

# Train 198 to Churchill, Manitoba

The PCs are [M-EPIC](#) field agents posted to the Manitoba office for patrols along the Olassie Trail. When a freight train derails on the way to Hudson Bay as night falls, they pluck at the one loose end in a web of intercontinental horror.

## Table of Contents

[The crash](#)

[The cover](#)

[The train](#)

[The problem](#)

[The destination](#)

[The cleanup](#)

## The crash

Train 198 has gone all the way from Billings, Montana toward the Churchill, Manitoba terminus, gaining and losing cars along the way. Its crew is just two people: Conductor Paul Pavel (28, close-cropped black hair, working for OmniTRAX) and Engineer Tim McInnerny (58, advanced male pattern baldness, working for CN). Both can expect significant bonuses from their respective carriers if they get the cargo to Churchill in time for transshipment to the African Republic of Guinea-Bissau, through the Northwest Passage. The unsteady weather situation in the archipelago north of the Bay, together with technical difficulties and subsequent delays to wait for other traffic, have put these bonuses in peril. There has been little sleep.

McInnerny's manager requests updates every half hour, on behalf of the shipper (North American Freight Logistics) and the government. Getting that ship through the Passage is apparently "some politician's pet project". After one of these irritating calls, McInnerny heads swearing to the crapper and Pavel is alone at the controls. The younger man suffers a momentary but wholly mundane lapse of reason and comes to believe that he has reached the final northerly stretch of the journey. He steps on the gas, bringing 3000 horsepower to bear on the vehicle against the wind. In fact, there is one sharp turn left, in the forest just outside the ghost town of Sundance. The locomotive goes completely off the rails. In the violence of the crash, Pavel is knocked unconscious. McInnerny's cranial trauma is fatal.

## The cover

Sudden and total loss of contact with a train crew in this part of the wilderness is the sort of thing local emergency services have special procedures for. The call comes through from Ottawa to the Manitoba office just 20 minutes after the crash. Sundance is another 25 minutes away by jeep on Provincial Road 290. The PCs have a couple of minutes to grab their gear from Quartermaster John Lynch (59, thick gray hair) before heading out. The Director suspects cultist activity and comes up with the pretext of EPIC having to go in first because of a human-toxic pesticide, HOS (hydroxyethyl octyl sulfide), on the cargo manifest. EPIC "just happens" to have a team nearby with the right equipment to take the necessary precautions, and "volunteers" to do so, partly out of scientific interest.

EPIC will check if dangerous levels of HOS have been released in the crash, before signaling paramedics and HBRC (local OmniTRAX) rescue vehicles to come in and start clearing the wreckage. In reality, the pesticide is relatively harmless if pure; it would irritate the eyes on contact but is syrupy at room temperature. The agents will be going in with guns at the ready. Lynch offers them a shotgun, along with light gas masks, protective goggles and lab kits to test for HOS.

## The train

The derailed train is a GM-built GP40-2L(W) diesel locomotive from 1976, followed by 16 freight cars with a variety of contents. In order of travel, these are:

- 1 x intermodal container car. This one is half-full of expensive US-made bicycle parts for sale to African retailers. Property of Skyraid Bikes, Billings, Montana.
- 10 x tanktainer cars. These are supposed to be filled with semi-viscous HOS. Property of Nuevas Fronteras, a nondescript Peruvian company. Attached in Montana and loaded at a chemical plant near the Canadian border.
- 3 x intermodal. Bills of lading say they're filled with mosquito nets, property of the "Canadian Samaritan" aid campaign for West Africa. Attached and loaded at Medicine Hat, Canada.
- 2 x intermodal. These are full of construction materials for the aid campaign, primarily fasteners, including 200 boxes of HurriQuake disaster-resistant nails.

The first half of these cars have piled off the rails and collapsed like a thousand-ton folding ruler behind the massive locomotive, which is on its side but relatively undamaged. Five tanktainers are smashed open, leaking a faintly yellow, sweet-smelling ooze. The underbrush by the locomotive is strewn with bicycle gears and broken trees, which led their stunted lives among the thousand lakes of this part of Manitoba. A couple of cars are balanced precariously across the rails, shifting and groaning from side to side in a fresh northerly breeze. Fortunately, there is no fire, and no overhanging wires, so no electrical hazard.

## The problem

Train 198 is unusual in many respects. The international route across three separate railway carriers for such apparently insignificant cargo is only the first. Dark forces motivate the journey. It is Vicky Williamson (28, blond), aide to a former MP on the Queen's Privy Council, who has been pulling strings to get the cargo to Africa while the going is good. She claims to be motivated by the need to increase Canadian shipping through the Northwest Passage in order to strengthen the national claim to those increasingly valuable waters. In secret, she is a white supremacist, aware of the Karotechia and acting on their orders.

The tanktainers were loaded at the Gemstone facility described in *Delta Green: Countdown* ("Dead Letter"). They contain bladders of the Sapphire substance hidden with the pesticide, which was also produced at ABC and ordered by Nuevas Fronteras as cover, to be sold legitimately in Africa. Sapphire is gaseous at room temperature. It kills the living and raises the dead. A handful of bladders have burst open. Wind conditions leave the crew of the train unaffected. Subject to GM fiat and in increasing order of threat, the following may be affected instead:

- A passing herd of caribou.
- A passing wolf.
- Two hobos (Steve Curdey, 39 and Milé Matejovic, 34) who hopped the 198 last night, without knowing where it was going. They're in one of the canvas-topped mosquito net containers and upset to be dead.

- Weather permitting, an arbitrarily large group of armed survivalist squatters, living in trailers at Sundance, a town built in the mid-1980s to house workers for the Limestone Dam project (largest generating station in Manitoba); only the lots remain. Paramedics may be ambushed by dead squatters here while the PCs are at the crash site to the north.
- The PCs themselves.

By the time Dr. Richard Store of M-INFO recalls what he once read of a "Herbert West" in a Canadian regiment in Flanders, the shell casings will no doubt have settled.

## The destination

The cargo belonging to Nuevas Fronteras is headed for Manzano Warehouses in Bissau. There, it will be transferred to trucks driven by Karotechia Bauern to a new installation, codenamed URWALD and classified as a Turm (meaning tower, or the rook in chess). There, Karotechia sorcerers, primarily the obese and deaf Nikolaus Pfadenhauer (47), will "key" the Sapphire compound to a genetic profile by sacrificing half a dozen "natives" per ton in an elaborate ceremony. Pfadenhauer is foremost among the Bischöfe, but a greater fan of Himmler than of Hitler. When he is done with it, the substance will be relatively ineffective (20%) against Caucasians. It will be released in small doses throughout Africa to contribute to the public image of the continent as despicably barbaric.

URWALD is a suitable target for an ostensible raid against the South American drug traffickers who are known to use the poorly policed islands and coasts of Guinea-Bissau as a way station to bring cocaine into Europe. Because this traffic is associated with the funding of terrorism, M-EPIC could manipulate the West and Central Africa branch of the UNODC to move in force, by leaking information through other Canadian agencies. A timely success here would greatly delay planned tragedies in a dozen other countries.

## The cleanup

Ray Turner of ABC will be interfering to get the intact tanktainers from Manitoba to Africa and end investigation of any "unexpected side effects". The damaged cars will be lifted by crane and hosed off over thick plastic sheeting at the nearest classification yard, then sold for scrap. By then, the Sapphire will be extremely dilute and impossible to extract from Manitoba's ecology. Even if M-EPIC has secured samples of Sapphire or its victims, EPIC has no jurisdiction in Montana, where the Gemstone facility is practically visible from the border. Perhaps it is time to probe those old suspicions of "colleagues" across that border. If Delta Green won't be listening, someone else will.