconic visage of Jefferson Davis.

ONCE UPON A TIME

The President's manner is one of forced civility, and he icily informs the posse it's been tried and convicted *in absentia* for the murder of General Lee and the abduction of Varina and Winnie Davis. (If Varina perished last chapter, the characters are guilty of

killing her instead.) However, Davis tells the characters he will extend them some sort of executive clemency if they divulge his family's whereabouts. If they refuse, all that's left is to determine if they face the gallows or the firing squad for their crimes.

Claims of ignorance or innocence elicit only "You are lying," from Davis, and devising a passable fairy tale to mislead him with requires an opposed roll pitting a character's *bluff* Aptitude against the doppelganger's *scrutinize*. *Persuading* the President to accept the partial truth (the posse doesn't know where the Davis women are *at the moment*) is resolved in a similar fashion. (The doppelganger's profile is found on page 52.)

If a character wins the opposed roll, Davis orders the posse removed and instructs the Nighthatchers to provide the heroes with water and hardtack once they're secured inside the wagons as a reward for their "cooperation." The stale hardtack is a definite threat to their dental health (and the brown water's scarcely better), but it allows recovery of some Wind previously lost to hunger and dehydration. A posse who loses the opposed roll gets no such reward.

The Nighthatchers vigilantly guard the posse en route, and have both Action Cards up their sleeves and scatterguns at the ready throughout the duration of its imprisonment. The characters are not blindfolded this time.

Deadlands D20: The Nighthatchers have readied actions and may perform coup de grace attacks on the heroes.

A PRISON FOR ONESELF

When the wagons come to a halt, the posse is directed at shotgun-point into one of three adjacent buildings surrounded by a high concrete wall. The buildings' fronts resemble faces frozen in death screams, and are surrounded by unusually menacing shadows and dying, skeletal trees. Once inside, they're led down a narrow hallway, ending in facing rows of prison cells. Each character is unshackled under heavy guard, and then locked inside separate cells.

Conditions are Spartan to say the least, as the interiors are completely empty, and have only a small barred window on the door for light and ventilation. One Nightwatcher stands guard at the staircase, his tireless, undead gaze never wavering from his grim task.

Time moves at a wounded pace until a Mephistophelean figure appears in the hallway. With diabolical firmness, he intones: "You are in Castle Thunder. I am Colonel Alexander. You six (*or however many*) are prisoners here. We want information, and by hook or by crook, we will get it."

THE NEW NUMBER TWO

The "we" Colonel Alexander refers to is comprised of himself and the President, to whom he is fanatically loyal. This devotion was won after Alexander served a lengthy and well-deserved prison term for corruption during his previous stint as a prison commandant. Davis (in truth, the doppelganger) pardoned Alexander, and charged him with eliminating "traitors and subversives" in Confederate society.

In gratitude, Alexander performs his duties with single-minded efficiency, and by virtue of his unquestioning loyalty, serves as second-in-command in the doppelganger's regime. However, despite commanding the Harrowed

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Nightwatchers and potent black-magical abilities, Alexander in no way suspects the President is really an abomination. Even if he did, the Colonel so loves his work it's doubtful he'd be much bothered by the fact.

WE WANT

INFORMATION INFORMATION INFORMATION

After Alexander's brusque introduction, one character is removed from his cell and taken down the hall, escorted by the Colonel and two Nightwatcher guards. Pull that player aside and describe the following scene privately, away from the rest of the group.

The character is placed inside a room where prevailing blackness obscures its precise boundaries. The guards disappear into the cloaking darkness, and suddenly a candle illuminates the Colonel's countenance and his growling Doberman. The air grows heavy—laden with incense, and Alexander begins to ask a series of seemingly innocuous questions, each designed to test the



CASTLE THUNDER PRISON LEVEL

Colonel Alexander takes interrogation subjects to an office below. The lower floor is identical to this one except that prison cells are replaced by offices.



hero's psyche for psychological weaknesses.

If the character tries to deny the Colonel any insights (through lying or silence), make an opposed roll using Alexander's *scrutinize* and the character's *bluff* after the initial questioning ends. Marshals are strongly encouraged to modify the rolls based on the actual role-playing (e.g., give Alexander a bonus if the player actually reveals something about his character's fears).

Alexander then attempts to use his new-found knowledge by terrorizing the hero using his *illusion* power. This is a Fair (5) *guts* check. If he won the earlier roll, he gains a +2 bonus for every success and raise he earned in the opposed roll. Castle Thunder's Fear Level 5 also penalizes the character's

guts check accordingly. Conversely, for every raise the character earned in the opposed roll, he adds +2 to his roll, but to make matters worse, Alexander attempts to *overawe* them prior to their *guts* check versus the *illusion*.

The Colonel interrogates the other characters in turn, and the Marshal should run these encounters as outlined above. He's interested in learning everything the Davis women told the posse, and with whom it shared that information. If the posse fails to spin an acceptable yarn about Varina and Winnie's current whereabouts at the Executive Mansion, Alexander wants to locate them as well.

Posse members who fail their *guts* check risk surrender to their fears and tell the Colonel exactly what he wishes to know. Any result of 19 or higher on the Scart Table means the terrified character reveals the desired information.

Harrowed in the party are an easy target for Alexander. Though he doesn't understand how things work, the Reckoners are paying attention and are more than willing to let the manitou take over and tell the Colonel everything he wants to know. The hero in charge has a say in this, however. The Marshal has to play the heavy here and should try and take over the Harrowed host as often as possible while under Alexander's care. If he's successful, the demon spills the beans. Alexander's knowledge of the Harrowed actually works against him here, though. He knows the demons are lying tricksters—he doesn't know they're on his side. Since the manitou doesn't know any more about the President than the hero does (remember, they're not omniscient), Alexander is even less trustful if a Harrowed's "companion" takes over and tries to tell him where Varina and Winnie are. A clever Harrowed who resists his demon might also "pretend" to be under and lead Alexander astray. Alexander remains doubtful, and actually gains a +2 to his *scrutinize* roll in this case.

(Note: Alexander's Profile has been updated from the one presented in *Back East: The South*, and is also now consistent with the Revised Edition

rules. Absent a copy of *Law Dogs*, treat Alexander's Colt Army-Thuer as a regular Colt Army revolver.)

Deadlands D20: Use the hero's Bluff skill versus Alexander's Sense Motive. The Will save for the Colonel's illusion is a base 15. The DC is 20 if Alexander won the first opposed interrogation, and 10 if he did not. If the save against fear is failed, the character spills the beans. (Don't forget to add the Fear Level of 4 to this roll.

PROFILE: COLONEL GEORGE W. ALEXANDER

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, Q:3d8, S:2d6, V:3d8

Dodge 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 2d6, horse ridin' 2d6, shootin': pistol 2d6, swimmin' 1d6, throwin': unbalanced 5d6

Mental: C:4d8, K:2d8, M:2d10, Sm:2d8, Sp:1d8

Animal wranglin': dog training 2d10, area knowledge: Richmond 3d8, arts: playwright, composer 3d8, faith 5d8, guts 4d8, leadership 2d10, overawe 3d10, performin': singing 1d10, scrutinize 5d8, search 2d8

Edges: Friends in high places 3 (President Davis), law man 2, rank 5, the Voice (intimidating)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, intolerance 2 (of "traitors and subversives"), loyal (to the President), self-righteous

Pace: 6

Size: 6

Wind: 16

Special Abilities:

Black Magic: Bolts o' doom 4, cloak o' evil 4, illusion 4, zombie 4

Gear: .44 Colt Army-Thuer, a fancy black uniform, two concealed chlorine gas canisters, a concealed gas mask, and Nero, his monstrous Doberman

Description: The Colonel wears an obsidian uniform, with matching beard and hair, and his voice and diction befit a vocalist and former playwright.

Deadlands D20: Colonel Robert

Alexander: Black Magician; Level 10: CR 15; Medium-size Human; HD 15d6; hp 56; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk +13 ranged (.44 Colt Army-Thuer,

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2d6/20/x2), +9 melee; AL LE; SV Fort +9 Ref +5 Will +5; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Black Magic (Int) +16, Bluff +5, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +5, Heal +6, Hide +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (occult) +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Ride +4, Search +5, Sense Motive +10, Speak Language (French) +2, Spellcraft +11, Spot +3, Swim +3; Empower Spell (*soul blast*), Endurance, Expertise, Firearms, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons, Weapon Focus (Thuer)

Spells: *Spell Points 43; 1—mage armor, shield, 2—hypnotic pattern, 4—phantasmal killer, 5—animate dead, 6—create undead, 9—weird.*

Possessions: As above.

Description: As above.

THAT WOULD BE TELLING

Characters who succeed at their *guts* checks are warned by the Colonel, "You resist for the nonce, but we will ultimately break you—mind, body and spirit—into a thousand irreparable shards." So informed, they are returned to their cell.

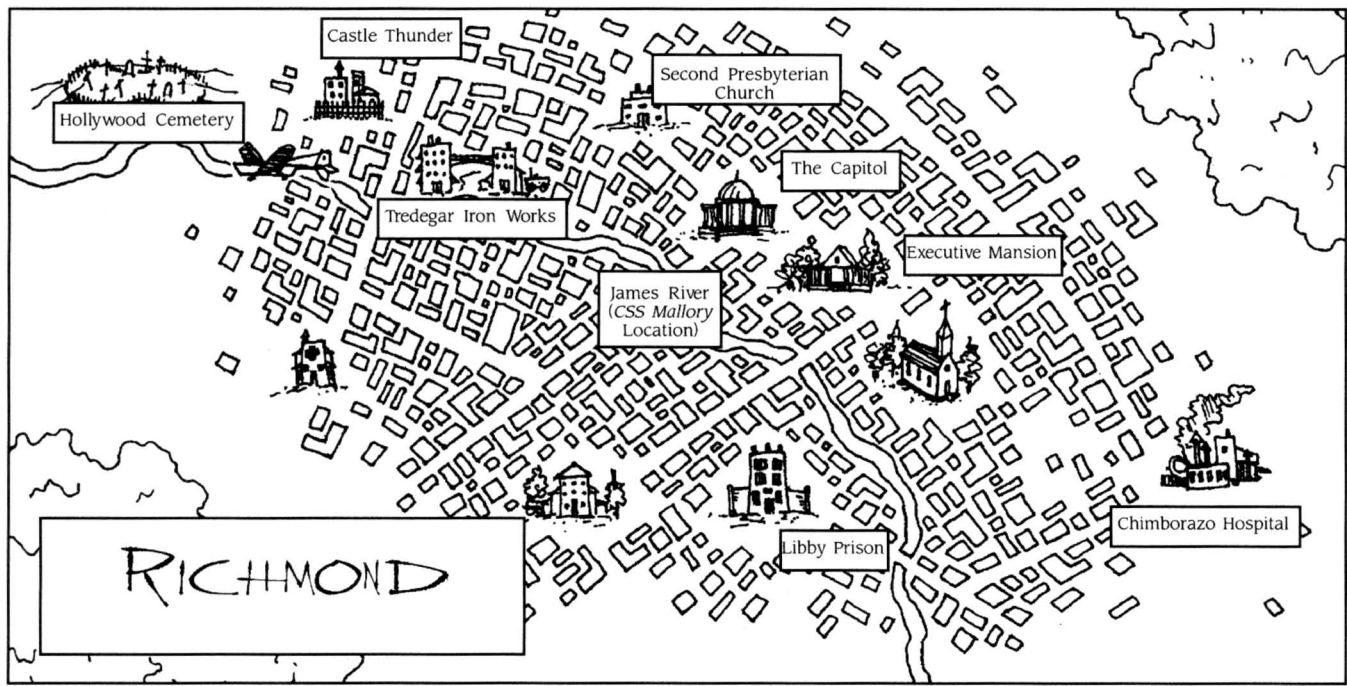
A posse member who succeeds at the fear check is able to hear the real world during Alexander's illusion and picks up a vital clue. Beneath the black-magic phantasms, the character overhears a snippet of conversation between the Colonel and one of his Nightwatchers.

Colonel: "If something goes wrong, we'll blow Libby Prison and level the city."

Nightwatcher: "I'm not looking forward to being crisped, Colonel."

Colonel: "Don't worry. We'll be safely underwater by that time."

Nightwatcher: "Hey, I think your playmate's comin' around. Let's hurt 'im some more."



DO NOT FORSAKE ME, OH MY DARLING

After the last posse member is questioned, Alexander explains to the prisoners, "Cooperation is rewarded. Resistance is punished." One character's cell is unlocked and clean bedding is brought to him, along with a decent meal, a full pitcher of clean water, and a bucket (for those little necessities). If the hero is Harrowed (and thus, decapitated), he even gets his head sewn back on (unless he has the *ghost* power, which means he's left staring at his dumb ol' body). After receiving the reward, the cell is re-locked and the Colonel leaves.

The rewarded character should be the one most likely to be mistrusted by the rest of the posse, not necessarily one who told Alexander something useful. Harrowed are especially well-suited for this role, but new members in the group or those with shady backgrounds work nearly as well. Alexander wants to foment dissent and suspicion amongst the heroes in order to hinder any escape attempts, as well

as creating an incentive for the characters to divulge their secrets.

Assuming the posse members don't fall for Alexander's ruse and turn on one another, they languish in their cells for days that pass like eons. They're kept alive on a diet of hardtack and water, with the exception of Alexander's appointed scapegoat, who continues to receive nourishing meals.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Eventually, it becomes obvious the posse's willingness to talk (and thus its value to the Colonel) has been exhausted. It's okay if the posse comes up with an escape plan on its own. If they do, great! We're through railroading them for a bit.

If the heroes don't have a plan to escape, Alexander rounds up the posse around 4am and marches them into the prison's central yard for some "fresh air." He neglects to mention this involves the posse getting ventilated.

There's one Nightwatcher guarding each character, and an equal number of additional human guards is lined up in the yard. The sound of guns cocking presages what happens next. (For ease of disposal, the bodies of any beheaded Harrowed characters are brought outside as well.)

The heroes are likely to attempt a Butch-and-Sundance exit out of this

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world, and the Marshal may wish to let them try it for a few desperate rounds. (Use the Nightwatcher statistics on page 27.) When the tide turns against the posse and real feelings of inevitable doom overcome the players, it's time to send in some help from on high.

FREE FOR ALL

The characters are distracted from their imminent demise by a long shadow cast all around them. An upwards glance reveals a long, cigar-shaped object, eclipsing the full moon and hovering at treetop level. From it, a blinding spotlight pierces the night and bursts of Gatling gun fire force the Nightwatchers to dive for cover. Next, a small cylindrical object—briefly silhouetted in the spotlight—falls to earth and generates an explosion that makes a fair-sized hole in the prison wall.

As the fight escalates, the posse gets a good look at the strange craft. It proudly flies the Confederate battle flag and bears the noblest of names: *Robert E. Lee*. The confusion sewn by the *Lee*'s attack enables the posse to evade the Nightwatchers' immediate pursuit. If the characters read Lee's instructions earlier, they're probably in a hurry to find the Second Presbyterian Church. On the off-chance they already have some means of locating the church (be it the *area knowledge: Richmond Aptitude* or an arcane shortcut), encounters there are described in "Houses of the Holy" below.

The posse has no better chance to escape than now, and if it's unwise enough not to take it, the Nightwatchers soon regroup and surround them. After that, we got three words for ya, Marshal: Total Party Kill.

The next thing the party must do is make their way through Richmond to the Second Presbyterian Church. If they never read Lee's instructions, they won't know this. If that's the case, you'll need to improvise a second impromptu rescue by the *Robert E. Lee*. This time, the air carriage watches the heroes as they escape the camp, then lowers a rope ladder when it's safe. The Captain, Beuaregard Barnes, then takes the posse to the church and says he

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was instructed to leave them there. He doesn't know why, nor does he want to. He's already angry at having to attack his fellow countrymen, so he won't be of any further help (and no, he certainly won't make an attack on the Executive Mansion).

If the characters have read Lee's instructions and try to make their way to the church on their own, let them. For suspense, the Marshal should play some cat-and-mouse with the "escaped prisoners" and Richmond's "Plug-Uglies" as well (see the Richmond section in *Back East: the South*). We don't recommend letting the Nightwatchers catch up with them again at this point—the heroes need a break before tackling those bad boys again.

HOUSE OF THE HOLY

Whatever the means, the heroes eventually find their way to the Second Presbyterian Church. However, if Lee's Instructions were still intact and in their possession when the Nightwatchers captured them, they find the building a burned-out ruin, and events should proceed to "The Man Behind the Curtain" below. Otherwise, a knock on the church's stately doors summons forth its pastor, Dr. Moses Drury Hoge, who welcomes the posse inside.

If the characters are ignorant of the passwords Lee's Instructions contained, Hoge assumes they are just what they appear to be: lost souls in search of a handout. He takes the adage "The Lord helps those who help themselves" quite seriously, so the posse's in line for a blistering jeremiad against the evils of sloth, drinking and whoring before any charity is forthcoming. (If a character's in need of medical attention, Hoge uses his miracles to heal them—seemingly so they'll stay alive for the sermon.)

Hoge's nearly impossible to interrupt once his sermon gets going, but after he's said his piece, he sincerely inquires about what brought the posse to such a sorry state. Tcharacters were likely admitted on the pretense of wanting spiritual guidance, they have to come up with some sort of answer, or else wind up back on the streets.

Any attempt to prevaricate or withhold something from Hoge requires a successful opposed roll between the hero's *bluff* and the preacher's *scrutinize*. However, it quickly becomes apparent lying to a man of the cloth isn't getting them anywhere, and any falsehood Hoge discerns only strengthen his resolve to find out the posse's real story. When the characters finally decide to tell all, they find Hoge has some tales of his own to tell in "The Man Behind the Curtain" below.

Deadlands D20: Use the heroes' Bluff skills against Hoge's Sense Motive.

PROFILE: DR. MOSES DRURY
HOGE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d6, S:2d6, Q:3d6,
V:2d8

Dodge 3d6, fightin': brawlin' 4d6, horse
ridin' 2d6, shootin': pistol 2d6
swimmin' 2d6

Mental: C:4d6, K:3d8, M:3d10, Sm:3d8,
Sp:4d12

Area knowledge: Richmond 4d8, faith
6d12, guts 2d12, persuasion 5d10,
professional: theology 5d8, scrutinize
5d6, tale-tellin' 5d10

Edges: Arcane background: blessed,
conscience, friends in high places 4,
religious rank 1

Hindrances: Heroic, loyal (to the
Confederacy), obligation -1 (weekly
sermon), pacifist-3

Pace: 6

Size: 6

Wind: 20

Special Abilities:

Miracles: Benediction, consecrate
weapon, exorcism, lay on hands,
panacea, smite.

Gear: Hickory walking stick (STR+ 1d6
damage), Bible, cross.

Description: Hoge is a dark-haired,
moustached man in preacher's garb.

Deadlands D20: Dr. Moses Drury

Hoge: Blessed; Level 5: CR 5;
Medium-size Human; HD 5d6; hp 23;
Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11; Atk +2; AL NG;
SV Fort +4 Ref +2 Will +8; Str 10, Dex
12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9,
Diplomacy +7, Faith +12, Gather
Information +5, Heal +14, Intimidate
+7, Knowledge (occult) +4, Knowledge
(religion) +8, Perform +6, Sense
Motive +8; Firearms, Simple weapons,
Skill Focus (Heal), Maximize Spell
(*cure serious wounds*), Empower Spell
(*cure light wounds*).

Spells: Spell Points 34; 0—*detect magic*,
light, *purify food and drink*, *resistance*,
1—*bless*, *cure light wounds*, *remove*
fear, *sanctuary*, 2—*calm emotions*,
consecrate, 3—*cure moderate wounds*,
gentle repose, *cure serious wounds*,
dispel magic, *prayer*, *remove disease*.

Gifts: Longevity.

Possessions: As above.

Description: As above.

THE PASSWORD IS...

If the characters follow Lee's
Instructions at the church, Hoge looks
surprised (though happily so), and then
hurriedly ushers them inside. The
heroes' needs (healing, food, clean
clothes, etc.) are all quickly attended to,
and soon afterwards, Hoge sits down
with the posse in his study for a most
urgent chat.

Characters who never knew the
password receive this kind of treatment
once they finally come clean with
Hoge, though this should take some
moderate persuasion.

If the posse members haven't yet
said exactly what brought them to the
church, Hoge asks them to do just that
at the very beginning of their talk. The
preacher reacts to the posse's story
with a visible mix of shock and horror,
and it's obvious all his worst fears have
been realized.

THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

The man responsible for the posse's rescue is already at the church when they arrive. He has remained hidden from view this whole time, listening. He reveals himself only when he's sure the heroes are trustworthy souls after the same thing he is—the overthrow of the Davis regime. This is the “sentinel” mentioned in Lee's instructions. Once Hoge realizes the full magnitude of the posse's predicament, he tells the heroes that they are not alone in their struggle. He opens the storage closet door, and a dark-haired, bespectacled man in dirtied, disheveled aristocrat's clothing emerges from it.

The man quickly apologizes for eavesdropping, and in an unassuming fashion introduces himself as the Secretary of War, Eric Michele, adding “You may also know my pen name, *The Southern Sentinel*.” Those who have read the *Tombstone Epitaph's Guide to the Confederacy* should be in a bit of awe. Then, Michele and Hoge together spin the yarn in “Bearing the Cross” below.

If Lee's Instructions fell into the Nightwatchers' hands, their meeting takes place in a nearby private residence, where Michele and the posse hide out and discuss matters in the early-morning cool. Michele displays obvious anguish and a touch of bitterness as he relates how the posse's carelessness led to Hoge's assassination. He insists on knowing exactly how the heroes crossed President Davis. He already knows part of the story, enough to detect any lies, but afterwards entrusts them with the information following.

BEARING THE CROSS

Dr. Hoge is (or was, depending on the circumstances) no stranger to the horrors of the post-Reckoning world, having served an eventful stint with the Confederate Chaplain Corps some years ago. He gained a measure of fame (make a Hard (7) *Smarts* roll to recognize him by name) back in 1870 when the press reported his ministering was instrumental in Robert E. Lee's recovery from near death. After



that, Hoge became a friend and spiritual counselor to the Lee family, and several other notables in Confederate society.

Lee confided to the pastor his misgivings about President Davis' increasingly erratic behavior, and soon after, Hoge came to share Lee's uneasiness. Therefore, when Lee headed West to take charge of Dixie Rails, he asked Hoge to keep him informed of the goings-on in Richmond and the Davis administration. As time passed and the President acted increasingly strange and autocratic, Lee and Hoge began to discuss what steps might become necessary if Davis descended into true insanity. They were eventually joined by another similarly concerned individual, Eric Michele.

Hoge's reputation as a man of true faith and wisdom brought an unlikely personage to him for advice and counsel. Eric Michele (always properly pronounced “Michael” in his birthplace Louisiana, but rarely in his adopted home Virginia) was Catholic by birth, and a War Department bureaucrat by profession. He'd managed to survive the President's many administrative purges through raw competence and by keeping a low profile, so when Davis nominated him to be the new Secretary of War in 1875, he was (to say the least) stunned.

It quickly became apparent that Davis appointed him because he seemed highly unlikely to question the President's conduct of the war. At first, Michele took pains to live up to that expectation. However, as the years rolled on, he could not deny the Davis administration had evolved into a brutal dictatorship. Michele watched helplessly—and with more than a little guilt—as political opponents died mysteriously and frequently, and the martial law declaration horribly abused the rights of the people and states. The worst had yet to come.

THE SEEKER

As Davis prosecuted the war with increasing vigor and ruthlessness, Michele noted a growing number of reports from soldiers across the country concerning strange and horrible events. Curious, he dug into the War Department's archives and uncovered many more such accounts (most dating from 1863 on), all kept tightly under wraps by Executive Order.

Michele became convinced the most crucial struggle facing the Confederacy was not the War for Southern Independence, but the battle to discover the cause of these unexplained events, long buried by the Davis administration (and, Michele presumed, the Union government). However, he knew Davis' grim determination to fight the war to a finish would tolerate no such deviation. Thus, he was left unable to clear his conscience, which bore the weight of those who had suffered because of the horrors he felt responsible for covering up.

THE SENTINEL

This brought him to Dr. Hoge for guidance, and a bond rapidly formed as the two shared what they knew about the President and the supernatural. Michele offered to pass along any useful knowledge his department garnered to Lee and Hoge, and the Secretary became party to their plans to save the Confederacy from its President if the need arose.

Their first precautionary step was to educate the Confederate people as much as possible about the weird and terrible events of the last few years, both within their government and without. Michele seized this as an opportunity to ease his guilty mind, and composed a series of letters detailing everything he'd discovered about such matters.

After completing his task, Michele sent the correspondence to the only

man in the Confederacy he felt could safely publish them, Lacy O'Malley of the *Tombstone Epitaph*. In order to protect himself and his colleagues from public ridicule and the Davis regime's vengeance, Michele signed the letters with a pen-name he felt best reflected his new role as a guardian of the Confederate people: the Southern Sentinel.

It was Michele who sent the air carriage to attack Castle Thunder. His spies in the prison informed him of what was going on, and he knew these heroes were the ones who must help him topple the Davis regime.

LAST, BEST HOPE

By blatantly using his office to commandeer the *Robert E. Lee*, Michele has dangerously compromised himself. It's only a matter of time before the Nightwatchers find and kill everyone present. If none of the characters mention it first, the Secretary raises the possibility of assassinating President Davis, and strongly resists any suggestions to the contrary. As he sees it, the individuals present are the Confederacy's "last, best hope," and though their hands will be bloodied, many innocents will be saved by their actions.

More optimistic or less-clued-in characters may counter by suggesting capturing Davis alive. Hoge strongly approves, and though he doesn't really believe it's feasible, Michele agrees to go along with the proviso that Davis be killed if all other methods fail. He is an abomination after all, not a human being.

If the characters adamantly refuse to go along with Michele's plan, the Secretary reluctantly relents and arranges for Hoge, the posse and ample provisions to be smuggled aboard a Confederate Army supply train, bound for the destination of their choice. This effectively concludes the scenario, and leaves the posse many dire repercussions, not the least of which is that the Nightwatchers continue to hunt them down (no matter where they go) until each and every one of the "conspirators" is dead.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

When and if an agreement is reached to move against Davis, Michele reopens the storage closet and says, "You will be needing these, then." With that, he returns to the posse any and all gear taken from it by the Nightwatchers, including Stuart's LeMat. ("I am—or rather, was not—without influence," Michele explains.) Since the characters probably don't carry cap-and-ball ammunition for the LeMat, the Secretary can provide some if asked.

Hoge (if not killed earlier or convinced otherwise) continues protesting any planned assassination, but Michele insists his cooperation is vital. The posse's assistance in the persuasion of the clergyman is welcomed, but if it fails, Michele ultimately prevails upon Hoge at least not to interfere.

Dr. Hoge is crucial to the plan because for the first time in years, Davis is leaving the safety of the Executive Mansion to deliver a eulogy at the Second Presbyterian Church tomorrow as part of a memorial service for Robert E. Lee. There is simply no better opportunity to get at the President, so whatever is to occur must happen then and there, or be doomed

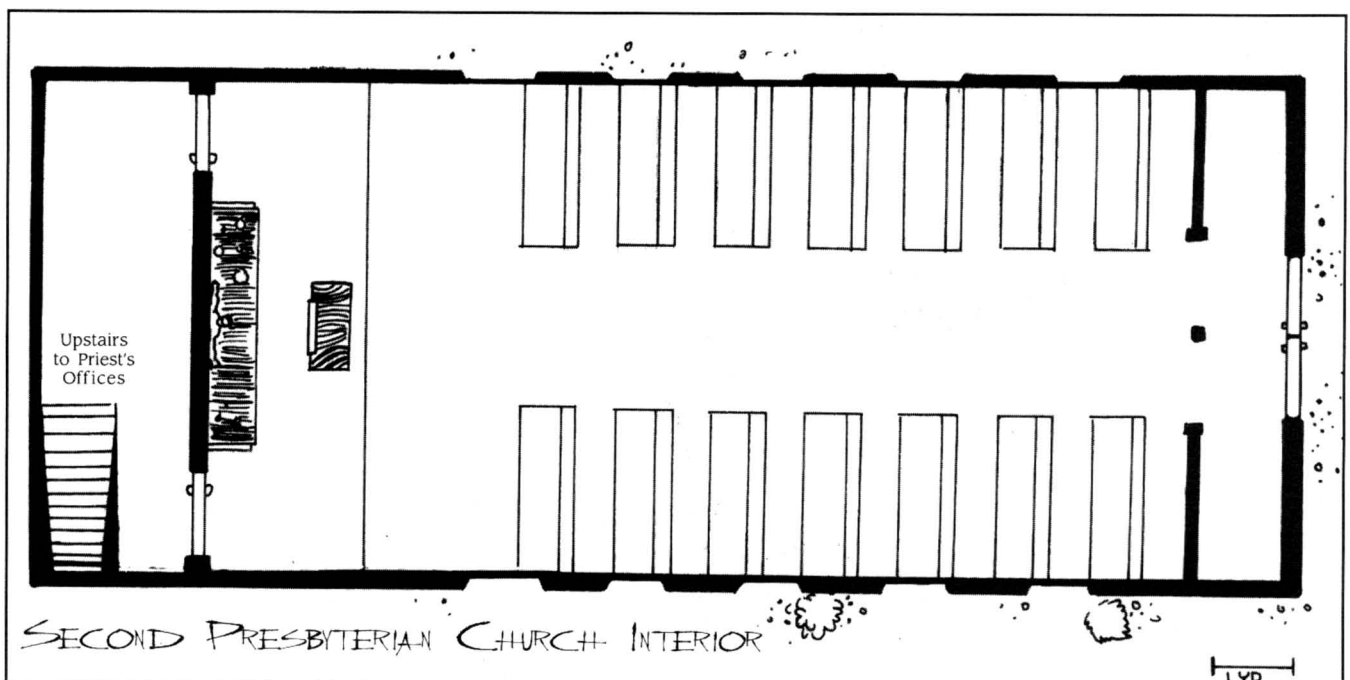
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to failure. More importantly, Michele adds, Lee's death will serve an epic and ironic purpose, for the doppelganger must attend his funeral.

When it comes to devising tactics, Hoge and/or Michele expect to follow the posse's lead, as that's almost certainly more within their expertise. Therefore, the characters have a free hand in determining that course of action. They have but a few short hours left before the service at 10am though, so their preparations must be made with that in mind.

TO KILL A PRESIDENT

President Davis arrives at the Church at the scheduled time, stepping from an ostentatious carriage and accompanied by a retinue of Nightwatcher bodyguards (one for each character, plus an additional one for Hoge, if present). They make their way through a tightly packed throng of mourners lining the streets, so the posse pulling a Jack Ruby is difficult.





If Lee Harvey Oswald is more their style, the surrounding huddled masses leave only Davis' noggin visible (a -6 called shot modifier, plus any other applicable penalties), with consequently a possibility of hitting an innocent person if they miss. Regardless if the bullet strikes true or not, all the posse's escape routes are cut off by the rush of fleeing spectators, leaving the heroes sitting ducks for Davis' minions. (Feel free to point this out before any triggers get pulled.)

Once inside the church, the President and his intimidating entourage get the first two pews all to themselves. Most every notable figure in the Confederacy is present and fill the remaining spaces. (If it would impress the posse, the Marshal can mention some of the famous names attending. The *Weird*

West Player's Guide, *Marshal's Handbook* and *Back East: The South* all list potential mourners.)

Deadlands D20: Davis has 9/10s cover while moving through the tightly-packed crowd.

FALL BRAWL

A confrontation inside the church begins whenever the posse chooses to initiate one. If the characters took pains to conceal themselves, they may even surprise the Nightwatchers (though like any good bodyguards should, they are expecting trouble).

Once the shooting starts, all the attendees attempt to escape out the main doors. Their panicked flight prevents anyone else from entering. The Marshal should enforce the innocent bystanders rules vigorously until the crowd has departed 1d4 rounds after the fight begins. Only Secretary Michele and Dr. Hoge try to remain inside, and only Colonel Alexander (seated in the back pew) definitely makes it out of the building. Michele does try to stop him, but a bureaucrat against a black magician isn't much of a match. If the party tries to stop Alexander (because they heard his threat in Castle Thunder), let them try. Unless they're awfully good though, Alexander should escape so that the heroes can participate in the exciting chase scene that follows Davis' assassination.

The Nightwatchers' first priority is protecting the President, yet they refrain from using any obvious Harrowed powers until the crowd has left. They employ the pews for cover whenever possible, but are also quite willing to grab some "human shields" from amongst the people running for the exits. (Make sure these are nameless dignitaries. Our storylines aren't quite ready to lose the likes of Cleburne or Longstreet!) However, any action the Nightwatchers take that confirms their Bad Guy-ness brings Dr. Hoge (if present) into the fight on the posse's side.

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FACE OFF

All bets are off after either Davis suffers a serious wound or the church empties (the Nightwatchers' hostages don't count when making this determination). If the latter happens, Davis and his bodyguards no longer have any witnesses from which they must conceal their special abilities. If the former happens, events still take a turn for the posse's worse.

When "Davis" suffers a major injury, his wounds ooze a thick, ivory fluid, and a resonating, inhuman howl escapes his lips. The doppelganger is then exposed to the world and ceases pretending to be as injured as a human should be. From then on, it's a no-holds-barred fight for survival inside the church. Two sides entered, but only one leaves.

PROFILE: NIGHTWATCHER BODYGUARDS

Corporeal: D:4d12, N:4d10, Q:4d10, S:4d12, V:4d12

Climbin' 3d10, dodge 3d10, fightin' brawlin' 5d10, quick draw: pistol, rifle 3d10, horse ridin' 2d10, shootin': pistol, rifle 5d12, sneak 5d10, speed-load: pistol, rifle 5d12, teamster 2d10

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d6, M:4d12, Sm:2d8, Sp:2d6

Area knowledge: Richmond 3d6, gamblin' 2d8, guts 5d6, overawe 5d12, ridicule 2d8, scrutinize 5d8, search 5d8

Edges: Brave, law man 2, rank 3, seen the elephant 2, "the voice" (threatening)

Hindrances: Aura o' death -5, mark o' the devil -3, mean as a rattler

Pace: 10

Size: 6

Wind: 18

Special Abilities:

Harrowed: Dominion: Manitou 6 Harrowed 0 (The powers of each Nightwatcher Bodyguard are as follows:)

Lieutenant Colonel Wesley

Anderson: Claws 2, marked for death 5, unholy reflexes 3

Major Ross Coburn: Rigor mortis 5, unholy reflexes 5

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Captain Christopher Nelson:

Claws 2, hell fire 5, unholy reflexes 3

Lieutenant Stephen Jacobs: Claws 2, devil's touch 5, unholy reflexes 3

Lt. Daniel Gwyn: Bad mojo 5, claws 2, unholy reflexes 3

Lt. Jeffrey Yates: Berserker 4, claws 5, unholy reflexes 1

Lt. Derek Bass: Claws 2, sleep o' the dead 5, unholy reflexes 3

Gear: LeMat Grapeshot Pistols, Winchester '66 rifles with 50 rounds of ammo

Description:

The undead Nightwatchers invariably wear black uniforms and grim expressions.

Deadlands D20: Nightwatchers:

Gunslinger; Level 10: CR 10; Medium-size Undead Human; HD 10d8; hp 80; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+3 Dex); Atk +13/+8 ranged (repeating shotgun 1-3d6/19-20/x3), +10 melee (Bowie knife 1d4+1/19-20/x2); AL LE; SV Fort +7 Ref +10 Will +3; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Gather Information +1, Hide +5, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (occult) +3, Listen +1, Move Silently +6, Spot +3; Combat Reflexes, Fannin', Firearms, Greased Lightning +4, Improved Critical (shotgun), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Rapid Shot, Simple Weapons, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Specialization.

Special Qualities: Harrowed; Dominion: Manitou 5 Harrowed 0. (The Powers of each Nightwatcher Bodyguard are as follows:)

Lieutenant Colonel Wesley

Anderson: Claws, marked for death, unholy reflexes

Major Ross Coburn: Rigor mortis, unholy reflexes

Captain Christopher Nelson:

Claws 2, hell fire, unholy reflexes

Lieutenant Stephen Jacobs: Claws, devil's touch, unholy reflexes

Lt. Daniel Gwyn: Bad mojo, claws, unholy reflexes

Lt. Jeffrey Yates: Berserker, claws, unholy reflexes

Lt. Derek Bass: Claws, supernatural ability (+2 Dex), unholy reflexes

Possessions: As above.

Description: As above.

PROFILE: JEFFERSON DAVIS GREATER DOPPLEGANGER

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d10, Q:3d12, S:3d10, V:4d8

Climbin' 3d10, dodge 3d10, fightin' brawlin' 4d10, horse ridin' 4d10, shootin': pistol, rifle 4d6, sneak 4d10, swimmin' 3d10, teamster 3d10

Mental: C:3d8, K:4d8, M:4d10, Sm:3d8, Sp:3d8

Area knowledge: Richmond, southwestern Mississippi 5d8, guts 5d8, leadership 4d10, overawe 3d10, persuasion 7d10, professional: law, politics 6d8, scrutinize 3d8, search 4d8

Pace: 10 (Pace is a self-imposed 6 until exposed as an Abomination)

Size: 6

Wind: 16

Error: 9 (once exposed)

Special Abilities:

Acidic Maw: See page 35.

Poison: See page 35.

Regeneration: See page 35.

Description: Until it uses one of its Special Abilities, the doppelganger looks exactly like the real Jefferson Davis.

Deadlands D20: Jefferson Davis

Greater Doppelganger: CR 10; Medium-size Shapechanger; HD 10d8; hp 75; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+3 Dex); Atk +13/+8 ranged (repeating shotgun 1-3d6/19-20/x3), +10 melee (Bowie knife 1d4+1/19-20/x2); AL LE; SV Fort +7 Ref +10 Will +2; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +6, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +17, Gather Information +12, Innuendo +12, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (occult) +12, Listen +6, Move Silently

+8, Perform +14, Ride +8, Search +8, Sense Motive +10, Spot +8, Swim +5, Wilderness Lore +6; Firearms, Far Shot, Simple Weapons.

Special Qualities: See the greater doppelganger statistics on page 36.

Possessions: As above.

Description: As above.

LONG, NATIONAL NIGHTMARE

There's no cavalry in this battle for the posse. If the characters lose, they all die. If the good guys emerge victorious, the doppelganger's dying breaths still bear dire words of warning. In-between coughs (which expel a sickly white liquid), the doppelganger addresses each posse member by name and mentions a loved one of theirs, displaying an intimate knowledge of their whereabouts and activities. ("And you, John Smith, with the mother who lives on a small farm in east Texas. Did you know she still bakes fresh bread for you every day in case you come to visit?") All of the doppelgangers' family factoids are thoroughly accurate, and are meant to unnerve the characters as much as possible.

"Everyone you have ever cared for is dead. Colonel Alexander will see to that after he destroys this wretched city!" the doppelganger boasts. With that, the doppelganger dissolves into a pool of whitish ooze.

THE BIG FINALE

As the smoke clears, the church doors open and the Capital Guards rush inside. To distract them from the posse, the Secretary moves to address both the Guards and the crowd outside, revealing a startling gift for oration as he explains what just took place.

Even if the posse took the hint and stealthily removed itself from the building, the characters hear the gist of his speech. Michele claims a conspiracy organized by Colonel George Alexander made an attempt on the President's life, and though some bystanders tried heroically to thwart the assassination, Jefferson Davis is now dead. In

conclusion, he urges everyone to return calmly to their homes and keep a lookout for the guilty Colonel Alexander. The crowd complies and disperses, giving the posse its chance to play hero again.

As soon as the fight began, Colonel Alexander ran straight for his personal submersible docked on the James River, the *CSS Mallory*. One of his men ran to Libby Prison. Soon after the party exits the church, eastern Richmond is consumed in a titanic blast originating from Libby Prison. The initial blast kills everyone from Libby Prison to the Trinity Church and the Church Hill Mansion. Fires rage outward from here, threatening Screamersville, the Chimborazo Hospital, the Capitol, and the Executive Mansion. Everything within this initial blast area becomes a Deadlands, and it isn't long before scores of charred corpses begin to rise in the ruins.

As the posse clears their senses, Secretary Michele staggers outside. The startled expression on his face slowly changes as he sees the massive column of fire and smoke to the east. The Sentinel is no longer the pedantic diplomat—he's a figure of rage and fury. "Alexander!" he screams to the posse. "He has a private submersible at the docks. He'll try to escape via the river. Kill him!" If the posse disagrees despite Michele's orders, you might need to remind them that Alexander's next task is to wipe out their families. The characters are bound for the ultimate confrontation with the Colonel, and this time...it's *personal*.

RUN SILENT, RUN DEEP

The normally busy Richmond docks on the James are still when the characters arrive. A gathering of longshoremen and sailors pause to survey the glow from the east, and then a happening out on the river. Less than a hundred yards offshore, the James bubbles and foams with tremendous disturbance. The source soon reveals itself as the sloping casemate of a Confederate submersible,

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rising quickly above the water's surface. The ship's smokestack belches forth a distinctive trail of ghost-rock smoke, then the vessel races towards the sea.

If the heroes want to catch Alexander, they'll have to commandeer one of the Confederate navy boats moored nearby. This isn't hard as the shipyard commander is already organizing his men into fire brigades and moving off into the city. The *Mallory's* sudden exit seems a bit odd, but the rebels don't have any reason to chase it.

The James River's relatively shallow depth makes submarine travel

THE BOATS

The torpedo boat is written up in detail in *River o' Blood*. *Smith & Robards* contains complete statistics for submersibles. You'll also find the rules for vapor cannons and clockwork torpedoes there as well. Here's a quick overview of the boats' statistics for handy reference. Hit locations and malfunction results would take up too much space in this epic adventure, so these must be looked up in *River o' Blood* or *Smith & Robards*.

If you don't have these books, Marshal, simply narrate the drama as the torpedo boat frantically dodges cannonballs and edges closer to the *Mallory*. Feel free to make some bogus dice rolls and describe superficial damage as the boat closes. Doing so adds just the right amount of tension to the proceedings and gives more of a feeling that an actual in-game battle is taking place. When the posse is properly shell-shocked, proceed to the boarding action in the next section.

Torpedo Boats: Durability: 40/8; Passengers 8; Pace 25; Turn 5; Travel 20mph; Fuel 2; Reliability 18; Modifier +3; Pumps 1d6. Torpedoes do 5d20 damage and are AP 4.

CSS Mallory: Durability: 60/12; Passengers 5; Pace 15; Turn 9; Travel 5mph; Fuel 3; Reliability 20; Modifier +6; Pumps 1d8. 10lb Vapor cannons do 5d20 and are AP1.

Deadlands D20: Deadlands D20 Marshals can find statistics for these boats and their weapons in the Appendix at the end of this adventure.

dangerous, so the *Mallory* must cruise along on the surface. This impairment disappears once it reaches the Appomattox River confluence fifteen miles away. From there on, the ship may venture underwater, and if it makes it to the Chesapeake Bay, the *Mallory* may go where it wills with little risk of detection.

WE'RE GONNA GET A BIGGER BOAT, RIGHT?

The only nearby vessels with a prayer of catching the *Mallory* are a flotilla of three torpedo boats, which are slightly faster than the ironclad, but also decidedly under-gunned. The boats—the CSS *Hillsman*, CSS *Williamson* and CSS *Wingo*—are armed with twin side-mounted torpedo tubes (four clockwork torpedoes carried per boat) and a bow-mounted Gatling gun.

If the heroes are all “land lubbers,” they can commandeer a sailor or two as well. These men work under duress unless they’re convinced they’re taking part in a noble cause—such as chasing Davis’ assassins or the fiend responsible for demolishing the city.

Characters without the proper skills can still drive the boat, they just do so at the normal penalty for being unskilled. (Yikes!)

The torpedo boat statistics at left conform to the “Drivin’ Lessons” section of the sourcebook *Smith & Robards*. Rules governing the use of clockwork torpedoes are also found within that fine publication.

Deadlands D20: Rules for vehicles can be found in the **Deadlands D20** rulebook.

ROLLIN’ ON THE RIVER

The characters may board whichever boats they wish, and should be quickly off in pursuit of their quarry.

The opposing vessels catch sight of each other after passing a bend in the river, and find themselves well inside

the *Mallory*’s effective cannon range (about 1000 yards). The ironclad continues along at full steam, but as the pursuing torpedo boats continue to gain on it, begins a fearsome series of volleys at them.

The *Mallory* carries ten 10-pound Vapor Cannons: two on each side, two to the rear and the remaining four aiming front; each with a corresponding firing arcs. See *Smith & Robards* for complete information on the boat and its armaments.

AVAST, ME HARDIES!

Assuming the posse’s boats successfully run the gauntlet laid down by the *Mallory*’s guns, they maneuver alongside, and the heroes must then attempt to board the ironclad. This *really* needs to be done during the four-round “window” of time between cannon reloads, so the characters have to act fast.

Leaping onto the ironclad’s deck requires an Onerous (7) *Nimbleness* roll. If a character fails the roll, he lands in the James instead. Going Bust means smacking into the *Mallory*’s iron casemate, which inflicts the character’s own *Strength* +2d6 damage. Either degree of failure also leaves a hero *swimmin’* against the river’s TN (5), at least until their buddies swing back and pick them up.

Unless someone lacks the sense to avoid standing in front of the gunports, boarding parties remain beyond the cannons’ reach while on deck. Therefore, the *Mallory*’s personnel must step from behind their iron shields and settle matters face-to-face.

Deadlands D20: Leaping onto the deck requires a DC 15 Jump check. Damage for rolling a 1 is equal to 1d6 plus the character’s own *Strength* bonus. The base DC for swimming the James is 10.

SKELETON CREW

The *Mallory* has served as the personal ship for Alexander and his Nightwatchers for some time now. It’s a credit to the original crew that when they discovered the nature of the Nightwatchers, they attempted to

mutiny. Unfortunately, they lost in that permanent way. Alexander and his surprised henchmen then raised the crew from the dead and put them right back to work.

The *Mallory* is crewed by the dead. A dozen stand waiting to repel boarders, and another seven can be found inside. Use the standard statistics for walkin' dead, but add drivin': steamboat 4d8, and artillery 3d10. The zombies carry Colt Navy revolvers and cutlasses.

The fight on the *Mallory's* narrow decks runs the risk of dumping the combatants into the drink. If that happens, they suffer the same consequences as missing a leap onto the ship (see **Avast, Me Hardies!** above). The zombies aren't shy about knocking people overboard either, as they're under orders to get the molesting heroes off the ship by any means necessary.

Deadlands D20: The zombies have Driving +4. They man the cannons using an attack bonus of +3.

THE AIR THAT I BREATHE

Once the characters cut a swath through the zombies, they're able to enter the *Mallory's* casemate and attempt to bring Alexander's getaway to a screeching halt. The first thing they're likely to notice is the inescapable cloud of ghost-rock fumes inside the ship.

Even though the fumes are concentrated, the posse members are in no real danger of contracting ghost rock fever (unless they plan on spending the next week or so inside the ship). However Marshal, the players probably don't know this, and a few bogus dice rolls after mentioning the cloud is likely to drive their inherent sense of paranoia through the roof.

An Onerous (7) *Cognition* roll (or Fair (5) *search*) means a hero spots the rack of vapor masks on the far wall. If the Marshal has done his job well, these completely useless accessories become a major objective for the posse. Don't forget to include one final bogus roll as the anxious character finally dons his "lifesaving" mask.

Deadlands D20: Spotting the masks is a DC 15 Spot check.

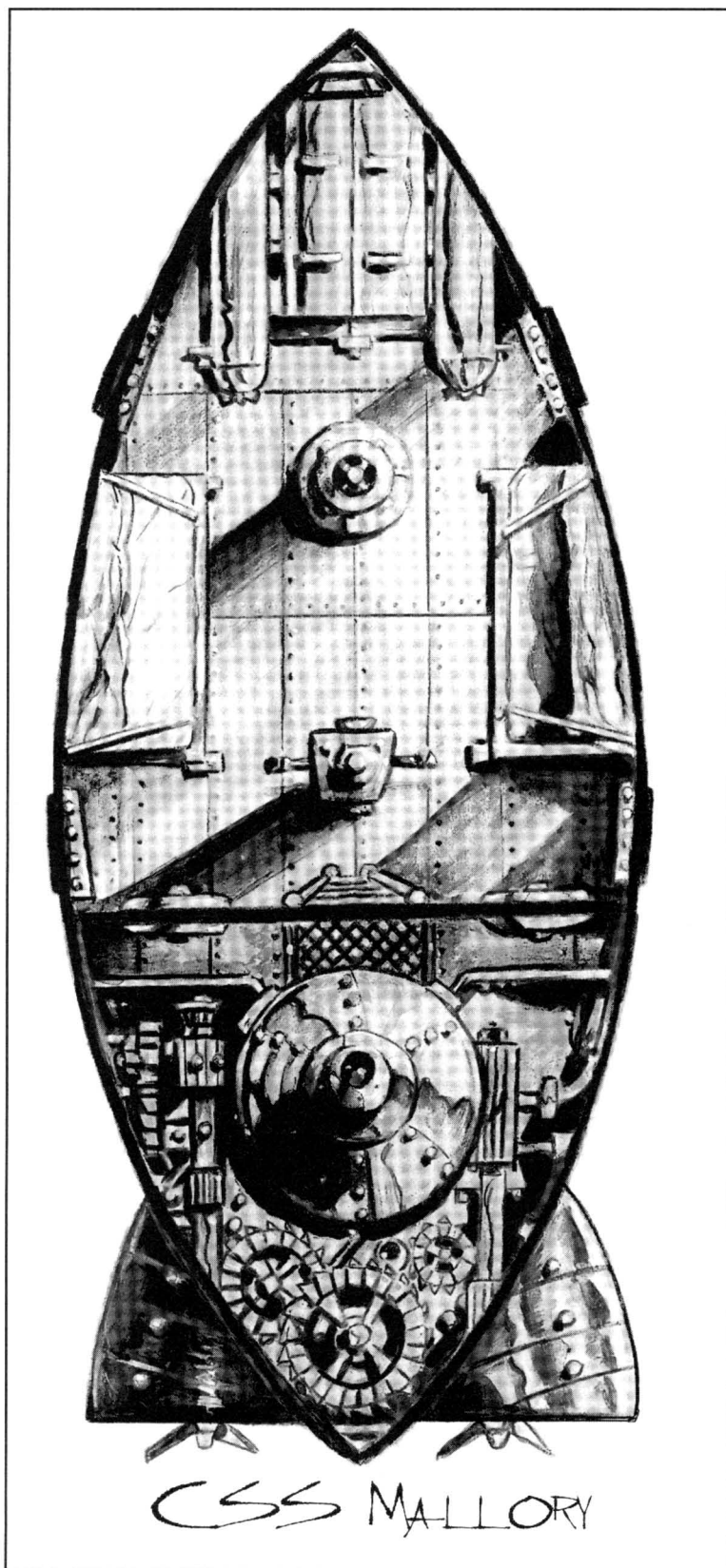
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LAST STAND

As the posse enters the *Mallory*, the remaining seven zombies charge them in a desperate effort to prevent them from reaching the Colonel. Once the posse's engaged with the undead, Alexander appears from the pilothouse and joins the fray. He is accompanied by half the party's number in *Nightwatchers*, unless the heroes have slain all those named earlier.

Fearing his likely punishment, Alexander rules out surrendering. If the posse doesn't kill him, he does the job himself. His last words are "I did it for my President and my country," but his speech only proves what a cruel fallacy his life was.





THE SHIP CANNA TAKE N'MORE, CAP'N!

If any hero knows how to steer a boat, at least one of them makes his way to the pilothouse and steers the *Mallory* safely back to Richmond. If the opposite is true, a complication results and one of the characters has to make a Fair (5) *drivin': steamboat* roll by using the default skill.

Success means the ironclad coasts gently along. Failure, on the other hand, runs the ship aground with violent impact, leaving the Confederate Navy with a heck of a repair bill in the process. Going Bust indicates an even more severe impact, one that actually sinks the vessel and leaves the characters dog-paddling in the James (just as described in **Avast, Me Hardys!** above). The Marshal must then adjudicate their swim using the rules in the *Weird West Player's Guide*.

The *drivin': steamboat* roll need not be repeated if the boilers can be shut down or the engines stopped, though doing either requires a Fair (5) roll with the *tinkerin'* Aptitude. Failure ruins the ship's engine mechanisms, and is guaranteed to give penny-pinching Confederate Congressmen heart attacks. Going Bust catastrophically overheats the boilers, causing them irrevocably to explode and scuttle the *Mallory* as if a Catastrophic Malfunction occurred. As above, the posse is left to swim for it.

Deadlands D20: The Driving (steamboat) DC is 10. The Tinkerin' check is DC 10 as well. A roll of 1 on the Tinkerin' roll causes a Catastrophic Malfunction.

BE SEEING YOU

Whether they return like conquering heroes or slosh their way back with the James dripping off their clothes, the posse's denouement takes place on the Richmond docks where Secretary Michele stands waiting. Words fail the career bureaucrat upon seeing the victorious heroes, but his gratitude seems all the more genuine for it.

If any of the characters are badly injured, Michele uses his authority to get them aid at the Robertson Hospital,

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the finest medical facility in the Confederacy. Anything short of a lost limb is automatically healed there, and in the shortest possible time.

As an extension of the Secretary's gratitude, the posse can travel from Richmond in the manner and to the place of their choosing. If the characters are still feeling paranoid, Michele arranges for them to be smuggled aboard a Confederate Army supply train, heading for anywhere in the Confederacy selected by the players east of Tombstone, Arizona. He can also secure them a luxurious private rail car to any of the same destinations, if the heroes prefer to ride in style.

Regardless of what the characters choose, the Secretary asks for their words of honor they will not divulge anything they have witnessed, at least until the Confederate government is prepared to deal with the repercussions. As a final token of thanks, he hands each posse member an envelope containing five crisp, new Confederate \$100 bills, which ironically display the stern gaze of Jefferson Davis.

EPILOGUE

As their train leaves the station, a well-earned sense of accomplishment overcomes the posse members, enabling them to relax for the first time in weeks. Just then, out of the corner of their eyes, they spot a foreboding figure outside the train window (or through an opening in the box car's door). The man is dressed all in black, rather like an undertaker, and has a sunken, pallid countenance, but the image disappears from sight in the time it takes to glance.

If the posse looks more intently, they see absolutely nothing out of the ordinary. Surely then, t'was but a figment...wasn't it?

A few days after the assassination of President Davis, hand the posse the *Tombstone Epitaph* special presented at the end of this book.



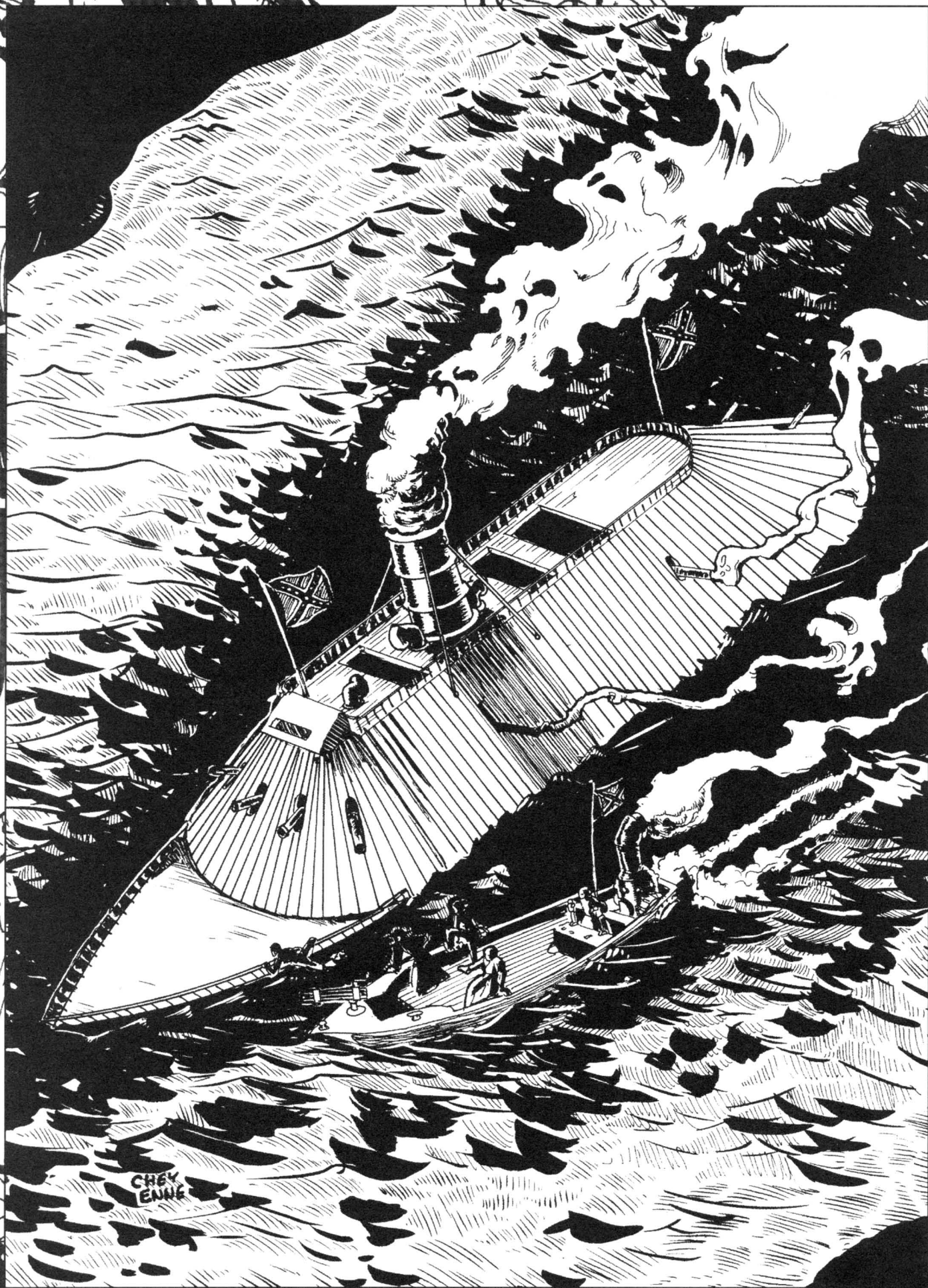
THE BOUNTY

- Bluffing Davis into believing something less-than-completely honest about Varina and/or Winnie's whereabouts:** 1 white chip
- Succeeding at the guts check caused by Alexander's illusions:** 1 white chip
- Escaping Castle Thunder on their own:** 1 blue chip each
- Agreeing to help Sec. Michele act against Pres. Davis:** 1 white chip each
- Defeating the doppelganger and its bodyguards:** 1 blue chip each, one Legend chip each
- Defeating the zombie seamen and Col. Alexander:** 1 red chip each
- Recapturing the Mallory, severely damaged but still afloat:** 1 white chip each
- Recapturing the Mallory with minor (or less) damage:** 1 red chip each

OOPS!

If the doppelganger survives, he belays his orders to Alexander before Richmond is incinerated. The public is told Secretary Michele led a failed coup attempt against the President, but succeeded only in killing himself (and anyone else Davis feels like getting rid of). The grim state of affairs in the Confederacy apparently reverts to the status quo, but behind that facade, becomes even grimmer still.

The doppelganger's surviving lackeys most definitely come calling on the posse or their loved ones should the assassination fail. The Nightwatchers won't relent until either Davis is dead or the posse is a distant memory.





APPENDIX: D20 GOODIES

Here are details on the powers and vehicles in this adventure not found in the *Deadlands D20* book.

NEW HARROWED POWERS

Book o' the Dead, an expansion book for the original *Deadlands*, features an unholy host of new powers for the Harrowed, many of which play a part in this epic adventure. Here are the powers used in *Dead Presidents*.

Those familiar with regular *Deadlands* rules should realize these powers aren't meant to be direct translations. We've rewritten the powers to have the same basic effects, but are different in several important ways.

First, there are no power levels in *Deadlands D20*. A Harrowed with cat's eyes sees in the dark in D20 he doesn't gain all the additional abilities such as soul sight granted

by the power in the original *Deadlands*.

The powers were rewritten to be simpler to keep track of, but also to take better advantage of the rules set they are to be used in. Some concepts from *Deadlands* just don't translate to *Deadlands D20*, and vice-versa.

BAD MOTO

This power makes life very rough for hucksters. As a free action, the Harrowed nominates a huckster within sight and makes an opposed Wisdom roll. If the Harrowed wins, the huckster's backlash number on his next hex is equal to half the Harrowed's level, rounded up. A huckster cursed by a 9th level Harrowed, for example, suffers backlash on a roll of 1 through 5.

BERSERKER

For a number of rounds equal to half his character level, the Harrowed's physical abilities (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution) are raised by +2. His mental abilities (Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma) are reduced by -2. This power may be used once per day.

DEATH MASK

This power works just like the *alter self* spell. The caster's level is the character's level.

DEVIL'S TOUCH

This power allows the Harrowed to modify the Reliability rating of a device to half his character level. A device affected by a 9th level Harrowed, for example, has a Reliability of 5. This applies to *any* mechanical device with at least some moving parts—not just mad science gizmos. The range at which the Harrowed can use the power is equal to half his level times five yards.

MARKED FOR DEATH

The Harrowed nominates one target as a full-round action. For a number of rounds equal to the Harrowed's level, the target may not spend Fate chips (if a character). If the target is a nonplayer character, all damage that actually harms the target (after damage resistance and other special abilities) is multiplied by 1.5.

RIGOR MORTIS

With a successful touch attack, the victim must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be *held* for a number of rounds equal to the Harrowed's level. If the target rolls a natural 1 on the save (and is a living being), he drops dead from a massive heart attack.

SILENT AS A CORPSE

As long as the Harrowed's feet touch the earth (normal footwear doesn't inhibit the ability), he adds half his character level to his Move Silently rolls.

UNHOLY REFLEXES

The Harrowed acts as if *hasted* for a number of rounds equal to half the Harrowed's level. The power may be used once per day for every four full character levels. The AC bonus applies only when the Harrowed is aware of the attack.

NEW WEAPONS

Vapor cannons and clockwork torpedoes are described in *Smith & Robards*. Here are their statics for *Deadlands D20*.

CLOCKWORK TORPEDOES

Clockwork torpedoes are launched from boats with specially-built tubes. These long cylindrical bombs race through the water toward their target in a straight line. Special clockwork gears stabilize the weapon and keep it on target where it explodes on contact.

Firing the torpedoes requires an Artillery skill roll. Once fired, the torpedo has a Speed of 360 feet per round, so vessels at a decent distance from the attack have a chance to evade (assuming the firer hit in the first place). Spotting the torpedoes requires a DC 10 Spot check. The Marshal should modify this for rough seas, night, and so on.

Reliability: 5

Malfunctions

Minor: The torpedo has a defective motor. It moves for 1d10 rounds and then runs out of power.

Major: The torpedo fires then veers wildly out of control after moving 1d20 x 10 feet. Roll 1d12 and read the result as a clock facing, then move the torpedo in that direction until it hits a target.

Catastrophic: The torpedo detonates in the tube, doing full damage to the vehicle and every character in the same compartment.

60 DEAD PRESIDENTS

VAPOR CANNONS

Vapor cannons use volatile ghost rock to propel their shells, extending the weapon's range and penetration.

Vapor cannons are found in three basic sizes named for the size of the shell they propel. See the table below for statistics.

Slow Reload: Reloading the cannon requires two full-round actions.

Reliability: 3

Malfunctions

Minor: The chamber leaks and the trapped vapor escapes. Nothing happens when the gun is fired.

Major: The chamber is overcharged with vapor. The cannon recoils violently and rolls backward. The firer must make a DC 15 Reflex save or suffer 2d6 damage.

Catastrophe: The gun's chamber bursts causing the shell's damage in a 10 foot radius.

NEW VEHICLES

Below are the D20 statistics for the *CSS Mallory* and torpedo boats. Submersibles are described in *Smith & Robards*. Torpedo boats are listed in *River o' Blood*.

SUBMERSIBLE (CSS MALLORY)

The submersible is roughly 30 feet long and can travel above or below the waves. The vessel can dive at 10 feet per round, or rise at twice that.

AC: 15

Hit Points: 60

Hardness: 40 all around

Speed: 70 (The submersible's base Speed is 35 while submerged)

Reliability: 2

Malfunctions

Minor: The boiler loses pressure, cutting the vehicle's base Speed in half. A DC 20 Tinkerin' roll stops the leak and restores Speed.

Major: Stress causes the sub to begin leaking. Water rises to neck-height within 2d10 rounds if a DC 15 Tinkerin' roll is not made.

Catastrophic: The boiler overheats and explodes. The sub suffers 6d8 damage and loses all power.

TORPEDO BOAT

These fast boats were designed to attack heavier boats by quickly striking with torpedoes and then motoring away as fast as possible.

Each torpedo boat has one Gatling gun and two torpedo tubes with one torpedo each.

Maneuverability: Torpedo boats are made for tight maneuvers at high speeds. The boat's driver may ignore the first two points of penalty modifiers for Speed.

Hit Points: 40

Hardness: 35 (but open-topped; passengers gain 1/4 cover)

Speed: 90

Reliability: 2

Malfunctions (Boiler)

Minor: The boiler loses pressure, cutting Speed by 10% per turn until a DC 15 Tinkerin' roll is made. The boat then regains pressure (and Speed) at 10% per turn.

Major: The boiler springs a leak. Treat this as a minor malfunction, but it cannot be repaired. A random passenger must make a DC 15 Reflex save or be hit by a jet of steam for 2d6 damage.

Catastrophic: The boiler explodes, sending the boat flipping end over end high into the air (if it was moving at its normal Speed or more). Everyone inside takes 6d6 damage from the explosion (DC 15 Reflex save for half). A second Reflex save against a DC 20 should then be made for hitting the water (if at high speed). Those who fail take 4d6 damage, those who succeed take half damage.

NEW WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Threat	Range Increment	Notes
Vapor Cannons				
6lb	4d10	20/x2	100	AP 10
10lb	5d10	20/x2	150	AP 20
12lb	6d10	20/x2	200	AP 30
Torpedo	6d10	20/x2	150	AP 40

Davis Assassinated! South Declares Cease Fire!

You heard right, friends and neighbors! After 18 long and bloody years, the American Civil has reached a cease fire!

The last shot seems to have rung out in Richmond, striking down the Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Reports from Back East indicate a former Davis confidant, Colonel Robert Alexander, was not only responsible for the death of the President, but for the death of Southern General Robert E. Lee some weeks ago.

Sources inside the "City of Graves" cite Alexander's mental instability as the cause of his violent coup. Alexander had already been give one chance by Davis, who freed him from a nine-year prison term for accepting bribes in his previous role as a prison Provost Marshal.

The Killer Knew No Respect!

Alexander struck at President Davis during a moment of weakness—as he mourned over the sealed casket of the beloved Robert E. Lee. Though witness reports at the scene are currently sketchy, the official word from Secretary of War Eric Michele (that's "Michael" for those readers unfamiliar with the French name) is that Alexander and his bodyguards waited until the President approached the



The South's fallen leader, President Jefferson Davis.

casket to pay his respects. Then Alexander himself and at least four others in his insidious cabal approached Davis from behind and shot him down in a hail of pistol shots.

The President collapsed in a heap where he was held by Secretary Michele. The grieving cabinet member said that Davis' last words were "There must be peace."

An unknown band of mourners at the funeral then leapt from their seats and gave chase to Alexander and his cronies. Reports state that these unnamed heroes caught the

assassins trying to escape via a Confederate submersible on the James River. An exciting chase ensued, and these gallant defenders of their fallen President brought Alexander and his men to final justice.

Assassins Astage!

Ironically, like John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Northern President Abraham Lincoln nearly 13 years ago, Robert Alexander was also a thespian. Richmond elite remember his deep bass voice resounding from the

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stages of that city's theatre before his arrest and incarceration. Could there be a link here loyal readers? Those of you who frequent our pages know that bizarre things are afoot in our world, so is the fact that both Alexander and Boothe were actors just a coincidence? Or is it evidence of a larger conspiracy pervading the theatrical arts?

Assassin's Victim Showed Him Mercy!

President Jefferson Davis must have believed Colonel Alexander still had good in him, for it was the President himself who pardoned him in 1872. Though the official charges against Alexander were bribery, rumors at the time of his incarceration claimed the Provost Marshal had tortured and starved inmates for his own leisure.

If such claims were true, President Davis certainly didn't believe them. He issued Colonel Alexander a pardon and put him in charge of his very own bodyguards, the so-called "Nightwatchers." The fact that President Davis rarely left the Executive Mansion—presumably under Alexander's advice—is some evidence of the Colonel's paranoia.

Secretary Michele Declared Acting President!

Secretary of War Eric Michele was unanimously named Acting President by the former President's cabinet. The morning after the assassination, Acting President Michele issued Interim Order #1: "Confederate forces throughout the South shall stand down. The Armies of the Confederate States of America are to defend her borders, but are not to initiate hostile actions without the express consent of the nation's highest office."

There followed a purge of many of the South's most aggressive leaders, including our own General Joseph Ewell Slaughter here in Arizona. It is likely that Acting President Michele knew these men would not obey his orders of peace, and might perhaps even challenge his authority.

Officials in Washington, D.C., expressed sadness at Davis' death, but were optimistic about the dying President's last words. "Our nations have bled long enough," said American President Ulysses S. Grant. "The

recent loss of a fine and honorable opponent, Robert E. Lee, as well as the death of Jeff Davis, should cause all Americans to pause and consider how this war has affected all of us."

Peace In Our Time?

Truer words were never spoken. But as frequent readers are aware, this reporter is of the opinion that more sinister forces are at work behind the scenes. It is the belief of the *Tombstone Epitaph* that a dark event of epic proportions is taking place right under our noses. The masters of this event are dark beings sometimes referred to as the "Reckoners" by those who believe in the conspiracy. Opinion within even this small group is splintered as to just who the Reckoners are. Some believe they are otherworldly beings. Most recognize they are a sinister cabal of powerful men and women who have mastered some dark art, and use it to manipulate world events to some dark conclusion wherein they will one day rule.

There are a few believers who claim President Davis himself was one of the Reckoners, one of the masters of this secret society. The *Epitaph* makes no claims there, and will not pursue such leads out of respect for the dead and his family.

A War Without End?

If these rumors of a secret sect are true, is it possible that the long war—which most agree should have ended nearly a decade ago—is a part of their ghoulish plan? And if so, can even the President's dying words bring the bloody conflict to a halt?

This reporter isn't holding his breathe for peace.

For the moment, however, it is reassuring to know that the blood of our brothers and sisters may trickle instead of flow.

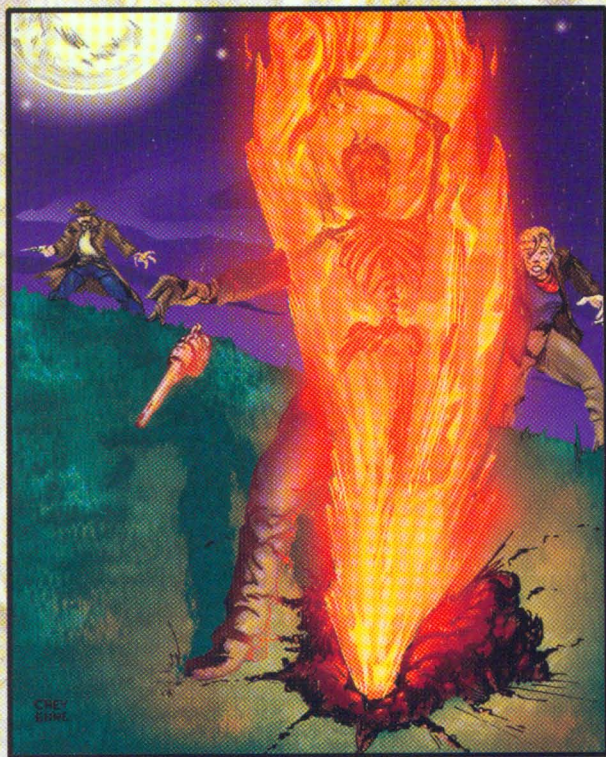
There is no doubt our new world will be one of espionage, suspicion, and treachery—at least for a while. Such wounds as our people have experienced are not healed overnight.

Lacy O'Malley
Tombstone, Arizona





Watch Your Step!



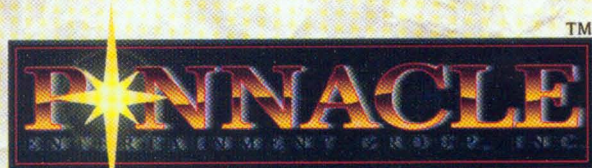
You never know what you'll step into! Buffalo patties may stink up your Dingoes, but a deadly conspiracy can plant a whole posse of veterans six-feet under.

That's what this twisted tale is all about—conspiracy and dead guys. The heroes are hired to look into suspicious activities in Gomorra that culminates in one of the most grisly gunfights ever seen in the Weird West.

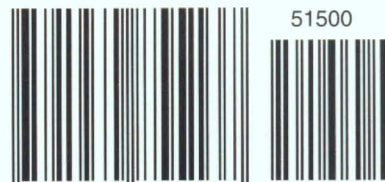
Soon after, the posse learns of a massive conspiracy that may just involve the legendary Black Circle, the Confederate government, and the Good Lord knows who else.

Dead Presidents pulls your posse into a massive world-changing event in the Weird West. Only highly experienced heroes need apply—we're talking about the kind who have probably seen a certain breed of devil bull and lived to tell about it. One or more of those creepy types who keep getting up when they should stay down wouldn't hurt either!

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