

GURPS® CALLAHAN'S CROSSTIME SALOON

Welcome to the Most Amazing Bar in the Universe!
Based on the Award-Winning Stories by Spider Robinson



By Chris W. McCubbin

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

GURPS®

CALLAHAN'S CROSSTIME SALOON

Welcome to the Most Amazing Bar in the Universe!

Based on the stories by Spider Robinson

Written by Chris W. McCubbin

Edited by Jeff Koke and Steve Jackson

Additional material by Spider Robinson, Steve Jackson and Christian Wagner

Cover by James Warhola

Illustrated by Donna Barr

Additional illustrations by Guy Burcham, Dan Frazier, and Rick Harris

Cartography and floor plans by Carl Anderson and Lynette Alcorn



GURPS System Design by Steve Jackson

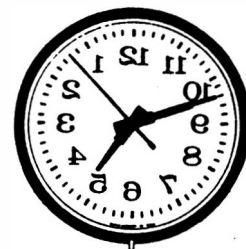
Jeff Koke, Managing Editor

Lloyd Blankenship, Product Development Manager

Carl Anderson, Production Manager

Monica Stephens, Page Layout and Typography

Kerry Havas, Print Buyer



Special thanks to John S. Crosbie and the International Save the Pun Foundation,
and the Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Playtesters: Tom Bither, Marilyn Blew, Christopher Burke, C.J. Carella, Don H. DeBrandt, Jeffrey C. Gaines, Evelyn Hildebrandt, Pally Hoffstein, Darryl Huber, Mike Hurst, Eric Kunze, Tim McGaughy, Bill Noland, Steffan O'Sullivan, Arthur Samuels, Ryland Saunders, Bob Schroeck, Rick Smith, Daniel U. Thibault, Christian Wagner, Dave Washburn, Todd A. Woods, Dustin Wright, Steven T. Zieger and the Illuminati BBS.

GURPS, *Illuminati*, *Roleplayer* and the all-seeing pyramid are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated.

All names of other product published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are registered trademarks or trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license. *GURPS Callahan's Crosstime Saloon* is copyright © 1992 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

Callahan's Crosstime Saloon is a trademark of Spider Robinson, and all the characters created in the "Callahan's" series are the property of Spider Robinson and used under license. All rights reserved.

ISBN 1-55634-221-7

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION3

Creator's Foreword – Spider Speaks	3
<i>About GURPS</i>	3
<i>About the Creator – Spider Robinson</i>	4
<i>About the Author – Chris McCubbin</i>	4

1. WELCOME TO CALLAHAN'S!5

<i>Placing Callahan's</i>	6
The Bar	7
<i>The Callahan's Stories</i>	7
Map of Callahan's Place and the Neighborhood	10
Long Island and New York Maps	12
The People	13
<i>Canonical Callahan's</i>	13
Employees and Regulars	14
<i>Small Miracles</i>	15
<i>Women in Callahan's</i>	16
People Helping People	17
The Times	17
Current Events	18
The Zeitgeist	18
<i>Lady Sally's</i>	18
Popular Culture	19
<i>The Option</i>	19
An Evening At Callahan's	20
<i>The Fireside Fill-More</i>	20
<i>Bar Fights</i>	21
Holidays	22

2. THE WONDERFUL CONSPIRACY23

What's Really Going On	24
<i>Mysteries</i>	24
Harmony	25
<i>Other Agents</i>	26
Homo Harmonius	27
<i>Adventures on Harmony</i>	28
<i>Harmonian PCs</i>	29
Psionics	30
Exotic Powers	30
Physiology	31
Racial Character	31
<i>Martial Arts</i>	31
<i>Harmonian Death</i>	32
<i>Untangling Time Travel</i>	33
<i>Callahan's Interface Screen</i>	33
Harmonian Time Travel	34
<i>GURPS Time Travel Terms</i>	34
Interface Screens	36
Harmonian Operations	36
<i>The Cockroach Gambit</i>	36
<i>Future Tech</i>	37
The Callahan Operation	38
<i>Future Tech and the Meddler</i>	38
<i>Time Skipping</i>	38
Harmonian Recruits	39
<i>Dimensional Travel</i>	39
<i>Sixth Column – Harmonian</i>	
<i>Special Operations</i>	40
<i>Historical Recruits</i>	40

3. CALLAHAN'S CHARACTERS 41

Regulars	42
Typical Callahan's Characters	42
Advantages	43
New Advantages	44
Disadvantages	46
New Disadvantages	46
Exotic Powers	49
Unusual Backgrounds	49
Psionics	49
New Psionic Power: Desire	50
New Psionic Skill:	
Timeshare Telepathy	50
New Psionic Limitations	50
New Anti-Psionic Technique:	
The Centipede's Dilemma	51
New Skills	51
Drinking and Intoxication	53
Alcohol Content Table	54
Intoxication Table	54
Determining Mood	56
Sobering Up	56
Hangovers	56
Disclaimer	57
Drinking in Callahan's	57

4. CAMPAIGNING WITH CALLAHAN 58

The Human Drama Campaign	59
The Stranger	59
<i>Punday Night</i>	59
The Story	60
The Solution	61
<i>Tall Tales Night</i>	61
GMing Problem-Solving Scenarios	62
Adventure Seed:	
The Haunted Trucker	63
<i>Sample Tall Tales</i>	63
Rannygazoo – Humorous Roleplaying	65
<i>Riddle Night</i>	66
GMing Silly Scenarios	67
Roleplaying the Crisis	67
GMing Crises	68
Adventure Seed: Wrong Turn	69
<i>Adventure Seeds</i>	69
Callahan's as Framing Device	70
A Place of Growth and Healing	71
<i>Alternate Callahan's</i>	72
Callahan's Online	73
The Life and Times of Callahan's Place	74
<i>Callahan's in the '90s</i>	74
Timeline	75

5. STRANGE FOLKS AND ODD GIZMOS 76

Cockroaches (AKA "The Masters")	77
<i>The Beast</i>	77
Advantages and Disadvantages	78

Psychology	79
<i>Mickey Finn (né Txfju Mpwfs)</i>	79
Harmony and the Cockroaches	81
Finn's People	82
<i>Mickey Finn's Story</i>	82
Finn's People and Harmony	83
The Krundai	83
<i>Finn's Powers and Special Abilities</i>	84
Psychology	86
<i>Finn's Friends</i>	86
Ecology	87
Culture	87
<i>Broodseven-Sub-Two Raksha</i>	87
Harmony and the Krundai	88
Vampires	89
Vampire Victims	90
<i>Pyotr</i>	90
The Time Police	91
<i>Josie Bauer</i>	92
Harmony and the Time Police	93
The Mirror Dimension	93
Harmony and the Mirror Dimension	94
<i>Al Phee</i>	94
Weird Tech	95
Confinement Loop	95
<i>Legality Class</i>	96
<i>Robert Trebor</i>	96

6. HARMONIANS IN OTHER GENRES98

<i>Cliffhangers/Horror: Professor</i>	
Weatherstone's Salons	99
<i>Rachel</i>	99
<i>Josiah I. Weatherstone</i>	100
Cyberpunk: Harmony Amusements Ltd.	102
<i>Space: Kingdom Come</i>	102
<i>Met Baynor</i>	103
Fantasy: Lean Theo's Inn	105
<i>"Lean Theo" Brewer</i>	105

7. FRIENDS, REGULARS & PAINS-IN-THE-BUTT107

Michael Callahan	108
Lady Sally McGee	109
Mary Finn	110
Anders, Cass	111
Cheerful Charlies	
(Les Glueham, Merry Moore)	112
Costigan, Fast Eddie	112
Flannery, Tom	113
Fogerty, Dink	114
Gonzales, Noah	115
Hauptman, Thomas	115
Janssen, Tommy	116
Joy, Bobbi	117
MacDonald, Jim and Paul	118
McGonnigle, Phil "Long-Drink"	119
The Meddler	120
Henry, the Meddler's Brother	120
Montoya, Domingo	121
Rachel	121
Stonebender, Jake	122
Telasco, Tony	123
Von Wau Wau, Ralph	124
Webster, Doc	125
And The Rest	126

INDEX128

INTRODUCTION

I missed Callahan's.

I've moved around the country a bit over the last decade (Nebraska, California, Washington State, Texas), but somehow spent little time on the East Coast. I've never even been to New York, much less Suffolk County, Long Island.

I reached legal age and learned of *Callahan's Place* at about the same time – just before I went into the Army at the start of the '80s. The Army kept me mostly on the wrong side of the country, and by the time I got out, Callahan's was long-gone. So it goes.

When I got this assignment, I thought about asking Spider Robinson for the phone number of Mary's Place, and maybe giving Jake a call. But I decided not to – better to concentrate on making this a fun game based on the classic stories, than to try to turn it into a journalistic exposé on the strange events in Suffolk County in the '70s and '80s.

One of these days I'll make it out East, though, and when I do I'll take a box of *GURPS Callahan's* along, and pass it out to any of the old regulars who are still hanging around at Mary's Place. I'm looking forward to that.

One of the great things about the Callahan's stories is their efficiency – we're never told more than we need to know to enjoy the stories. But, in many ways, designing a roleplaying setting is a process of quantification – pinning down the who, what, when, where, why and how. To complete this book, I had to fill in a lot of details that the stories quite rightly left blank. It's a humbling experience – I feel like da Vinci had handed me the Mona Lisa and said, "Here, finish up the background." I hope I didn't ruin anything for anybody.

Callahan's, I think, is a much more adult place to game than most of the universes found in roleplaying. I use "adult" in the usual colloquial sense (a little more sex, a lot less violence), but more importantly, Callahan's is adult in that it concentrates on the characters' feelings and motivations, rather than on how much punishment your guy can take, and how much reward he can get out of taking it. (This doesn't mean that there's nothing here for younger gamers, though – adulthood has nothing to do with age.) I also like the fact that solving the problems that come up in a *Callahan's* campaign lets the PCs help others, rather than helping themselves.

It also occurs to me that *Callahan's* is more cheerful . . . no, make that more *hopeful* than just about any other roleplaying setting I can think of. I like a good shoot-'em-up or hard-boiled drama as much as the next guy, but lord, there's a lot of that kind of gritty stuff out there right now. Surely there's room for some kind of alternative. *Callahan's* is 99% grit free, and I like that.

Anyway, welcome to Callahan's. Have one on me. My toe's to the line, so here's to good friends, and good times. CRASH!

– Chris W. McCubbin

Creator's Foreword – Spider Speaks

In his novel *The Number of The Beast* . . . the immortal Robert A. Heinlein suggested, apparently quite seriously, that fictional universes (he called them "fictions") may be as real as any other kind.

Using a space/time twister, his characters travel to alternate universes – and one day find themselves in the Land of Oz, just as described by L. Frank Baum. Shortly thereafter, they find themselves in a Robert Heinlein novel – a different

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Roleplayer. This bimonthly magazine includes new rules, variants, new races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer, or write for subscription information.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

BBS. For those of you who have computers, SJ Games operates a BBS with discussion areas for several games, including *GURPS*. Much of the playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours a day at 512-447-4449, at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Give us a call!

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. Page references beginning with M refer to *GURPS Magic*, while P is used to refer to *GURPS Psionics*.



Introduction

About the Creator – Spider Robinson

Spider Robinson burst upon the science fiction scene in 1973, when he sold the first Callahan's story – “The Guy With the Eyes” – to *Analog*. A year later, with fewer than a handful of stories under his belt, he won the John Campbell Award for Best New Writer of the Year.

Since then he's become a major figure in science fiction, as a writer, columnist in *Analog* and popular guest at SF conventions. His literary achievements have so far netted him three Hugos and a Nebula. *Callahan's Crosstime Saloon* was named 1977's Best Book for Young Adults by the American Library Association, and awarded the 1978 Pat Terry Memorial Award for Humorous Writing by Australia's Sydney Science Fiction Foundation.

His other work includes the novels *Telepath*, *Mindkiller*, *Night of Power* and *Time Pressure* and the short story collections *Antinomy* and *Melancholy Elephants*.

For more than 15 years he's made his home in Canada, where he lives with Jeanne, his wife and collaborator on the Hugo and Nebula-winning *Stardance* and its sequel, *Starseed*.

About the Author – Chris McCubbin

Chris McCubbin is a Nebraska native and a non-graduate of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, in English. He came to gaming by way of the comics industry, where he worked as an editor on Fantagraphics Books' two respected magazines, *The Comics Journal* and *Amazing Heroes*.

This book is McCubbin's fifth for SJ Games. His other books include *GURPS Aliens*, *Magic Items*, *Space Bestiary* and *Fantasy Folk*, which won the 1991 Gamer's Choice Award for best roleplaying supplement. He's also the writer of the adventure “Fighters of the Purple Rage” (a punning title Callahan himself would have approved of, dreamed up, alas, by Steve Jackson) in *GURPS Fantasy Adventures*.

In addition to being SJ Games' staff writer, he's also the editor of *Autoduel Quarterly* and the company art director.

He's into good movies, fun books, decent restaurants, alternative rock music and BBSing. He lives in Austin with his wife, Lynette Alcorn, and the stereotypical two cats, Polychrome and Clipper.

novel! One of the characters speculates that perhaps *any* Universe becomes real *in proportion to the number of people who believe in it and spend time there*.

If that is so, Callahan's Place is about to become even more real, in one sense, than it was already. And it's been real enough to pay my rent and feed my family for two decades now.

In 1972, I became the proud possessor of a Bachelor's degree in English. But – I discovered too late – I didn't *want* to drive a cab. So I ended up in the only other occupation for which my degree suited me: night watchman. I spent nine long months guarding a hole in the ground to prevent its theft. (The law required a watchman on all county construction; the county was constructing a sewer . . .) One night I became so bored that to keep awake, I set down on paper a preposterous story told to me by a friend named Jake Stonebender, about a bar he claimed to frequent – and the next thing I knew, I had a life. And a wife, and a pleasant and rewarding occupation.

Now, 20 years and a third of a million words later, you are about to walk into that most wondrous of saloons. I've seen some of the pages and pages of data that follows; Chris McCubbin clearly knows Callahan's Place better than *I* do, and will give you a detailed tour. And everything I know about roleplaying games could be tucked into a molecule, and still leave room for several electrons and a critic's heart. So perhaps I should just pipe down and let you get to the fun.

But I need to say just a few more words about Callahan's Place before you start solidifying its reality on me, on the basis of second-hand accounts.

In a world that was slowly evolving the concept of “cocooning” (what my friend Steve Thomas calls “rectocranial inversion”), Mike Callahan was weird enough to believe that good fellowship and shared merriment are worth more than a VCR and a CD player with remote control. In a culture where pessimism has metastasized like slow carcinoma, that crazy Irishman was crazy enough to try and raise hopes, like hothouse flowers. In an era during which even judicious use of alcohol is increasingly bum-rapped, the Mick of Time believed the world can look just that essential tad better when seen through a glass, brightly. (As long as you let someone else drive you home after.)

Many strange and marvelous things happened in his joint – great deeds were done, great tales were told, there were belly-laughs and tears and general shenanigans. And yes, games were played, riddles solved, pun competitions held, contests fought, and challenges wrestled to the ground. But the most important thing that happened there, always, was the sharing. The reason people came to Callahan's Place was to share their triumphs and shames, their pain and their joy. In so doing, they became the best kind of family there is.

So if Chris and Steve have done their job as well as I know they have, you will not find this to be one of those games where the point is to cut the other bloke's heart out and eat it. The underlying point here, I hope, is to take off some of that clumsy armor we all wear, and get merry with your friends, and help each other feel a little bit better about being alive. Because I have only learned one important thing in 42 years, and it is Callahan's Secret: when you share joy, there's more of it; and when you share pain, there's less of it.

That's equally true in Callahan's Place fiction, and in the so-called “real” world. It is, I think, the answer to entropy, and the reason why maybe Life isn't such a bad deal, after all. And if that ain't the basis for a few hours of good times, I don't know what is.

Hey, Game Master! What does a guy have to do to get a drink around here, anyway?

– Spider Robinson
Vancouver, British Columbia
24 February, 1992

WELCOME TO CALLAHAN'S!

1





Placing Callahan's

The GM is free to place Callahan's anywhere he likes along Route 25-A, but it's possible to make a few educated guesses about more likely locations.

Two facts have been dropped about the location in the stories – that it's in one of the more heavily wooded areas, and that its nearest neighbors are tourist trap gift shops.

This makes the most likely area north of Rocky Point, near Brookhaven State Park. There's no mention in the stories of the place being anywhere near the shore, so that makes the area between Rocky Point and Head of the Harbor unlikely, and the far western end of the highway is too urbanized to be a really good candidate.

Of course, if the GM has a particular favorite spot on Long Island, away from Route 25-A, he's perfectly free to locate the place there for his campaign, under the assumption that Jake deliberately misnamed the highway, to throw tourists off the scent.

If you've never been to Callahan's Place, God's pity on you. Seek it in the wilds of Suffolk County, but look not for neon. A simple, hand-lettered sign illuminated by a single floodlight, and a heavy oaken door split in the center (by the head of one Big Beef McCaffrey in 1947) and poorly repaired.

Inside, several heresies.

First, the light is about as bright as you keep your living room. Callahan maintains that people who like to drink in caves are unstable.

Second, there's a flat rate. Every drink in the house is half a buck, with the option. The option operates as follows:

You place a one-dollar bill on the bar. If all you have on you is a fin, you trot across the street to the all-night deli, get change, come back and put a one-dollar bill on the bar. (Callahan maintains that nobody in his right mind would counterfeit one-dollar bills; most of us figure he just likes to rub fistfuls of them across his face after closing.)

You are served your poison-of-choice. You inhale this, and confront the option. You may, as you leave, pick up two quarters from the always-full cigarbox at the end of the bar and exit into the night. Or you may, upon finishing your drink, stride up to the chalk line in the middle of the room, announce a toast (this is mandatory) and hurl your glass into the huge, old-fashioned fireplace which takes up most of the back wall. You then depart without visiting the cigarbox. Or, pony up another buck and exercise the option again.

Callahan seldom has to replenish the cigarbox. He orders glasses in such quantities that they cost him next to nothing, and he sweeps out the fireplace himself every morning.

Another heresy: No one watches you with accusing eyes to make sure you take no more quarters than you have coming to you. If Callahan ever happens to catch someone cheating him, he personally ejects them forever. Sometimes he doesn't open the door first. The last time he had to eject someone was in 1947, a gentleman named Big Beef McCaffrey.

Not too surprisingly, it's a damned interesting place to be. It's the kind of place you hear about only if you need to – and if you are very lucky. Because if a patron, having proposed his toast and smithereened his glass, feels like talking about the nature of his troubles, he receives the instant, undivided attention of everyone in the room. (That's why the toast is obligatory. Many a man with a hurt locked inside finds in the act of naming his hurt for the toast that he wants very much to talk about it. Callahan is one smart hombre.) On the other hand, even the most tantalizingly cryptic toast will bring no prying inquiries if the guy displays no desire to uncork. Anyone attempting to flout this custom is promptly blackjacked by Fast Eddie the piano player and dumped in the alley.

But somehow many do feel like spilling it in a place like Callahan's; and you can get a deeper insight into human nature in a week there than in ten years anywhere else I know. You can also quite likely find solace for most any kind of trouble, from Callahan himself if no one else. It's a rare hurt that can stand under the advice, help and sympathy generated by upwards of thirty people that care. Callahan loses a lot of his regulars. After they've been coming around long enough, they find they don't need to drink any more.

It's that kind of bar.

– "The Guy With the Eyes"

The Bar

Route 25-A runs for more than 20 miles along the northern shore of Long Island, breaking off from Route 25 at Village of the Branch, and rejoining a few miles west of Calverton. You'd never find Callahan's if you didn't know where to look – not with all the shopping centers, fast food joints and tourist traps that have sprung up along the highway since Callahan's opened up.

It's a working-class area. Even the summer people are working class – the rich folk all vacation out on Montauk Point or in the Hamptons. No intellectuals either, except the faculty from SUNY at Stony Brook, and they don't put on airs about it.

Most of the folks work in the city and commute – they can't afford the good neighborhoods in the city, and they don't have to settle for the bad neighborhoods. Or maybe they just need a little more elbow room.

Traditionally, this is an Irish area, although that's not as true as it used to be. Still, at first glance Callahan's looks like an Irish bar of the old school.

There's the sign – no, over there, in the bushes. There's a floodlight mounted over the sign for at night, but it doesn't help much, unless you know what you're looking for.

Here we are. I'm not used to seeing this parking lot empty. When the Place is open everybody parks wherever they can find a place to squeeze in. On a normal night the whole crowd has to come piling out six or seven times and move their cars, to let somebody off the lot when they want to leave. All part of the charm, I guess.

Mike Callahan built this place himself, right after the war. They knew how to build 'em in those days – it may not look like much, but it's more than 30 years old, it's not *too* drafty, the plumbing works and the roof don't leak.

Are you hungry? We can get a sandwich and a soda at the deli across the street. I recommend it – it's open all night, and Callahan's sends a lot of business their way. No? Okay.

Mike's spending the day in the city, but don't worry – he said I could come in and show you around. Mike lives in the city with his wife, who I hear has a business of her own in Brooklyn. He also has a cot in the back, there, for when he doesn't feel like the drive – Mike drives a beat-up old white pickup from the early '60s. I don't understand how he can face commuting in that monster, but I've never heard him complain.

Notice the big crack in the front door – Callahan did that the first year he was open. Some dumb jerk tried to stiff him. He never had the door fixed – guess he decided it could serve as a friendly reminder. It seems to have worked – that stunt hasn't been tried since.

Take a close look at the door. Notice anything? No lock. Never has been one. Y'know, there's been at least four times – maybe more – when somebody tried to burglarize the place after hours, and none of them ever even thought to try the front door – they went around to one of the two other doors, which Callahan keeps padlocked when he's not open, or tried to squeeze in through a window. I don't think any of them got away with anything either, unless Callahan decided to loan 'em a few bucks instead of breaking their limbs.

Okay, come in. Here it is. How long has it been since you've been in a joint with an honest-to-god sawdust floor? You got a dozen or so tables, all made of sturdy wood, each with its own plastic tablecloth and old-fashioned ashtray made out of a funnel and a tin can. No booths – privacy isn't the point of seating at Callahan's. The chairs are wood too – with cushions. Mike's real

The Callahan's Stories

There are 17 Callahan's stories spread out over three books. Spider hasn't ruled out the possibility that there might be more . . . someday.

That total of 17 doesn't count the related tales of Lady Sally's place, currently found in the novels *Callahan's Lady* and *Kill the Editor*, with more (including *Lady Slings The Booze*) to come. This book doesn't cover Lady Sally's . . . but another one might, someday!

Below is a short story-by-story synopsis of the Callahan's series.

Callahan's Crosstime Saloon

The Guy with the Eyes: In this story we first meet Mike Callahan and most of the regulars. Ex-heroin addict Tommy Janssen becomes Callahan's youngest regular, and Mickey Finn, the alien cyborg sent by a powerful interstellar race to purge the earth of life, acquires his name and resigns from his former position with Callahan's help.

The Time-Traveler: The first recorded time traveler to visit Callahan's did it the hard way. Thomas Hauptman was a happily married Protestant minister in 1963, when he and his wife went to visit his sister-in-law in the troubled South American nation of Pasala. Imprisoned for no reason by the rebel leader El Supremo, Tom spent 10 years in a tiny cell, where he lost first his faith, then his wife, and barely hung on to his sanity. When he was finally released in 1973, Hauptman found he had traveled ten years into the future of a country he no longer recognized. In desperation, he went to Callahan's to rob the place, and ended up being employed as Callahan's relief bartender.

The Centipede's Dilemma: Dink Fogerty, a hulking, dull-witted fisherman, destroys all competition at the Third Annual Darts Championship of the Universe at Callahan's, scoring a perfect string of bullseyes, despite his complete lack of darts technique.

Eventually, though, Doc Webster deduces that Fogerty is a telekinetic of remarkable power and subtlety, despite his low IQ. Fortunately Fogerty lacks the imagination to think of all the mischief he can cause with his talent – at least he hasn't so far . . . The regulars need to find a way to neutralize a psionic *idiot savant* of great power.

Continued on next page . . .

The Callahan's Stories (Continued)

Two Heads Are Better Than One: Jim and Paul MacDonald are a pair of brothers with a problem. They're both mutant telepaths, with the ability to *completely* interface with the minds of others – share all their hopes, dreams, vices and secrets. The problem is that their powers are uncontrollable and unpredictable. The shock of seeing people as they really are, right down to the deepest cellars of their subconscious, has already sent Paul – the older and more powerful brother – into a catatonic coma, and Jim's about to meet the same fate, when he stumbles into Callahan's.

The Law of Conservation of Pain: The Meddler, a time traveler from the year 1995 (using the first time machine ever built), materializes in Callahan's. His mission: to change the life of Bobbi Joy, a beautiful hooker who will soon be revealed as the most gifted singer/songwriter of the century. Her songs are so pain-filled that they've been banned from broadcast in certain areas because of the increase in the suicide rate when they're on the charts. The Meddler plans to murder a certain cop before he can give Bobbi Joy her disfiguring facial scar – unless the regulars at Callahan's can think of a better plan.

Just Dessert: A trio of strangers to Callahan's learn the peril of pulling obnoxious practical jokes in the presence of Doc Webster.

"A Voice Is Heard in Ramah . . .": Callahan's acquires its first female regular, Rachel, who acts as Wendy to Callahan's Lost Boys until the night she tells her life's story. Rachel is more than two centuries old. She doesn't know how long she'll live, but she knows she'll eventually grow old and die. All her many children have died before leaving children of their own, and she's starting to wonder if there's any reason to go on. She turns to Callahan's regulars to help her find a reason to face the coming centuries.

Continued on next page . . .

proud of his cushions (but that didn't stop him from helping Spud Flynn set one on fire one windy night, to settle a bet about which way the draft was coming from). This kind of chair ain't cheap any more – that's why the guys pitched in and bought that double-sized job over there for Doc Webster – if he'd'a broke any more of Callahan's chairs, I swear he woulda broke Callahan.

Look up over the door. That's the counterclock – not only do the numbers run backwards, but the gears and innards have all been made special so it actually runs counter-clockwise. I don't know where Mike got it. Jake says he's seen another one like it, once.

Here to your right is the chalkboard. We use it mostly on Riddle Night. And over to your left is the Place's fanciest piece of equipment, the spiral staircase going up to the roof.

Let's go up. Ain't it a beauty? Some of the boys were telling me that it used to be in the fanciest whorehouse in New York, and I believe it. Solid iron, but there's barely a clang and never a creak. It's only been in for a few months. Before that we had to climb up a iron ladder set into the wall – Callahan had the staircase installed after Shorty Steinitz broke his ankle coming down.



Callahan added this little shed thingy over the entrance when he had the staircase installed, for rainy nights. And this is the roof. It doesn't seem like much now, with the sun beating down on it like this, but it's awful nice at night, with the stars shining down, and the breeze rustling in the trees . . .

'Round the corner there to your left is the dumbwaiter; it's always been there, so folks up on the roof didn't have to go up and down the ladder every time they needed a refill.

While we're up here, old Pyotr, Mike's designated driver, lives a couple hundred yards down that way, and the Masers live about a quarter mile past

him – they usually walk over when the weather's decent. None of the other regulars live within walking distance. Guess that's all there is to see up here.

Let's go behind the bar here, first. Through this curtain. This is the storage room – Mike said it was all right to bring you back here, but don't mess with anything, Okay? See that big pile of cartons over there? They're all glasses, for folks who choose the option. Mike buys glasses in bulk. Other than that, nothing unusual – furnace and water heater, boxes of booze and cleaning supplies. That's the service entrance over there.

Y'know, it's amazing what Callahan keeps back here. Doesn't matter if it's a jug of fine old Spanish wine, or a bottle of Tiger Breath, the worst booze on the planet. If the situation calls for a certain kinda booze, Mike always seems to have it.

This is Mike's office. There's the cot, and that's Mike's desk. No safe – Callahan brings his money with him when he comes, and takes it when he leaves. The Apple there on the desk is for Mike's accounts. The TV up there usually only sees duty as Mike's computer monitor, but he keeps his cable bill paid, and every once and awhile the TV comes out. Mostly it's reserved for assassinations, disasters and the Super Bowl if Callahan likes the teams, but a few days before last Halloween he hauled it out because *Abbot and Costello Meet Frankenstein* was the Saturday Night Creature Feature.

The place is wired for phone service, too, but Callahan usually keeps the phone disconnected during business hours. Most of our families know that if there's a real emergency they can get a message to us from the deli across the street.

Okay, back out front. This is the cigar box where Mike keeps his quarters for change. Here's the taps, and under the bar are the beer coolers – besides the brands he keeps on tap, Callahan can serve you most domestic brands and quite a few imports in bottles. He doesn't serve cans, and he only sells pitchers when the place is real crowded. There's also soda and Perrier – the water's for Pyotr, mostly, but Callahan has a lot of regulars who used to be luses and don't like to drink. Funny thing, though, he also has lots of regulars who aren't luses any more, but who still like to drink . . .

Also under the bar, you'll notice the baseball bat, and that wooden case there, with the lock, holds Callahan's shotgun. It sits out on top of the case when the Place is open. Not that any of the regulars ever get out of line, but sometimes an undesirable element wanders in. I've never seen Callahan use either the bat or the shotgun, though I don't doubt he can use 'em both well enough. If there's trouble Callahan usually gives the troublemaker a look at one or the other, depending on the seriousness of the infraction, and nine times out of ten that ends it right there. If that *doesn't* end it, Fast Eddie just slips up behind them with his blackjack, and they float out on a cloud, with little birdies chirping around their head.

These shelves on the wall here are where Callahan keeps his liquor. This beer bottle is made out of foam rubber, and if you tell a big enough stinker Callahan will heave it at your head – a very high compliment. The coffee pot's always full, fresh and hot – but you're a fool if you drink the coffee straight. Irish coffee is Callahan's specialty; he calls it "God's Blessing" and he's not bragging. He makes it with good coffee, real Irish whiskey, real whipped cream and a light frost of sugar on the rim of the mug. You have to experience it. The mugs, by the way, are sacred – God's Blessing is the only drink in the house that the option doesn't apply to.

The Callahan's Stories (Continued)

Unnatural Causes: At Callahan's annual Halloween reunion, Tony Telasco tells how Callahan's place helped him get over Vietnam. But then it turns out that the guy in the big, green, fuzzy alien costume *isn't wearing a costume*. He's a Krundai, a member of an advanced and long-lived alien race that has been manipulating humanity for centuries. To the Krundai, Earth is a game preserve, and humanity is a herd of meat animals that have been custom-designed to be their own butchers. In this Krundai's most recent mission, he altered history in disguise as a human – one Adolf Hitler. His actions haunt him, and he's come to Callahan's seeking empathy and absolution. But Callahan demands a price . . .

The Wonderful Conspiracy: On a holiday evening, Jake, Doc, Fast Eddie, Long-Drink and Callahan are the only ones in the Place. They have a quiet conversation that eventually leads Jake to suspect what Callahan's *real* job is.

Time Travelers Strictly Cash

(Of the 11 pieces in this book, only four are Callahan's stories. The rest are essays or unrelated fiction.)

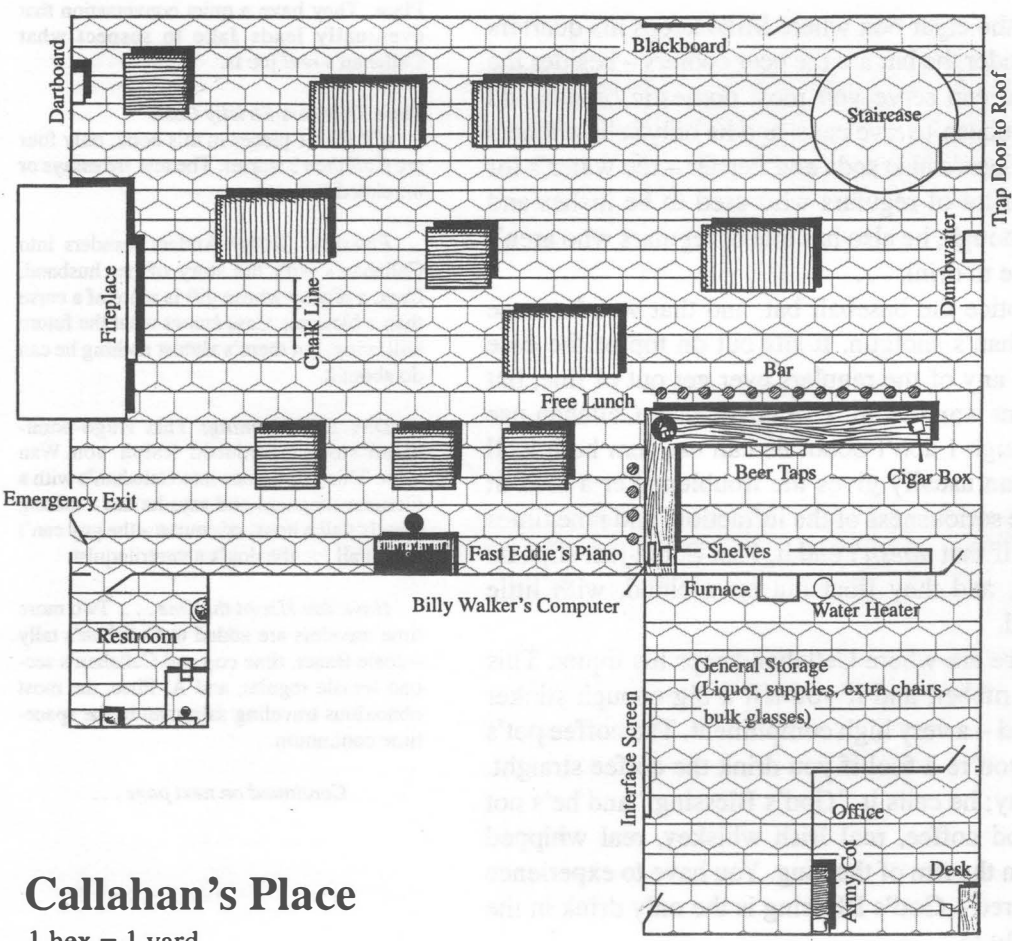
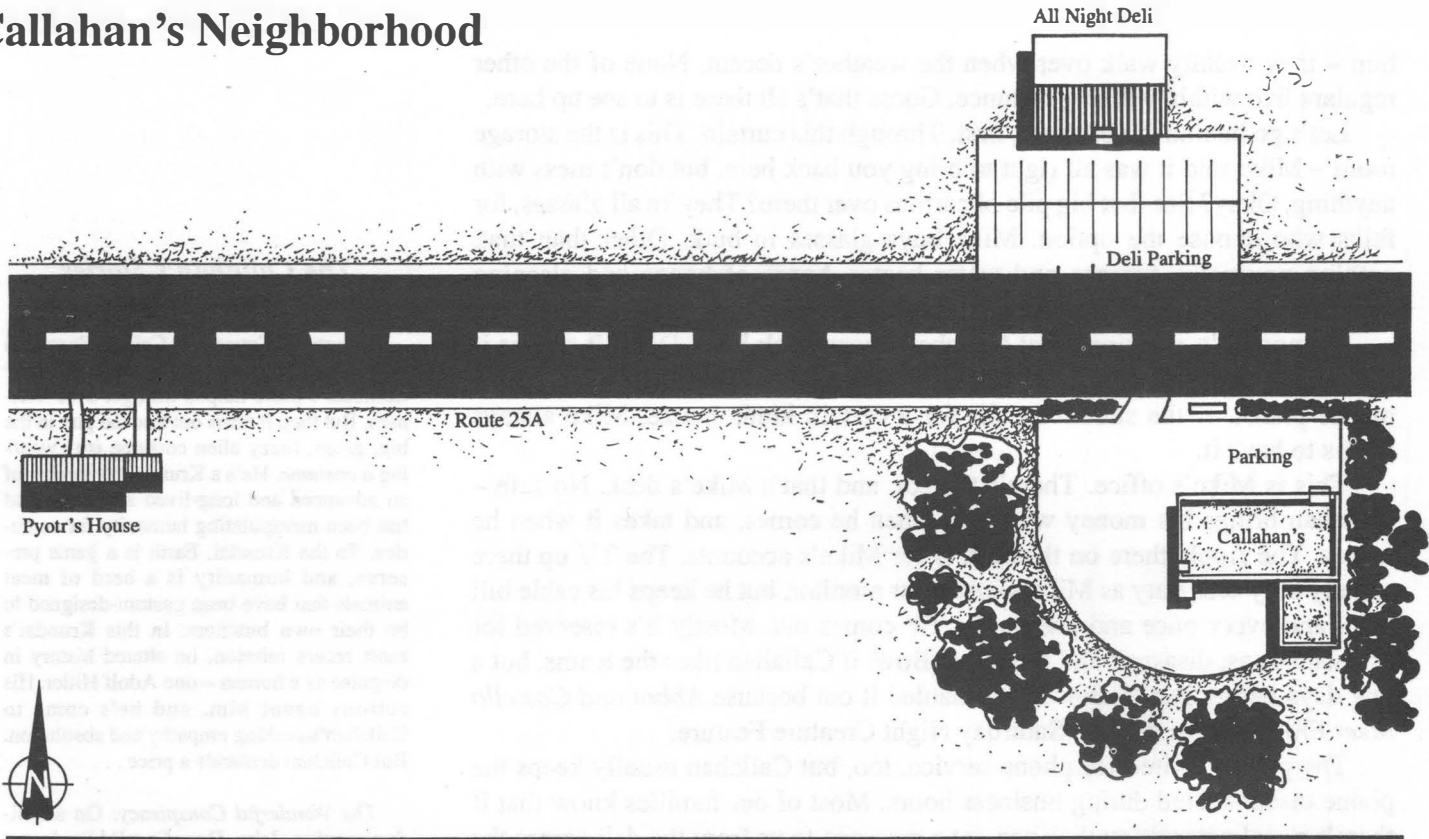
Fivesight: Kathy Anders wanders into Callahan's with the story of her husband, Cass, a precog whose gift is more of a curse than a blessing. Cass *knows* what the future will bring, but there's almost nothing he can do about it.

Dog Day Evening: This Hugo-nominated story introduced Ralph Von Wau Wau. This guy comes into Callahan's with a German shepherd and says he has a talking dog. It's all a hoax, of course – the guy can't talk at all . . . the dog's a ventriloquist.

Have You Heard the One . . . : Two more time travelers are added to Callahan's tally – Josie Bauer, time cop and Callahan's second female regular, and Al Phee, the most obnoxious traveling salesman in the space-time continuum.

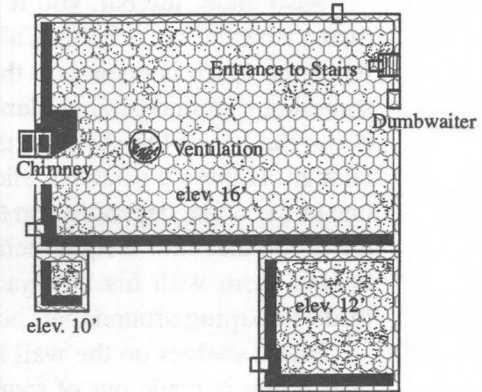
Continued on next page . . .

Callahan's Neighborhood



Callahan's Place
1 hex = 1 yard

Floor Plans



Callahan's Roof
1 hex = 1 yard

Welcome to Callahan's!

There's no mirror behind the bar. Callahan doesn't believe in them. (Actually, we did have a mirror for a few days, but that's a long story . . .) Instead, Callahan uses that wall to write down quotable quotes from the regulars – wise sayings, memorable one-liners and the punchline from every winning yarn from every Tall Tales night. Somebody should turn that wall into a book. *Thirty Years of Suffolk County Wit and Wisdom.*

There are no bar stools – something else Callahan doesn't believe in. Instead, he uses these tall chairs.

Down here at the end of the bar is the free lunch – pickles, pickled eggs, apples and grapes, chips and dip, crackers, cheese and nuts, mostly. Lately Callahan's added fresh sliced vegetables, and on special nights, Slippery Joe Maser and his wives . . . yeah, "wives," long story . . . bring their famous chili. That jar is for donations to the food fund, but I've known some of the guys to live off that lunch for weeks at a time when money's tight, and nobody will so much as look at you funny if you do. Callahan also buys a half dozen or so roast beef sandwiches from the deli most nights, which he'll sell at cost, or give away if somebody needs some solid food.

Over there by the wall is the latest addition to the ambiance. What's that? A video game? Lord, no! Callahan has no time for coin-operated amusements. I recall the gentleman of Sicilian extraction who tried to convince Callahan that his jukebox enterprise represented an offer Callahan could not refuse. I'm afraid that while Mike was explaining the flaw in this gentleman's reasoning, both of the gentleman's arms were inadvertently broken.

No, this Apple here is for our newest regular, Billy Walker. Billy can't get out much, because he's got this condition – Tourette's Syndrome, maybe you've seen the public service commercials about it on late-night TV? Anyway, Billy can type well enough, so Mike fixed him up with a computer and modem, and bought this second computer for the Place here. Now Billy logs on for a couple hours most nights, and one or another of the guys will sit here and chat over the computer. We have a couple of good typists who will type in the action from Punday Night or Tall Tales Night, and Jake and Eddie have taken to taping their Fireside Fill-More jams and sending them off to Billy.



This is Fast Eddie's piano. Notice the old-fashioned stool – Fast Eddie would sooner play standing up than rest his butt on a bench. On Fireside Fill-More nights Jake plugs in his amp right here beside the piano.

That door's the bathroom – only one. Now we're getting more ladies in, and Callahan's talking about adding another john, but so far he hasn't done

The Callahan's Stories (Continued)

MirrorforriM Off the Wall: First a mirror materializes mysteriously behind Callahan's bar, then a man walks in with the best booze this side of the Four-Eye Monongahela – but the stranger will drink only the Tiger Breath that Callahan sometimes uses to unclog the drains. How are these facts related? What if the mirror *isn't* a mirror – what if it's a gateway to a mirror *dimension*?

Callahan's Secret

The Blacksmith's Tale: After the closing of Lady Sally's, Callahan's daughter Mary uses her blacksmith's skills to install Sally's spiral staircase leading to Callahan's roof. Jake loves her at first sight, but then Mickey Finn flies in for a visit, and after hearing his problems with life on Earth, Mary proposes! In this story we begin to learn what it means to be Mickey Finn's friend.

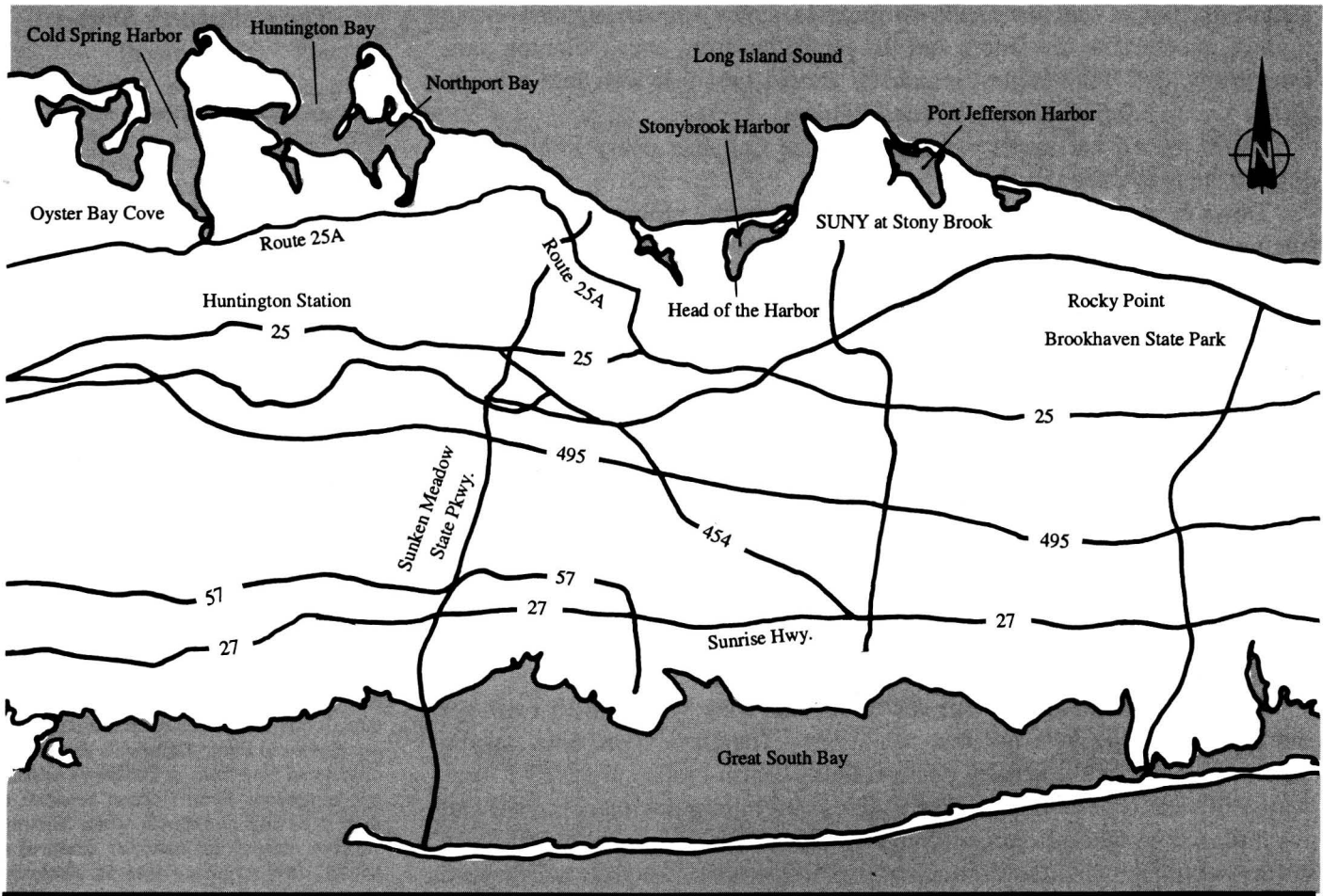
Pyotr's Story: Jake breaks his beloved, one-of-a-kind acoustic guitar, Lady MacBeth. Eventually Fast Eddie saves the Lady by kidnapping Domingo Montoya, the last living guitar wizard. In the meantime, though, Jake begins to hatch a strange theory about old Pyotr, Callahan's designated driver, and why folks at Callahan's seldom get hangovers. Pyotr's secret becomes a matter of life and death when Tommy Janssen, despairing over the death of a friend, drinks himself into an alcoholic coma. This story also introduces Quiz Night.

Involuntary Man's Laughter: The Cheerful Charlies are Les Glueham and Merry Moore, a married couple in a unique line of work – they make their living cheering unhappy people up, satisfaction guaranteed. If the case looks hopeless, they bring their client to Callahan's. But even that remedy won't work for Billy Walker, a tragic case of Tourette's Syndrome, a disease which causes him to twitch, bark and grunt in such a horribly *funny* way that not even a saint could keep from laughing out loud at poor Billy – much less the Cheerful Charlies, or Callahan's patrons. Then Callahan comes up with a technological solution to Billy's loneliness.

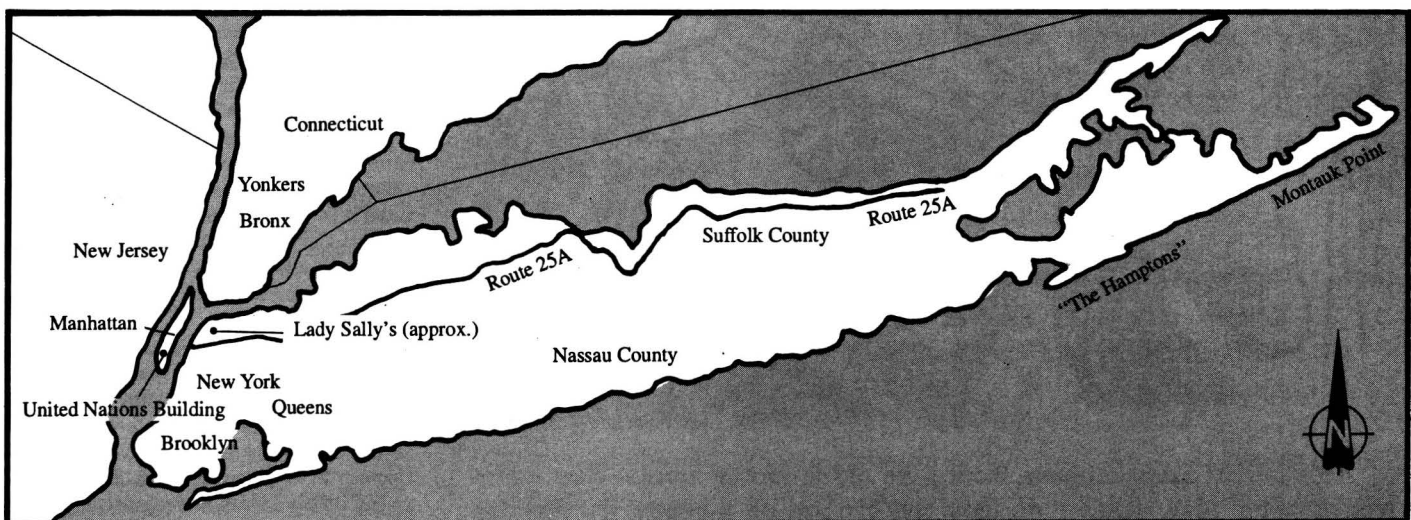
The Mick of Time: In this final story of the series, Mickey and Mary Finn think they've solved the 20th century's Big Problem. But then one of Finn's former masters comes to reclaim his property – and incidentally to vaporize the Earth. Callahan has to call *all* his friends and regulars in to face the menace in a last stand against the Beast.

Western Suffolk County, Long Island

— = 10 miles



Long Island and New York City



— = 10 miles

anything about it. Nothing worth looking at in there, except to mention that Callahan keeps it spotless and warm in the winter.

This is the emergency exit, which Callahan sometimes props open on very hot nights. There's no central air, but between the ceiling fans, the windows and the doors the Place is livable most nights. And then there's always the roof.

The dartboard's over there by the opposite wall. Every year we have the "Darts Championship of the Universe." Most other nights the Dartboard serves mostly as a menace to life and limb.

Finally, this is Callahan's famous fireplace. If you're taking advantage of the option, you toe this chalk line and throw from here, but folks also throw their glasses as a sort of spontaneous tribute – usually for a real unexpected stinker of a pun. Losers on Tall Tales night traditionally heave their glasses when they drop out of the competition.

Some of the long-time regulars have developed really incredible pitching arms, and they can put a glass in the fire from anywhere in the bar. Long-Drink McGonnigle holds the record – one night on a bet he threw from one yard short of the far wall and hit dead-center.

I've seen the fireplace more than ankle deep in glass at the end of an evening, and more than two dozen glasses hit the bricks all at once when Doc Webster's in top form.

On the outside the fireplace looks like an exceptionally large, old-fashioned, but still pretty ordinary fireplace, but take a look here inside – notice the shape? It's built like a parabolic reflector, which makes it almost impossible for glass to spray out over the room. Still, if you throw hard enough, or if you just miss (though surprisingly few folks ever do), it's possible to scatter some glass – that's why Callahan keeps that broom and dustpan set handy.

Mike sweeps out the fireplace every morning. And yes, we do use the fireplace to build fires in, sometimes. More than once, though, I've seen a cheerful midwinter blaze tragically pass away before its time under a merciless hail of glass.

I guess that's it for the tour. C'mon – I know this chophouse in town where we can grab some supper, and by the time we get back the place should be open for real.

The People

I don't want you to get a picture of Callahan's Place as an agonized, Alcoholics Anonymous type of group-encounter session, with Callahan as some sort of salty psychoanalyst-father-figure in the foreground. Hell, many's the toast provokes roars of laughter, or a shouted chorus of agreement, or a unanimous blitz of glasses from all over the room when the night is particularly spirited. Callahan is tolerant of rannygazoo; he maintains that a bar should be "merry," so long as no bones are broken unintentionally. I mind the time he helped Spud Flynn set fire to a seat cushion to settle a bet on which way the draft was coming. Callahan exudes, at all times, a kind of monolithic calm; and U.S. 40 is shorter than his temper.

– "The Guy With the Eyes"

If you want to meet interesting people, few places beat Callahan's. And not just for the aliens, telepaths, immortals and time travelers either, though those

Canonical Callahan's

Fans of popular fictional characters like Sherlock Holmes and Tarzan often play games with the stories of their favorite hero, trying to guess just which stories "really" happened, and which were "only made up" by the hero's chronicler. Similar games can be played with the Callahan's stories.

While there's no reason to assume that any of the stories are *completely* imaginary, there are several extremely suspect elements strung throughout the series.

Spider Robinson admits that he deliberately placed certain contradictions in the stories, while Callahan's was still open, to throw tourists and the idle curious off the scent. The first and most obvious of these was his contradictory statements in "Unnatural Causes" and "The Wonderful Conspiracy." The first story says that Callahan's is always crowded on holidays, and the second says it's almost empty (for the facts behind this paradox, see sidebar, p. 22).

Many other dubious additions to the series involve names, in-jokes directed at SF fandom or both.

By far the story with the least verisimilitude is "Have You Heard The One . . .", which Jake and Spider Robinson littered with a host of SF-related puns and in-jokes, starting with the lead character, Al Phee, whose name (and probably appearance as well) has almost certainly been tailored to heighten a perceived similarity to science-fiction writer Alfred Bester. On the other hand, "Gentleman John Kilian" might very well actually be British SF author John Kilian Houston Brunner. There's no reason to regard Josie Bauer's purported relationship to Philip José Farmer as anything other than a gag cooked up between Jake and Spider Robinson. Josie's name is probably also fictional, though Jake and Spider might have also been punning off the similarity between Josie's and Farmer's names.

Continued on next page . . .



Welcome to Callahan's!

Canonical Callahan's (Continued)

Another story with several suspect elements is "Mirror/roriM Off the Wall." The names "Four-Eye Monongahela" and a close variation of "Tiger Breath" are drawn from a story by Oliver Le Farge (though Callahan might well have really used this reference). And it seems most unlikely that the inventor of the interface with the mirror dimension would have a palindromic name like Robert Trebor.

Another most unlikely name is Cass Anders (the unseen protagonist of "Five-sight"). This name is an obvious variation on Cassandra, the seeress of Greek mythology who was cursed by the Gods so that she always predicted the future with complete accuracy, but was never believed. This change was made to protect the privacy of Kathy Anders.

A somewhat less unlikely literary reference is found in Rachel's name, from "A Voice is Heard in Ramah." The title of the story, and possibly Rachel's name as well, comes from the Bible. Jeremiah 31:15 reads, "Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not."

Finally, Jake was never given a last name until Spider Robinson's foreword to this book. While "Jake Stonebender" is a handy name for reference purposes, it's rather unlikely that it's really his name. The name comes from a memorable tall tale told by Jake in "Two Heads are Better Than One," about his three-headed Grandfather Stonebender. Jake got the character Grandfather Stonebender (as Noah Gonzales points out in the story) from a Robert A. Heinlein story, "Lost Legacy."

Further hunting for contradictions, improbabilities and in-jokes is left to the reader.

The lesson in this for the GM is if he finds a given element in the *Callahan's* stories improbable, he shouldn't hesitate to change it, under the assumption that Jake was probably tinkering with the "true" facts, anyway. On the other hand, if he thinks that punning names, in-jokes and subtle literary references would be an amusing addition to Callahan's milieu, he's in very good company.

are interesting enough. The ordinary folks are probably even more fascinating than the exotics.

Most of the folks at Callahan's have a story to tell, and they're willing to tell it (but only if you really want to listen). There's Tommy Janssen, who used to be a smack-head, and Slippery Joe Maser who has two wives, and Noah Gonzalez, whose leg was blown off by a bomb but who's still the best officer on the Suffolk county bomb squad, and Billy Walker, who can't leave his own house because of his advanced case of Tourette's Syndrome, but who still joins the party at Callahan's most nights via modem.

Then there are the folks who can't be regulars, but still consider themselves part of the family. They include a Vietnam vet who's become a full-time peace activist, a guy with no jaw, a former real-estate developer who gave up all his money to lobby for parks, greenbelts and nature preserves, the last living guitar wizard and a couple of award-winning science fiction writers, one British and the other presently Canadian.

And then there's the *weird* ones . . . Now, Late Late Show rejects don't wander into Callahan's every day – Spider Robinson claims to have been a regular for over a year, and an occasional for more than a decade after that, but he maintains that "somehow that way-out stuff never seems to happen while I'm there" (*Time Travelers Strictly Cash*).

Still, it's racked up an impressive array of exotics. So far the total (not even including Callahan and his blood relations) is four time travelers (not counting Tom Hauptman), three aliens, two telepaths, a telekinetic and a precog's wife, an immortal, a talking dog, two dimension-hoppers and an alcoholic vampire. And that's just the ones they've told us about.

Employees and Regulars

There are at least a half dozen people who are almost as important as Callahan himself in making Callahan's the kind of place it is. The individuals below (as well as all the exotics listed above) each gets his own complete character write up in Chapter 7, but this section briefly discusses each individual's contribution to the bar and its regulars.

The first three individuals below are those lucky enough to actually work for Mike Callahan.

Fast Eddie Costigan

Fast Eddie is the stereotypical Brooklynite come to life. He looks like a well-groomed orangutan, and his speech is liberally salted with "dese," "dose" and "you'se."

Fast Eddie has been with Callahan's since before there was a Callahan's. He met Mike at Lady Sally's right after the war, and helped Callahan move into his new bar.

Eddie is the Place's piano player – a virtuoso of the dying art of barrel-house piano. He can play tirelessly for hours at a time, stopping only to gulp a beer when he sweats himself dry.

He also shares bouncer duties with Callahan – actually, Callahan is the only one who actually bounces, and you'd better believe that when Mike Callahan throws you out of his joint, you *do* bounce. Fast Eddie's method of dealing with troublemakers is to steal silently up behind them and put them to sleep with a lightning-fast touch from his everpresent blackjack.

When it comes down to it, Fast Eddie is a remarkably lucky man – gifted, uncomplicated and happy.

Tom Hauptman

Tom is a former minister who came to Callahan's to rob it (in "The Time Traveler") and stayed on as Callahan's relief bartender. Most of the patrons call him "Padre."

Since Hauptman came on, Callahan has started taking a couple of days a week off, where Tom runs the bar solo. Tom also helps out on very busy nights like Halloween and New Year's Eve, and takes care of a good deal of the daily maintenance of the bar.

Although by the time he found Callahan's he had completely lost his faith, his training as a minister still stands him in good stead. Tom is an excellent listener and a fine source of encouragement and common-sense advice.



Pyotr

Pyotr is Callahan's designated driver. When patrons exceed their capacity, Callahan demands their keys. At closing (or on request of an ailing patron) Pyotr will ferry him home. If there are multiple drunks on the same night (a rather rare occurrence at Callahan's) Pyotr takes a cab back to the bar. Callahan pays the cabbie, and it's a point of honor among regulars to pay him back on their next visit. On his last run of the evening, Pyotr spends the night on the couch of his charge.

He's a mournful-looking man of late middle age, an immigrant from some Eastern European country, who still has a bit of an accent. He never smiles. Pyotr never eats in public and never drinks alcoholic beverages – he strongly prefers distilled water.

Small Miracles

Reality works a little different . . . a little better . . . at Callahan's place. People find they can do things they never imagined they could do, like Noah Gonzalez's glasses-juggling trick (see p. 20). This seems to be one of the more picturesque side-effects of the probability nexus (see p. 24).

To simulate this effect, the GM may implement the following: any time a character needs to make a skill roll (or any DX- or IQ-based roll) while he's *on the grounds* of Callahan's place, the GM may secretly roll 1d, and add that number to the skill roll in question. That bonus will stay constant until the character leaves the bar. Thus Noah Webster, who has a juggling skill of 14, was operating with an effective skill of 20 when he did his juggling trick with Long-Drink.

Also, every Callahan's regular gets the Luck advantage, effective *only* while he's actually at the bar (there's no cost for this advantage – it's a special effect of the bar, itself). This means that if a character messes up a skill roll, he can try again.

In addition to more ostentatious effects, like Noah's juggling, this also explains the consistently inspired quality of the punning and storytelling at Callahan's.

Besides being able to *do* impossible things, folks at Callahan's are also much more accepting of the impossible. For instance, nobody much notices that Callahan's is always open when the first customer arrives (see p. 21), and anybody who can add could figure out that Callahan must be at least 65 or 70 by 1980, but nobody stops to question the fact that he barely looks 50.

Partially this is just familiarity – folks don't bother to think about things that don't change. But this is also an example of how Callahan's subtly changes the way its regulars look at the world. Callahan's people are able to accept *big* impossibilities like Mickey Finn and Ralph Von Wau Wau, in part because they've learned to accept the small wonders that Callahan's place serves up every day.

There's no point cost for this ability either – it's just something that happens to the world-view of Callahan's regulars. If a PC seems in danger of getting sidetracked in a search for the roots of some petty impossibility, just remind him, "after all, this is Callahan's Place."



Women in Callahan's

At its founding in the '40s, Callahan's Place was an Irish bar in the grand tradition. This meant that there were *no women allowed!* An Irish bar is a place where a working-class man goes to escape from wife, mother-in-law, marriageable daughters, small children and even his own sainted mother – all the various females that restrict his freedom and hold him to his station with ties of obligation. A woman in an Irish bar is as unthinkable as a pig in church. (Barmaids and proprietresses don't count, but Callahan's never had either.)

Of course, Mike Callahan himself had no problem with females in his bar, but that was what the local guys expected of a joint like Callahan's, so that's the way it stood for the bar's first 25 years or so. Oh, there were special occasions – wedding receptions and similar parties – where the rules were suspended. But, on a daily basis, Callahan's remained quietly and exclusively masculine.

Continued on next page . . .

Curiously, those whom Pyotr ferries home almost never wake up with hangovers the next morning.

Pyotr was a fixture at Callahan's for several years before anybody figured out his strange secret (see p. 48).

The next three characters are not employees, but they make up a sort of inner circle among Callahan's several dozen regulars.

Doc Webster

If Michael Callahan is the heart of his Place, Samuel "Doc" Webster, M.D., is its soul. An immense Bacchus of a man, who last saw the slim side of 400 lbs. in college, Doc is capable of tucking away several quarts of Peter Dawson's in an evening at Callahan's, and still face emergency surgery at 7 a.m. with nary a finger twitch.

Although a true man of science, erudite and sophisticated, Doc is most brilliant as a humorist and master storyteller. He dominates all the organized competitions at Callahan's, from being the unchallenged master of the pun-off and tall tale to being several times Darts Champion of the Universe. He also calls the square dances.

In addition to everything else, Doc is Callahan's most active recruiter, regularly prescribing a visit to the Place to his patients with a sickness of the soul beyond the reach of medicine.

Jake Stonebender

The narrator of the *Callahan's* stories, Jake is a thin, good-looking man with long hair and a light beard.

Jake is a musician who learned his craft in the thriving New York coffee-house folk scene of the 1960s. He usually preforms solo with his guitar, except at his weekly Fireside Fill-More jams with Fast Eddie. He despises hard rock, which he considers cacophonous.

Jake is the man Doc Webster watches at the weekly punning and tall tale contests. Jake isn't as consistently brilliant as the Doc, but you can never tell when his muse will strike and he'll quietly come out with something completely untoppable.

A keen observer of humanity, Jake is often the first one to notice when a fellow-patron is in need, and to reach out to answer that need. He's also the one most likely to respond instantly and correctly in a crisis.

Long-Drink McGonnigle

Long-Drink cheerfully confesses that in his youth, he was a "jackass." He hasn't changed that much. He's less sensitive than Jake or Doc, and much less tolerant of a sob story or similar blarney. A veteran moonshiner, Long-Drink has no respect whatsoever for authority of any kind – he's a born anarchist.

Long-Drink is taller than Jake, and even thinner, hence his name. He's one of Callahan's most constant regulars, and one of Pyotr's most constant clients. He seems to have gotten his place in the inner circle simply through omnipresence – and perhaps because Callahan admires and approves of his independent nature.

Long-Drink is a compulsive punster. He can and will pun at a massacre or a funeral – not irreverently, but unavoidably as night into day. Because puns come so naturally to him (and because there's very little that can stand be-

tween Long-Drink and a free drink) he's a leading contender on Punday Nights.

People Helping People

Callahan's Place is the best place in the world to be if you're in a hopeless situation. The one thing the regulars do best is solve people's problems.

Which is not to say that Callahan's is a haven for busybodies and gossips. Help is only offered when asked. The one explicit and unwavering rule of Callahan's Place is *no prying*, and the penalty for violators is set in stone – a very close encounter with Fast Eddie's blackjack.

(It should be noted, though, that for some of the regulars this rule is more of a formality than a prohibition. The more empathic patrons are experts at knowing when somebody is asking for help, even when they're not saying a word.)

Callahan's guys are always willing to pass the hat for somebody who needs a few extra bucks, or ask around for you if you're out of a job, but normal everyday problems like that aren't really what they're best at. If you're in trouble with the cops you're better off getting a lawyer, and if you think your wife is playing around you should probably hire a private eye.

The folks at Callahan's lean more towards the tough assignments, answering questions like "what is the meaning of life?" and "why should I go on living another day?" The regulars at Callahan's realize that the answers to these questions are different for every person, and they specialize in helping those who may lack their personal answer to seek it out. Once these big questions are taken care of, the merely physical details of the problem tend to work themselves out – the folks at Callahan's know this, because they've all faced down some big problems of their own.

Besides solving existential dilemmas, the other specialty of the house is believing unbelievable situations and coping with them.

If Mickey Finn had walked into the Pentagon and told them he was going to destroy the Earth in a few hours, he would have been doing well if he managed to see anybody over the rank of Major before the deadline rolled around, and that's *with* a demonstration of his alien powers. It takes a place like Callahan's to cope with situations like that in any sort of efficient fashion.

The word "unbelievable" is not in the dictionary at Callahan's Place, but that doesn't mean the patrons are credulous or gullible. Callahan can smell a con-job a mile off, and that's about how far he'll throw anyone foolish enough to try one in his joint. And Doc Webster will know a paranoid schizophrenic the second he opens his mouth. There's no bunch of guys anywhere *less* susceptible to a line of blarney than Callahan's people.

The Times

I don't know how come a government with the best propaganda machine ever built failed to sell a war to a country, for the first time in history. I don't know how come three or four guys managed to pull down a corrupt thug of a president. I don't even understand how come all the things this here bar stands for haven't been drowned under a sea of drunks and brawlers and hookers and hoodlums every other bar gets, why the only people that seem to come here are the ones that need to, that ought to, that have to. That's the real miracle of this joint, you know, not our telepaths and little green men.

– "The Wonderful Conspiracy"

Women in Callahan's (Continued)

In the '60s and '70s, male bastions were falling on all sides. Meanwhile, Callahan's clientele had expanded, and was no longer made up exclusively, or even predominantly, of blue-collar Irish. The guys even had no problem accepting Bill Gerrity, a heterosexual transvestite, as a regular. So, when Rachel walked in in the early '70s, the boys were taken aback, but nobody asked her to leave.

Rachel's combination of utter femininity, remarkable charm and unwavering personal dignity was ideally suited to forge the way for female regulars at Callahan's – Rachel could neither be patronized nor mistaken for "one of the guys." By the end of the decade, nobody particularly noticed when a female stranger like Kathy Anders would wander in for a quiet drink.

But if Rachel opened the door for female regulars, Josie Bauer blew it off its hinges. Where Rachel introduced femininity to Callahan's, Josie introduced sex. A devout admirer of impromptu wit, Josie made it her unabashed practice to go home with the winner of each Wednesday's Tall Tales Night (assuming that lucky gentleman was interested, which he usually was). Callahan's could never be a meat market, but once it became a place where a man had a measurable chance of picking up a woman, its ancient tradition as an Irish bar was dead and buried.

By the time of the Night of the Cockroach, even wives (specifically Slippery Joe Maser's Susie and Susan, Mary Finn and Callahan's own wife, Lady Sally McGee) were welcome in the bar – a blasphemy that would surely have set the respectable Irish fathers of Callahan's original patrons spinning in their graves, had they known.



Welcome to Callahan's!

Lady Sally's

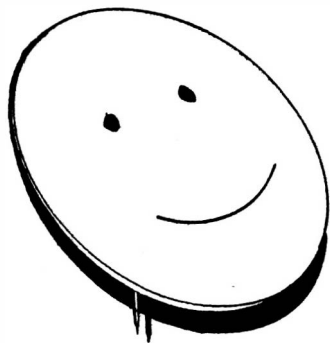
"Lady" Sally McGee is Michael Callahan's spouse and the keeper of the most high-class brothel in Brooklyn. Lady Sally refers to her employees as "artists," and pays them a regular salary, rather than a percentage of their earnings. Her customers are admitted only after a personal interview with the Lady herself, and are charged according to their ability to pay. Her numerous wealthy and influential clients insure that Lady Sally never has any problem with the authorities.

Callahan's patrons know he's married, but few know it's to Lady Sally – nobody asks much about Callahan's family, both because of his policies against prying, and because the Irish bar tradition forbids the discussion of womenfolk.

Nonetheless, there are numerous subtle connections between Callahan's and Lady Sally's. Fast Eddie played for Lady Sally before he worked for Callahan, and he still plays her parlor at least once a week. At some point he started bringing Jake along. Subsequently Lady Sally's became one of Jake's most dependable gigs (although he had no idea that Lady Sally and Callahan were married until he met Mary). After she stopped coming to Callahan's, Rachel (probably on Callahan's recommendation) found employment as one of Lady Sally's artists, which finally allowed her and Fast Eddie to develop a mutually satisfactory relationship.

Shortly before Mary married Mickey Finn, Lady Sally closed her place. Thereafter, she started showing up a Callahan's with some regularity, making no particular effort to keep her relationship to Callahan a secret.

Spider Robinson has chronicled the adventures of Lady Sally and her artists in the novels *Callahan's Lady* and the upcoming *Lady Slings the Booze*. If there's enough interest, Lady Sally's may someday be the subject of a *GURPS* book of its own.



Callahan's Place was founded in the late '40s, but the Callahan's stories begin in 1973, and continue until the destruction of the Place in the mid-'80s. Most of the Callahan's stories (all of the first two books) take place in the '70s.

In the '90s, the '70s tend to get short shrift. The "me decade" is often dismissed as a time of selfishness, hedonism and almost transcendent tackiness. All this is true.

Yet the '70s were also a dynamic, eventful decade full of adventure opportunities for the GM.

Current Events

The single defining event of the '70s was probably Watergate. In 1972, Republican president Richard Nixon was reelected in a near-record landslide victory, and everything seemed to be going his way. Nixon was moving rapidly to end America's involvement in the disastrous Vietnam war, while consolidating America's dominance of global politics (forging historic agreements with China and the USSR, and in the Mideast). The racial and social tensions which had grown steadily during the troubled '60s seemed to at last be easing.

Then, in early 1972, District of Columbia police arrested five burglars inside Democratic National Headquarters in the Watergate complex. It was instantly obvious to even the most loyal citizen that these were not simple criminals, but spies hired by high-level officials in the administration. The only question was, how high?

The nation's reporters, led by John Woodward and Carl Bernstein of the *Washington Post*, immediately begin tracing the plot back to its origins. The trail led up, and still farther up into the administration. First the vice-president resigned. Then, for the first time in history, a President of the United States left his office in disgrace.

The iron-fisted Nixon administration was followed by the innocuous leadership of first Gerald Ford, then Jimmy Carter. The remainder of the '70s faded into an ever-deepening mire of recession, energy shortage and international crisis.

To the independent-minded patrons of Callahan's, the entire decade of the '70s was a vindication of a principle they'd always known in their hearts – you can't trust anybody to tell you what to do, except yourself.

The Zeitgeist

The '70s were the decade when the radicals and "flower children" of the '60s reached their majority and were cut loose *en masse* from the parental apron strings that had both supported them and constrained them throughout the '60s.

As the counter-culture disintegrated, a surprising number of former hippies – like Jake, for example – managed to find a niche in the real world that somehow allowed them to make a living with their '60s ideals intact (at least for the moment). But far too many young people took Tommy Janssen's path, losing their '60s moral code except for its unrestrained hedonism, leading to unprecedented epidemics of addiction and venereal disease. Finally, many decided they preferred compromise to starvation, and entered the working class.

For this generation, though, “respectability” was strictly a relative term. Outwardly the ’70s “look” was a slightly more tailored version of the shaggy hair and wild fabrics of the ’60s. Exaggeration was the rule of the day – huge fluffy “afros” topped heads of all races, ties covered the entire chest, pants flared extravagantly at the ankles and shoes rested atop Frankensteinian platforms.

Another generation might have discretely swept the Watergate scandal under the rug, or been utterly destroyed by disillusionment. The radical rhetoric of the ’60s, however, had paved the way for acceptance of this national breach of faith. When the government was revealed to be utterly corrupt, most people were emotionally prepared to tell themselves they’d known it all the time, and go on about their business. There was enough vestigial ’60s idealism left to force the Nixon administration out of office, but the revolution never happened.

Instead, a decade after John F. Kennedy told the nation “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country,” the nation started asking “what can I do for me?” Faced with a government that could not be trusted, the population turned away from other sources of institutional authority, like the churches and traditional morality. Self-gratification became the order of the day. Promiscuity and drug use became less covert forms of recreation, and the homosexual community took its first tentative steps “out of the closet.”

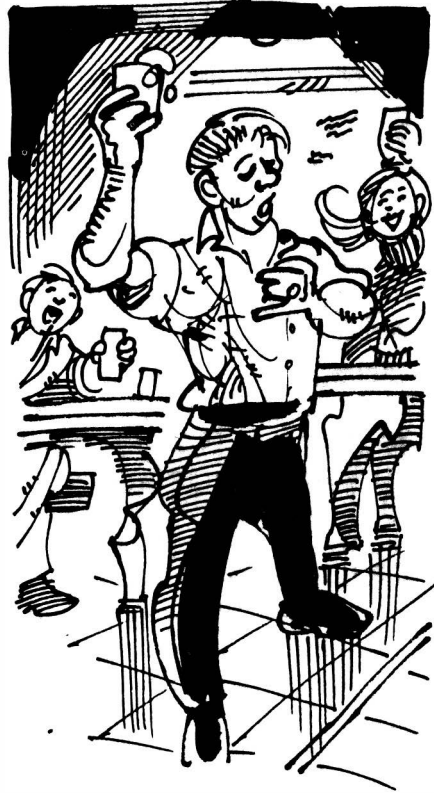
Of course, such indulgence carries a price. When it came time to deal with the emotional wreckage of too many relationships, or the reality of addiction, the casualties of the ’70s were told to look within themselves for healing. Phrases like “self-actualization” entered the language, and one-on-one psychoanalysis was the therapy of choice.

This “me-first” philosophy sat poorly with the liberal political bent of the early ’70s. People could, in theory, support a better life for unfortunates in hell-holes like Bangladesh, Biafra and Calcutta, but saw no compelling reason to give up any of their own comforts for the benefit of those people. Inextricably, the idealistic liberal facade of the ’70s began to transform into the conformist conservative facade of the ’80s, while the deeper problems of selfishness and excess remained unchanged.

In short, if ever a decade needed Callahan’s Place, this was it.

Popular Culture

Despite all its surface absurdity and tackiness, the ’70s was the decade when popular culture finally came into its own.



The Option

The option is probably the single event that best defines the difference between Callahan’s and other bars. It’s described in Jake’s own words on p. 6.

Just as baptism makes you a part of a church community, or voting makes you part of a political community, in exercising the option a patron is publicly declaring his interest in becoming a part of the Callahan’s community. This entitles him to several privileges – most notably the right to have his problems heard and considered by the assembled clientele – but also incurs an obligation to follow the mores and rules of the place.

Callahan will serve anybody, at least once, but he’s rather picky about those who he allows to exercise the option. If Callahan tells you to “drink up and get out,” you are not welcome to stay for a toast. Callahan has rescinded his hospitality from individuals as inhumanly evil as Broodseven-Sub-Two Raksha, and as trivially obnoxious as the pranksters in “Just Dessert.”

Besides the formal, “official” option described on p. 6, there’s also a spontaneous version. Whenever anybody drops out of Punday night competition or is topped on Tall-Tales night, he concedes by draining his glass and tossing it into the fireplace – he doesn’t have to worry about toeing the chalk line, he just moves to a point where he has a good clear throw. The option is also used as a sort of spontaneous tribute. Whenever anybody tells a truly memorable pun, or tops a top-quality tall tale, several glasses will hit the bricks from the spectators – Callahan’s exclusive equivalent of an ovation. A more serious application of the spontaneous option occurs when somebody makes a formal toast, and somebody else wants to vigorously echo the sentiment – he throws his glass into the fireplace along with the toaster’s.

But regardless of other considerations – formal or spontaneous, serious or trivial – if you exercise the option, Callahan keeps 50 cents for the glass.

The Fireside Fill-More

The "Fireside Fill-More" is the weekly jam between Fast Eddie and Jake. Originally the jams were held on Mondays, but about 1980 they seem to have moved to Wednesdays.

Jake's not particularly fond of the name. It's a pun on the Fillmore East, the classic San Francisco rock venue of the '60s. Jake despises the cacophonous acid rock for which the Fillmore is famous, and takes great pains to explain to anyone who asks that the music from *his* Fill-More has nothing at all in common with the music from that other place.

Actually, what Jake and Eddie play is an eclectic mix of jazz, blues, country, and a little bit of classic rock 'n' roll and pop. Most of their material comes from the '20s through the '50s, or even earlier (though some James Taylor or Simon and Garfunkel might sneak in). The boys are more interested in playing classics than in playing hits – they both make a hobby out of finding, learning and playing little-known, often ribald classics of American popular music. Ethnic music, from the black music of the Apollo Theater and the Cotton Club to the early hillbilly music of poor white farmers, is a particularly rich source of suitable tunes.

The Fireside Fill-More, however, is *not* a somber recital of Lost Classics of American Folk Music. Jake and Eddie go to so much trouble to find strange stuff because they want their jams to be different, memorable and most of all, fun.

Consequently, Fireside Fill-More runs heavily towards drinking songs (including Jake and Eddie's original "Drunkard's Song," a portion of which is reprinted on p. 53), sing-alongs, audience participation songs and comic numbers of all descriptions. Though the humor is often ribald, vulgarity for its own sake is scorned.

Jake and Eddie keep a jar out for donations during their jams, and split up the night's take afterwards. The lion's share of the money goes to Jake, since Eddie draws a regular salary from Callahan.



On television, the variety show was dying and the adventure-drama remained unchanged (except for a shift in emphasis away from Westerns and towards contemporary crime shows), but the TV comedy was quietly undergoing a major renaissance through shows like *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *The Bob Newhart Show*, *The Odd Couple*, *M.A.S.H.* and *Saturday Night Live*. Perhaps the single most revolutionary TV show of the decade was Norman Lear's *All in the Family*.

Of course, there was still plenty of dreck like *The Brady Bunch* and *Happy Days* for critics to point at and mock.

The folks at Callahan's, however, tend to be somewhat retarded when it comes to TV acumen. Prime time is spent at the bar, rather than in front of the tube, and Mike keeps his set out of sight most of the time unless something that's *worth* watching is on. Would-be-wits who try to get a laugh by quoting Archie Bunker or imitating Steve Martin's "Wild and Crazy Guy" are likely to earn blank looks from Callahan's patrons.

Regulars with a literary sensibility would probably be reading thrillers by John Le Carre, or sprawling historical novels by James Michener or Herman Wouk. Jake and Noah Gonzales are enthusiastic science-fiction fans, and they tirelessly evangelize the bar about the wonders of Roger Zelazny, Robert Heinlein, Larry Niven and Michael Moorcock.

In general, the films of the '70s were well-made and exciting, yet introspective. Folks at Callahan's would probably talk about *The Godfather*, *The French Connection*, *The Sting* and Woody Allen's comedies. Later in the decade would see the rise of the high adventure of George Lucas' *Star Wars* and Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

With two professional musicians in the "inner circle," music is probably the most important aspect of the popular culture to Callahan's Place. Actually, it's important to Callahan's because it's important to Jake – Fast Eddie just plays what he likes and ignores the rest.

The folk movement of the '60s had grown to a comfortable middle-age in the early '70s, mutating into the mellow "soft rock" of artists like James Taylor, Jackson Brown and Judy Collins. This is the only modern trend in music that Jake has any time for (though he's also fond of the "psychedelic hillbilly" music of the recent past, characterized by The Band and Country Joe and the Fish).

Other musical movements of the '70s, like funk, art rock and punk rock, went largely unnoticed at Callahan's. Probably the single musical trend which best defined the decade, summing up all its decadence and frantic, directionless energy, was disco. But if any of the Callahan's regulars ever entered a disco it's not recorded, and it seems unlikely that they repeated the experience.

An Evening At Callahan's

Warm light and happy noise and the smell of good suds came flooding out the opened door; as we descended the stairs the sour, oddly pleasant aroma of Callahan's ever present El Ropo cigars joined the mix. Under the laughter and talk, Fast Eddie Costigan was playing Mac Rebennac stuff, and occasionally one patron or another would scat along with him. Noah Gonzalez was working on a gag he'd picked up from Al Phee, juggling full shot glasses, and by God he finally had it down cold. A small cheering section had gathered; while they clapped, Noah started sipping from the shots at they passed his face. (Noah works for the Suffolk County Bomb Squad, which is why one leg is artificial,

and a merrier man you'll never meet.) Mary and I joined the onlookers; true artistry is rare. Noah drained two tumblers, spilling no more than a teaspoon or so on himself, then swallowed, wiped his mouth without losing rhythm, and hollered out, "Open wide, Drink!"

Long-Drink McGonnigle never blows a cue. "Hit me," he cried, and opened his mouth wide.

This is what I think I saw: the shot glass still containing whiskey went up one last time, tilting this time in stately slow motion so that the contents almost spilled; then it came down, and Noah caught it, stopped it cold with three fingers, the contents departed on a high trajectory, Noah flung it back into the stream of traffic so that it made up the lost time, we held our collective breath – and the Drink whipped his head two inches to the left and the flying booze impacted squarely against the back of his throat. A roar went up, and Noah laughed so hard he lost all three glasses, and – perhaps most magnificent of all – Long-Drink did not lose so much as a drop of the load.

– "The Blacksmith's Tale"

There's no set opening time at Callahan's. Callahan seems to have an uncanny knack, though, for arriving before the evening's first patrons. According to Jake, "Once I came by at three in the afternoon, to talk to Callahan about something, and found that the place had been open for over an hour; another time I arrived at 7 P.M. and Mike was just opening the door. But somehow, for the better part of a decade, it never struck me that the place was always open when I arrived" (*The Blacksmith's Tale*).

There's no predicting the crowd, either. Weekends are usually busy, but unlike most bars, Callahan's patronage doesn't drop off all that much mid-week. This is due to the popular special events Callahan hosts every week. Monday is the Fireside Fill-More jam with Jake and Fast Eddie, and Tuesday is Punday night (the day was chosen so the regulars could count the week "Sunday, Monday, Punday . . ."). Wednesday is Tall-Tales night.

In the early '80s, Riddle Night was added to the schedule, on Thursdays. For reasons that are not recorded, but probably had to do with Jake's other professional commitments, Tall-Tales night and the Fireside Fill-More jams seem to have switched days at about the same time.

Even on nights when there isn't a scheduled event, however, Callahan's is still active. Sure, sometimes the guys get involved in a serious bull-session about current events, philosophy, sports or some other big topic, and then there are the nights when the attention of the house is focused on somebody with a problem . . . but Callahan likes his place merry, and most of the time the action is loud and non-stop.



Bar Fights

Some players have developed an almost instinctive response to roleplaying any tavern visit – their characters enter the bar and start looking for a fight.

With all due respect to the venerable tradition of the barroom brawl, it should be pointed out that this sort of behavior just doesn't fly in a Callahan's campaign.

A traditional bar fight relies on a the curious fact of human nature that if somebody gets pushed, he'll push back – and if he can't push the guy who pushed him, he'll push whoever he can reach. So the fight rapidly spreads from the original quarrelers into a free-for-all involving the whole bar.

Callahan's regulars won't hesitate to defend themselves physically, but they don't strike out at random. If you knock somebody – anybody – down in Callahan's, first you'll probably be grabbed by three or four tough, working-class guys (possibly including Noah Gonzalez, the veteran cop). Then Fast Eddie will introduce you to his blackjack, and you'll decide a little nap would be nice. During your rest, Callahan will pick you up and toss you across the parking lot. If Fast Eddie isn't in that night . . . too bad for you, since that means your near future holds an encounter with Callahan's much less civilized aluminum baseball bat.

If someone tries to pick a fight in Callahan's, Callahan or one of the regulars will notice his hostile mood immediately, and first make the consequences of belligerence in Callahan's place obvious (Callahan will show him the bat), then try to talk him down. If he's actually dumb enough to take a swing, GMs needn't even bother to roll. Just say something like, "You punch him in the face, then suddenly the room goes black. You wake up in the parking lot with a big sore spot on the back of your skull and miscellaneous small sore spots all over your body. Your watch says a half-hour has passed."

The only way to start a decent brawl in Callahan's would be to walk in with a dozen or so tough guys, say a biker gang, all ready to fight. Even so, there's probably a better-than-even chance that Callahan, Doc Webster and the other regulars would talk the gang into turning around and heading out with their tails between their legs, without a blow being thrown (and this doesn't even take into account the Diplomacy skill of Callahan's shotgun). It's also entirely possible that even such a gang of hard-cases would get caught up in the fun, and settle down to drinks and stories, rather than brawling.

Holidays

There's some confusion about holidays in the stories, which at various times report that the Place is jam-packed on holidays – and almost *empty* on holidays. In fact, it depends on the holiday. Callahan's is usually busiest on traditionally social holidays like Halloween, the Fourth of July and New Year's Eve, but quiet on more family-oriented days like Christmas and Thanksgiving. On the latter days, the only patrons you're likely to see are the few, like Jake, for whom Callahan's is family.

The conversation recorded in "The Wonderful Conspiracy" actually took place on Christmas Eve, not New Year's Eve – there was a bit of miscommunication between Jake and Spider Robinson.

The traditional reunion date for Callahan's regulars past and present is the costume party on Halloween, which is inevitably the most crowded night of the year. After a time, people often find that they no longer need Callahan's for support or friendship, and move on. But on Halloween, *everyone* who can possibly reach Callahan's gives it his best shot. And things get wild.



Random activities that might break out at any moment at Callahan's include Doc Webster's notorious square dances, and an amazing variety of games, ranging from the traditional (charades) through the impromptu to the indescribable.

Although many of the games at Callahan's involve alcohol, Callahan frowns on drinking games of the mindless "last one to pass out wins" variety. The games at Callahan's tend to be mentally or physically vigorous, and often the participants will burn off more alcohol than they take in. For example, one night the festivities might involve a timed relay race around the tavern, with stops at the free lunch to eat half of a sandwich and take a drink of beer, the piano to play chopsticks and take a drink of beer, the dart board to throw a fist of darts and take a drink of beer, the blackboard to solve a word puzzle posted by Doc Webster and take a drink of beer, and the chalk line to finish the beer and heave it into the fireplace, with appropriate time penalties for uncompleted jobs and spillage.

There are several minor customs at Callahan's that the regulars pick up naturally after a visit or two, without being told. First of all, Callahan parks a small broom and dustpan set on either side of the fireplace, and if anyone accidentally sprays a shard or two of glass beyond the hearth while exercising the option (which seldom happens, given the unique design of the fireplace), that person is expected to remove any stray glass to its proper place. If he accidentally forgets about this detail, the other patrons will see to it that one of the two sets migrates quietly into his hands. (Of course, if the person sprayed glass because he was especially distraught or emotional, whoever's sitting nearby will take it upon himself to clean up the mess while the others tend to the problem at hand.)

Another example is the Place's rather bizarre parking-lot etiquette. There's absolutely no attempt made to regulate the parking of Callahan's customers. There are only two rules – try not to park anywhere where you'll block off a lot of open space, and if your car needs to move to let somebody else out, get up and move your car so he can leave. This means that on a normally-crowded night, a large majority of the patrons can expect to have to pile out of the bar and shuffle their cars around as many as six or seven times to let various early-birds leave.

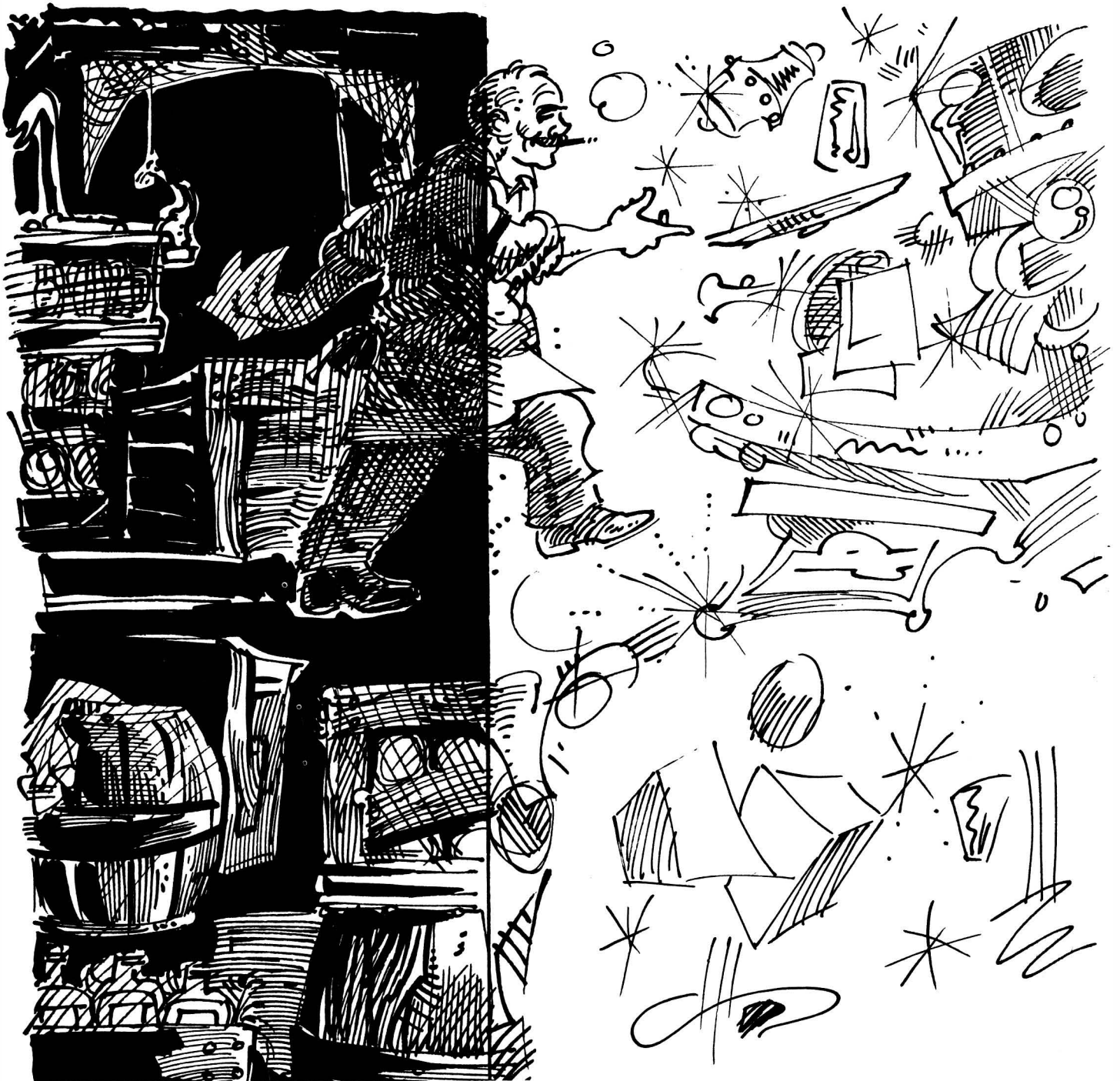
Finally, there's the closing ritual. A few minutes before closing time, Fast Eddie goes from table to table with a big plastic-lined trash barrel and a seltzer bottle. Somebody at the table unscrews the top from the funnel-and-tin-can ashtray and dumps the butts, then while he replaces the top, Eddie inserts two corners of the plastic tablecloth in the barrel, and another customer raises the other two corners into the air while Eddie sluices off the tablecloth with the seltzer bottle.

Most nights several patrons volunteer, without being asked, to sweep and straighten up. Callahan merely polishes the bartop, collects the night's takings in a bank bag, turns out the lights and goes home. (The somewhat hazardous task of sweeping out the fireplace, however, is reserved for Callahan or Tom Hauptman, and is usually done as soon as one or the other arrives the next day.)

Callahan is very conscientious about not selling alcohol after the locally-mandated closing time (he's built up a lot of good will with the local constabulary over the years, but prefers to save it up for a time when he really needs it). However, after closing time, if the night has been pleasant and the crowd's thinned down to a reasonable level, he's often known to break out the booze again, on the house, turning the evening into a perfectly legal private party.

THE WONDERFUL CONSPIRACY

2



Mysteries

There are countless mysteries about Harmony and its people, and not everything that happens in a Callahan's campaign will be comprehensible to the PCs.

Some things will not be explained because they're none of the PCs' business – Harmonian operations work on a strict "need to know" basis. If the PCs are members of a Harmonian's empathic family, and roleplayed right, they won't often ask for explanations of events they aren't directly concerned with, and won't complain when they're told they're better off not knowing.

For example, was it pure luck – or the probability nexus working overtime – that led a group of half-baked terrorists to plant a small nuclear device in Suffolk County Police Headquarters? Remember, this happened while Noah Gonzales was on duty, on the one night when Suffolk County really needed a tac-nuke (see "The Mick of Time," in *Callahan's Secret*). Or perhaps the "terrorist organization" was really a time-traveling Harmonian, sent back by the Callahans to place that crucial piece of hardware where it would do the most good on the Night of the Cockroach? The patrons of Callahan's will never know, and neither will the readers.

Other events – particularly those having to do with time travel and historical manipulation – will be literally unexplainable to the characters. As Callahan points out in "The Mick of Time," the English language is built around the assumption that time is strictly linear and time travel is not possible (see sidebar, p. 33).

And even Harmonians are not omniscient, and won't know every reason for every strange event that happens. When you build your house on a probability nexus, you already know that strange things are going to happen – pretty soon you stop worrying about "why" and start thinking in terms of "what next?"

This uncertainty is both a boon and a pitfall for the GM. On the one hand, it certainly makes adventure design easier. Planning a good Callahan's adventure is not like putting together a jigsaw puzzle, with every piece in its place. It's more like drawing a pencil sketch, with the significant details clearly marked, and the rest merely suggested, or left entirely to the imagination – unless it becomes necessary to define them.

Continued on next page . . .

" . . . That 'mysterious force' stuff you were talkin' about, Jake – did you mean that literally?"

I thought about it. "You mean like a gang of sixth-column missionaries, Doc? A bunch of guys working undercover like Raksha an' his friends, only in reverse? No, I don't really think that's the way of it . . . wups!"

Reaching for my glass without looking, I knocked it skittering across the bar, and leaped to grab it before it could fall into Callahan's lap. I froze for a moment, leaning half-over the bar – but I've always rather prided myself in being quick on the uptake.

" . . . on the other hand," I continued calmly, "maybe that's exactly right. Who knows?"

And Callahan – who was still sitting as I had seen him, his legs folded under him in full lotus, suspended a good three feet off the floor – winked, poured my glass brimfull of Bushmill's, and grinned.

"Not me," he lied, and puffed on his cigar.

– "The Wonderful Conspiracy"

What's Really Going On

Michael Callahan is a time traveler. He's been sent from mankind's distant future to help his ancestors along the historical path that will eventually lead to Harmony, the advanced, enlightened, interstellar civilization that will produce Callahan and his ilk.

Callahan is not working alone. His efforts are supported by his family – his spouse, "Lady" Sally McGee, his daughter Mary Finn, and her husband, the fantastically powerful alien cyborg Mickey Finn.

Callahan has mentioned that the 20th century is a particularly critical nexus in the space/time continuum, saturated with Harmonian agents, but Callahan's immediate family are the only Harmonians introduced in the stories.

Harmonians are stationed throughout history at various "crisis points." They do *not* know in advance exactly what crisis they will meet – they can only compute the statistical probability of the crisis occurring, and then be ready for whatever actually happens. (They can make a pretty good guess, but history holds surprises for even the best guessers.)

If Callahan's operation is typical (and this book assumes that it is), the normal *modus operandi* for the historical mission is for the Harmonian to set himself up at a probability nexus, posing as a local.

A probability nexus is basically a place where strange things happen on a regular basis, where – to steal a line from Terry Pratchett – million to one chances come out nine times out of ten. Probability nexus may be natural flukes in the space-time continuum, which the Harmonian has to locate, or they may be a side effect of a psychically active visitor from the future staying in one place for a long enough time. Either way, the end effect is the same.

Such a nexus inevitably draws the strange and the gifted. A Harmonian visitor can make use of both sorts. Gifted individuals are passively and gradually drawn into the effort, and held in reserve for the crisis – they will come to make up a Harmonian empathic "family," the Harmonians' primary weapon in the battle for time. Oddball events provide valuable intelligence into the nature of the coming crisis – to use the most dramatic example from the stories, Mickey Finn's "coincidental" appearance at Callahan's resulted in

the world being saved at least two and possibly three times (and that's not even counting the crucial role Finn played in ending the Krundai conspiracy).

The Harmonian seems to take it almost as a matter of faith that the probability nexus will provide him with the tools and allies he needs to meet the coming crisis – his job is not to seek out recruits, but to have them ready at the proper time and in the proper place. His preferred tactics are to allow the nexus to draw a pool of gifted individuals into his sphere (see p. 39). Then, along with his newly-formed local “family,” he sets about subtly influencing the present, smoothing potential tragedies before they develop, and meeting full-blown crises by applying the minimum amount of direct interference, directly to the epicenter of the problem.

Callahan's Place met and dealt with at least four major crisis points:

1. The reprogramming of Mickey Finn, allowing him to avoid his orders to destroy the Earth and settle here (see p. 82).
2. Ending the Krundai Conspiracy, an alien plot which for millennia had controlled human evolutionary development for the purpose of turning humans into a psychic “food” source.
3. Ending (or at least deferring) the threat of global nuclear war in the 20th century.
4. Destroying “The Beast” – one of Finn's former masters (an alien psychological deviant), who came to Earth to recover Finn and, incidentally, to destroy the solar system.

Harmony

“All right,” Doc Webster said, “I’ll play. Where are you from?”

“A place that calls itself Harmony.”

“Isn’t that in New Zealand?” somebody asked.

“Nope. It’s about 20 billion miles further away, and quite a few years from now.”

There was silence for a time. Mary sat down at the nearest table and commandeered someone’s neglected drink. She watched Finn snore while she sipped it.

“Well,” Doc Webster finally said in a conversational tone, “that explains a lot. Always said there was something weird about you, Callahan. Anyone who would permit puns like mine in his establishment is just not normal.”

“Time traveler, huh?” Tommy Janssen mused. “You must be from further up the line than the Meddler or Al Phee.”

“Or Josie Bauer and her Time Police,” Callahan agreed. “To my time, yours and theirs are pretty much indistinguishable.”

“How far is that, Mike?” I asked.

“Well,” he said, “where I come from, the human race has got it together. Nobody’s hungry; nobody’s angry.”

That far!

– “The Mick of Time”

Harmony is the home of the Callahan family and their race. It’s described as being on a remote world, many centuries in the future.

The people of our time have few concrete facts about Harmony. The Harmonians reveal its existence to few, and tell these few as little as is ethically and practically possible.

Mysteries (Continued)

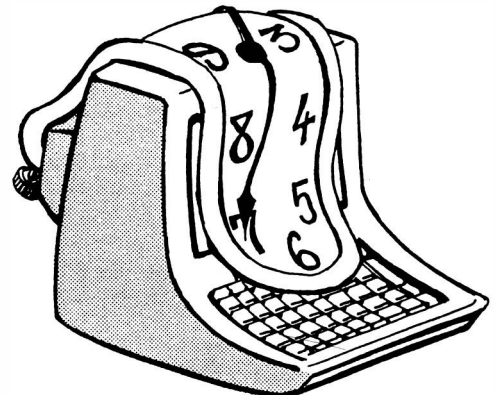
In general, if an explanation of a mysterious event will move the plot along, then it should be offered (or placed in the adventure where it’s likely to be discovered). If an explanation would bog down the game, or lead it off in unwanted direction, then it’s better to leave it a mystery.

Of course, players like to know what’s going on, and they tend to react poorly to “just because” answers. The GM of a Callahan’s game needs to understand the difference between something that can’t be explained and something that doesn’t make sense.

If his players are really working to solve some mystery, and the GM doesn’t *have* an answer, perhaps the best bet is just to let them work it out for themselves, in character. In the *Callahan’s* stories, after all, the heroes spend a lot of their time unscrewing the inscrutable. Just give the players their head until they come up with a plausible solution. The GM will certainly be astonished at their creativity, and he may well find that the problem takes the adventure in fruitful and unexpected directions. Just smile and say “that’s it, exactly” – or don’t say anything at all, but make it true – and go on.

If the adventure is bogging down, though, it’s the GM’s responsibility to jump-start it. One good way is to make something – anything – happen. Have the subject of the adventure run screaming into the night, or have Doc Webster start to glow and levitate, or have the bar attacked by 10,000 chainsaw-wielding IRS agents. Anything physical and unexpected will help get the players’ minds back on track, just like the Zen whack on the head.

Mind-blowing coincidences, impossible rescues, mysterious advice from incomprehensible sources – all these help make Callahan’s a unique adventure setting. If they move the plot along they’re wonderful things. If they become a *deus ex machina*, or a replacement for roleplaying, then they are merely an annoyance. The GM has to keep the miracles in his campaign down to a manageable level.



Other Agents

Callahan hints that there are many Harmonians operating in this era. This opens even more possibilities for the GM. The premise of the “wonderful conspiracy” need not be tied to the physical location of Callahan’s Bar, or any bar at all.

The best place to look for Harmonian agents is near, but not on the seats of power. They go for influence, not power or authority – like Lady Sally’s place, right across the river from the U.N. (Of course, there are also deeper cover operations, like Callahan’s Place. There’s no point in searching for one – but if you need to find it, you will.)

Coincidentally enough, such places are also superior starting points for roleplaying campaigns.

For example . . .

Mrs. Wagner

In this campaign, the PCs are typical action-adventure types – spies, mercenaries, martial artists, PIs, etc. Each of them has undergone some sort of bad experience (anything from a loss of a limb, to loss of a loved one, to simple loss of confidence) that causes them to retire early.

This is basically an *Illuminati* campaign. Callahan’s and *Illuminati* are both “modern-day weirdness.” The big difference in game terms is that an *Illuminati* campaign will be more about action and intrigue, and less about personalities and loyalty. GMs can either begin with *Illuminated* weirdness and introduce Callahan’s later, or start as a Callahan’s Place campaign and bring in Mrs. Wagner when the players want a change of pace.

At any rate, the PCs have found their way to Callahan’s Place, where they become part of the crowd and begin to come to terms with whatever led them away from their former callings. They help out a few people at Callahan’s, and see some strange things.

That’s great, but they can only spend so much time in a bar. In the rest of their life, they’re starting to get restless for the “good old days” of danger and adventure.

One day they get a call from Mike Callahan, who invites them to meet him for lunch at a local diner. When they get there, Mike introduces them to a friend of his – a fifty-ish, plump woman with twinkling eyes, neat gray hair and the sort of improbable tortoise-shell-and-sequined glasses usually seen only on high school home economics teachers and ladies in *The Far Side* cartoons. She’s Mrs. Edna Wagner, from Washington. The group has a pleasant lunch that lasts most of the afternoon – Mrs. Wagner seems profoundly interested in their stories, and several PCs will realize later that they said more about their past than they ever expected to with a stranger.

Continued on next page . . .

For instance, Callahan told Josie Bauer that the temporal difference between Harmony and the Time Police organization she worked for was “not as much as you might think,” but only a few minutes before he’d told Tommy Janssen, “To my time, yours and theirs [the Time Police’s] are pretty much indistinguishable.” The Harmonian civilization may lie as little as a millennium in the future, or several hundred millennia.

A few facts are known, or can be deduced, about Harmony. The most obvious is that it’s a utopia. The Harmonians have taken technology, personal development and social engineering just about as far as they can be taken. Harmony is all of mankind’s dreams and ideals realized. It’s a place of beauty, serenity, joy and plenty.

In *GURPS* terms, Harmony is easily Tech Level 16. The Harmonians are a post-toolmaking society. They don’t build material things to meet their needs, they manipulate the energies necessary to do any job directly. The interface between humans and the coherent energy is apparently mental. If a Harmonian wants something – say a perfect replica of a past-era artifact, or a performance of a certain entertainment – he only has to think about what he wants, and the coherent energies will arrange themselves to bring it about in the most economical fashion.

The secrets of Harmonian dwellings are even more inscrutable. They may be something as (comparatively) straightforward as pseudo-material energy constructs, or something as exotic as user-modifiable, individual pocket universes! If the latter is true, then it would be theoretically possible for someone to leave his home and be anywhere in the primary universe, and no matter where he travels, home will be no more than a step away.

Harmonian technology is not omnipotent. There are some things that a Harmonian must do for himself, and some things that he cannot do at all. But the limits of Harmonian ability are far, far beyond our current perspective. In general, a Harmonian on his home turf (as opposed to risking his neck downtime in his savage past) is more potent and invincible than Zeus in Olympus.

Both Callahan and Lady Sally have identified Harmony as a specific place in our space-time continuum, many centuries and light-years from Earth. We do not know what *kind* of place it is, though. It might be a planet, or a Dyson sphere or ringworld, or something even stranger. Whether or not old Earth even still exists in the Harmonian epoch is unknown. The Harmonian civilization is obviously capable of interstellar, and probably intergalactic and even interdimensional travel. This suggests that the place “Harmony” is the political and cultural center of an interstellar civilization, but this is only a guess. The Harmonian civilization might be voluntarily limiting itself to one world for some reason (if the pocket dimensional dwellings mentioned above are real, overcrowding is not a concern), or Harmony might simply be the world that the Callahans live on – nothing special among many other civilized worlds. Maybe *all* Harmonians call their home-world “Harmony” when discussing it with primitives like us.

One thing seems a fair guess: Harmonians are not numerous enough to fill every available space in their universe, or anything close to it, for the simple reason that if they were, other, non-human races would have no space to evolve or expand. Such a state of affairs would certainly be noxious to the Harmonians. To the contrary, the fact that Harmonians are almost immortal, combined with the virtual certainty that their reproduction is under their complete control, suggests a small, stable population, where everyone has as much

elbow room as they could ever want, without any possibility of accidentally disturbing the neighbors.

If the Callahan family is any indication whatsoever, the government of Harmony is almost certainly a consensual anarchy. Lady Sally's credo may well be the philosophic basis of the whole Harmonian civilization – "Please consider yourselves now and henceforth, and no matter what anyone else ever asks of you, free to do any damned thing you want that doesn't hurt someone unnecessarily."

This creed, together with Callahan's assurances that "nobody's hungry, nobody's angry" doesn't leave much room for crime or violence. Whether antisocial behavior is even possible in Harmony is very much an open question – it may be as extinct as smallpox. If there are deviant Harmonians, there are countless ways for such a socially- and psionically-advanced race to reach out and show their erring sibling the civilized path. In the unlikely event that someone is such a hardcase as to be completely immune to every cure offered him, the Harmonians would certainly prefer to simply exterminate the offender, rather than enforce psionic or sociological conditioning against his will. However, they might well offer even such a hopeless case a free choice between destruction and enforced isolation for the rest of his existence.

It would be foolish to assume that Harmonian civilization is entirely human. It's true that of the three alien races depicted in the books – Cockroaches, Krundai and Mickey Finn's people – only Finn's civilization showed any noticeable potential for enlightened civilization of the Harmonian variety (and they might well be a *part* of the Harmonian civilization – see p. 83). But Finn's people were unable or unwilling to protect themselves from destruction by the Cockroaches. On the other hand, a civilization as advanced as those above, but with anything approaching a Harmonian morality, would be extremely unlikely to interfere in a savage, half-evolved world like 20th-century Earth. They might well be out there right now, and leaving us alone (or, more accurately, leaving our development to our descendants).

Callahan seems to imply, mostly through his behavior, that humanity will reach Harmonian ideals without advanced alien guidance. That's only a guess, though. There's no real evidence that Humanity achieves Harmony completely without help. It could be argued that becoming civilized is something *every* society has to do for itself, no matter how many already-civilized friends it might have waiting to help.

But it's also possible that love (the real cornerstone of Harmonian civilization) is an exclusively humanoid trait. Finn's people might have the capability to join Harmonian civilization, but stranger aliens would never be able to see humans – or any race not their own – as anything other than cattle or vermin. Such races would either require constant monitoring to keep them in line (like, for example, the Krundai), or need total extermination (like the Cockroaches, in all probability). Xenocide is no doubt a horrible prospect to the Harmonians, but as with individuals, they would certainly prefer to eradicate an inimical race than to make unasked and unwanted changes in its fundamental nature.

Homo Harmonius

Attributes

ST +2 (20 points), HT +2 (20 points), IQ +3 (30 points).

Other Agents (Continued)

A few days later, each of them is mailed a plane ticket to Washington, D.C., together with a cryptic note, which mentions a "possible position, very lucrative and with a good deal of travel, of special interest to a person of your unique talents and experience." The letter is unsigned – but there is a time and date at the bottom, together with a Washington street address. Anybody who doesn't leave for Washington on the appointed day will find themselves politely, but firmly, collected by gentlemen in neat, dark suits.

In Washington they find what they expected, only bigger. They're being offered a job with an agency so secret it doesn't have a name, and so important it doesn't need one. Basically, it's the government's top-level counter-espionage, counter-terrorism agency. They remain skeptical through their initial interview, until they're taken to meet the director. Sitting outside his door – glasses and all – is Mrs. Wagner. She gives the party an encouraging smile as they go in.

Mrs. Wagner is the director's executive secretary. The director can be played as a good agent and administrator, who follows Mrs. Wagner's advice because he knows a good idea when he hears one. Or he can be bumbling comic relief, who survives his high-power job because Mrs. Wagner intercepts crises and quietly makes the decisions.

The recruits are given a week to make their choice. If they go to Callahan for advice he'll be supportive – "The biggest problem I got with the government is there aren't nearly enough fellows like yourselves in it."

Once on board, the new special team will immediately start with various sorts of exciting spy stuff, all over the globe. After most mission briefings, Mrs. Wagner will stop them: "If you're going to Peru, you might want to keep your eyes open for . . ." or "Here's your folders. I slipped in a couple extra files I think you might find interesting. Don't worry . . . you're cleared for them."

The agents' missions will rapidly take a turn for the weird. None of the other guys have to deal with teleporting smugglers, or chimpanzees armed with automatic weapons. Maybe a couple of other agents have met real ninja assassins, but did they worship big, furry demons called "Krundai"?

The team will also begin to figure out that their *real* orders come from Mrs. Wagner – even more so than the other agents.

Mrs. Wagner is, of course, from Harmony. Her job is simply to keep the U.S. from blowing up the planet, and to use the power of the U.S., whenever possible, to keep others from blowing up the planet. Although she's technically a double-agent, she's genuinely loyal to her boss and to her agency . . . and, of course, to her friends.

In between missions, of course, the PCs can still hang out at Callahan's. Perhaps they'll even need to seek help there, if the problem is big enough and strange enough.

Adventures on Harmony

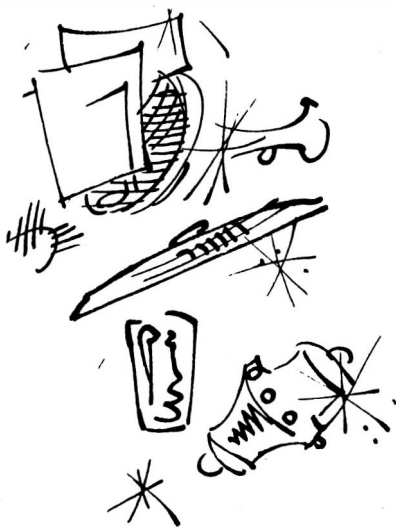
Harmony may be utopian, but it's not a paradise. Even in the far future, things can still go wrong, and not everybody in the big universe of the Harmonian epoch will be as enlightened as our descendants. So even in Harmony, there's plenty of room for adventure.

For example, a technologically advanced, morally bankrupt race like the Cockroaches or the Krundai detects Harmonian society for the first time. Instead of trying to establish friendly – or at least equitable – relations, the aliens kidnap several Harmonian children, and take them off to study.

The Harmonians rapidly deduce what happened (with the help of their time-scanners). Analysis reveals that their technology could overcome the aliens, but not and guarantee the safety of the children. The aliens' stronghold is well-defended against infiltrators using ultra-tech or psi, but might be more vulnerable to a more . . . primitive approach. Perhaps their Demigod Detectors just won't register anybody from the 20th century.

A Time Agent (Callahan or whoever) is contacted and asked to take a small, highly-qualified group from his "family" into his confidence, bring them forward to Harmony and ask them to attempt the rescue.

The recruits are given as much neat high-tech stuff as they can handle, taken to a place as close as possible to the alien stronghold, and left to figure out how to free the hostages, while the rest of Harmonian society prepares to repel the invasion, once the captives are free . . .



Advantages

Absolute Timing (5 points), Charisma +2 (10 points), Empathy (15 points), Enhanced Time Sense (45 points; see p. 44), High Pain Threshold (10 points), Immunity to Disease (10 points), Luck (30 points), Time-Jumper (75 points; see p. 44), Unaging (15 points), Unusual Background (100 points), Voice (10 points).

Disadvantages

Code of Honor – Harmonian (-15 points; see p. 46), Sense of Duty – to "Family" (-5 points).

Psionics

Mind Shield power 15 (+3 free from Empathy – 24 points), Mind Shield skill at IQ +1 (6 points)

It costs 400 points to play a Harmonian. Note that the above values are for temporal field agents, like the Callahans, who are presumably the most gifted and adaptable specimens of their race. It seems unlikely, however, that the average "Harmonian on the street" will be much less-gifted, given the capabilities of Harmonian technology and social engineering.

On the other hand, it's also possible that the "average" Harmonian is a veritable superman or demigod – it's certainly within their capabilities – and the field agents are distinguished by their *lack* of exotic powers, which makes it easier for them to maintain their cover. This seems rather unlikely, though, since Harmonian culture seems to value serenity and simplicity to an extent that would make such radical personal alterations unlikely, expect perhaps for a few specialists or eccentrics.

Given the rather fragile nature of the time continuum, there's a good chance that only field agents are allowed to possess or exercise the Time Jumper advantage.

A Harmonian agent will never "buy off" any of the above characteristics. A field agent will be at least a 500-point character, and probably much higher.

Other Common Advantages, Disadvantages and Skills

Common Advantages

A Harmonian might have any of the advantages from the *Basic Set*, though social advantages like Military Rank and Status are unlikely, as they might make undercover work difficult. Intuition is extremely common. Danger Sense would be less common than one might expect in a psionic race, since the Enhanced Time Sense advantage makes it mostly redundant.

A well-established field agent will certainly have an Ally Group (Callahan's regulars, Lady Sally's artists and special clients).

Common Disadvantages

Besides the required Code of Honor and Sense of Duty, a Harmonian will probably have *no* other significant disadvantages, *except those which are necessary to maintain his cover*. There is no set upper limit to the number of disadvantages a given Harmonian will have, but the GM must agree that the chosen disadvantages do more to enhance the mission's chances for success than to jeopardize those chances.

Almost all mental disadvantages are unthinkable for a Harmonian agent. Even Honesty and Truthfulness could potentially jeopardize his cover and his mission. Disadvantages which are conceivable (though still very unlikely) might include Vow, Duty and additional Codes of Honor or Senses of Duty.

Physical disadvantages will also be extremely rare, but might be adopted as part of the cover. For example, a Harmonian working among the beggars of 14th-century Paris might take the disadvantages One Leg and Ugly appearance. He can get full points for appearance, but *all other physical disadvantages are worth only ½ normal points*. This is because it is entirely possible for the Harmonian beggar to leave his assigned time and transfer to Harmony, have his leg regenerated, return to the 14th century at the exact moment he left to deal with whatever he needed his leg for, then transfer back to Harmony to have his leg painlessly removed again. The only reason physical advantages are worth any points at all to the Harmonian is that their Code of Honor insures that tricks like the above will be used only as a very last resort.

The Harmonian will cheerfully adopt any social disadvantages that might enhance his cover. Lady Sally, for example, as a brothel keeper, is cut off from any formal recognition by polite society outside her own House – this is a 5-point Social Stigma.

Note that almost all Harmonian disadvantages apply only while undercover and in the field. In Harmony, all such disadvantages will be either transient or irrelevant. If much of the campaign is to take place in Harmony, the GM may wish to rule that such cover disadvantages are worth much fewer points, or even no points at all.

Quirks

A Harmonian can have up to 5 quirks, like any other character.

Common Skills

There are several skills which are practically universal among Harmonian Field Agents. These include Temporal Physics, History (of the milieu they are assigned to), Area Knowledge (of the current geopolitical state of their assigned milieu), Bard (since their primary tool is communication), Psychology and Anthropology.

Social skills are of particular importance to a Harmonian agent. Diplomacy and Acting are perhaps the most important, but the Callahan's, at least, all show a great personal fondness for Carousing. Leadership and Savoir-Faire are givens.

The Harmonians among us are, after all, secret agents, so they will often have Thief/Spy skills like Holdout, Stealth, Lockpicking and Lip Reading. Streetwise is as much a necessity as Savoir-Faire.

Harmonians sent out among savages (like us) are taught to defend themselves physically. The most natural martial discipline for Harmonians is a passive, defensive style – the Judo skill from the *Basic Set* will do very well. (GMs who own *GURPS Martial Arts* can design a Harmonian martial art to suit their campaign, using Judo as the primary skill – see sidebar, p. 31.) They'll also learn any other styles that will fit their cover. For instance, Callahan is a formidable roughhouse fighter (a high Brawling skill), because that is considered an essential ability for an Irish tavern-keeper in Callahan's place and time. Callahan also knows how to use the shotgun and baseball bat (Shortsword skill) he keeps behind the bar, and Lady Sally is proficient with handguns from several tech levels. A Harmonian will very rarely use deadly

Harmonian PCs

Most GMs will probably want to keep Callahan, or whoever the primary Harmonian in their campaign happens to be, on the edge of the action. He serves to start adventures, or provide crucial help when the action stalls. Most of the action, however, will be carried forward by the PCs, who will normally be part of an empathic family. Such an arrangement is entertaining, easy on the GM and completely in keeping with the spirit of the Callahan's stories.

However, if the GM is in the mood to try something a little different, he can allow Harmonian PCs.

Many GMs are, with good reason, uneasy with 500+-point PCs, particularly when mixing them with more normal sorts. However, the dynamics of a group consisting of one Harmonian and several modern humans in a Callahan's campaign is quite different from, say, a group consisting of one 500-point super and the rest 100-point martial artists in an action/adventure campaign. The Harmonian abilities are not nearly as showy as those of the average 500-pointer. And the Harmonian has a Code of Honor which ensures that he'll do his best to play down his superiority.

Nonetheless, a Harmonian PC will certainly tend to dominate the party. So the GM should make sure the Harmonian is played by a skilled, mature roleplayer – someone who will put the story ahead of ego gratification, and will work with the GM to bring the adventure to a satisfying conclusion. Likewise, the rest of the players need to be mature roleplayers who are willing to work as part of a group. And even so, the GM might find things easier if he lets the other PCs start with 150 or even 200 points.

Even though the Harmonian will certainly be the most powerful character in the group, he will not necessarily be the leader. Harmonians are quite content behind the scenes, and have no problem letting a local take the initiative, if he's competent. If he's incompetent, the Harmonian will never let him get to a leadership position in the first place. If the Harmonian is not the group leader, he will certainly offer excellent suggestions when they're asked for, and he'll warn against any imminent dangers he can see, but he will also be the most supportive, least fractious member of the party when disciplined action is called for.

Continued on next page . . .

Harmonian PCs (Continued)

The biggest danger of allowing a Harmonian into the party, perhaps, is that the GM will cease to have complete control over Harmonian time tricks. On the one hand, the Harmonian's time travel ability is an extremely powerful, expensive advantage, and it *should* be of great benefit to the party. A party which includes this ability will require considerably more challenging problems to hold their interest than might otherwise be the case.

But time travel cannot be allowed to become a *deus ex machina*. There will be times when the GM will have to "just say no," in a more-or-less arbitrary fashion. This is necessary both to maintain play balance, and to preserve the mood of the original stories. If necessary, he can just say "You can't go there; you've been there once."

This is where the Harmonian player's maturity and creativity become all-important. Maturity because it'll spoil his fun – and probably everyone's – if he sulks. Creativity because if the player *works* to get around the GM's prohibition, thinking of unique and interesting approaches, and *roleplaying* a determined effort to solve the problem, then the GM should be lenient about allowing the desired effect.

The All-Harmonian Campaign

For a *really* different campaign, the GM might allow *all* the players to play Harmonians. They might be a group of young adults, exploring the universe of the far future, with occasional excursions into the remote history of their race via interface screen. Such trans-temporal side trips would certainly be carefully monitored by their elders, but stuff happens, and there would still be plenty of room for things to go wrong and adventures to occur.

True, such an ultra-powerful, all-Harmonian campaign would bear only a tangential resemblance to the stories of Callahan's Bar, but it could still be a lot of fun, particularly if played as a one-shot or short change-of-pace campaign.

force against a local – usually a well-executed bluff is sufficient. But if a Harmonian plans to use a weapon to bluff, he'll make sure to know how to use that weapon for real.

As part of the Harmonian Unusual Background, a field agent can take both the Harmonian tongue and the local language for his assigned area as native languages. They will almost certainly learn several other languages from their assigned era as well. Also included in the Unusual Background is an Area Knowledge of his assigned era, as though he were a native.

Psionics

Given the degree to which Harmonians have perfected themselves socially and physically, the general lack of psionic ability displayed by the Callahan family is puzzling. After all, even our present, primitive humanity is capable of producing such prodigious psionic talents as Cass Anders, Dink Fogerty and the MacDonald brothers. Surely by the Harmonian epoch, psionic talents will be as universal as the ability to comprehend spoken language is in the 20th century. On the surface, sending non-psionic Harmonians back to our era seems as nonsensical as sending a party of 20th-century time travelers back to the Bronze Age armed only with stone axes.

We can only guess at the answer to this conundrum. The most obvious conclusion seems to be that psionic agents are not sent to non-psionic or proto-psionic cultures because such exotic powers could jeopardize the Harmonian's cover, or even send history off in an unwanted direction.

The next question, then, is whether the Callahans are in fact non-psionic, or whether they are just so good at hiding their powers that nobody in their local circle suspects their real abilities. Either possibility seems plausible (and, in fact, at least once Lady Sally exhibited what *may* have been an extremely subtle and powerful mind control power).

In the end, the choice regarding a Harmonian's psionic capabilities rests with the GM. In general, this book assumes that, apart from the Mind Shield listed above (and, perhaps their Time Travel ability), Harmonian agents in pre-psionic eras do not possess these powers.

As a race, however, it can be assumed that Harmonian psionics of unimaginable power can and do exist, back on Harmony.

This raises the possibility of a Harmonian in distress bringing in a superpsi to accomplish a given task, then returning him to Harmony before he's noticed. This would, of course, be a flagrant violation of nearly all the accepted practices of a Harmonian field agent, but it's theoretically possible. (Of course, any individual attempt at such a tactic might be a temporal impossibility if the GM so rules; see below.)

Exotic Powers

The same reasoning applies to more exotic powers and abilities like bionics, magic and meta-powers from *GURPS Supers*. A Harmonian will have such abilities if and only if they are necessary to enhance his cover. For example, a Harmonian operating in a cyberpunk sprawl might well have several pieces of visible cyberware installed.

Likewise, most of the meta-powers found in *GURPS Supers* are easily obtainable with Harmonian technology, and a Harmonian might well be a super in a time and place where most people were metahumans. For example, if a Harmonian was operating out of Jokertown, from the *Wild Cards* books

(and *GURPS Wild Cards* and *Aces Abroad*), he would certainly operate as a Joker, with radical physical mutations, and a few (perhaps trivial) exotic abilities.

If the Harmonian mission extends to realities where magic use is common (very much an open question – see p. 390), then the question of Harmonian mages arises. The thought of a Harmonian wizard seems somehow incongruous with the racial character – Harmonians already do enough tampering with the fabric of reality, through their missions and probability nexus. In addition, a practicing mage opens himself up to spying and attacks from other mages, which might jeopardize the Harmonian's cover. So even in magical worlds, it seems likely that Harmonians will have Magic Resistance far more often than they have Magery.

Physiology

If an autopsy were performed on a Harmonian cadaver, the physician probably wouldn't be able to tell that the subject wasn't an ordinary human (though a chemical analysis by a hematologist, endocrinologist or similar specialist might produce some very surprising results). Nonetheless, evolution has continued (augmented and accelerated, no doubt, by extensive genetic engineering), and the Harmonian is as fundamentally different from a 20th-century human as we are from *Australopithecus*, though in less obvious ways.

First of all, Harmonians enjoy perfect health and a lifespan measured in centuries, or perhaps millennia. Harmonians do age, but the process is so slow as to be irrelevant in 20th-century terms – Lady Sally was over 3½ subjective centuries old, and she had to use cosmetics to achieve her (still stunningly attractive) apparent age in our era.

Still more profound are the neurological advances which give the Harmonians their astonishing mental speed and agility (and presumably many other psionic gifts as well, though not in field agents to our era – see above).

Exactly *how* different a Harmonian brain might be is probably a question a Harmonian would never answer, for fear of leaving his questioner with a paralyzing inferiority complex. Callahan said that the reason we can't come to terms with the concept of time travel is that our language won't allow it, but he may have been being kind. Perhaps a 20th-century human brain is no more able to deal with time travel than an orangutan could figure a square root.

Racial Character

The stereotypical 20th-century conception of an immortal and enlightened race is a bunch of serene stiffies in white robes, sitting around making profound pronouncements to each other.

Well, the occasional Harmonian might wear a robe, in the privacy of his own home, but the rest of the image couldn't be further off. A Harmonian's concept of the finer things in life emphasizes *fun* – laughter, games, sex, good food and drink – and an occasional profound discussion, too.

This does not mean they are a decadent race – they take their obligations seriously. Harmonian morality can be

Martial Arts

Below are a list of skills and maneuvers from *GURPS Martial Arts* which would be appropriate for a native Harmonian style. The exact design of this art is left up to the GM, depending on the importance and nature of man-to-man combat in his campaign. It is up to the GM to decide whether to include some, all or none of these elements in his martial art, and to decide how to prioritize the skills. It seems certain, however, that Judo will be a primary skill in any Harmonian style.

Whether or not to include cinematic skills and maneuvers is, of course, up to the GM. It should be noted, however, that such elements might be highly appropriate, even if they're not part of the more conventional martial arts of the campaign. After all, doing impossible things is a Harmonian specialty. The Harmonians' Enhanced Time Sense, in particular, might allow them to do many strange and wonderful things in combat.

Suggested Skills

Judo, Karate, Body Language, Breath Control, Yin-Yang Healing, various close combat weapon skills.

Suggested Maneuvers

Arm Locks, Breakfall, Disarming, Ear Clap, Feint, Leg Grapple.

Suggested

Cinematic Skills

Blind Fighting, Body Control, Immovable Stance, Meditation, Mental Strength, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets, Push.

Suggested

Cinematic Maneuvers

Binding, Enhanced Dodge, Roll With Blow, Sticking.



Harmonian Death

It's almost impossible to kill a Harmonian – permanently, anyway. Even if one could somehow be deprived of his ability to time travel, the skills, brains and physical prowess of the average Harmonian would still make arranging his death a daunting prospect, even for the most skilled assassin.

When the ability to time travel is taken into account, a Harmonian becomes an almost impossible target. Their Enhanced Time Sense advantage will allow them to detect any attack slower than a laser beam, transfer to Harmony before it arrives, arm themselves and return to the same instant, at a point where they're out of danger and in position to counterattack.

A duel between a Harmonian and another time-jumper with a similar response time would be a fascinating and frightening thing to observe, with each opponent materializing for an instant to try a new weapon or tactical gambit, then vanishing before their opponent's counterattack can reach them – a deadly cat-and-mouse game with no margin for error.

But even if the assassin were good enough, or lucky enough to take the Harmonian completely by surprise, killing him thoroughly may not be enough – not with a TL16 society backing him up. We know that the Cockroaches were able to take complete mental and physical templates of Mickey Finn's people – right down to the molecular level – at the moment of their annihilation. Suppose that a Harmonian was completely vaporized by a hostile attack. Technologically, the Harmonians are little if any behind the Cockroaches. It might be entirely possible for his allies back home to use an application of timescanner technology to take a complete "picture" of the Harmonian's physical structure and memories, then rebuild him. Such a process could no doubt be accomplished quickly on the Harmonian end, and instantly from a downtime viewpoint. Thus the assassin who managed to vaporize the Harmonian might not even have time to brush off his hands and congratulate himself on his performance before his opponent would be back – well-armed, reinforced and *annoyed*.

All of the above notwithstanding, Harmonian Time Agents are *not* invulnerable. In fact, they're in tremendous danger all the time. GMs need to remember the nature of the Harmonian time mission – Harmonian agents don't fear doing something that will get them killed, they fear doing something that will *never get them born*.

boiled down into two main precepts. The first is basic: respect others' choices. A Harmonian will not take any action that would interfere with another mature, responsible adult's freedom. If a Harmonian found a friend standing on a window ledge, preparing to jump, he might try to talk him out of it (as long as the jumper was willing to listen), but he wouldn't grab him by the belt and pull him back through the window.

There is a corollary to this, however: one is allowed to defend one's own freedom. If someone wants something a Harmonian has, he can ask for it (and if he really needs it, he'll probably get it), but he does not have the freedom to just take it. Harmonians all agree that "your freedom ends where my nose begins." Reaction is expected to be proportionate to the offense. A violent defense is an appropriate response to a violent offense (though not always the best response – as a rule Harmonians abhor violence as crude and clumsy, and avoid it whenever possible). But words are never sufficient provocation for bullets (or their TL16 equivalents) among Harmonians.

The second cornerstone of Harmonian morality follows the first closely: take care of one another. An individual has the right to mess up his own life any way he pleases, but not the lives of others. Anyone who tries to impose his own will on others forfeits his own freedoms, unless and until he stops stepping on others' rights. If someone's freedoms are being threatened, Harmonians will band together to defend him.

Harmonians will also always respond to simple human need. A Harmonian will not hesitate to take risks or make sacrifices for someone who needs help. When Slippery Joe Maser and his wives let their house burn down rather than delaying even a minute to answer Callahan's urgent summons (in "The Mick of Time"), they were displaying a very Harmonian morality. Harmonians recognize that without happiness and contentment, material possessions are meaningless, so most of their energy is directed at meeting emotional and psychological needs. But physical hardships are not neglected – Jake has had to live off of Callahan's free lunch when money was tight, sometimes for weeks at a time, and Callahan never even mentioned that he was taking food without leaving donations.

We can only speculate about how Harmonians settle differences between themselves, but they would certainly be handled through personal interaction, rather than official channels. Sanctions, if called for, would be social, rather than civil.

Say, for instance, that one Harmonian took something another treasured, without permission, and that the object was then destroyed in use. When he discovered the theft, the original owner would probably first approach the thief, and ask him why he took the object. If he decided the thief had a real need for the object, or that it wasn't worth a quarrel, he'd simply declare the matter forgotten. Recompense would not be demanded, but might well be accepted, if offered (under the assumption that if the offer was made, the thief had an emotional need to atone). If no explanation were offered, however, or if he found it inadequate, the original owner would make his grievance known publicly. Those who agreed that he'd been wronged would avoid the thief socially. If forced by circumstance to be in his presence, they might take slightly exaggerated security precautions with their belongings, to emphasize their disgust with the offending party's behavior. This peaceful feud might continue until the thief apologized, or until the aggrieved party decided nothing good was coming from his ongoing grudge, and declared the matter forgotten.

Of course, the above scenario is entirely hypothetical. It assumes that Harmonian society retains something like the modern concept of property: in fact, a Harmonian probably wouldn't get offended by the loss of any material possession unless it was very old and rare, or possessed great sentimental value, and even then he might not think the object worth starting a quarrel over.

It's also possible that Harmonian communication has progressed to such a degree that it's no longer even possible for two Harmonians to disagree on the validity of a motive, making the above quarrel absurd. Once the two parties talked, they might well both know that the object should never have been taken, or that it should, with the same certainty that a mathematician knows the answer to a simple equation.

Even if the scenario is completely accurate, it's almost certain that a 20th-century observer would never even know that an offense had been committed against the one party, or that action was being taken against the other.

Temporal agents, however, cannot afford such lofty ideals. Harmonian agents extend as much freedom to their local "families" as they can stand, but just as a small child cannot assume adult responsibilities without endangering himself and others, so are immature societies not expected to display the wisdom and freedom that Harmony has achieved after eons of social evolution. So, while Callahan might not have provoked the offense that caused him to put Big Beef McCafferty's head through the door, he may have secretly welcomed the chance to establish his physical formidability, in a culture where such considerations are still valued.

In general, however, violence is shunned by Harmonian agents. It should be noted, for instance, that McCafferty was the first and only patron ever forcibly ejected from Callahan's (although Callahan left the door unrepaired



Untangling Time Travel

The whys and wherefores of Harmonian time travel are, quite literally, inexplicable. As Callahan explains it, time travel cannot be intelligently discussed in English (and presumably in any other major modern language as well), because the language is built on the assumption that time is strictly linear and cannot be altered.

The Harmonian's ability to transfer himself freely back and forth from his current position on the local timeline to his current position on the Harmonian timeline is a given – he can do that at will. Likewise, his ability to use an interface screen to take others or large objects back in forth, and to change his spatial location, is automatic. Any more complicated use of time travel is entirely up to the GM's discretion.

As with other mysteries of the Harmonian race (see sidebar, p. 24-25), the GM's freedom to arbitrarily control time travel is both a boon and a danger. It lets him dictate whether or not a given trick will work, based entirely on its effect on the adventure – but he must work hard not to be arbitrary.

If all the PCs are modern humans, it's easy to determine whether a given time trick will work. If the GM feels the trick will enhance the adventure, it will work – the Harmonian can arrange it. If he feels it will detract, it's impossible – very sorry.

With a Harmonian PC, the process can become a bit more interactive. When a plan of action is suggested, the GM can roll (in secret) against the character's Temporal Physics skill, modifying the roll according to the complexity of the plan and its potential effect on the flow of the story. If a successful time manipulation will bring the adventure to a screeching halt, the GM can still arbitrarily declare the plan impossible. "You run the equations every way you can think of, but you just can't make it work." However, even if the player's working plan is impossible, the GM can still make a skill roll, and suggest an alternate plan of action on a success or critical success.

All of the above applies equally to timescanner use – whether a given past or future event can be monitored, and if it is, whether the scan is accurate, is entirely at the GM's discretion.

Callahan's Interface Screen

While Lady Sally is known to have a interface screen behind a retractable panel in her office, the stories do not record whether one was actually located at Callahan's Place. On the floor plan on p. 10, a section of the storeroom has been marked as a suitable location for an interface screen (projected over an outer wall, and concealed behind a large sheet of plywood, which can simply be slid aside when the screen is needed). Whether or not there is actually a screen there is entirely up to the GM.

The Wonderful Conspiracy

GURPS Time Travel Terms

Despite the fundamentally arbitrary nature of Harmonian time travel, the physics of the time continuum in the *Callahan's* stories can still be broadly defined according to the terms set out in Chapter 3 of *GURPS Time Travel*. GMs who do not yet own *Time Travel* can run a *Callahan's* game perfectly well without this information.

Time is plastic, with some resistance. New timelines are possible, as are parallel worlds, but they're not the only way for time travel to work. There is no recency effect. Temporal exclusion is in effect. An interface screen can provide full two-way communication between timelines; if an interface screen is not available, the only way to communicate is to actually jump between times (which still works very well, given the speed and efficiency of Harmonian time travel).

Continued on next page . . .



for more than 30 years, as a visible reminder of the consequences of belligerence in his place).

Likewise, they abhor killing, particularly killing of pre-Harmonian aborigines (like ourselves). They will do so, however, without guilt, if circumstances warrant. For example, in *Callahan's Lady*, Mary attacks a pimp who's threatening a young street hooker, and no tears are shed when the encounter proves fatal to the pimp.

In general, if a Harmonian tells someone "try that again and I'll be forced to kill you" (as members of the Callahan family have had to say, on occasion), he *really means it*. For this very reason, such a warning is almost always heeded. And if a Harmonian decides that a given individual *needs* to be dead, that individual is well-advised to start working on his will – and it better be a short one, if he expects to survive long enough to sign it. (It should be noted that, while no member of the Callahan family will hesitate to kill at need, Mike seems to hold a much stronger aversion to violence than either Lady Sally or Mary.)

Harmonians also put a high value on telling the truth, but don't hold it sacred above the welfare of others. For instance, Callahan has lied to the police at least twice – in "The Time Traveler," to camouflage Tom Hauptman's role in foiling a burglary, and in "Fivesight," to protect a young man he didn't even know from being implicated in an inexplicable crime.

A Harmonian agent will *not*, however, lie to a member of his local "family" of friends and allies. He might refuse to answer, or answer only with a generality, and he might not go to the trouble of correcting mistaken conclusions, but a straight question will always get a straight answer. This is an integral part of the bond that gives a Harmonian empathic family such a formidable unity of purpose.

Harmonian Time Travel

"Jesus Christ," I said faintly, "I wish I had time to ask you about five hundred questions."

"Me too, Jake," he said. "But I'll tell you right now, better'n half of them I'd never be able to answer, in any words that's have meaning for you. Like, right now, most of you are probably wondering about time paradoxes and so forth, and the answers simply won't mean much to you."

"Let's try anyway," Doc Webster said. "Did you know this showdown with Finn's Masters was gonna happen? Is that why you've been running this bar all these years?"

"Yes and no," Callahan said promptly. "See what I mean?"

– "The Mick of Time"

A Harmonian time traveler moves between eras psionically. At its simplest level, this ability allows the Harmonian to travel between two (or possibly more, but in any case a low and finite number) subjective time streams. The primary time stream is Harmony itself, in our future, and the secondary stream is their "station" – in the Callahan family's case, Long Island in the late middle of the 20th century.

The Harmonian typically returns to a given time stream at the exact point in space-time he left. So, objectively, he is living two parallel, largely-uninterrupted lives centuries apart. Subjectively, he lives one life, dividing his time as he wishes between the two timelines.

An unaided Harmonian can carry clothes and small objects between timelines (as long as he remains in the no-encumbrance category).

There is one absolute rule of Harmonian time travel. No Harmonian can ever, under any circumstances, travel to a time when he already exists. Because of this prohibition, Harmonians will seldom “skip” any objective time in either timeline (for instance, leaving a timeline at 4:30 and returning to it at 6). This is because “skipped” time is effectively *gone* from the Harmonian’s objective experience – it can be regained, if at all, only through complex and inconvenient machinations (see sidebar). Being a pragmatic and efficient people, the Harmonians prefer to put every available moment of both objective timelines to constructive use (but remember that the Harmonian’s definition of “constructive use” definitely includes activities like drinking, joking and sex).

The Harmonians are a resourceful people, and they have many ways to circumvent this prohibition and avoid the constraints of strict linear time. The simplest and most effective such method is simply communication and cooperation between field agents.

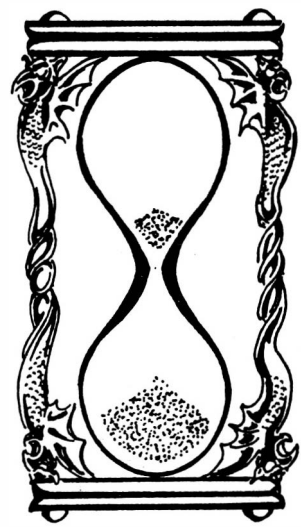
For example: A Harmonian is facing a major crisis in Austin, Texas, at 6:15 P.M. on Friday, Jan 3, 1992. She transfers herself to Harmony, where she thinks the problem over thoroughly, and decides that the best way to deal with the crisis will require an M-1 Abrams tank and two tons of canned spinach, all of which must arrive before 6:30. She then locates another field agent, who last came forward from San Francisco, California, late on Thanksgiving Day, 1991. She tells him her problem and what she needs, and he returns to our timeline. He instantly reappears, with different clothes and the start of a beard, and tells her that he left our timeline from Christmas Eve at Ft. Hood, Texas, and that all arrangements have been made. The two sit down together for a leisurely meal, and further discuss possible complications, and what “clean-up” procedures will be necessary once the crisis is successfully resolved. The first field agent then returns to Austin at 6:15 on the 3rd, and walks to her window, where she looks out to see a fully-crewed main battle tank turning the corner onto her street.

Such dramatic operations, however, are very uncommon, for any number of reasons (see *Harmonian Operations*, below).

Harmonians will be extremely reluctant to bring any future technology into a past era. The actual degree to which this prohibition is enforced, however, is left to the discretion of the agent. For example, while Callahan seems to regard the prohibition of future technology almost as Gospel, Lady Sally is known to keep and use several anachronistic devices, including a small but deadly arsenal of future weapons, for use in emergencies.

One reason for the prohibition, no doubt, is that the Harmonians fear premature introduction of ultra-tech will harm the local society, or compromise the Harmonian mission. A misplaced gizmo could even, with appalling ease, violently skew the path of history – at best destroying the agent’s decades of field work in a given era, and at worst annihilating the era entirely, substituting it with some unquantified alternate timeline (see sidebar). That could easily wipe out the very chain of events that led to the Harmonian civilization itself! For a Harmonian to carry anachronistic technology into the field is to risk racial suicide.

Harmonians also have the ability to monitor certain events without being actually present. Mary was able to watch the accident that killed Jake’s wife and child, for example. However, simply seeing something in the past does not



GURPS Time Travel Terms (Continued)

The Observer Effect

An important question for GMs trying to run a *Callahan's* campaign along *GURPS Time Travel* lines: is there an Observer Effect?

On the face of it, the stories seem to suggest there is not. The best evidence for this is Mary’s account of how she used her Harmonian time travel to observe the deaths of Jake’s wife and daughter, to see if they could be saved. Although in this case a successful time intervention proved to be impossible, the fact that a trained time-agent like Mary found it a possibility worth investigating, and didn’t hesitate to watch the event in question to test her theory, seems to rule out the Observer Effect as a concern.

This argument, however, does not take into account the subtlety of Harmonian time operations. It should be noted that Mary never says how *closely* she watched the accident. She may not have been planning to prevent the accident – instead, she may have been looking for a way to save Jake’s loved ones in spite of the accident, perhaps by replacing them with blank clones or resurrecting them using braintape technology. While either of these feats is possible, given Harmonian technology, she may have discovered that such a substitution would simply have too profound an effect on the timeline to make the attempt safe for Harmony.

If the Observer Effect is used, it does go a far way towards explaining why Harmonians have so much uncertainty about their own past, and why Harmonian agents take such elaborate precautions with the local timelines, and provides another excellent reason to avoid time-skipping (see below).

In the end, it’s up to the GM whether the Observer Effect is a concern in his campaign, and if so, what procedures the Harmonians may have developed to get around it.

The Cockroach Gambit

Perhaps the best recorded example of the efficiency of Harmonian travel occurs at the climax of "The Mick of Time." Here's how Jake records it:

The Beast thought very fast, much faster than any of us could hope to, and it had that time-sharing thing down cold. But no one present in the room, including The Beast, knew as much about time as Mike Callahan. Callahan, who carried himself and his wife and daughter through time, without the support of any external hardware . . .

The Beast was carrying on over a hundred conversations at once, like a chess Master playing a hundred opponents at once. Every few dozen picoseconds it got back to Mike's "table," and the big Irishman was always there. But in between, he was elsewhere, in a quiet, safe space-and-time where he could think things over and plan at his leisure. Leisure enough to work a lot of things out, and to come up with the swiftest and most elegant solution.

Actually, Jake is exaggerating a bit in places, for dramatic effect. Callahan didn't "carry" Sally and Mary through time – they came together, each under their own power. And he only needed to time jump once, not multiple times, as Jake implies.

What this incident *does* prove, however, is that Harmonian time travel is literally instantaneous. Callahan transferred out, considered the situation, made his plan, obtained the device (which might not have been a device at all, in any sense of the word we can understand) that he needed, activated it and transferred back, and The Beast – a creature with a Enhanced Time Sense at least as acute as Callahan's own – never even knew that he'd left. (The details of Callahan's counterattack teach a lot about Harmonian strategy, psychology and morality, but there will be no further discussion about these events here, out of respect to those who may not have finished *Callahan's Secret*.)

In theory, either Sally or Mary could just have easily done what Callahan did. Perhaps they didn't because the Beast's sensory block interfered with time travel, and Callahan was the first one able to get past it. Or perhaps they deferred to Callahan because the crisis was taking place on "his territory." Or maybe his skills were just slightly sharper; Harmonians would always let the best agent do the job.

guarantee that it is a real part of Harmonian history – the nuclear exchange which the Harmonians were expecting in the '70s and '80s never happened, but the cockroach invasion, which they never suspected, happened instead. By the same token, some monitored events can be changed, but some are immutable (at least to Harmonian interference). Mary seriously investigated the possibility of saving Jake's family, but was forced to conclude that it was not possible.

Exactly how they monitor such events is never made explicit. It may well be a special function of the Interface Screen (see below).

Interface Screens

When Callahan told Jake, "We don't use machines for time-travel," he was obfuscating. The primary "motive force" for Harmonian time travel is psionic, but in its pure state this ability, while amazingly efficient, is rather limited. (It is likely, for instance, that when the Callahan family and Josie Bauer left our era, Josie went along because her personal time machine was needed to transport Mickey Finn's considerable mass into the future.) So the Harmonians *do* use machine to make their time travel more powerful and versatile (though the word "machine" may be as inadequate when applied to Harmonian technology as the word "fire" would be to describe a fusion reaction).

The chief technological aid to Harmonian time travel is the interface screen. This device projects a two-dimensional interface simultaneously at two different points on the space-time continuum. The user can walk through the screen in one time and emerge on the other side in another time.

The limits (if any) on a screen's area are known only to the Harmonians, but typical field models are 6 to 8 feet in height and breadth. Anything which can fit through the screen will be transported – a horse, a motorcycle, a parade. Thus, it allows the Harmonian to carry far more between eras than he could if limited to his own powers. The screen can be adjusted to be completely invisible, or to be seen as a silver shimmer.

The screens also have another, far more potent ability. They allow an agent to return to the past at a place other than the one he left from. This makes the screens effectively instantaneous transporters.

For example, if Callahan transferred to Harmony from his storeroom at 9 A.M. on July 4, 1978, and returned under his own power, he would have to return to the storeroom. However, once in Harmony, he could use the interface screen to drop him at Lady Sally's office, the Rose Bowl, the Black Hole of Calcutta or even one of the moons of Jupiter when he returned to 1978.

A Harmonian can reset an Interface Screen with just a thought. There's no particular skill roll involved, except perhaps History, to pinpoint his target date and place. It can probably be assumed that contemporary humans cannot activate or reset an interface screen under any circumstances (although if one is left set and activated, they can pass through it freely as long as it remains accessible). However, if the GM wishes to relax this prohibition he's free to do so, on his own terms.

Harmonian Operations

That was when I've been sorrier to see a man shake his head. "Again, Jake, what you're saying sounds logical – because you're saying it in English.

*Take my word for it: my home space/time is just as likely as yours to stop existing in the next hour or so. Worse, to stop ever **having existed** in this continuum. If the Cockroaches steam-clean this planet, there'll be no way for my home to ever come to pass." He frowned. "This whole era is a tinder-box; we've got agents spotted all through here/now, doing what we can to cool things out. But we always knew there was going to be at least one really major something around about now. What we **thought** was that the crucial event in question would be a nuclear firestorm. The shape of history seemed to point that way. We thought we had it covered, thanks to Finn." He looked sadly at his catatonic friend. "But it was us made the awful mistake, not him."*

– "The Mick of Time"

Harmonian time agents walk the razor's edge of probability. If they weren't around, human history would probably come to a premature end, either through suicide or at the hands of alien menaces like the Krundai and the Cockroaches. On the other hand, if the Harmonian mission becomes intrusive – or even generally known – that knowledge could slough history off into some unknown and disastrous future that precludes Harmony just as surely as the premature end of the human race would.

The consequences of failure of the Harmonian mission are not just extinction, but annihilation. If the Harmonian time agents fail to address any major crisis correctly, their civilization will not only cease to be, but will cease to *have ever been*.

Add to this the fragile and unpredictable nature of the time continuum, where catastrophic paradox can result not only from failing to meet a major temporal crisis, but from any petty anachronism, and the true scope and audacity of the Harmonian mission becomes apparent.

In order to insure the integrity of history, the Harmonians operate under a strict set of self-imposed rules, which can be broken down into three interrelated principles.

The first such principle is secrecy. Harmonians admit their true nature to few – even their empathic "families" are only told the truth if there is no other alternative.

The second is unobtrusiveness. All field agents will adopt local identities, and live a (by and large) conventional life for the era in question.

The final principle is misdirection. Harmonians often work through local agents – not because they are afraid to take risks themselves, but because if something goes wrong, there's usually a good chance that the local will be assumed to be acting alone, leaving the Harmonian and the rest of his operation free to try again. (A Harmonian will never, however, send a local into danger unless that local knows the risks involved as thoroughly as he can comprehend them.)

Harmonian operatives with a given assignment, like Callahan and Lady Sally, act with complete autonomy. There are no formal degrees of rank among the Harmonians, and the division of authority is simple. Each field agent is assigned to a particular probability nexus. Thereafter, that agent has primary and unchallenged authority to deal with any crisis that occurs, originates or is first identified at that nexus. If a crisis arises at Callahan's, Mary and Lady Sally will follow Mike's orders, but if the crisis occurs at Lady Sally's, Mike will let her call the shots.

Future Tech

The rules about carrying future technology back to more primitive eras make up one of the most ambiguous of the many gray areas behind Harmonian time operations. Arranging for a major scientific breakthrough to occur before its time isn't done, but there seems to be a great deal of latitude about an agent's freedom to keep a personal cache of anachronistic tools and weapons. Callahan seems to avoid such gadgets at all costs, but Lady Sally is known to keep several, and to use them when circumstances warrant.

Harmonians seem to avoid the technology of their own time. But perhaps their gadgets are simply unrecognizable, or even undetectable to a modern observer, until they're actually used – and maybe not even then.

It seems likely that Harmonians rarely go forward to the future-mall, pick out the particular device they need at that moment and haul it back to the past. Rather, it's probable that many anachronistic gadgets are found in the present.

After all, the Harmonians are not the only time-traveling human civilization, and probability nexi are a notorious attractive force for time travel (see "Have You Heard the One . . ." in *Time Travelers Strictly Cash*). Some of these time travelers are inevitably going to – for one reason or another – leave mementos of their visits.

The most dangerous such temporal salvage – nova bombs, say, or psi-drugs – is destroyed, or taken forward to Harmony. But some of the smaller toys can be cached away for a suitable occasion.

In general, the closer to the local technology the item, the less risk. A laser pistol or supercharged portable computer deck would not be nearly as ostentatious and dangerous as a space-warper or an energy shield.

It should also be remembered that not all "ultra-tech" items found in a Harmonian's possession need really be from the future. After all, visionary genius is drawn to a probability nexus as surely as time travelers. Perhaps the gadget in question was created by a gifted local, or left by a contemporary alien visitor!



Future Tech and the Meddler

The fate of the Meddler (from "The Law of Conservation of Pain," in *Callahan's Crosstime Saloon*) is a dramatic illustration of the pitfalls of time travel.

The Meddler was the first time traveler in our timeline. He came back from 1995 to 1972 with a specific mission in mind, and he accomplished that mission. He sent back word to Callahan's, from the future, that he had successfully changed the direction of the life of the singer Bobbi Joy.

But now it's 1992, and holography has not replaced television, glass energy pistols have not replaced handguns and no female vocalist has appeared who might be Bobbi Joy.

It would seem, then, that in his rescue of Bobbi Joy, the Meddler managed to create a branch in time, separating his own timeline from that recorded in subsequent stories. The most likely cause of this branch is the fact that the Meddler and his brother traveled to times when they already lived, illustrating why this practice is so rigidly interdicted (it can be assumed that higher-tech time travel, including both Harmonian time jumps and Time Police technology, includes failsafes which eliminate this risk by simply making it impossible to travel to a time where you already exist). In the Meddler's case the divergence seems to have been benign – Bobbi Joy's existence has been expunged from our karmic path, but she still lives in a timeline where she can be happy. But other half-prepared time travelers – particularly those who don't happen to materialize in Callahan's – may not be so lucky.

Time Skipping

The reason Harmonians hate to skip time (for example, leaving one era at 7 a.m., and returning at 10, having skipped three hours) is that it turns time into a maze.

Suppose that Harmonian returns at 10 and discovers a crisis had occurred at 9:45 a.m. He could return to 7, and try to forestall the crisis, or minimize it (assuming it hadn't become "fixed" in time, and unchangeable even for a time traveler). But if he failed, he'd be forced out of our time line at 10 a.m., and be unable to return to it until some point after he heard about the crisis. Sometimes such brief "time holes" can be useful, but generally they lead to inefficiency, confusion and missed opportunities.

It is assumed that the worst consequence of "catching up" with a time when you already exist is that the subjectively later version of the time traveler will be forced back to the timeline he came from. However, the consequences of such an event are not recorded in the stories, and if the GM cares to levy harsher penalties, he is free to do so.

There can only be one agent in charge at any given nexus. When Mary was working for Lady Sally, she was expected not to take any major or overt action (except in an emergency) without her mother's knowledge and consent. It seems likely that, like Mary, most young field operatives spend a time as part of a senior agent's "family," giving them field experience while allowing them to observe the senior agent at work.

The Callahan Operation

The relationship between Callahan and Lady Sally can be compared to two generals in the same theater of operations, each with his own unit and specific mission. Lady Sally's is the "front line" unit, with a relatively large number of troops seeing action more or less all the time. Callahan's place is a special forces unit, held in reserve most of the time, and only activated to deal with unexpected or extreme threats.

Lady Sally's cover as the keeper of a high-class bordello just across the river from the United Nations is deliberately calculated to give her the maximum possible influence over international politics, with the lowest-possible public profile. Her empathic family of erotic artists is chosen and organized for their ability to interact with the outside world, subtly spreading Harmonian ideals and enhancing Lady Sally's influence.



Mike's group, on the other hand, is deliberately kept small and obscure. There is little attempt at outreach. Callahan relies almost completely on the probability nexus to bring significant individuals into his orbit (although several of the regulars – particularly Doc Webster – do recruit new members for the family, on a more or less active basis). Despite helping occasional distressed one-timers like Kathy Anders, most of the family's empathic energy goes to strengthening their own bonds.

As mentioned above, Mary's place in the scheme of things seems to be primarily as a trainee and assistant to her mother, with no independent authority. It seems likely that when Lady Sally's closed down, Mary planned to simply transfer to her father's family, as a regular. However, when her proposal to Mickey Finn was accepted, she became an independent agent, with an assignment, not to a specific place; but of caring for and guiding the tremendous potential and danger that the amazingly powerful Finn represented for the human race and the Harmonian mission.

Mary's "field promotion" is an instructive look at the way Harmonians conduct and expand their operations. The most interesting thing about the affair is that, from all appearances, Mary's decision was entirely spontaneous and entirely personal – if her marriage to Finn had been previously planned, or even discussed, she would have certainly avoided the brief liaison with Jake that was to prove so painful for him in the next few months.

Once her decision was made, however, her parents never questioned it, or her status as an equal. This indicates that Harmonians tend to find their own stations in the battle for time, rather than taking orders from any central authority, and that a field agent has exactly as much authority as he cares to assume. Promotions aren't *earned*, they're *found*.

Harmonian Recruits

*I appreciate your trying to keep the tourists and voyeurs out of our hair – if this Place gets too crowded, I can't let people smash their glasses in the fireplace. By all means keep our location under your hat, and keep your hat in a safe-deposit box. But I think you've gone just a bit too far in that direction. If folks think your stories are fiction, they're liable to get the idea that this Place is only imaginary, that a Place like this couldn't "really" exist. They'll miss the point that **any** bar can be Callahan's Place, as soon as responsible people start hanging out there together. You'd be surprised how many sad sons of bitches believe people only care about each other in books.*

– Letter from Mike Callahan to Spider Robinson,
excerpted in *Time Travelers Strictly Cash*

The Harmonians are a psionically active race, and their main battlefield is the psyche. They are not, however, primarily interested in wild, dramatic talents like Telepathy and Telekinesis. The Harmonian's main weapon in the battle for history is empathy.

This is not to say that Harmonians scorn the more dramatic psionic powers – they will happily accept a recruit with an exotic talent. But no matter how dramatic an individual's other psychic gifts might be, he will never be "one of the family" until he has developed the prime attribute of empathy.

Fortunately, the Empathy skill *can* be developed, as can other, more dramatic psychic powers. Learning psionics, in Callahan's milieu, is much like learning to draw or play an instrument. Some people are freak talents, able to master the discipline with no formal training at all. Others are gifted, able to use their training to full advantage and master their craft through hard work. Most people have no particular talent for psionics, but are able to acquire a certain competence through long hard work and a patient teacher, and some people are completely oblivious – psychically color blind or tone deaf. See p. 49 for information on learning psionics "from scratch."



Dimensional Travel

The story "Mirror/roM Off the Wall," from *Time Travelers Strictly Cash*, clearly establishes that there are alternate realities accessible from Callahan's Earth (see p. 93). The question for the GM is: how odd can these other realities get, and how active are the Harmonians there?

The answer to the first question is manifestly "pretty darn weird." Once you start messing with the fundamental nature of reality, there's no reason to stop with swapping left/right symmetry.

The second question is trickier. It's known that very close cognates, like the mirror world, are heading for their own Harmony, and that they have their own Harmonian agents – the mirror world even had its own Callahan's Place, complete with Callahan himself.

What about stranger worlds – worlds that could never create Harmonian civilization? Accessibility is not a problem – we can assume that Harmony is aware of even the most bizarre possible realities, and can get there at need.

The question is one of motive. Certainly in the midst of the ongoing battle for time, the Harmonian race will have few experienced time agents to send out to the suburbs of probability. But even the most out-of-the-way reality might have a Harmonian agent or two, just to keep track of things. Perhaps the probability in question presents a present or potential danger to Harmony, or perhaps it's pure research.

For the GM, the upshot of this is that he can safely put a Harmonian agent, or even Callahan himself, in *any* campaign – Audouel America, IST Earth, Camelot – without compromising the integrity of the original stories.

Sixth Column – Harmonian Special Operations

Jake has referred to the Harmonian conspiracy as a “sixth column.” This is a useful phrase that bears definition.

In military parlance, a fifth column is “a group of secret sympathizers or supporters of an enemy that engage in espionage or sabotage within defensive lines or national borders.” The name was coined in Madrid in 1936, when four rebel columns were advancing on the city, and the rebel commander boasted that when he reached Madrid his troops would find a “fifth column” already at work.

A sixth column, then, is a similar organization, but one which works against the enemy, *without the knowledge of the regular defenders*. In essence, any active ally you don’t know you have is a sixth column.

Jake got the term from Robert A. Heinlein – it’s the title of his first novel. Heinlein’s works are enthusiastically recommended to all *Callahan’s* GMs, as an excellent source of inspiration and ideas.

Historical Recruits

Harmonians could certainly “rescue,” or even *resurrect*, notable figures from the past. All that’s required is to use a timescanner to take a complete genetic profile and braintape of the individual in question at the moment of death. Then grow a healthy body in the prime of life, read the original’s memories into the clone’s brain, and transfer him to an era where his presence won’t cause an undo stir. Thus a Harmonian could have Leonardo da Vinci or H.G. Wells – at the height of their health and creative energies, and with all the memories of their former lives intact – as a member of his “family.”

Famous disappearances are even easier for a time traveler to recover. Are Ambrose Bierce and Amelia Earhart regulars at Callahan’s, or someplace like it uptime? Perhaps.

This same service could easily be offered to less-famous members of an empathic family. The Harmonian wouldn’t make an explicit promise of “life after death” on Harmony. That would be too likely to trigger feelings of religious awe or fear that would interfere with empathic rapport and generally screw up his family’s state of mind. But it seems a good bet that Tom Flannery or the MacDonald brothers, or even one of Callahan’s other regulars who was left in good health at the end of the stories, could be encountered somewhere uptime, living a second life in Harmony, or as part of a new Harmonian time mission.

Harmonian tactics are subversive, in the best sense of the word. Harmonians do not seek to conquer the enemy. They’re more interested in recruiting him.

In a very real sense, what a Harmonian offers his recruits is a family – a home. The concepts of “family” and “home” as sources of unselfish love, unconditional support, serenity, joy, mirth and security are romanticized ideals in our time and throughout most of human history, but they’re everyday realities in the Harmonian epoch. The Harmonian offers a vision of that reality. He does not promise delivery from all pain and grief, but he offers a place where his recruits know they’ll never have to face either alone.

And the truly amazing thing about this deal, from the modern standpoint, is that the Harmonian *means it*, 100%. He does not come in like a cold-blooded sociological engineer, pushing the proper emotional buttons to get the desired response, nor as a condescending missionary, bearing the treasures of civilization to the ignorant savages of the past. He comes as a friend.

A Harmonian will not hesitate to go out on a limb for a member of his “family” of recruits, even if it means risking his life, his cover or even his mission itself. (It is an interesting academic question; if a Harmonian had to choose between betraying a friend and the certain failure of his mission, which would he choose? But the Harmonians are an imaginative, resourceful and subtle people, and they don’t see things in such black and white terms. They’re masters at conquering the “hopeless” situation. In general, the Harmonian philosophy seems to be to take care of the individuals first, and the situations – no matter how seemingly black – will take care of themselves.) A Harmonian doesn’t *expect* his loyalty to be reciprocated. He *knows* it will be, with the same certainty that a chemist knows that mixing certain elements will result in a given compound.

Members of a Harmonian “family” are not coddled or spoiled, however. As in an ideal family, the Harmonian is more interested in meeting needs than in gratifying desires, and happiness and peace of mind are more important than physical comfort. Callahan, for example, did not produce some super-scientific magical cure for Tom Flannery’s fatal illness. Instead he provided a place where Tom could know joy in the time he had left, and come to terms with his own mortality. But if one of his patrons is hungry, Callahan will never let them leave unfed, and he encouraged Tom Flannery to try cryonic suspension – the best chance he had with the technology available.

Finally, an essential component of the Harmonian’s relationship with his family is *respect*, including the freedom to make your own mistakes. A Harmonian won’t offer advice unless it’s requested, and if a friend gets his butt in a sling, the Harmonian will go to any lengths to get it out – if the friend *wants* it out. If a Harmonian needs help in a dangerous situation, he’ll make the consequences known to his friends, and if any of them care to face those consequences along with him, he’ll respect that decision too.

In general, if a Harmonian tells a member of his family he needs one of the Devil’s wisdom teeth, that person will cheerfully walk into hell, pliers in hand. And this loyalty doesn’t just flow back and forth between the Harmonian and his friends, it’s also spread out among the whole empathic family. Any of Callahan’s patrons will sacrifice as much for a fellow regular as they would for Callahan himself. The net result of all this mutual loyalty is a body of gifted individuals linked by bonds strong enough to daunt any potential enemy. A Harmonian family can be physically destroyed, but never intimidated or subverted.

3

CALLAHAN'S CHARACTERS



Regulars

The word “regular” is used here to describe somebody who has spent time as a member of a Harmonian’s empathic “family” (see p. 39), and who considers at least one Harmonian a personal friend (though he probably doesn’t know anything overt about Harmony or the Harmonian time mission). It doesn’t really have anything to do with how often he actually gets to see his Harmonian friend these days.

There are three prerequisites to being an “official” regular: one advantage and two disadvantages.

The basic attribute of any member of a Harmonian family is Empathy. A character does *not* have to be empathic when he walks through the door of Callahan’s in order to be accepted, but he must work on developing his empathic sense if he ever wants to be “one of the family,” by reserving most or all of his earned character points until he has enough saved to buy the advantage – Empathy, and many other similar advantages can be bought after character creation in a *Callahan’s* campaign.

(Mickey Finn is an exception to the above – he’s not human, and he’s not really capable of feeling any real instinctive empathy with humans. In such cases, a dispensation is granted and the character is welcomed into the “family” anyway. Such cases are incredibly rare.)

Nobody, however strange, is welcome among a Harmonian “family,” though, unless he has taken on the Regular’s Code of Honor (see p. 46), and a (5-point) Sense of Duty to other members of the “family.” It is possible for someone actively associating with regulars to merely behave in a manner consistent with the Code of Honor out of courtesy, but without any real moral commitment (i.e., without taking the disadvantages themselves). Such an individual will be treated courteously in return, but the highly Empathic regulars will know, on a gut level, that he’s not one of them, and they won’t fully accept him until he’s ready to commit to their way of seeing things.

It should be remembered, however, that the regulars’ Code of Honor is an almost instinctive result of hanging around a Harmonian. Regulars will tend to laugh at any attempt to articulate their behavior, and they never, ever proselytize others to their way of thinking – such an act would, in itself, be a violation of their Code of Honor.

Typical Callahan’s Characters

Literally anyone or *anything* can be accepted as part of the Callahan’s family – from Mickey Finn to Ralph Von Wau Wau (see *Exotic Abilities*, p. 49).

Callahan’s does, however, have a typical patron – he’s working-class, probably not educated more than a year or two past high school, often a family man and usually Irish. Until the last decade of the Bar’s existence, all the patrons were male (see p. 16). Most of the regulars are in their 30s or 40s, though there are plenty of exceptions on either end of the age scale.

There’s no reason for the PCs to conform to any of the above, unless they want to, but the GM should know that most of their fellow patrons will fall into most or all of these categories.

Starting Point Total

Most of Callahan’s patrons are ordinary guys, with maybe some uncommon sensitivities and a few significant talents. In short, the guys at Callahan’s are mostly 100 points or a little less.

Callahan’s “inner circle,” however – particularly Jake and the Doc – are quite a bit above average, from a combination of natural talent and hanging around a Harmonian for so many years.

Then there are the real weirdos, like Rachel, the MacDonalds and Ralph Von Wau Wau – not to mention Mickey Finn, who’s literally off the character point scale.

In general any point total between 100 and 200 points is a good starting point for a *Callahan’s* campaign, depending on what the GM wants to do with the campaign. If he’s planning on many dangerous situations and adventures outside the bar, or if he wants lots of strange characters and weird powers, he should think about a higher starting level. But if he wants the characters to mostly use their heads to solve others’ problems, there’s little reason to set the starting total over 100 points.

The GM has several options in dealing with the required Empathy, Code of Honor and Sense of Duty. He can require all PCs to take them at creation (probably the best option if the charac-

ters are supposed to already be established regulars when the campaign begins), with the option of whether or not to count the 15 points of mandatory disadvantages against the campaign maximum.

If the characters are arriving at Callahan’s for the first time during the campaign, the GM can allow them to take the whole regular “package” at once (since the three items add up to a convenient 0 points). If he wishes to keep total disadvantage points under 40 (or whatever the campaign-specific total is) he may require the PCs to commit some or all of their future earned character points to buying off enough disadvantages to



bring them under the campaign ceiling. However, all characters should be allowed to retain at least one disadvantage besides the two required, even if it's a very expensive one, like Blindness.

He can also allow the characters to "trade" the Code of Honor and Sense of Duty for an equivalent point value of other disadvantages – Alcoholism, for example, or Chronic Depression (see p. 47). This exchange should be convincingly explained and roleplayed. The explanation is no problem – Callahan's gave the character the strength to overcome his disability, and now he feels grateful in return. The roleplaying can come in when the GM brings the former disadvantage back into play. Say, for example, that the former alcoholic falls off the wagon at a wedding reception, getting himself into trouble, or the formerly-depressed character locks himself in his room for two weeks after hearing of a friend's death, and his buddies from Callahan's have to bring him out of his black mood. If, however, the character remains constant in roleplaying his "replacement" disadvantages, the reoccurrences of his former disadvantages should come more and more rarely, and only under ever greater stress.



Advantages

Allies/Patrons

see pp. B23-24

In general, Callahan is not considered an Ally or Patron to his empathic "family," because except during times of great crisis, he does not spend nearly enough time and effort directing and subsidizing those around him to be considered anything more than a good friend.

Lady Sally, on the other hand, probably does qualify as a Patron to her artists – those members of her empathic "family" who actually work for her.

Empathy

see p. B20

This ability is the core of what makes a Harmonian "family" work. In general, all the PCs in the campaign should either have this advantage, or be actively engaged in acquiring it (Empathy, like many other advantages in the *Callahan's* milieu, *can* be acquired with earned character points – see p. 42).

There are some regulars who aren't empathic, but they tend to be very unusual cases, like Mickey Finn.

Empathy does count as 3 levels of Telepathy power, as described on p. 49.

Luck

see p. B21

Any Callahan's regular has the first level Luck advantage while he's inside (or on the roof of) Callahan's place. He must buy the advantage, however, if he wants that Luck to stay with him when he leaves the bar. A regular who's already lucky does not find his Luck increased when he's in Callahan's.

Unusual Background (Regular – 20 Points) *see p. B23*

This advantage is *not* needed in campaigns where everyone is a regular or a Harmonian. The GM may want to use it in campaigns where Callahan's (or an equivalent Harmonian outpost) is part of the campaign background, but not the focus of the campaign, and where one or two of the PCs might want to

be a regular, but the rest may not even know about Callahan's (or whatever).

You are a regular at Callahan's, Lady Sally's or their campaign equivalent. In this case the word "regular" has nothing to do with how *often* you get to the Place, it means that you have Empathy and the appropriate Code of Honor and Sense of Duty. It also means that at least one Harmonian considers you a personal friend.

This advantage represents your ability to go to a Harmonian enclave like Callahan's for the help and advice of the proprietor and his empathic "family," and your access to the unusual talents of the Harmonian and his more exotic associates (folks like Mickey Finn or the MacDonald brothers). It does *not* necessarily mean, however, that you actually know anything concrete about Harmony or the Harmonian Time Mission.

Unusual Background (Harmonian – 100 points)

see p. B23

This cost represents the Harmonian time agent's access to the technology, insight and history of his people. Which, since Harmony is a time-traveling civilization, effectively includes access to the technology and insight of all human history (and presumably a few non-human races, too).

While 100 points may seem an excessive cost for an advantage, the cost would actually be much higher if it weren't for the Harmonian Code of Honor. Without this code to restrain them from reckless exploitation of their native technology, a Harmonian could travel back to virtually any period in history and set himself up as a god.

This advantage also covers trivial details of the Harmonian's double life, so that he doesn't have to individually pay for skills like the local language, or Area Knowledge of his adopted locale.

New Advantages

Alcohol Tolerance

5 points

Your body metabolizes alcohol with remarkable efficiency. You can drink steadily for an indefinite time with no major detrimental effects.

While drinking normally, you will never go beyond Intoxication Level 5 on the Intoxication Table (see p. 54). A normal pace of drinking is about one Tolerance level per half-hour.

If a character with the Alcohol Tolerance advantage is distraught (see p. 56), or wants to get drunk for any other reason, he may consciously decide to push himself beyond his limits, drinking very rapidly and heavily (about one Tolerance level every 15 minutes, or even more). In such a case, the character progresses normally on the Intoxication Chart, except he gets a +5 to his Tolerance value, and +2 to all HT-related drinking rolls.

Enhanced Time Sense 45 points

This advantage is an advanced form of the Combat Reflexes advantage, and includes all the benefits normally associated with that advantage. There is no reason for any character to ever take both Enhanced Time Sense and Combat Reflexes – the advantages are *not* cumulative. Unlike Combat Reflexes, Enhanced Time Sense cannot be purchased after character creation.

Someone with Enhanced Time Sense can receive and process information at a rate dramatically faster than most humans. Your physical speed is unaffected, but your mental speed is prodigious.

In addition to the effects of Combat Reflexes, this gives you several other game benefits. First, you automatically have initiative in any combat situation (if there's more than one character with Enhanced Time Sense in the combat, initiative falls to the one with the highest Basic Speed). At the GM's discretion, you can perceive things that happen too fast for normal humans to discern. For example, you will never be fooled by a projected image, because you'll be able to see the individual frames of the film or tape change. If secret information is being sent at super-high-speed, as a "blip" over the air or wire, you'll be able to hear it, if you're monitoring the transmission. (You probably won't be able to decipher it, but you'll be able to tell it's there, and you'll know it's not just random static). If you glimpse a blurred object in flight out of the corner of your eye, you'll be able to tell if it's a bird, a baseball, a fairy or a very small UFO.

Finally, if you have Enhanced Time Sense, the GM can *never* tell you to make a decision *right now*. Your rapid thought

processes will always give you the opportunity to think a problem full thoroughly and respond in the manner you think best. (This advantage will not, however, protect you from the slings

and arrows of impatient fellow gamers, if you're taking a half hour to decide what to do in each second of a given combat.) The only exception to the above might be something that's coming up so fast that the other players can't perceive it at all – then the GM would be justified in asking you for an immediate response.

This advantage does not "slow down" the world from your viewpoint. You can still enjoy a movie by simply ignoring the frames, in much the same way that a literate person can choose whether or not to consciously notice the individual letters in the words he's reading. A normal conversation will not seem to last decades.

This advantage should not be available to normal human PCs without the GM's permission and a significant Unusual Background. It can be used as a super-power or racial advantage.

Special Enhancement: This advantage will never allow you to make more than one psionic attack per turn, but for an additional +15 points it will serve as the "instantaneous" enhancement (see *GURPS Psionics*, p. P27) applied to *all* relevant psionic skills.

The GM might also use this advantage as a *prerequisite* for certain exotic psionic enhancements, like The Beast's ultra-fast Timeshare Telepathy (see p. 50).



Light Hangover

2 points

You have hangovers, but they're not crippling. The duration of your hangover is figured normally, according to the rules on p. 56, but the effect is a flat -1 to DX, -1 to IQ for the duration. Hyperesthesia does not occur.

No Hangover

5 points

No matter how much you drink, you will never get a hangover. This does not prevent or modify any of the effects of the actual intoxication, it just eliminates the unpleasant aftereffects.

Time Jumper (Harmonian)

75 points

This is the power to travel in time without machinery or a gate – just by willing the "jump." This is the power specifically possessed by Harmonian time-travelers. It's a limited

form of the Time Jumper advantage found in *GURPS Time Travel*.

Harmonian Time Jumping is a racial ability, and *cannot* be improved with earned character points, except under very unusual circumstances (GM's option).

Harmonians jump between their native timeline – Harmony itself – and (usually) only one other. In effect, a Harmonian is living two parallel lives in two distinct timelines. When he leaves one timeline, he returns to the other at the exact spatio/temporal point where he left. (This restriction can be avoided by “skipping” forward, or with the aid of an Interface Screen, see p. 36).

Making the Jump

A Harmonian time jump is effectively instantaneous. The Harmonian Enhanced Time Sense allows them to make the transfer without needing to concentrate for any noticeable time. There is no fatigue cost for a normal time jump.

When a Harmonian makes a time jump, he must make an IQ roll. The jump will only fail on a critical failure. If the jump fails, the Harmonian takes 1 fatigue and may do nothing else that turn. He may try to jump again, normally, in the next turn.

A Harmonian can carry up to No Encumbrance (IQ × 2) lbs. of items between timelines (note that for purposes of time travel, encumbrance is figured from IQ, not ST).

It is not known whether Harmonians can “push” themselves to carry a heavier load through time. If the GM wishes to allow this, he may allow the Harmonian to carry up to 4 × IQ lbs. on a successful Will roll, at a cost of 5 Fatigue.

A Harmonian cannot carry another person through time, unless that person's weight is within their encumbrance limit, or the Harmonian has the aid of an interface screen.

A Harmonian may never, under any circumstances, travel to a time where he already exists, even with the aid of an Interface Screen. The consequences of trying to do so are not recorded in the stories. It is assumed that any attempt to do so will simply result in the failure of the time jump, but the GM is free to impose any more elaborate or more disastrous consequences he considers appropriate to his campaign.

Skipping Time

It is possible for a Harmonian to skip forward in time – for example, transferring to Harmony from September 1, 1962, and returning to our time at September 3, 1962. This is seldom done, however, for reasons discussed on p. 35.

Extra Timelines and Reprogramming

The following two special abilities are not found in the stories, and the GM is free to ignore them if he finds them unsuitable for his campaign.

Some exceptional Harmonian Time Travelers may have more than two parallel timelines going at once. For example, a Harmonian might be leading lives on Harmony, on 23rd-century Mars, during the French Revolution and in ancient Babylon. Each additional timeline costs a flat 10 points. Thus, the Harmonian in the example above would pay 95 points for his Time Jumper ability – 10 extra points for each of two extra

timelines. The GM may also require an additional Unusual Background cost for Harmonians with three or more timelines available. Whether or not this ability can be purchased with earned character points is left to the GM.

If a Harmonian time-agent finishes his mission in a given era, he may wish to start something new in another era. He may move his new assignment forward in time, just by “skipping” an appropriate amount of time (although he can't skip to any time forward of Harmony itself – whether it's even possible for Harmonians to travel into their own future is completely unknown). If he wants to re-establish himself at a point earlier than his previous mission, however, the process is more elaborate.

To reprogram himself to travel to a new, earlier era a Harmonian must pay 5 earned character points, and spend one month in Harmony, undergoing intense psychological reconditioning. At the end of his time his parallel timeline will be repositioned – he will be able to travel to the new timeline freely, but the old timeline will be lost to him (unless he uses an interface screen or similar time machine). This reconditioning will not, however, in any way bypass the prohibition against traveling to a time where he already exists.

Unaging

15 points

You will never grow old. Your age is fixed at any point you choose and will never change. You do not have to make any aging rolls. A character with this advantage cannot get any points by taking the Age disadvantage.

Unfazeable

15 points

Nothing surprises you – at least, nothing that's not obviously a threat. The world is full of strange things, and as long as they don't bother you, you don't bother them. You are exempt from Fright Checks, and almost no reaction modifiers affect you, either way. You treat all strangers with the same distant courtesy, no matter *how* strange they are, as long as they're well-behaved. You will have the normal reaction penalty toward anyone who does something rude or rowdy, but you will remain civil even if you are forced to violence.

This advantage is incompatible with all phobias. A character with this advantage is not emotionless – he just never displays strong feelings. The stereotypical Maine Yankee or English butler has this advantage.

E.g., two fellows in rocking chairs on the porch of a general store:

Ed: “What'd that little feller with them orange tentacles on his head want?”

Burt: “Just another lost summer tourist. Took a wrong turn at Mars.” (Looks up in the sky.) “Looks like it's gonna rain tomorra.”

Ed: “Ayuh. Looks like.”

This advantage must be roleplayed fully, or the GM can declare that it has been lost. In a campaign where Fright Checks are an hourly occurrence, the GM can charge 20 or more points, or disallow the advantage.

Disadvantages

Alcoholism

see p. B27

Alcoholics who do their drinking in Callahan's tend to find out they no longer need the alcohol after awhile.

Regulars who are also alcoholics roll at +5 to Will to avoid binging while at Callahan's, and have at least +3 to the Will roll anywhere else, even if they haven't "withdrawn" yet.

The GM may allow regulars with the requisite character points to *fully* buy off their Alcoholism disadvantage. This is not normally possible, but Callahan's is not a normal place.

Code of Honor

see p. B31

Harmonian Time Agent

(-15 points)

Do nothing that might interfere with the eventual evolution of Harmony. Protect the secrecy of your mission. Blend into the local culture. Do not introduce anachronistic technology into the local milieu. Use local methods whenever possible, and use anachronistic techniques only when absolutely necessary, and to the absolute minimum degree possible. Influence others subtly, through example – don't arbitrarily try to force the local culture, or any local individual, to do anything.

Extend the same friendship, loyalty and commitment to members of your local "family" that you expect them to extend to you. Don't force your help on anybody who doesn't want it. Don't refuse help to anybody who's willing to change. Don't waste Harmonian ideals on those who would try to ex-

ploit them for selfish ends. Respect your local friends – if they choose to sacrifice or take risks for your sake or for the benefit of your mission, allow them to do so, with gratitude.

Harmony is brought about by building mature trust between individuals, so protecting your mission is no excuse for betraying your local "family."

Regular's Code of Honor (-10 points)

You can count on your friends for anything you really need, so your friends can count on you for anything they really need. Be willing to sacrifice to help a friend. Callahan (or his campaign equivalent) knows what he's talking about – if he suggests or asks for something, just do it, and if he doesn't want to tell you why, that's his business.

Don't pry. Respect others' privacy and freedoms. Don't force your help on anybody who doesn't want it. Don't refuse your help to anybody who really needs it. Everybody deserves the same respect, regardless of whether they look funny or act strange. Try to put people at ease, rather than putting people off.

Don't put up with jerks who try to control others – if they get off with a punch in the nose, they're getting off easy. Don't let your good will be taken advantage of by people who are only interested in their own advancement. Never hesitate to take a stand for what you know is right.

New Disadvantages

Alcohol-Related Quirks

The following -1 point disadvantages can be useful in campaigns using the advanced drinking rules (pp. 53-57). If the character is a regular drinker, he can count these disadvantages either against his quirk total, or against his regular disadvantage total. Someone who habitually avoids alcohol may still have these disadvantages (in case he gets drunk accidentally, or under compulsion), but may be counted only against the character's -5 points of quirks.

Alcohol Intolerance

-1 point

Alcohol "goes right to your head." You will become intoxicated much faster than normal. When you reach your first Tolerance point (see p. 53), you'll immediately go to Intoxication Level 3 (you can go higher, if the roll indicates). At each Tolerance level thereafter, you'll always increase by *at least* one Intoxication level (and you can always increase by more than one, if the dice so dictate).

Horrible Hangovers

-1 point

You have a -3 penalty to all attribute modifiers when hung over, and +3 to hangover duration. See p. 56.

Nervous Stomach

-1 point

Alcohol disagrees with your metabolism. You have a -3 to all HT rolls to avoid vomiting while drinking.

Obnoxious Drunk

-1 point

As you drink you become *really* uninhibited. At each intoxication level you must make a Will roll minus your current intoxication level, or do something that will embarrass yourself, your host, other witnesses or all of the above. You aren't deliberately malicious or destructive, but hurt feelings and damaged property often follow your drinking.

The details will depend on the circumstances – at a formal dinner it might be as simple as commenting out loud on the Duchess's weight, while at an already-wild party you might be the one who tries to swim in the aquarium – whatever it takes to get you remembered as a drunken idiot.

Sleepy Drinker

-1 point

Alcohol makes you drowsy. Beginning at Intoxication Level 6, you must make a HT roll at each new Intoxication Level or become too sleepy to drink. You have 1d × 10 minutes to find a place to curl up before you drift off.

If you manage to stay awake long enough to reach intoxication levels where everybody must roll to stay awake, you are at an additional -3 to those rolls.

Personality Change

-1 point

There are many possibilities here. For instance, if you're a vicious drunk, when intoxicated your mood is almost always foul. See p. 56. Someone might also be a friendly drunk, a

singing drunk, a silly drunk, and so on. Most of these require no die rolls – just roleplaying.

Many disadvantages from the *Basic Set* may be taken with the caveat “only while drunk,” as quirks. These include Bully, Berserk, Intolerance, Jealous, Stubbornness, all kinds of Odious Personal Habits, and many more.

More Serious Disadvantages

varies

Characters with the disadvantages Alcoholism or Compulsive Behavior: Hard Drinker can take mental disadvantages which will be active “only when drunk.” These will be worth -3 to -5 points, or even more – depending on the circumstances, and with the GM’s permission.

Less severe drinking quirks – for example, “never drinks alone,” or “thinks he’s a comedian when drunk” – are possible, but can only be taken as quirks.

Chronic Depression **-15 points + -2 points per level**

You’ve lost your will to live. You’d commit suicide, only it seems like so much trouble.

A chronically depressed character needs to make a Will roll to do *anything* except acquire and consume the *minimum* necessities for survival. A Will roll would be required, for instance, to take a shower, go to a movie, attend a scheduled job interview or keep a date. If forced to make a choice between two or more actions, you must make a Will roll to make any choice other than the path of least resistance.

Chronically depressed characters tend to spend a lot of time in cheap, un-air-conditioned efficiency apartments, eating government cheese and drinking cheap beer while listening to fundamentalist stations on AM radio and memorizing the stains on the ceiling.

Each additional level of this disadvantage reduces the Will-roll necessary to take any sort of action by -1 (maximum -5). It is quite possible to be so depressed that it is all but impossible for you to do anything at all for yourself, unless you’re physically picked up and hauled out of your lair by some independent party. (If somebody does show up and demand you go out and do something with him, though, you have to make a Will roll to refuse or resist).

If a character breaks a Vow, violates a Code of Honor, Duty or Sense of Duty, or loses a Dependent, the GM can replace that disadvantage with this.

A chronically depressed character may replace his depression with a new disadvantage of equivalent level that is

more conducive to self-esteem. For instance, Jerry, one of Callahan’s ex-regulars, got over the guilty depression caused by his real estate business’s damage to the ecology by replacing his depression with a Sense of Duty to the environment, and becoming a full time ecological activist. Callahan’s regulars, like Jake, can replace depression with the standard Regular’s Code of Honor and Sense of Duty.

There is no point penalty for replacing Chronic Depression with another disadvantage of identical cost. However, the reason for the switch must be (in the GM’s estimation) convincingly roleplayed, and the GM may require the character to roleplay *both* disadvantages for a time (the new one constantly, and the Chronic Depression whenever the GM decides to bring it into play), as a transition period.

Dog

-15 points

You are a large, intelligent talking dog like Ralph Von Wau Wau. You walk on four legs. You lack fingers, so you cannot perform any task that requires manipulators more precise than your mouth or paws.

Your teeth do cutting damage. You have a +1 to DR from your fur.

This is *not* a complete racial template for talking dogs, as might be found in *Aliens* or *Fantasy Folk*. The above point total does *not* include any advantages or disadvantages that can be found in the *Basic Set*. See Ralph Von Wau Wau, p. 124, for an example of these additional canine attributes, which include extra HT and DX, Alertness, Color Blind and Social Stigma.

For those who might be interested, Dog breaks down as follows: Bite (5 points), DR 1 (5 points), 4 Legs (5 points), No Fine Manipulators (-30 points). All of the above advantages and disadvantages can be found in *GURPS Aliens* or *GURPS Fantasy Folk*, except for Bite, which is taken from *GURPS Uplift*.

Jinxed

-20/-40/-60 points

A Jinxed character is to bad luck as a plague-carrier is to disease. It does not affect him, but it gets everyone else around him. If you are Jinxed, anyone in your immediate vicinity suffers a -1 through -3 penalty (depending on the severity of the jinx: -20 points per -1) on any roll that the GM makes for them. They have no penalty on rolls they make themselves. Thus, there is no way for the rest of the party to be sure that a jinx is present without keeping track of failed “sure-fire” attempts over a period of time.



A jinx gets everybody, friend or foe. Ulysses was a perfect example. He was tough, clever and determined, and he survived everything thrown at him, but none of his shipmates made it. Part of his own survival was due to the fact that things went wrong for his foes as well, with Ulysses around – Polyphemus, for example, missed some easy IQ rolls when dealing with Ulysses.

If the Jinxed character is a Callahan's regular, the jinx will not operate when the character is in (or on the roof of) Callahan's place – the Place's probability nexus "corrects" the jinx. GM's may want to drastically reduce the cost of this disadvantage in campaigns that take place mostly inside Callahan's. If the campaign takes place *entirely* in Callahan's, the Jinx is worth no more than a quirk.

If the Jinxed character is an NPC or new PC, however, the Jinx will operate until the character becomes a regular (by developing Empathy and taking on the requisite Sense of Duty and Code of Honor). This is because as the character becomes more psychically tuned to the positive Empathy of Callahan's, the probability nexus can have more of a calming effect on his personal probability irregularities.

Susceptibility to Poison

-5 Points

Your body lacks a normal vomit reflex, and you cannot purge toxic substances from your system once they're ingested.

In game terms you are at -5 on all HT rolls against any ingested poison, and at -3 on all HT rolls to recover from any disease where frequent vomiting is a normal symptom – for example, influenza.

If the TL is 6+, and you are under a physician's care, these rolls are made at only -1 – stomach pumps and antibiotics can substitute for your system's normal means of cleansing itself.

This disadvantage also makes you dangerously susceptible to alcohol. If, at any point along the Intoxication Chart (see p. 54), you fail a HT roll to avoid vomiting, you will not vomit, but instead become sick and miserable (-3 to ST, DX and HT, in addition to any other current minuses). If you continue drinking and fail another HT roll to avoid vomiting, you will go into an alcoholic coma (as described on p. 12) within the next 3d minutes.

This disadvantage cannot be taken in conjunction with the Alcohol Tolerance advantage (see p. 44).

The GM may want to increase the value of this advantage to -10 points in campaigns where ingested poison is very common, or where medical science is very primitive.

Terminally Ill

variable

You are going to die . . . soon. Tom Flannery had this disadvantage when he came to Callahan's.

Point cost is determined by the length of time remaining. One month (or less) is worth 100 points (and you'd better work fast!). More than one month but less than one year is worth 75 points (Tom Flannery had 9 months to live when he came to Callahan's, and knew it), and from one to two years is worth 50 points. More than two years is worth nothing – any one might be hit by a truck in two years!

If the GM is running a one-shot adventure, he should disallow this disadvantage as meaningless. If, during the course of a campaign, the character acquires a "miracle cure," has himself cloned or cyborged, or anything else that extends his life past the termination date, he must buy off this disadvantage. If he doesn't have enough points, all earned character points should go to this purpose until it's bought off. There is no reduction necessary for characters like Tom Flannery, who have themselves cryonically frozen at death – not at our tech level, anyway. The cryonic process is still too young and risky to be considered a cure. Anyway, even if the cryonics worked perfectly, the frozen character would still be just as out of most campaigns as though he were dead.

This disadvantage is best fitted either to a character whose player really intends to play as if doomed, or to a character who will struggle nobly to beat his fate, right up to the last minute.

Tourette's Syndrome

variable

You suffer from Tourette's Syndrome, a rare neurological disorder that causes your muscles to twitch and contort uncontrollably. It also causes you to make uncontrollable vocalizations, which can range from incoherent grunts and "barks" to foul language.

At the -15 point level your affliction is obvious to anybody who observes you for more than a few seconds. You are at a -2 to all DX rolls, and any tasks requiring fine manipulation take twice the normal time for you to finish. Certain social skills (Acting, Bard, Leadership, Sex Appeal) will be negatively affected as well in certain situations (GM's option).

At -30 points you find it very difficult to function at all in normal society. You are at -5 to all DX rolls, your movement rate is halved, and tasks requiring fine manipulation take 5 times normal to complete. Social skills are affected as above, but to an even more extreme degree.

Some skills (Stealth, Running, Acrobatics) will be completely impossible for you, and others will be practically useless. For example, certain combat skills could be studied in theory, and even practiced for conditioning purposes, but would be of little benefit in an actual fight.

Sometimes the symptoms of the disease are acutely embarrassing to the character. Like Billy Walker, they might be perversely comical, requiring anybody who's in his presence to make a Will roll to avoid bursting into helpless, uncontrollable laughter (individuals with the Unfazeable advantage get a +3 to this roll). Another embarrassing complication is when your involuntary vocalization takes the form of offensive profanity. If a character has either or both of these difficulties, it's an additional -5 to the advantage.

Vampiric Dependency

-50 points

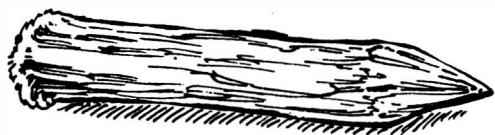
You are a human vampire, like Pyotr. You are *not* a supernatural monster – you suffer from a genetic condition (relatively common in certain Eastern-European countries) that requires you to derive sustenance from human blood.

You do not actually drink blood; rather you filter it, through special glands in your extended canine teeth. If carefully done,

this can be accomplished with no harm to your donor whatsoever. If you drink the blood of a drunken individual, or someone on drugs, you will yourself become drunk or high. Drunks who have their blood filtered by a vampire will normally not have a hangover the next day (roll 3d the first time any character's blood is filtered while drunk – on a natural 18 that character's hangover is *doubled* in severity and duration, even if he has the No Hangovers or Light Hangovers advantages. On a 3-17, the hangover is completely avoided).

You may eat nothing except raw, fresh meat. At least once a week – preferably more often – you must filter approximately a quart of fresh human blood (remember that the blood *does not* need to be removed from its donor to be used).

(Note that the stories do not record what Pyotr ate, other than human blood. It is assumed that he must take in raw mass somehow, and that – since he refuses to let others watch him eat – he had to do so in a way ordinary folk would find repellent, hence, raw meat. If the GM prefers, he may require vampiric characters to eat only small living creatures, or some other similar restriction of his own choosing.)



Exotic Powers

Exotic nonhuman or superhuman characters are at the center of many of the Callahan's stories, and strange powers should have an important place in a *Callahan's* roleplaying campaign.

Since many of the exotic powers recorded in the stories were psionic in nature, the psionic powers in the *Basic Set* are an excellent start for exotic characters in the game. GMs looking for still more options should see *GURPS Supers*, *GURPS Aliens* and *GURPS Psionics*.

Unusual Backgrounds

It is recommended that the GM assign Unusual Backgrounds for strange powers on a case-by-case basis. After all,

Weirdness Magnet

-15 points

Strange and bizarre things happen to you with alarming frequency. You are the one with whom demons stop and chat. Three-inch-tall humanoids from Alpha Centauri will build an observation station behind your TV set. Dimensional gates sealed for centuries will crack open just so you can be bathed in the energies released . . . or perhaps the denizens of the other side will invite you to tea.

Nothing lethal will happen to you, at least not immediately, and occasionally some weirdness will be beneficial. But most of the time it will be terribly inconvenient. People who understand what a weirdness magnet is (and recognize you for one) will react to you at -2. The exceptions will be parapsychologists and thrill-seekers, who will follow you around, and the regulars at Callahan's, who are used to that kind of stuff.

In many ways, the probability nexus at Callahan's Place is a textbook example of this disadvantage, applied to a location rather than a character. Therefore a human weirdness magnet will be powerfully drawn to Callahan's, like two magnets with complimentary charges.

Because of the probability nexus, GMs may want to reduce the value of this disadvantage drastically in campaigns that take place mostly or entirely in Callahan's, as with *Jinxed*, above.

anything can happen in Callahan's Place, so there's no reason to charge an Unusual Background just because the character is "out of the ordinary" – in Callahan's there *is* no ordinary.

Most of the exotics in Callahan's, however, do have powers that can be described very simply – an immortal, a telepath, an intelligent dog who talks. Very complex character conceptions – a flying lightning-thrower with gills, for instance – might be fair game for a UB (of course, anybody who tries to build such a character on 100-200 points will have problems anyway). Likewise, pre-set UBs, like the Trained by a Master advantage in *GURPS Martial Arts*, should not be ignored in a *Callahan's* campaign.

Psionics

All of Callahan's regulars are psionics – most of them just haven't realized it yet. In a Callahan's campaign Empathy counts as three levels of Telepathy Power, with no skill (see *GURPS Psionics*, p. P96).

Since almost anybody can learn Empathy, that means that almost anybody can learn to be a Telepath – we all have the aptitude, we just don't have the teachers. Yet.

Callahan's regulars tend to progress little if any in the psionic arts, though, since the only earned character points they can spend on Psionics are those earned in adventures where they actively use their nascent psionic abilities (see p. B82) – a difficult prospect, when they don't even consciously know they have the advantage in the first place. (No, someone cannot use character points earned for using Empathy to improve other psionic skills.)

In general, if the Empathic character is in the presence of any active use of Psychic powers by a trained psionic, the character can reserve ½ point earned during the adventure to improve his psionic powers. If the character actively takes part in the psionic activity (say by being contacted mentally by a telepath with Telesend power, or by resisting a Mental Blow attack) he can use any amount of the points earned during the adventure to improve his psionics.

But, unless the GM supplies a trained psychic teacher to explain it to them, the PCs will not *consciously* realize that they have any given psionic ability until their skill with that ability at least equals their IQ (costing 4 points per skill). Until he reaches this point, the novice psi will not be able to actively *initiate* psychic activity for any reason. If he is the recipient of any sort of psychic contact or attack, however, he can instinctively *respond* to the full extent of his abilities.

Of course, if the GM prefers, he can simply provide the PCs with an experienced psionic as a teacher, in which case none of the above restrictions apply.

At this stage in human evolution, single-skill powers are the most common manifestation of psi.



New Psionic Power

Desire

★5

This strange, wild talent was possessed by Dink Fogerty (see p. 114). It's a hybrid of Telekinesis and Exoteleportation, with elements of Mind Control thrown in.

Desire must be purchased as a single-skill power, or the user must possess Telekinesis, Teleportation *and* Telepathy power – all three. If it's the latter, then the *lowest* power level is used.

Desire can bring one object to another – fish to a net, darts to a board, or liquor to a glass. In order for the power to work two conditions must be met: First, both the desirous object and the thing desired must be within range of the psionic, and second, a logical connection between the two objects must exist in the psi's mind. For instance, you couldn't make cacti want cheese – there's no connection. You could make a cat

attract mice, but not mice attract cats – the connection isn't logical.

The psi cannot simply say, “I want X” – he must use two associated objects other than himself. Sentient creatures who are the object of desire get a Will roll to resist the compulsion. Sentient creatures who are the focus of the desire must really *want* what the psi is trying to attract to them.

Standard power-to-range and power-to-weight ratios apply. The psi can choose whether to teleport or levitate the desired object to its goal, but remember that maximum teleport weight is only 1/10 of maximum TK weight.

Special Enhancement: For +20% the psi can make something *not* want something else. A jacket not want bullets, for example, or a catcher's mitt not want balls. The same conditions as above apply, but the force generated is repellent, not attractive. Dink Fogerty had this enhancement.

New Psionic Skill

Timeshare Telepathy

Prerequisite:

Enhanced Time Sense

This skill allows a psi with Enhanced Time Sense to carry on multiple private mental conversations at once. He divides his concentration between the different conversations at intervals of time so minuscule (tens of picoseconds) that the person he's communicating with probably won't even notice his absences (unless he also possesses Enhanced Time Sense – and

yes, it's possible for a dozen timeshare telepaths to each hold private conversations with all of the others).

The number of conversations the psi may conduct simultaneously is dependent on his skill level. With skill of 10 the psi can conduct two simultaneous conversations, and this number doubles with each subsequent point of skill – 4 at 11, 8 at 12, 128 at 16, etc.

New Psionic Limitations

Gestalt Shock (-25%)

This was part of the debilitating suite of disadvantages that the Telepathic MacDonald Brothers suffered before they arrived at Callahan's. This limitation can only be taken by Telepaths with Telereceive Skill of 16+, and with the additional limitations Uncontrollable and Unconscious Only (maxing out the possible limitations on the power). If the afflicted psi wishes to “buy off” his limitations, he must lose this one first, before starting work on the other two (or buy them all off at once).

If a telepath suffers from Gestalt Shock, it means that whenever his power activates, he will *instantly* receive *everything* in his subject's mind – right down to the deepest, darkest levels of the unconscious. He must make a Will roll or be mentally stunned for a number of turns equal to the amount he missed the roll by.

In a crowd it's much worse – he must make the Will roll against *everybody* within range of his power, and he's stunned for a number of turns equal to the *sum* of all missed Will rolls.

Furthermore, if he critically fails his Will roll with a 17 or 18, he will fly into a berserk rage and try to kill the subject of

his Telereceive with his bare hands, stopping only when he's completely immobilized, unconscious or sedated, or when he or his victim is dead. Regardless of whether he succeeds or fails at the Will roll, he will carry an uncontrollable antipathy against that person, and will avoid him like he would the object of a phobia, for as long as he continues to be subject to Gestalt Shock.

If the psi rolls a natural 18 on his Will roll, he goes into a berserk rage as above, and then goes into a complete catatonic state, in which he will remain until his Gestalt Shock can be resolved by outside parties (using psi of their own, or ultra-tech devices), or until he dies.

Fivesight (-50%)

This limitation can only be taken with the Precognition power, and only in conjunction with the further -25% limitation, “only misfortune.” It was the curse of Cass Anders, in the story “Fivesight.”

With Fivesight you see the future with absolute clarity and 100% reliability, but you can't tell anybody, and you can take only minimal precautions to minimize the misfortune. For in-

stance, if you foresaw that a friend was going to die in a horrible car wreck on a remote road, you could give him a powerful tranquilizer, to minimize his pain while dying, but you couldn't verbally warn him or prevent him from going. If you foresaw yourself being clubbed by a mugger, you could hide a piece of metal in your hat, to absorb the impact, but you couldn't just stay home.

What happens if a character with this limitation tries to

avoid the predicted misfortune is that he can avoid it, but *something* bad always happens, usually something worse than what was first predicted. The longer the *precog* tries to avoid his fate, the worse that fate becomes. For example, if someone with Fivesight predicted that he'd get knifed by a burglar the coming evening, and decided to stay away from home, he might get hit by a stray bullet from a drive-by shooting, or run over by a bus instead.

New Anti-Psionic Technique

The Centipede's Dilemma

This psi-blocking technique can be tried on any psionic, by *anybody*. However, it can only be tried once on any given individual, and it's not likely to work on any psi much more clever than the imbecilic Dink Fogerty.

To initiate the Centipede's Dilemma, the psi is simply asked the question, "how do you do (any given psionic effect)." The psi must immediately make an IQ roll (at -5 if he is self-trained). If he makes the roll, he figures out how he does it, and can go ahead and use his power normally, with no time lost.

However, if he fails the roll, his concentration on his power manages to activate the power, with him as the focus, and the power *turns on him*. Things might start flying around the room like a poltergeist, or a teleport would suddenly find himself on the roof, or a telepath might spill his secret thoughts to everybody in the room. The GM specifies the specific effect.

Whatever happens, however, the psi will find the experience of losing control of his power intensely unpleasant.



Thereafter, he must make a Will roll every time he tries to use his power or have it turn on him (as the Uncontrollable limitation on *Psionics*, p. 30). If he ever critically succeeds at the Will Roll, he has resolved the block, and his power returns to his full control. However, if he ever critically fails the Will Roll (as poor Dink Fogerty did on his very first try), the block becomes permanent, and the psi's powers are out of control forever and under all circumstances (as above, but a successful Will roll will only turn the power off – it can never be brought under control). Nothing short of ultra-tech, another powerful psi or many years of psychiatric therapy will suffice to return control of his power to the psi.

If a player wants to create a character with a permanent Centipede's Dilemma block, it's a -50% limitation.

Trained psis can often be assumed to have resolved the Centipede's Dilemma during their training, making further attempts to trap them with it futile. Obviously, this technique is best suited for a less-than-serious campaign.

New Skills

Darts (Physical/Easy)

Defaults to DX -4,

Thrown Weapon-2 or Throwing

The ability to accurately throw small sport darts at a static target. Any character who knows this skill at DX level or better gets a +1 to his normal default to use any balanced, hand-thrown, pointed weapon (i.e. Knife or Shuriken, but not Axe or Spear Thrower).

With rare exceptions, this is a hobby skill, and bought at half price.

Erotic Art (Physical/Hard)

Defaults to Acrobatics-5

Prerequisite: Sex Appeal-13

This represents a general knowledge of advanced sexual technique. The exact game effects are left to the GM's discretion.

Currently this skill is only known in certain Eastern culture, most notably followers of Tantric Hinduism. On Harmony it's studied universally. Lady Sally is a master of these techniques, and Mary is extremely adept in their use (though with partners she's personally fond of, she prefers spontaneity to technique).

Juggling (Physical/Easy) *Defaults to Slight of Hand -3*

Basic Juggling is extremely easy to learn. The Juggler rolls at base level to keep 3-balanced objects in the air, or two balanced objects with one hand.

More complicated tricks simply require more-or-less extreme negative modifiers.

Each extra object is a -3 to skill. Unbalanced objects are -2 to skill. Unmatched objects are -1 to -6, depending on how close they are in weight. Various maneuvers each have their

own penalty, starting at -2 for a simple under-the-leg pass. Noah Gonzalez's trick with the shot glasses (see p. 20) was probably about a -12 modifier, with an additional -3 for the stunt with Long-Drink at the end. Negative modifiers are doubled for any trick which the Juggler has not previously rehearsed for a number of hours equal to the base negative modifier of the trick.

Team juggling is a separate P/E skill, but the two skills default to each other at -2.

A Juggler must make a skill roll whenever he tries a new maneuver or trick, or every 15 seconds, whichever comes first. If he fails the roll he will drop as many objects as he failed by. On a critical failure the juggler overreaches himself. He drops all objects and must make an immediate unmodified DX roll or fall down. If he's juggling dangerous objects (knives, torches, bowling balls), he will take damage from one or more of the objects on a critical failure (GM should roll the number of objects that cause damage randomly). No active defense is possible, PD and DR protect normally.

Professional Skill: Bartender (Mental/Average)

Defaults to Carousing-3

This skill incorporates knowledge of stocking and maintaining a professional-quality bar, in addition to knowing how to mix a variety of drinks.

A professional bartender also knows how to interact with customers in a professional yet friendly way – including the ability to calm down unruly drunks before the bouncer needs to get involved. At higher levels the skill takes on an element of showmanship, allowing the bartender to present the drinks in unique and attractive ways, and to mix them with showy tricks and flourishes.

Finally, a bartender will have a working knowledge of local laws relating to alcohol trade and consumption, and will be able to accurately gauge the intoxication level of any given customer.

Professional Skill: Courtesan (Mental/Average)

Defaults to Savoir-Faire-5

This skill represents the business side of high-class prostitution (and is quite different from Professional Skill: Street-walker). It involves knowing and avoiding entanglements with the law or organized crime, making professional contacts, calming or escaping from unruly or dangerous customers, and various techniques of professional seduction. It also includes a detailed knowledge of birth control and disease prevention techniques available to the character's culture and Tech Level.

Punning (Mental/Average)

Defaults to Bard-3

Prerequisite: Language Skill 13+

The ability to make humorous, impromptu puns. Competitive punning and tall-tale telling are fully described on pp. 59-65.

This skill can be used to allow a character who's a much better punster than his player. However, the GM should always encourage his players to make up their own puns, rather than making Punning rolls, whenever possible. Particularly impres-

sive impromptu punning in a given session should be grounds for a character point bonus.

GMs running punning contests at Callahan's should remember that Punning skill decreases the more the competitors drink. These skill penalties are covered in the advanced drink-ing rules.

A character with Compulsive Behavior: Punning is a paronomasiac. This is a -5 point disadvantage.

Temporal Electronics (Mental/Hard)

Defaults to

Temporal Operation-6 or other Electronics-5

Prerequisite: Temporal Physics

This is an Electronics skill specialty (see p. B43) that deals with building and repairing time machines. Its practitioners are usually called "temporal engineers," just because "electron-icist" is such an obnoxious word, but this is *not* an Engineering skill.

There is no default for persons from cultures without time travel. The only contemporary native with this skill is the Meddler's brother, though the PCs might meet some Time Police temporal engineers, visiting our time from the future. Most Harmonian time travelers will not bother with this skill except as a hobby – the Harmonians have a post-electronic technology, and wouldn't worry about learning Temporal Electronics any more than a modern person would worry about learning to chip flint points.

Robert Trebor used a version of this skill – Parachronic Electronics – to establish the gateway to the mirror dimension in "Mirror/roirriM Off the Wall."

Temporal Operation (Mental/Average)

Defaults to

Temporal Electronics-2

This is the skill of running time machines. Successful Operation rolls get the travelers precisely to the target place and time, without unpleasant side effects. Failed rolls may cause them to arrive a week too early, 15 feet in the air, without some of their equipment or suffering from Timesickness (see *GURPS Time Travel*, p. T33). The GM may establish a "failure table," or just make it up as he goes along.

Harmonians do not need this skill to operate an Interface Screen, any more than a modern human needs a "Vacuum Operation" skill to vacuum a rug.

A variation of this skill, "Parachronic Operation," deals with transdimensional interfaces.

Temporal Physics (Mental/Very Hard)

Defaults to

Temporal Electronics-6, or Physics/TL9+ -4

Prerequisite: Physics (TL9+)

This is the theoretical science of time travel. Temporal Physics (TL16) is the only Time Travel skill studied by Harmonian Time Travelers. It allows the practitioner to mathematically figure the odds of a given intervention or anachronism skewing history into an inconvenient or catastrophic path. (Temporal intervention remains a chancy business at best – Temporal Physics can help the PC gauge probabilities, but it provides no guarantees.)

Drinking and Intoxication

*We was feeling mighty fine as we crossed the city line
Suckin' whiskey and a-whistlin' at the girls
But the next saloon we try someone wants to black my eye
'Cause he doesn't like my brown and shaggy curls
So then a fist come out of orbit, knocked me clean across the
floor
But I was pretty drunk and didn't even care
And I was pretty disappointed when the coppers hit the joint
As I was makin' my rebuttal with a chair
But the coppers came a cropper 'cause I made it to the crapper
And departed by the ventilator shaft
Met my buddies in the alley as they slipped out through the
galley
And we ran and ran and laughed and laughed and laughed
Yeah there's nothin' like drinkin' up a windfall
We was drunker than a monkey with a skinful
We wuz so goddamn drunk that it was sinful
And I think I ain't sober yet*

— "The Drunkard's Song,"
from "The Law of Conservation of Pain"



Callahan's is, after all, a place where people go to drink. And when people drink they often get drunk. Here we present very detailed rules for drinking and intoxication in *GURPS*. These rules will *not* be needed every time a character states he's having a drink. Often it will be sufficient for the GM to

hand the player the Intoxication Table, and simply ask him how drunk his character plans to get that night. However, if alcoholic intake is an intrinsic part of a roleplaying adventure these rules can add an extra dimension to the action.

Say, for example, that several dozen bikers burst unannounced into Callahan's and declare that they will trash the place unless one of the regulars can drink their leader under the table. Or perhaps the GM knows that a Merman from the lost city of Atlantis is going to flop through Callahan's door at half-past-midnight, and he wants to know just how drunk the PCs will be at that moment.

These rules will also be useful in many non-Callahan's campaigns (particularly the *Fantasy*, *Swashbucklers* and *Old West* genres). Just how drunk is your barbarian by the time the big tavern brawl starts up, and how hung over is he the next day, when it's time to leave for the adventure?

Each beverage is assigned an alcohol rating from 1 to 20, with a 1 to 2.5 for beer or diluted wine, and a 20 for pure alcohol. (In general, the alcohol rating will be equal to 10% of the drink's proof, rounded up.) This rating is then multiplied by the number of ounces of liquid in each serving, to give an alcohol rating *per round*. This should be recorded by the player, and each subsequent drink should be added, in a running total. For example, if a character has 2 12-oz. dark beers (alcohol rating 2, for a per-round rating of 24), his total should read 24+24, or 48.

Each character has a Tolerance for alcohol, equal to twice his HT. Persons of unusual size or weight may receive additional modifiers – see below.

Each time a character's total intake reaches a multiple of his Tolerance, he rolls 1d and divides the roll by half, rounding up, to produce a result between 1 and 3. This roll determines the drinker's current position on the Intoxication Table, below. The Intoxication rolls *increase by +1* on *each* roll after the first.

Example: Shorty Steinitz has a HT of 10 and a normal metabolism, so his Tolerance is 2×10 , or 20. Suppose he drank those two 12-ounce beers. After the first one, he would make an unmodified Intoxication roll (because it's his first roll). The second beer would make his total consumption 48, which is another multiple of his Tolerance, so he'd roll again – this time at +1. His next roll, if he continues to drink, would be at +2, his forth roll at +3, and so on.

As long as he continues drinking, a character's intoxication level can *only go up*, never down. For example, say that Shorty rolled a 3 on his first roll – Cheerful/Mellow. His second roll is a 1, a result in the "not intoxicated" range. But Shorty does *not* sober up – he remains at level 1. If his third roll is a 1 (with +2 by now) his intoxication level will not change, but if he rolls a 2 or 3, his intoxication level increases to the indicated level.

It is possible to skip levels on the table below, going (for instance) directly from level 5 to level 7. If you skip a step, ignore its special effects – for instance, if you skip step 9, you're much less likely to vomit.

Alcohol Content Table

The following is a table listing the most common types of alcoholic beverage and their typical alcohol percentages. Conveniently, most alcoholic *drinks* contain approximately the same amount of alcohol (1 12-oz. beer = 1 4-oz. glass of wine = 1 4-oz. mixed drink = 1 2-oz. shot = 1 ounce of pure alcohol).



<i>Beverage</i>	<i>Proof</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Alcohol Rating (per oz.)</i>	<i>Beverage</i>	<i>Proof</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Alcohol Rating (per oz.)</i>
Beer, dark	—	8-9%	2	Schnapps	60-80	30-40%	6-8
Beer, light	—	2%	1	Sherry	—	20%	4
Beer, normal	—	4%	1	Tequila	80-100	40-50%	8-10
Brandy	40-50	20-25%	4-5	Vodka	80-120	40-60%	8-12
Everclear (pure alcohol)	190	95%	19	Whiskey (includes bourbon, scotch and rye)	90-120	45-60%	9-12
Gin	80-100	40-50%	8-10	Wine, cheap	—	10%	2
Moonshine	120-170	60-85%	12-17	Wine, fortified	—	25%	5
Most Liqueurs (Kahlua, Amaretto, Triple-Sec, etc.)	40-50	20-25%	4-5	Wine, port	—	40%	8
Rum	80-100	40-50%	8-10	Wine, table	—	12-15%	2-3

Intoxication Table

1 or 2. Not intoxicated.

3. Cheerful/Mellow

Your current mood is pleasantly heightened. +1 to all IQ-based rolls in any pursuit requiring creativity or imagination. This level of Intoxication won't help you run a chemistry experiment or debug a computer program (or hurt you, either), but it might help you win a punning contest or paint a picture. -1 to all Will rolls.

4. Elated

You start to act a bit silly. -2 to all Will rolls, lose the +1 for creative pursuits.

5. Boisterous

You are loud and restless. -3 to Will Rolls, -1 to other IQ rolls and IQ-based skills. -1 to rolls vs. DX or DX-based skills.

6. Unsteady

The alcohol begins to affect your reflexes and perceptions. -3 to Will Rolls, -2 to IQ and DX rolls.

7. Drowsy

You become lethargic and pensive. -3 to IQ rolls (including Will rolls), -3 to DX rolls. Make a HT roll to stay awake. If you fail, you doze off, or feel so sleepy that you leave the party.

8. Weaving

Your reflexes and responses are seriously impaired. You can't walk straight or carry on a coherent conversation. -3 to IQ and Will rolls, -5 to DX rolls. Make a HT roll at -2. If you fail, you doze off, or feel so sleepy that you leave the party.

9. Vomit

You become physically ill. You may avoid vomiting on a roll vs. HT-3, but *only* if you stop drinking entirely for the rest of the night – if you continue drinking, you *will* vomit. On a critical failure, you are unable to make it to the restroom or similar appropriate place without throwing up. Whether you actually vomit or not, you don't feel well – you must make a Will roll (at current penalties, as #6, above) to continue drinking, unless you are an alcoholic or distraught (see below), in which case you must make a Will roll to *stop*.

10. Surly/Spacey

If you're in a good mood (see below) you become giddy and incoherent – you think everybody is your best friend. If you're in a foul mood, you become paranoid, and will snap at anybody who tries to approach you. You do not feel well – make an unmodified HT roll to avoid vomiting, then another (whether you vomit or not). If you fail the second HT roll you find yourself losing consciousness – you will pass out in no more than 3d × 10 minutes, or whenever you get to a place where you can rest, whichever comes first. You will remain unconscious for 2d+6 hours. If you make the second HT roll, you may make a Will roll (at current minuses) to continue drinking, unless you're an Alcoholic or distraught (see below), in which case you have to make the Will roll to *stop* drinking.

11. Belligerent/Out of It

If your mood is good, you enter an unresponsive "blissed out" state. You must make an IQ roll at current minuses to notice even things which directly affect you (somebody is speaking to you, somebody is stealing your wallet, the building is on fire). If your mood is bad you become belligerent, behaving as though you had the Bully disadvantage, and challenging all comers to fight. If you get in a fight, you're at -3 to

all attack rolls and active defenses (yes, your DX is higher if you're in a belligerent state than if you're equally drunk but not belligerent – adrenaline), but you take punishment as though you had High Pain Threshold. After $2d \times 10$ minutes of this behavior (or if physically restrained for more than 1d minutes), you must make two HT rolls and a Will roll as above. If you fail the second HT roll, you will lose consciousness in no more than $2d \times 10$ minutes. If you make all three rolls, you continue drinking and behaving in a belligerent/out of it fashion until you come to your next intoxication roll.

12. Violent/Delusional

You become temporarily unhinged by the alcohol. Make a Will roll at current penalties. If you succeed, you realize that the alcohol is making you crazy. You stop drinking and go home to bed. If you fail, roll 1d. On a 1-5 you start breaking glass, turning over tables and generally destroying everything in sight. If anybody tries to stop you, you will attack them as though you were Berserk. After 3d minutes of destruction, or after winning a fight, you must make two HT rolls and a Will roll as #8, above, to remain conscious and continue drinking. If you fail the second HT roll you will lose consciousness after 3d minutes. If you make the second HT roll, you will demand more alcohol and drink yourself to your next intoxication roll. If alcohol is withheld, you will fly into another destructive rage.

On a 4-6 you are menaced by bizarre and threatening hallucinations. The GM will tell you what you *think* you see, and you will react as though it were real. If you're lucky you might just flail around a lot and look like a crazy fool, but you might also destroy property and injure yourself or others in your struggle to escape or destroy the hallucinations.

13. Pass Out

You pass out cold. You may make a roll vs. HT -3 to stay conscious for an additional 1d minutes – long enough to stretch out on a car seat, floor or gutter. Otherwise you pass out right where you are, possibly taking damage from falling off your barstool. Once you're asleep, you must make a final HT roll to avoid vomiting. Vomiting will not wake you up. If you vomit while passed out, roll 1d. If you roll a 6, you are choking on your own vomit – you immediately begin suffocating as per the rules on p. B122. You will die unless somebody else clears your windpipe for you (successful First Aid roll or default at +5 required). Barring tragedy, you will sleep for $2d+9$ hours.

14. Alcoholic Coma

You go into an alcoholic coma. While in the coma, you must make a HT roll every 10 minutes. Each failed roll reduces your HT by a further -1. For each full 6 points of HT lost, you *permanently* lose 1 point of IQ. If HT reaches 0, you die.

You must continue rolling until: 1) the alcohol is purged from your system via a stomach pump or equivalent treatment; 2) you make a critical success on the HT roll; 3) you die.

If you haven't vomited yet during your drinking bout (and you don't have the Susceptibility to Poison disadvantage), someone else can induce vomiting (successful First Aid roll required), which will let you roll vs. HT. If you succeed, you

will take 1d-3 points damage from the shock to your system, but will otherwise simply be passed out, as above. If not, you will be in very serious danger of death unless you get medical attention.

Special Modifiers

Certain advantages, disadvantages and skills will greatly change the character's tolerance for alcohol.

Alcohol Tolerance: Increases your Tolerance level. See p. 44.

Alcohol-Related Quirks: See p. 46. You are subject to various minor inconveniences or embarrassments when you drink.

Alcoholism: Alcoholics roll on the Intoxication Table normally (except as noted above), except they must check on their first drink to see if it triggers a binge. An alcoholic on a binge will always drink to at least Intoxication Level 9 if he can, after which he *may* feel bad enough to stop. However, while most people have to make Will rolls to *continue* drinking past the point where they become ill, an Alcoholic (whether he's on a binge or not) must make a Will roll to *stop*. Alcoholics will very often drink until they pass out.

Susceptibility to Poison: see p. 48.

Carousing: Anytime a HT or Will roll is called for on the Intoxication Table, the character may substitute his Carousing skill level (but remember that Will rolls cannot be more than 14, regardless of IQ or – in this instance – Carousing skill).

Body Size

Dwarfism: A character with Dwarfism automatically has a -5 to his Tolerance. Thus a dwarf with HT 12 would have a Tolerance of 19 ($12 \times 2 - 5$).

Gigantism: A character with Gigantism adds 8 to his Tolerance. Thus a giant with HT 11 would have a Tolerance of 30.

Fat: A fat character gets a +5 to his Tolerance. A Very Fat character gets a +10.

Overweight: An Overweight character gets a +3 to his Tolerance.

Skinny: A Skinny character gets a -3 to his Tolerance.

Shyness/Cowardice

Alcohol tends to make people more outgoing. Shy characters reduce the severity of their shyness by -1 level per intoxication level, beginning at Level 5: Boisterous. For this purpose there are considered to be four levels of shyness: Crippling, Severe, Mild and quirk. Thus even the shyest individual is able to function normally by the time they reach intoxication level 8.

Characters with the Cowardice disadvantage may forget about their disadvantage entirely at Intoxication Level 10+. Cowardice will *not* restrain a character's unpleasant or violent behavior at levels 8-10.

Other Modifiers:

Pacing Oneself: A character may declare before he starts drinking that he is "pacing himself." This means that he is drinking no more alcohol than his Tolerance each hour. In addition to making fewer Intoxication Rolls than those who

aren't pacing themselves, he will receive a -2 modifier on each Intoxication Roll. Anyone drinking only beverages with an alcohol rating of 1 is automatically considered to be pacing himself – a human can drink only so much liquid. Alcoholics on a binge, or distraught characters (see below), may not pace themselves.

Eating: If a character eats at least one ounce of solid food between Intoxication Rolls, he gets a -1 to his next roll. Eating larger quantities of food will not increase this modifier.

Empty Stomach: If a character has not eaten a meal in the last 6 hours, he is at +2 to all Intoxication Rolls.

Physical Exertion: A character who has been exerting himself physically (for example, doing an hour or more of heavy labor, or getting in a fight of any length) will get a -2 to all Intoxication rolls for the first *hour* after he stops exerting himself – his metabolism is working faster, and processing the alcohol more efficiently.

Drugs: A character is drinking alcohol while under the influence of drugs will be at +1 to +10 to all intoxication rolls. +1 might be a mild over-the-counter cold remedy, and +10 would be a powerful mind-altering drug like PCP or cocaine. Certain drugs may be treated as poisons when mixed with alcohol, at the GM's discretion.

The GM may assess further modifiers for any other special circumstances which may arise.

Determining Mood

At Intoxication Levels 10 and 11, the mood of the drinker becomes very important. The GM may require a drinker who reaches these levels to roll 1d. On a 1-3, the drinker's mood is fair, on a 4-6 it's foul. This roll can be modified by plus or minus 1-5, depending on the character's mood when he started drinking, and events that happened during the evening. For instance, getting mugged or cheated would give someone a foul mood, while receiving a cash bonus or being with an attractive member of the opposite sex would tend to make one cheerful. However, a natural roll of 1 *always* indicates a good mood, and a natural 6 is *always* a bad mood, regardless of other modifiers.

Characters with the disadvantages Bully, Bad Temper or Berserk will always be on the violent side, unless they roll a natural 1 – other modifiers are irrelevant. Also, a character with none of the above disadvantages may take the quirk Surly Drunk, which likewise insures that he will become unpleasant except on a natural 1. Characters with the disadvantage Pacifism will get a -2 to all die rolls, and characters with the Common Sense advantage will become unpleasant only on a natural 6.

The character should reroll his mood each time he passes a new Tolerance multiple, since dramatic mood swings are a hallmark of the extreme drunk.

A character who's this drunk is *not* in complete control of his actions. The GM is free to dictate a PC's behavior, if he feels the player is not adequately roleplaying his character's drunkenness – for example, backing off from a fight just because the odds are bad, when he's supposed to be belligerent, or taking an active part in the proceedings, when he's supposed to be surly, or not reacting appropriately to hallucinations.

Drinking While Distraught

At certain times, a character may become mentally distraught. Possible reasons for such a state might be the recent loss of a Ally, Patron or Dependent, inadvertently but thoroughly breaking a Vow or violating a Code of Honor or Sense of Duty, or rolling a 20 or more on the Fright Check Table in the recent past.

A distraught individual will find his ability to drink responsibly greatly impaired. Once he starts to drink he will continue to drink (assuming that alcohol remains available) to at least level 6 on the Intoxication Table, and even then he must make a Will Roll (at current minuses) to stop drinking, or drink until he passes out. The drinker can try a new Will Roll each time he makes a new intoxication roll.

If the GM rules that the character is in a distraught state, and the character has nothing else to do to take his mind off his problems, the GM can mandate that he make a Will roll, or seek out a bar and begin a drinking spree.

Sobering Up

The only way to sober up is to stop drinking. For each half hour that a character refrains from drinking anything at all, he makes a HT roll. If he succeeds, his Intoxication Level decreases by 1. A character in the process of sobering up does *not* need to make any additional HT or IQ rolls as his Intoxication Level decreases – he just gradually loses his attribute penalties.

Sobering Shock

News or an event of a particularly shocking nature can reduce a character's Intoxication Level immediately, as his body floods with adrenaline. If the character receives some shocking news (a loved one is sick or in danger, his house is on fire), or becomes involved in an emergency situation (he's violently attacked, or the building he's in catches fire), his Intoxication Level will immediately drop by -3, at the GM's discretion.

Hangovers

If a drinker overindulges in alcohol, he'll probably end up with a hangover (unless he has the No Hangover advantage; see p. 44). Any time a character achieves a value of 2 or greater on the Intoxication Chart he risks a hangover when he stops.

To check for hangover, the drinker must roll 1d+3 at the end of each drinking session. If this roll is equal to or less than the highest (not necessarily last) Intoxication Level of the session, the character has a hangover. The hangover kicks in 1d hours after the end of the drinking session, or on awakening, if the character fell asleep before the hangover began. It will last 1 hour for each point by which the hangover roll was missed (minimum 1). "Hair of the dog that bit you" – a single stiff drink taken immediately upon awakening – will reduce this time by an hour (drinking more than one drink will not add to this effect, only make the character drunk again, putting off the hangover). Other, more elaborate remedies may have a more dramatic effect, at the GM's discretion.

A hungover character will be at a cumulative -1 to all IQ- and DX-based rolls per each hour's duration of the hangover.

Thus someone with a 4-hour hangover will start the day at -4 to DX and IQ. This penalty decreases hourly as the hangover progresses.

An adult dose of aspirin, or an equivalent, will give a +2 modifier to this penalty beginning ½ hour after the aspirin is taken, and cuts the time of the hangover down by an equivalent amount. (The modifier is +3 if the aspirin is taken *between* the end of the drinking bout and the onset of the hangover, but the GM should require both an IQ and a Will roll at current penalties for the drunk character to remember to take aspirin, and to actually motivate himself to take it.)

A character may take the quirk Horrible Hangovers, which adds -3 to the attribute penalty and duration of all hangovers. (GMs may allow characters with Alcoholism, or Compulsive Behavior: Heavy Drinking, to take Horrible Hangovers as a -5 point disadvantage.)

Example: Billy Joe Bob drinks himself to the *Belligerent/Out of it* stage (#11 on the table above) before he stops drinking and goes to sleep. He rolls a 5 on his hangover roll (missing his Intoxication Level by 6), so when he wakes up, he's got a doozy. When he gets out of bed, he's at -6 to DX and IQ. He stumbles to the kitchen and takes two aspirins (+2) and washes it down with a shot of bourbon (+1); in half an hour, he's down to only -3 penalties. After three more hours, he's back to normal.

Hyperesthesia

Hungover characters are more susceptible to pain than normal. Any sudden or shocking sensory input – a flash of light, a loud noise, a slap on the back – will be intensely painful. The character must make a Will roll (at current minuses) or be mentally stunned for 1 turn.

Characters who actually take damage while hungover must make a Will roll or be mentally stunned for a number of turns equal to their current IQ/DX penalty. Even if they make this roll, they should add their current IQ/DX penalty to their normal penalty to combat skills next turn.

Hungover characters with High Pain Threshold have normal penalties to DX and IQ, but may ignore the effects of hyperesthesia. Likewise, characters with the Light Hangovers advantage do not suffer from hyperesthesia.

Disclaimer

Please do not reality-check these rules. It might be fun to roleplay a drinking bout between your character and the president of the local Hell's Angels chapter – and these rules will allow you to do so – *but* (Mrs. Grundy take note) the above rules are in no way an endorsement or glorification of irresponsible drinking in real life. If you choose to drink real alcohol, instead of just pretending to drink in a roleplaying game, please do so legally and responsibly.

Drinking in Callahan's

The expression one too many has only a limited meaning at Callahan's Place. Mike operates on the assumption that his customers are grown-ups – he'll keep on serving you for as

long as you can stand up and order 'em intelligibly. But no one drunk drives home from Callahan's.

– “Fivesight”

Michael Callahan believes in allowing people to get as drunk as they feel they need to be. While Callahan doesn't approve of sodden drunkenness in his Place, he discourages it by keeping the atmosphere active and “merry” enough to make people want to stay alert and responsive, not by imposing arbitrary limits.

On the other hand, Callahan also believes that a real no-holds-barred bender can be cathartic, if the situation warrants. The best example of this is an old-fashioned Irish wake, more than one of which Callahan's has hosted in its time. On such occasions no attempt, active or passive, is made to restrain the patrons' intake.

The regulars are conditioned to respond instantly to anyone who comes to Callahan's looking for help or support. Consequently any expression of physical or emotional pain will act as a sobering shock on any regulars who observe it, as their empathy and instinct to offer consolation override the alcohol in their system.

Callahan and his regulars know countless drinking games, but they avoid games of the mindless “last one to pass out wins” variety. Drinking games at Callahan's tend towards the mentally or physically energetic, and often burn off more alcohol than the competitors are taking in (see p. 22).

Whenever a patron reaches intoxication level 5 and wants to continue drinking, Callahan demands their car keys before he will serve them. This does not apply to those who Callahan observes to be effectively pacing themselves, or to regulars who Callahan knows to have the Alcohol Tolerance advantage, unless they seem to be distraught, or are deliberately trying to exceed their capacity for any reason.

Nobody's ever gone into an alcoholic coma at Callahan's (Tommy Janssen – who has the Susceptibility to Poison disadvantage – once drank himself into a coma in Callahan's parking lot, but it wasn't Callahan's booze or Callahan serving it). And no one's ever injured himself falling off a barstool. If you pass out at Callahan's, there'll be someone there to catch you. Patrons who pass out in Callahan's are ferried safely home by Pyotr, or sometimes left to sleep it off on the army cot in Callahan's office.

Callahan's place is so charged with positive empathy that it's almost impossible for anyone who reaches Intoxication Levels 10 or 11 to become violent (mood becomes foul only on a mood roll of a natural 6, regardless of other modifiers). Occasionally strangers wander in already in such a state – they tend to remember their visit to Callahan's as a brief but very painful mistake. Intoxication Level 12 is also exceedingly rare – usually Callahan or the regulars can talk the drinker into going somewhere to sleep it off before this stage is reached. If a drinker does go into a berserk state in Callahan's, Fast Eddie and his blackjack usually see to it that he's sleeping peacefully before he can do more than minimal damage.

Those who drink themselves insensible at Callahan's, curiously enough, seldom wake up with hangovers. For the reason for this blessing, see the description of Pyotr, pp. 90-91.

4

CAMPAIGNING WITH CALLAHAN



The Callahan's stories are multi-faceted – they don't hit just one mood or theme. There are humorous romps like "Have You Heard the One . . ." and "Dog Day Evening," human dramas like "The Law of Conservation of Pain" and "A Voice is Heard in Ramah," and cosmic adventures like "Unnatural Causes" and "The Mick of Time." Any one of these can be used as a model for an entertaining night's roleplaying.

The Human Drama Campaign

"Lady," I said, "there's so much pain on your face that I just have to ask you, How come? If you don't want to tell me, then I'm prying."

She blinked. "And if you are?"

"The little guy with a face like a foot who has by now tiptoed up behind me will brush his blackjack across my occiput, and I'll wake up tomorrow with the same kind of head you're gonna have. Right, Eddie?"

"Dat's right, Jake," the piano man's voice came from just behind me.

She shook her head dizzily, then looked around at the friendly, attentive faces. "What the hell kind of place is this?"

Usually, we prefer to let newcomers figure that out for themselves, but I couldn't wait that long. "This is Callahan's. Most joints the barkeep listens to your troubles, but we happen to love this one so much that we all share his load. This is the place you found because you needed to." I gave it everything I had.

– "Fivesight"

This sort of adventure is probably the most representative of the Callahan's stories, while at the same time being the most atypical roleplaying challenge. In it, somebody with a problem wanders in to Callahan's, and the patrons have to help him find a solution.

Sometimes the solution to the problem can be as subtle as helping someone who's given up hope find a personal reason to go on living, as in "The Time-Traveler" or "A Voice is Heard in Ramah." Other times it requires direct action, as when the guys rescued Kathy Anders and Wally from the blame for Cass Anders' death in "Fivesight." In extreme circumstances, like Mickey Finn's first visit to the Place – "The Guy With the Eyes" – the consequences of failure can be literally world-shattering – or worse!

While it would be very difficult to build an entire campaign around this sort of plot exclusively, human dramas are, in many ways, the best sort of plot if *GURPS Callahan's* is being played as a change-of-pace or one-shot convention scenario.

The Stranger

The scenario will inevitably begin when a stranger walks into Callahan's place, with something on his mind.

Normally, the regulars will know right away that there's a problem (though there are exceptions, like Rachel, who was a regular for several months before anyone became aware of her concerns). First of all, the fact that the individual found Callahan's on his own at all is a tipoff – Callahan's isn't a easy place to stumble upon, and normally new patrons are brought to the tavern by a regular. If somebody wanders in to the tavern on his own, it's a better-than-even bet that he was drawn there by the probability nexus, because he *needed* to find Callahan's.

Punday Night

The oldest and simplest of Callahan's weekly contests, Punday Night follows the traditional "pun-off" format.

The rules are fully described in "The Time-Traveler" as follows:

Punday Night is a weekly attraction at Callahan's – if that's the word. Folks who come into the place for the first time on a Tuesday evening have been known to flee screaming into the night, leaving full pitchers of beer behind in their haste to be elsewhere. There's Sunday, see, and then there's Monday, and then there's Punday. And on that day, the boys begin assembling around seven-thirty, and after a time people stop piddling around with drafts and start lining up pitchers, and Fast Eddie gets up from his beat-up upright piano and starts pulling tables together. Everyone begins ever-so-casually jockeying for position, so important on Punday Night. Here and there the newer men can be heard warming up with one another, and the first groans are heard.

"Say, Fogerty, I hear tell Stacy Keach was engaged to the same girl three times. Every time the Big Day come due, she decided she couldn't stand him."

"Do tell."

"Yup. Then the late Harry Truman himself advised her, said, 'gal, if you can't stand the Keach, get out of the hitchin'."

And another three or four glasses hit the fireplace.

Of course the real regulars, the old-timers, simply sit and drink their beer and conserve their wit. They add little to the shattered welter of glass that grows in the fireplace – though the toasts, when they make them, can get pretty flashy.

Along about eleven Doc Webster comes waddling in from his rounds and the place hushes up. The Doc suffers his topcoat and bag to be taken from him, collects a beer-mug full of Peter Dawson's from Callahan, and takes his place at the head of the assembled tables like a liner coming into port. Then, folding his fingers over his great belly, he addresses the group.

"What is the topic?"

At this point the fate of the evening hangs in balance. Maybe you'll get a good topic, maybe you won't – and the only way to explain what I mean is by example:

Continued on next page . . .

Punday Night (Continued)

"Fast Eddie," says Callahan, "how about a little inspirational music?"

"That would bring the problem into scale," says Doc Webster, and the battle is joined.

"I had already noted that," comes the hasty riposte from Shorty Steinitz, and over on his right Long-Drink McGonnigle snorts.

"You've clefted me in twain," he accuses, and Tommy Janssen advises him to take a rest, and by the time that Callahan can point out that "This ain't a music-hall, it's a bar," they're off and running. Once the topic is established, it goes in rotation clockwise from Doc Webster; and if you can't supply a stinker when your turn comes up, you're out. By one o'clock in the morning, it's usually a tight contest between the real pros, all of them acutely aware that anyone still in the lists by closing gets his night's tab erased. It has become a point of honor to drink a good deal on Punday Night to show how confident you are. When I first noticed this and asked Callahan whose idea Punday had been in the first place, he told me he couldn't remember. One smart fella, that Callahan.

To run Punday Night as part of a role-playing scenario, the GM should allow the players a choice. Either they can come up with an actual, on-topic pun, or they can roll against their character's punning skill. If they fail a skill roll, they're out for the night. GM's are advised to prepare a few stinkers in advance, to spice up the scenario at appropriate intervals.

Pacing is all-important on Punday Night. Competitions normally last 3 hours, and no more than 30 seconds can pass between puns – that's upwards of 500 puns on any given Punday. Realistically, taking into account a reasonable attrition rate, this means that the evening's winners would probably have to pun at least 100 times each. To save time, though, the GM can elect to play fewer rounds, say 10 or 20. If a justification is needed, he can say that the PCs sailed through the preliminaries, and the roleplayed competition represents only the last section of the evening. Players who seldom or never resort to skill rolls during Punday competition may be rewarded with extra character points.

Occasionally, at the end of the evening, the finalists will mutually agree to a final winner-takes-all pun-off. This is usually an elaborate pun in the tradition of Tall Tales Night (see below).



Second, Callahan's regulars have such highly-developed empathy – particularly for emotional pain – that it will usually be immediately obvious if the new guy is in need of help, no matter how stoic his facade.

And finally, due to the unique nature of the clientele that finds its way to Callahan's, it is often obvious to *anybody* that this is someone with a problem – he'd have to, if he had two heads (for example).

Once the subject of the adventure has entered and been identified, the next step is to induce him to tell his story. This is where Callahan's rule against prying becomes important – Fast Eddie's blackjack will always be ready to reprove a regular who asks an impertinent question. The preferred method of breaking the ice is to introduce the newcomer to the Option (see p. 6) and give him the opportunity to name the source of the problems in a toast. Once the subject has been broached, the regulars let the newcomer know that if he's ready to talk, they're ready to listen.

The Story

Eventually, the stranger will be induced to tell his tale. In the *Callahan's* books, the character's story often is *the* story. The solution to his problem is more or less pro-forma. For example, in "The Time-Traveler" the point of the tale was to hear Tom Hauptman's tragic but fascinating life story. The solution to his problem – finding a reason to go on living and getting a job from Callahan – required little thought or action on the regulars' part.

This sort of event is obviously unsuitable as a self-contained adventure, for the simple reason that the PCs won't have a chance to *do* anything except sit and listen – and that's not roleplaying.

However, such stories *do* have a place in an ongoing campaign. First of all, they're probably the best way to introduce new PCs to the Callahan's campaign – the character stumbles on the bar in an agitated state (or perhaps his visit is prescribed by Doc Webster), tells the people what's eating him, and in return is offered sound advice and a formal welcome into Callahan's family.

This works just as well as a way for the GM to introduce new NPCs who he wants to have ready for some important role in the future – as long as their stories aren't *too* long and involved.

For roleplaying purposes, however, the best personal stories are those which pose a problem which the teller *cannot* solve himself, and which *must* be solved – and soon.

Normally such stories will be such that they'd probably *never* be believed anywhere else except Callahan's, involving things which are, on the surface, impossible. Or at least things which nobody in his right mind would ever believe without hard, eyewitness proof. Consequently, the teller will probably be hesitant to tell his story at first, for fear of seeming crazy. Often, he'll finally be convinced to talk only as a sort of challenge – the regulars almost encourage an attitude that says, "You guys think you've heard it all? Well listen to *this!*"

As the story progresses, it rapidly becomes obvious that the listeners are taking the teller's words at face value (although the guys at Callahan's are smart enough to realize that what the teller *thinks* happened may bear little or no resemblance to what's actually going on), and the teller will gain enthusiasm, anticipating the relief of finally getting the problem off his chest.

Once the story is over, it should be obvious to the PCs what the problem is, what the consequences of failure are, and how long they have to take care of it. Often time will be of the essence. People seem to find Callahan's most often right at their personal crisis point – sometimes mere hours, or even minutes from catastrophe.

The Solution

Everything prior to this point has been preliminaries. Once the story has been told, the roleplaying really begins.

The task before the PCs is to figure out a way for the newcomer to solve or cope with his unique problem. They'll do this simply by brainstorming – asking questions about ambiguous parts of the story (once the story is told and the cards are on the table, all rules against asking leading questions are off), and proposing different theories for the tale-teller to corroborate or shoot down.

The original story should have given the players the who, what, when and where of the situation. Sometimes the first question that needs answering will be *why*? What are the *real* reasons behind the teller's problems? So the teller has been regularly abducted by aliens since he was three? Why him? And what do they want?

More often, though, "why" is a trap. Worrying about whys in the heart of a probability nexus is an insanity-inducing exercise. If too much inquiry into the whys of the situation are leading the campaign up a blind alley, the GM (probably using the character of Callahan himself) needs to bring the problem back to the subject. Nobody worried about why Rachel was immortal, or why the MacDonald brothers were telepathic. They were there and they needed help, and that was all that mattered. So the regulars just concentrated on the second question . . . How?

The real crux of the scenario is finding out how the newcomer can eliminate his problem, or learn to live with it. Essentially, the PCs are faced with a puzzle to solve. While it may not sound like much fun sitting around solving someone else's problems, with the right players this sort-of scenario can be as exciting as fighting your way through armies of enemies. The fact that the decision is important to at least one person and possibly to many more – sometimes to the whole world – gives the adventure the necessary dramatic tension, while the normally-bizarre nature of problems that find their way to Callahan's provide a sense of the fantastic. The fact that all the weird stuff happens technically "off stage" is irrelevant.

Tall Tales Night

Tall Tales Night is an advanced variant of Punday Night. It tests not only the competitors' adroitness at punning, but also their overall story-telling ability.

Callahan begins the Tall Tales Night festivities by calling out for a topic. First tale told decides the topic for the rest of the evening, but often the competitors are reluctant to go first, since the first story seldom wins. Each competitor in turn stands up and tells an elaborate story ending in a torturous pun (the pun isn't mandatory, but punless tales seldom win). The winner is declared by general affirmation. Usually the winning story is the last one of the evening – this isn't a formal rule, but sheer common sense. If you can't top the last story, you're better off saving anything you've got stored up for future refinement and use, rather than wasting it in a futile effort. Winner gets his bar tab refunded for the evening. A competitor can tell more than one tall tale per night, but they seldom do, for the obvious reason that most folks use up their best effort first.

If anyone among the competitors or spectators can predict the punch line of the tall tale, he can shout it out and the teller is out of the competition. However, the best of Callahan's tale-tellers will often lead up to an obvious punchline, then when somebody guesses it they'll quietly correct them, using *another* punch line that they had prepared, that turns the obvious one on its ear. This is considered an extremely prestigious technique. If Callahan thinks the topic is too easy, or the competitors are all advanced tale-tellers, he can start calling for a moral – a *second* pun, to be appended to the basic punchline, in the form of a fractured aphorism, like "no nose is good nose," or "two heads are bitter, then none."

The actual art of the tall tale (or shaggy dog story, or groaner) is demonstrated in the following sidebar.

Continued on next page . . .





Tall Tales Night (Continued)

To simulate Tall Tales Night in a role-playing context, the GM should require everyone to make a Bard roll and a Punning roll (see p. 52). If both succeed the player is in the running. The sum of the amounts by which these rolls were made is the basic score (the player can elect to forego the Punning roll entirely, if he prefers). If morals are required, that's another Punning roll, which doesn't add to the base score if made (except on a critical success, which is worth +3), but reduces the base score by -5 if it's failed. If the contestant makes either of the first two rolls with a natural 3, or makes critical successes on both the first two rolls, competition stops and he's immediately declared the winner. If he wishes, the competitor may make up to three additional Punning rolls, representing sub-puns worked into the story before the punchline. Each extra pun adds +1 to the overall score (or +3 on a critical success), but a failed roll on a sub-pun subtracts 3 from the overall score.

If a competitor wishes to roll again, he may, after everybody has had a turn. But his overall score will be at a cumulative -2 for each attempt past the first.

Ties at the end of the competition can be resolved as a contest of skills between the survivors, alternating Bard and Punning rolls.

However, if a player knows an on-topic groaner, he may elect to tell it, rather than rolling for his character. Real tall-tales will *always* beat rolled tall-tales, except on an "instant win" critical success, as described above. But if any other players have heard the story, or can correctly guess the punch line, they can call it out and put the player out of the competition, just like in the stories. If more than one player comes up with a good tall tale, the night's winner is decided by a vote among the players, with the GM breaking ties.

Gming Problem-Solving Scenarios

In writing a human drama adventure, the most important thing to remember is not to script too tightly. Gaming doesn't work as efficiently as writing, and not all players are as clever and intuitive as the guys at Callahan's. If the GM expects players to deduce his fiendishly clever plot twist with the ease found in the stories, he's probably in for an evening of blind alleys and frustration.

The GM is much better advised to prepare for several broad eventualities, and let the PCs determine which one is correct. This sort of adventure is not so much a hide-and-seek game, with the GM hiding the goal, and the players looking for it, as it is a collaboration between the players and the GM to construct a satisfying short story together.

This doesn't mean that the first half-bright brainstorm that the PCs come up with should automatically become *the official word*. Revealing blind alleys can be an important part of the problem-solving process. The trick is to keep the blind alleys a source of entertaining dramatic tension, and not let them become a source of frustration and tedium.

NPCs

If the PCs get off on some track that the GM just doesn't want to deal with, his best means to get them back on track is to use the characters from the stories – Doc, Jake, Long-Drink, Callahan himself and all the rest. Doc could point out the crucial logical flaw in the hypothesis that the PCs are enthusiastically constructed, or Fast Eddie could make some innocent remark that could send the enquiry in a whole new, more profitable direction.

The danger of this is that the NPCs can not be allowed to take over the action. It's no fun for the players to set around all night watching Doc, Jake and Callahan solve their adventure.

One way to bypass this pitfall is to use two GMs. One GM plots out the adventure and plays the role of the person needing help. The other one takes the part of all the NPCs from the stories – or as many of them as seem necessary to resolving the situation at hand.

The two GMs should *not* share the details of the plot, except in the most general terms. This will allow the character playing the regulars to participate as a real player in the scenario – guessing what's going on based on the same clues that the players are getting, and putting his ideas in the words of whichever regular seems most appropriate to a given guess or insight. Thus Callahan, Doc and Jake become just another set of characters on the scene, rather than GM's tools to be used or discarded when convenient.

But, if the players do start to get off into the sort of blind-alley trap discussed above, the GMs can collaborate to steer the adventure back on course, through a passed note or quick conference.

Mixing Intro Stories and Human Drama Adventures

Several of the stories mingle the introduction of a new regular character with a more exotic problem to solve. For example, in "The Guy With the Eyes," Tommy Janssen rejects his slavery to heroin immediately before Mickey Finn rejects his slavery to the Masters. And in "Unnatural Causes" Tony Telasco tells the story of what he had to give up to regain his self-respect after Vietnam, then Broodseven-Sub-Two Raksha faces a similar choice in his desire for absolution.

This technique can be profitably used by GMs when it's time to introduce new player characters.

For example, say a player comes to his GM with a new character he wants to play – a New York cop who didn't find out until after he shot that the short drug dealer with the .38 was really just a 9-year-old-kid with a cap pistol.

Together the GM and the player cook up an introduction for the character. The cop has been cleared of criminal charges, and Internal Affairs has just ruled that he acted properly. Tomorrow he's supposed to get his gun back and return to the streets . . . but he's not sure if he wants to. He's beginning to question the things that made him want to be a cop in the first place.

Disgusted by the city, he has to get out. Not knowing where to go, he recalls a cop named Gonzalez who told him about a bar he liked out on Long Island, off 25-A. He decides to see if he can find it. He does.

After making his toast ("to innocence") and telling his story, the player will decide whether his character is going to keep being a cop or start to build a whole new way of life, based on the advice of the other PCs, and his best roleplaying instincts.

That's when the GM springs his surprise. After the cop's story, the other stranger that night, a steely-eyed man with short gray hair, makes a toast of his own – "to duty!"

This man is an Air Force colonel. Fifteen years ago he was a fighter pilot, who was scrambled to pursue a UFO. Following procedure, he eventually fired on the alien craft and destroyed it. He was secretly decorated, and eventually rose to his current post as the commander of a top-secret UFO task force in the Pentagon.

Over the years, the government has been slowly gathering intelligence on its alien visitors (through certain psychically-gifted individuals, who can sometimes pick up on the aliens' psionic communications). The colonel is now convinced that the craft he shot down was on a benign mission of scientific inquiry – they didn't answer his challenge simply because the aliens don't use radio.

Even worse, there is strong evidence that the aliens are returning, very soon, and that they want justice for the murder of their research crew. The Colonel's orders are specific and pragmatic – he is to engage and destroy the aliens on the first sign of hostile intent, in the interests of national security. He understands these orders, and even agrees, to a certain extent, with the rationale. He knows that despite their advanced technology, the aliens are not normally warlike, and will probably lose a military engagement with modern U.S. air power. However, deep down inside he keeps remembering his father telling him "two wrongs don't make a right."

He needs Callahan's people to help him figure out how to contact and pacify the aliens, without betraying his country.

Adventure Seed: The Haunted Trucker

One not-too-crowded night, Callahan's Place starts to shake like it was located on Long Beach, not Long Island. But the rattle isn't an earthquake – somebody's driven a semi into the parking lot.

A couple minutes later the driver walks in. He could be any age between 35 and 50, and he's as thin as a hermit on a fast, or a heroin addict. His eyes are horrible – amazingly bloodshot and baggy.

He orders coffee, black. Callahan asks him if he wants to try "God's Blessing" and the trucker says, "Why not?" But, when Callahan serves the drink the trucker pulls a large, mysterious black bottle out of his pocket,

Sample Tall Tales

Tall tales in the Callahan's sense can't be explained, they have to be illustrated. This unspeakable horror, from the pen of Steve Jackson, could come straight from the mouth of Long-Drink himself.

You can lead into this story several ways. Any mention of humor, and especially Monty Python, will give an excuse. So will any mention of espionage, smuggling, cryptography, or just weird books. If delivered with a corny British accent, it works even better.

* * *

Not many years ago, the British counter-spy team at MI-5 turned up a really cute little espionage operation. It had been going on under their noses for years; it was brazen, but very clever.

A Soviet spy ring had been collecting military information – something to do with submarines, I think, but it really doesn't matter. The point was that the man collecting the information was in a very high-security area. He had no access to radio equipment, microfilm, or any of the ways that a spy normally communicates. The information he was stealing was not compact, either – not the kind of thing you can write on a scrap of paper and toss over a wall.

So he cooked up a really clever scheme. Most of the men on base were Monty Python fans; there was even a little group that specialized in performing the better skits. One of the favorites was the "Spam" sketch. And they had even gone into the publishing business. They printed up a book entitled *Spam*. Inside, every page was the same: Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam. Over and over and over again. It sounds daft, but the troops had a lot of fun doing it. They advertised it in a newsletter for Python fans, and bookstores actually started sending in orders for it. They must have sold at least a hundred copies a week there for a while.

Anyway, our spy saw an opportunity here. He got word to his control to have a bookshop start placing regular orders for the Spam book. Every month or so, they'd get a case of a half-dozen copies. And the spy, who had joined the Python club, was in charge of shipping. So he'd mark those special books with a pattern of pinholes in the pages. It was time-consuming, but very effective.

Continued on next page . . .



Sample Tall Tales (Continued)

Now you'd think that this is just the sort of thing that a good security team would catch. And it should have been. But – as our clever spy had guessed – the Spam books had a peculiarly numbing effect on the inspectors. When they started leafing through those hundreds and hundreds of pages of “Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam,” their eyes glazed over. After a while they started passing the books through unopened.

The ring was finally blown when somebody on the other side turned coat. Otherwise, it could have gone on for years and years. The spy had found the perfect hiding place.

No one inspects the Spammish Repetition.

The specimens below won honors from the International Save the Pun Foundation as the Best Stressed puns of 1991. The International Save the Pun Foundation can be reached c/o John S. Crosbie: Chairman of the Bored, Box 5040, Station A., Toronto, Canada M5W 1N4.

As written, they're a bit sparse for Callahan's quality. The top-seeded Callahan's competitors usually spice up their delivery with involved asides and digressions, secondary puns and all manner of extra humorous garnish. Still, they can stand as the beginnings of a prize-winning tale, when the GM needs one in a hurry.

Continued on next page . . .

shakes several large, ominous black pills out into his hand, and before anyone can stop him, swallows them all at a gulp.

“Friend,” Callahan says, “It's none of my business what you do to stay awake on the road, but if you've just committed suicide in my Place, I'd appreciate a few minutes warning.”

At the words “stay awake,” the trucker goes into almost hysterical giggles, but when he calms down he assures Callahan that he'll be okay. Sure enough, after a few minutes he looks noticeably better.

He finishes his drink, and when he asks what he owes, that gives one of the regulars a chance to explain the option. He thinks it over for a minute, then toes the chalk line and toasts, “to sleep.”

Then he tells his story. His name is Willie Christianson, and he hasn't slept in two years. (In case the players don't know it, Doc Webster will be quick to point out that that's impossible – humans can't survive for much more than a week without sleep. Willie should be dead or insane – probably both.) The pills don't keep him awake – they just keep him alert, because even though he can't sleep, he still gets tired.

Willie says his trouble started when he was hauling a load over the Great Divide with his partner, Joe. They were behind schedule, and Willie fell asleep at the wheel and went over a steep bank. It wasn't a particularly high bank, but Joe was still killed instantly.

Willie got away with a mild concussion. He was taken to the hospital for observation overnight. Distraught over his friend's death, he was given a sleeping pill. But it didn't work, because every time he closed his eyes, Joe came in, sat on his bed and told him to wake up!

When Willie's sleeplessness persisted for a week, then another, the doctors became alarmed. (All the more so because some of the staff was claiming to also see Joe, sitting on the edge of Willie's bed at night). They started running tests. In the meantime, Willie's fatigue was becoming crippling.

One day, without his permission or any warning, Willie was transferred to a top-secret military hospital. Though just as bewildered as the other doctors, the government scientists were able to help, after a fashion. They gave Willie an experimental military wake-up pill that gave ordinary soldiers screaming hallucinations if they took more than one per month. Willie was soon taking three a day, and his required dosage has risen steadily ever since.

The government also gave Willie a job. In an unmarked truck, he hauls classified transcontinental cargoes solo – and non-stop, except for gas and short breaks. If asked what he's hauling, Willie will answer “I don't know, and even if I did, *you* don't want to. And don't ask me where my origin or destination are either – just don't ask.”

The pay is excellent, but between Joe and the constant fatigue, Willie hasn't enjoyed a minute of life since the accident. Under no circumstances will he leave any of his prescription behind for analysis. He makes everyone present solemnly promise not to try to follow him.

With that, Willie will take his leave, so he can make his delivery on time. But when the regulars make a sincere offer to help, he'll say he'll be back through in about two weeks, and he should have more time on his hands.

Willie shows up on schedule, looking no more happy or healthy than the last time. If the regulars decide to take him back to the cot in Callahan's office, and watch him try to sleep, they can. He'll give every appearance of rapidly dozing off, then his eyes will jerk open and he'll say “he's here.” The PCs will

see nothing, and after a minute or two Willie will relax and say, “now he’s gone.”

But, if the regulars attempt to hypnotize Willie (which Doc Webster can do), the result will be considerably more dramatic. Under deep hypnosis Joe will materialize – a stocky man wearing jeans, a sweat-stained shirt and a gimme cap. Like any self-respecting ghost he’s translucent and intangible. When Willie doesn’t rouse himself immediately, Joe will look confused and alarmed. If the regulars try to make contact, he’ll notice them, and they’ll hear his voice in his mind. “Willie can’t go to sleep. Willie can never sleep again.” If any attempt is made to reason with the ghost, or appeal to his compassion, Joe will look thoughtful and sad, then slowly fade away – but as soon as he does, Willie wakes up with a start. Further attempts at hypnosis will be futile.

Possible Explanation

Here’s one possible explanation for Willie’s troubles. Of course, the players might come up with something completely different.

Willie is a mutant with the powers of telepathy and photokinesis – he creates illusions out of light. His mutation was latent until, for some reason, it was activated by the accident. He doesn’t know about his powers.

Also because of his mutation, Willie no longer *needs* to sleep – but he doesn’t know that either! His constant fatigue is all psychosomatic. His precarious physical condition is not due to sleeplessness, but to chronic stress and (mostly) the powerful government stimulants (which would have killed him months ago if he had a normal human metabolism). “Joe” is a photokinetic manifestation of Willie’s subconscious – an unconscious attempt to explain his sleeplessness, using his guilt over his friend’s death.

With the proper psychological reconditioning (perhaps courtesy of the MacDonald brothers) Willie can break his psychological addiction to the idea of sleep, get rid of his fatigue and start to develop his powers.

Rannygazoo – Humorous Roleplaying

Callahan came around the bar, a red-headed glacier descending on the shabby man. The barkeep picked him up by the one existing lapel and the opposite collar, held him at arm’s length for a while, and sighed.

“I like a good gag as well as the next guy,” he said conversationally, “but that’s serious money in that hat. Now if you was to ask that dog his name, and he said ‘Ralph! Ralph!’ and then you was to ask him what’s on top of a house and he said ‘Roof! Roof!’ and then you was to ask him who was the greatest baseball player of all time and he said ‘Ruth! Ruth!’, why, I’d just naturally have to sharpen your feet and drive you into the floor. You would become like a Gable roof: Gone With the Wind. What I mean, there are very few gags I’ve never heard, and if yours is of that caliber you are in dire peril. Do we have a meeting of minds?” He was still holding the guy at arm’s length, the muscles of his arms looking like hairy manila, absolutely serene.

“I’m telling you the truth,” the guy yelped. “The dog can talk.”

Callahan slowly lowered him to the floor. “In that case,” he decided, “I will fade your thirty.” He went back behind the bar and produced an apple. “Would you mind putting this in your mouth?”

The guy blinked at him.

“I believe you implicitly,” Callahan explained, “but someone without my trusting nature might suspect you was a ventriloquist tryin’ to pull a fast one.”

Sample Tall Tales (Continued)

A scarcely-reported incident of the Desert Storm conflict grew out of the U.S. Military’s orders that chaplains assigned to the field would have to wear vestments bearing a desert camouflage pattern.

Fortunately, the chaplains found a liturgical supply house that not only carried the required garments but also, anticipating a quick victory for the U.S.-led coalition forces, had cut prices.

A sign outside proclaimed “War Surplice Sale.”

Two archaeologists searching for artifacts in Central America came upon an ancient stone wall bearing the carved figures of two men. One figure was standing on the ground looking up at the other, who appeared to be flying over him.

“What do you think, professor?” one archaeologist asked the other.

“Definitely Mayan,” the other replied, pointing at the lower figure. “And the one above him must be Supermayan.”

A dog owner had a pit bull that hated to walk. The dog would sit back and brace his feet so that the owner could move him only by dragging him by the leash. The owner finally gave up when he realized he was creating a bottomless pit.

When the painter, Harold Towne, was asked by the mayor of Santa Cruz, CA, to help build support for a new art gallery, public awareness was slow to awaken. But at long last, just before Christmas, the mayor was able to assure the famous painter that “Santa Cruz is coming to, Towne.”

The church mouse’s wife had her bags packed and was ready to walk out the door when her husband asked, “Why are you so unhappy? We have a roof over our heads and every day the kindly old preacher feeds us a handful of cheese and bread crumbs. It could be worse.”

“That’s just it,” the wife cried. “I’m sick and tired of leading a hand-to-mouse existence.”

Riddle Night

Riddle Night was the last of the weekly scheduled Callahan's activities to evolve, and is the quietest and most leisurely of the weekly games. The Callahan's riddle game is a solitary, cerebral activity that can easily be combined with pleasant conversation, soft music or similar activities.

To play the game, a "Riddlemaster" is selected who makes up the riddles for the week. The more he makes up, the more he stands to win or lose.

There is some leeway in the exact sort of riddle used. The usual procedure, though, is to construct word puzzles after the "invisible idiot" model (named after a notorious translator who rendered "out of sight, out of mind" literally as "invisible idiot.") For example, *coffin; baby boy* translates to pall; new man – Paul Newman. Or *festive, meat hooks; finish second* comes out to gala, hands; place – Callahan's Place. The night's riddles are usually inscribed on the large blackboard by the door by the Riddlemaster. Semicolons separate words, commas separate parts of words.

As a clue there's usually a topic for the night, which all the riddles fall under. There are also usually categories within the topic, which can either be provided by the riddlemaster as an additional clue, or guessed by the competitors for bonus points. A normal night's topic might include 3-5 categories of 5-10 riddles each.

Here's a category devised by Doc Webster and put forth in "Pyotr's Story." It was one of four categories under the topic "Public Personalities." The competitors could guess the category for bonus points.

- a) *Hindu ascetic; masculine profession*
- b) *tramp; crane*
- c) *profligate; cheap*
- d) *span; tavern, money*
- e) *fish; Jamaican or Scottish male, caviar*
- f) *certainly; Irish street*
- g) *handtruck; forgiveness*

The answers are Jain; man's field – Jane Mansfield, 'Bo; Derrick – Bo Derek, Rakehell Welsh – Raquel Welch, bridge it; bar, dough – Brigitte Bardot, Marlon; mon, roe – Marilyn Monroe; surely; Mick lane – Shirley MacLaine; and dolly; pardon – Dolly Parton. The category is Film Women.

Continued on next page . . .



"Okay," said the guy at once, and he stuffed the apple in his face. He beckoned to the dog, who came at once to the center of the room and sat on his haunches. He gazed up inquisitively at the shabby man, who nodded.

"I hope you will forgive me," said the dog with the faintest trace of a German accent, "but I'm afraid my name actually is Ralph."

– "Dog Day Evening"

Not all of the Callahan's stories are deep human drama like "The Law of Conservation of Pain," or high adventure like "The Mick of Time." Some of the most popular Callahan's tales are just plain *goofy*. Examples include "Have You Heard the One . . ." "Just Dessert," "The Centipede's Dilemma" and the Hugo-nominated "Dog Day Evening."

Where human drama is the most dauntingly atypical roleplaying challenge for the GM, humorous scenarios are the most deceptively easy Callahan's adventures to play.

"Deceptively" easy, because *Callahan's* is no *Toon*. Humorous roleplaying is tricky under the best of circumstances, but in *Callahan's* the GM must keep the silly stuff rolling, while simultaneously guarding the dignity and integrity of his characters (well, it's his campaign, and the GM can do anything he dang well pleases . . . but if he lets the regulars and PCs become mere caricatures of themselves, he's not really playing *Callahan's* any more).

Broadly speaking, there are three separate kinds of humorous situations represented in the stories.

The most common source of humor is usually presented in the background of more serious stories, usually in the form of one of the weekly humor contests – Punday Night, Tall Tales Night or Riddle Night (see sidebars for rules), but sometimes from the general "merriness" of the patrons – for example, the early antics at the Halloween party in "Unnatural Causes."

Another type is basically a human drama, except that the situations are just goofier than they normally are, and the consequences of failing to meet the challenge are considerably less than earth-shaking.

This sort of scenario is best represented by "Dog Day Evening." Ralph Von Wau Wau the talking dog, and Joe his mute human companion, wander into Callahan's with a simple need. They have to find a place where they can

fit into society. Now, this could be heart-tugging stuff, but instead it's used as an excuse to set up some absurd situations and make some really awful puns.

The final sort of funny Callahan's yarn is a kind of "cautionary tale." In this sort of story, a strange stranger wanders in to Callahan's, not in search of help or advice, but in search of a sucker. Whether it's the complex, ultra-tech con of Al Phee, the unimaginative and dumb'con of Dink Fogerty, or the sheer mindless pranksterism of the ugly guy and his co-conspirators, the protagonists have one thing in common – they came into Callahan's expecting something (wealth, booze, cheap laughs) for nothing. Bad move.

Normally the guys start out taking the troublemaker at face value, which rapidly leads to absurd and embarrassing situations. Soon, they notice that something's wrong, and then somebody figures out what's really going on and the tables start to turn – usually quite rapidly. Inevitably it's the would-be con man who ends up with egg on his face (sometimes, if Callahan gets hold of him, he ends up *on* his face, period, in the parking lot).

GMing Silly Scenarios

The opposite of comedy isn't tragedy – it's boredom. The secret of keeping a funny adventure funny is to keep things happening. Don't sweat the details of logic and continuity – they're not important in this kind of story. Just keep things moving. If the GM doesn't have a good plan for where the adventure should go after an unexpected turn, he doesn't need to call a halt to the action to figure out the best course. If nothing good comes to mind, he can always fall back on the mindless – chase scenes, pratfalls and other slapstick shticks.

At the same time, if the GM wants to keep Callahan's true to form, there are a few things he must watch out for. Violence should be kept minimal and cartoony – in general, threats are to be preferred to actual blows. Take a tip from classic TV sitcoms; when Ralph Kramden intoned "one of these days, Alice, *pow!* Right to the moon," that was funny. However, if Ralph had actually been a wife-beater, that would not have been funny.

The other thing to remember is to let real human emotions show through, occasionally. Callahan's comedy should be closer to Charlie Chaplin than the Keystone Cops. There are moments of real poignance in even the most gonzo stories, as when the partially paralyzed Chuck Samms realizes that the "miracle cure" offered by Al Phee was only an illusion, and Phee shows real regret for that thoughtless cruelty.

Roleplaying the Crisis

The room became totally quiet, filled with a mood of exuberant desperation. The locker room before the big game. Backstage waiting for the house lights to go down. The hold of the Huey as the LZ appears in the distance.

We were as ready as we were going to be.

Callahan nodded slowly. "It's about time," he rumbled. He trod his cigar underfoot and lit a new one. "It's all about time." He poured a shot of Bushmill's for himself, walked slowly around the bar. "Isn't it?" The sawdust squealed under his boots. Fast Eddie left the piano and tossed a couple of sticks of dry birch onto the fire; there was a crackle as the bark began to catch, and that fine sharp-sweet smell of burning birch joined the symphony of pleasant smells in the room. Callahan toed the chalk line, faced the rattling hearth. I didn't mind the tears; they fell too quickly to obscure my vision. He raised his

Riddle Night (Continued)

Stakes are simple. Anyone who guesses a riddle gets a drink on the Riddlemaster's tab (but you pay for your own glass if you make a toast). The Riddlemaster gets a free drink for every unguessed riddle at the end of the night. The competitor with the most free drinks collected at the night's end is the next week's Riddlemaster. Callahan is the official judge and scorekeeper, even on nights when he chooses to play or Riddlemaster himself. Bonus drinks are usually offered for guessing a category or for sweeping every riddle in the category.

If the GM wishes to roleplay Riddle Night he may come up with his own riddles and let the players solve them at their leisure, or he may run the evening as a series of Quick Contests of IQ between the players and the Riddlemaster.

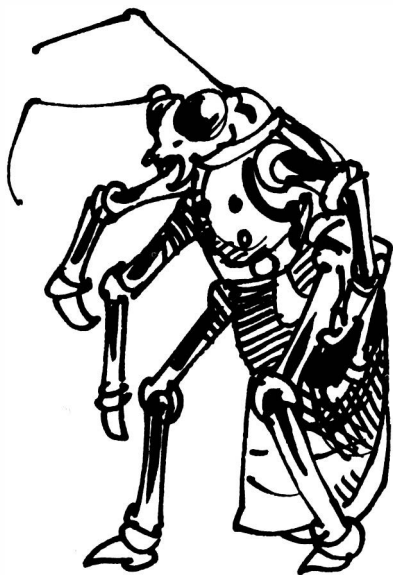
Continued on next page . . .



Riddle Night (Continued)

The GM decides the number of categories, and the number of riddles within each category. Ties go to the Riddlemaster. Each win by a player indicates a riddle solved, but after three failures (or any critical failure) the player becomes mentally exhausted and can no longer compete. On a critical success by the Riddlemaster, the riddle is marked as unsolvable. On a critical failure by the Riddlemaster, the player he's rolling against sweeps the rest of the category (see below).

After solving the first riddle in a given category, the player can make an unmodified IQ roll to guess the category. If he fails, all the other contestants can try, rolling from highest to lowest IQ. Once the category is known, all subsequent attempts to solve its riddles are at +1. If a player makes a critical success on a riddle, he sweeps the rest of that category (if he critically succeeds on the first riddle in the category, he earns a bonus point for solving the whole category; and if he critically succeeds while the category is still unnamed, he gets a +5 on his IQ roll to guess the category). If the player and Riddlemaster simultaneously critically succeed or fail, there are no special effects – the winner is determined normally.



glass, and we all raised ours. The bright lights shattered on all that glass and the room sparkled like a vast crystal.

"To the human race," Mike Callahan said clearly in that gravelly baritone. "God help us, every one." He drank off the Bushmill's in one long, slow draught, smacked his lips and whipped the glass underhand into the fireplace.

"To the human race," we chorused, and the largest barrage of glasses in the history of Callahan's place began.

– *"The Mick of Time"*

Perhaps the most exciting, as well as the most traditional, roleplaying challenge offered by the *Callahan's* milieu is a full-blown Harmonian crisis. Recognizing and meeting these crisis points is the whole reason for the Harmonian time mission. If a crisis point is missed, it will result in the eradication of the timeline that leads to Harmony, and perhaps to the extinction of mankind.

Several major crises were met in the *Callahan's* stories. The most dramatic are chronicled in the first and last stories; the bar's initial encounter with Mickey Finn in "The Guy with the Eyes," and the showdown with the Beast on the Night of the Cockroach, chronicled in "The Mick of Time."

Another crisis was less urgent, but equally important – the downfall of the Krundai conspiracy in "Unnatural Causes."

It's important to note that none of the above crises was specifically anticipated by the Harmonian Time Operation. The Harmonians knew that "something big" was brewing in our time, but they didn't know what. Their best deductive reasoning pointed to the threat of global thermonuclear war as the big crisis of our time – and indeed, that was yet another crisis dealt with by the Callahan family.

It should be noted that all of the above crises – even the geopolitical nuclear threat – were either caused or answered by Mickey Finn. It could therefore be argued that the one real crisis met by Mike Callahan was Finn's arrival on Earth, and that all the others listed above were just manifestations of the big problem of what to do with this ultra-powerful being that had just imposed himself on human history.

GMing Crises

The GM is faced with two major difficulties in creating Harmonian crisis adventures. The first is specific to the Callahan's milieu, but the second is intrinsic to all Harmonian campaigns.

The first problem is that, if the players' have read the Callahan's stories, they know what the crises are, when they're going to occur and what their outcome will be.

Even if none of the players know the Callahan's stories, many GMs will still find it less than creatively satisfying to rehash the Night of the Cockroach for the big climax to their *Callahan's* campaign.

If Callahan's place is being used as a framing device (see below) this is not a problem. Callahan's crises are quite different from Lady Sally's, or Mrs. Wagner's (see p. 26).

For GM's whose campaigns are focused on Callahan's place, though, the best way to GM a crisis is probably to just make up new ones instead of (or in addition to) the ones presented in the book (see below). Such alternate crises are equally appropriate for players who are familiar with the original stories (who might need something like this to demonstrate that the stories aren't

gospel from the GM's point of view), and those who aren't (who don't care one way or the other).

The second problem is that Harmonian crises don't pop up every week, or even every year. Callahan's was a veritable hotbed of crisis activity. Most Harmonian missions will meet with only one crisis, unless they get lucky . . . in which case their crisis will work itself out, and they'll never have to worry about it at all.

The GM can use a crisis to punctuate his campaign, but not to carry it. For most campaigns a crisis is, like the old joke says, "a great trick, but you can only do it *once*."

The focus of the campaign determines how much of a problem this is. In a campaign like Mrs. Wagner's (p. 26), the PCs lead daily lives that are exciting enough to carry the campaign on their own – the crises, when they arise, are just gravy. Even in a tightly-focused *Callahan's* campaign a dearth of crises won't be a problem if the GM has a talent for devising human drama and rannygazoo scenarios.

One excellent way to get around this problem, is to take a tip from the stories and present the campaign with a meta-crisis (for Callahan's, the meta-crisis was the arrival of Mickey Finn). Then let this event spawn subsidiary crises over a span of years, in game time. This option works best in an alternate Callahan's (see sidebar, p. 72) or non-Callahan's Harmonian milieu, since Callahan's Place itself already has a meta-crisis of its own on its hands, and it would be difficult to provide it with another without straining continuity and credibility to the breaking point.

Adventure Seed: Wrong Turn

This is an alternate Harmonian crisis, which can be inserted into a *Callahan's* campaign instead of (or in addition to) the Krundai invasion or the Night of the Cockroach.

One day, without explanation, Callahan doesn't show up to open the bar. Though disturbed, the patrons call in Tom Hauptman, and the night goes on almost like normal. But Callahan doesn't show up the *next* night either.

Fast Eddie calls Lady Sally's, and discovers that not only has Mike not been seen there recently, but the Lady herself, along with Mary, her security chief, have also been AWOL for the last 48 hours (this adventure provides an excellent chance for fans of Lady Sally's to bring their favorite characters from those stories together with the Callahan's gang).

Furthermore, the news is even crazier than usual. Suddenly, the world seems bound towards Armageddon at a pace that makes the Cuban Missile Crisis seem like a game of croquet on a summer afternoon.

Enter Josie Bauer, who's just received a top-secret Time Police briefing. It seems the high levels of the Time Police know about Harmony, and their intelligence reveals that the worst-case scenario has come to pass. Somewhere, somehow a Harmonian Time Agent screwed up, or missed a cue, and now *Harmony is a historical impossibility*. Callahan and his fellow agents have vanished, because they no longer can exist!

Even worse, a probability wave is building up, and it will soon wash over our era and wipe out even the memory of Mike Callahan and his cohorts, and undo everything in history the Harmonians have ever done. If that happens, a clean, quick sterilization of Earth following Mickey Finn's report to his masters is one of the more *pleasant* possibilities.



Adventure Seeds

The Spiky Bits

This scenario works best set in the late '70s, during the first bloom of the punk rock movement.

Early one night, just before Fireside Fill-More, a young man in a grimy leather jacket walks in and says that his bus has broken down a couple hundred yards from Callahan's – can he use the phone? One of the regulars in attendance that night happens to own a garage and a wrecker, and he offers to take a look at the bus. He commandeers a strong flashlight from Callahan, and accompanied by Long-Drink and a couple other mechanically-minded patrons, goes out to see what's wrong.

A few minutes later, Long-Drink returns, announcing that the bus won't be fixed for three or four hours. Then he ushers in the bus's occupants. In walk eight young men. The first four look like something out of a bad horror film – they wear eye make-up and jewelry heavy on the cross and swastika motif, along with torn jeans and T-Shirts with army boots and leather biker jackets. But the most unusual thing about them is their hair, which is enameled solid, and piled to razor-sharp spikes and ridges on their heads.

The four strangers are The Spiky Bits, a hot punk band from England on their first American tour (their first album, *Gutter Crucifixion*, has just been released). They're introduced as Colin Blockage (lead vocals and guitar), Stu Stalin (drums), Rodney Fitzhugh (bass) and Fehg (lead guitar).

Continued on next page . . .

Adventure Seeds ***(Continued)***

With them are Rick Gamish, their manager – the only American on the bus, and the only one over 25. There's also three roadies – Mick, Hal and Ivan. (The GM is free to throw in an adolescent groupie or two if he sees humorous potential there).

Hijinks ensue.

Some possibilities (using the regulars from the stories as examples – the GM should plug the PCs into these events, or make up similar situations tailor-made to the PC's personalities).

Fehg, the guitar player, becomes fascinated with Jake's one-of-a-kind guitar, Lady Macbeth. He keeps bugging Jake during the set breaks to let him try a few chords. Jake does *not* want this greasy punk banging on the Lady, and becomes rather paranoid and obnoxious about it. If he eventually relents, Jake will discover that Fehg is a classically-trained guitarist (he spent a year studying in Spain), and his first attempt on Lady Macbeth will be a flawless transcription of a complex Bach lute piece.

However, Rodney, the group smart-ass, is loudly and vulgarly making fun of the Fireside Fill-More music. When he doesn't get a rise out of anybody with his general "cooler than thou" approach to the music, he moves on to racist comments about the black blues and ragtime artists Fast Eddie idolizes. Even worse, he makes one especially low comment about Scott Joplin while he has his back turned to Eddie. When he wakes up, he's apologetic. It turns out that he's a decent pianist himself, and knows an impressive repertoire of obscure and hilarious (if filthy) English pub songs.

Meanwhile Colin has produced a tape player (with headphones), and is playing the band's music for Long-Drink. The 40ish Drink becomes a fan – not only of the energetic music, but of the cheerfully anarchistic punk scene in general, and Colin starts giving Long-Drink lessons in how to be a punk. Long-Drink even goes so far as to let Colin artfully tear his shirt and shave off a couple of inches of hair over his right ear. Thereafter, Long-Drink will forego the pleasures of Callahan's once or twice a month, slick back his hair, put on his sleeveless Spiky Bits t-shirt and steel-toed workboots, and slip off into the city for an evening at CBGBs.

Continued on next page . . .

The regulars have to figure out what went wrong and, using Time Police technology, send a small group back in time to undo the damage done. The GM can send the PCs on a wild romp through history-gone-bad, or if he prefers, set the problem temporally closer to home – perhaps right before Callahan's disappearance.

This presents a special problem – the prohibition against a time traveler going to a time where he already exists. One possible way to circumvent this difficulty (and another challenge for the GM to face the PCs with), is the Mirror Dimension (see p. 93). If the PCs can locate Robert Trebor and get him to reestablish his dimensional gate, they can trade places with their mirror counterparts. Once in an alternate reality, where they never previously existed at all, they can travel freely to whatever time they want. While the PCs struggle to save Harmony on mirror earth, their counterparts are fighting to save Harmony on our earth.

Callahan's as Framing Device

Callahan's Place does not need to be the be-all and end-all of a campaign to be useful to that campaign. It can also be used to excellent effect as a framing device, providing a reason for the adventures to happen, without necessarily being the place where they happen.

In the stories, of course, the action seldom moves outside the taproom itself, and even when it does (like Fast Eddie's abduction of Domingo Montoya) it's usually "off-stage," and only described later, when everybody's safely back in Callahan's. There is absolutely no reason for the GM to feel constrained to follow this pattern in his campaign.

Suppose, for example, that Mickey Finn had not been able to make it to the Halloween party where Broodseven-sub-two Raksha revealed the Krundai conspiracy. Instead, perhaps, Tony Telasco would reluctantly decide to take up arms again – not against his fellow man, but in defense of all humanity. Tony might call up a few old army buddies, guys whose politics he might no longer agree with, but whose capability to seek out and destroy a smart, well-hidden enemy he trusts implicitly. Under such circumstances the battle against the Krundai might take years instead of weeks. It would certainly be much more dangerous, drawn out and desperate than it was in the story. In short, a perfect action/adventure roleplaying campaign.

There are other ways to use Callahan's as a framing device, however, without rewriting continuity so severely. For example, the campaign can be built up around one of Callahan's colleagues – a different Harmonian whose mission is more action-oriented than Callahan's. There's even a good basis for this in the stories – such Callahan's regulars as Jake, Fast Eddie, Rachel, Ralph Von Wau Wau, Mary and Callahan himself have all shown up in the stories of Lady Sally's, sometimes in very important roles.

Callahan himself has said, "This whole era is a tinder-box; we've got agents spotted all through here/now, doing what we can to cool things out." To the GM, of course, this means that he can place a Harmonian agent anywhere it would suit his campaign to have one.

An example of a campaign built around a GM-created Harmonian, Mrs. Wagner, is found on p. 26.

By the same token, the Harmonian operation doesn't need to be the focus of the campaign, any more than Callahan's Place itself. If the GM already is involved in a contemporary campaign he's free to introduce Callahan's as a

background detail. This works in virtually any genre, though *Psionics* and *Illuminati* are probably the easiest to mesh with the stories as written. Eventually, the GM can work the Wonderful Conspiracy into the campaign, if he wishes, or he can just leave Callahan's as a rather mysterious place for the PCs to go for good times and good advice.

A Place of Growth and Healing

The place was more packed than even I had ever seen it before, and I've been hanging out at Callahan's for quite a few years now. Added to the usual list of regulars and semi-regulars were a host of old-timers and ex-regulars, some of whom I knew only by reputation and some not at all. As I think I already told you, a lot of Callahan's customers stop needing to drink after they've been around long enough, and not many people in this crazy age enjoy judicious doses of ethanol for its own sake. So they stop showing up, or become more involved with their families, or simply move elsewhere – but holidays somehow draw them all back like chickens to the roost come sundown.

– “Unnatural Causes”

This is not strictly a campaign type. Rather it's an important function which Callahan's (or any Harmonian outpost) can fulfill, even in campaigns where it's not the center of the action.

The GM can use Callahan's, not as a place where adventures start or end, but as a place where the adventurers can go between battles and challenges. Callahan's becomes a place for change-of-pace scenarios (a quiet human drama in an otherwise action-packed campaign, or a bit of rannygazoo in an otherwise-serious milieu) and, more important, as a place where the GM can accelerate or control the development of his PCs along lines designed to maximize teamwork and good roleplaying.

In the stories, people who hang around Harmonians grow and change. And they grow and change in certain predictable ways. They become more tolerant, more compassionate and (perhaps most of all) more empathic. At the same time they become less angst-ridden and generally less screwed up.

The suggestions below are designed to allow *GURPS Callahan's* PCs to grow and develop along lines similar to how the character's in the stories grow and develop. These suggestions are completely optional – some GMs will find them inappropriate for his campaign or style of roleplaying, and are completely free to ignore them.

On first coming to Callahan's, PCs should be allowed a certain amount of freedom in redistributing their points – for example, replacing 15 points of personal mental disadvantages with the Regular's Code of Honor and Sense of Duty, or being allowed to take the Code of Honor and Sense of Duty, and using those points to purchase Empathy. Other changes may be allowed – for instance, trading Bully for Pacifism, at the GM's discretion.

The GM may allow discarded disadvantages to continue to haunt the PC for a time (see p. 47), or he can make them simply go away – people often find themselves radically changed after an evening at Callahan's.

Next, it is suggested that for every roleplayed evening which a PC with the Regular's Code of Honor and Sense of Duty (see p. 42) spends at Callahan's, the GM allow him one additional “bonus” character point, just for being there.

Adventure Seeds (Continued)

On a more serious note, Tommy Janssen, who knows the band's work and is a bit of a fan, sees Stu slipping off, and correctly surmises that he's going to find some place to shoot up. Tommy makes it a bit of a personal crusade to – without preaching – convince Stu to stay straight, at least for the night.

Finally, Callahan and Doc Webster have been talking to Rick (a stereotypical New York hustler in punk's clothing), and it's soon obvious to them what the band is too stoned and innocent to see – Rick is manipulating them and ripping them off right and left. Doc and Callahan start cooking up a plan to tip off the band as to what's going on, and get Rick what he deserves, without prying or tattling.

Gremlins!

Something strange is going on at Callahan's – the bar seems to be cursed. Lady Macbeth starts snapping strings every couple minutes, Long-Drink spills liquor, toasters are even missing the fireplace! And still stranger things are happening – darts resting peacefully in the board mysteriously fly out to pin the ears of unsuspecting patrons. While climbing onto the roof one moonlit night, a patron is inexplicably slammed by the trap door, sending him to the hospital for stitches.

The problem stems from one Rudy Meyers, a quiet, cherubic-faced young man who has been a regular at Callahan's for almost a month. In fact, he started coming only a couple of weeks after reaching legal drinking age (cagey GMs will introduce Rudy a session or two before the strange stuff starts happening – otherwise it will be too easy for the players to figure out what's going on). Rudy is a jinx (see p. 47) and a poltergeist (a wild psionic talent that produces uncontrolled bursts of telekinetic activity – see *GURPS Psionics*, p. 47). However, unlike most poltergeists, who aren't even aware that they cause the mysterious events around them, Rudy has some control over his TK. He can't control the effects, but he can turn it on and off.

Rudy *likes* being a jinx. Despite his sweet exterior, he takes a perverse joy in seeing those around him in fear or pain. He's an excellent actor, though, who never shows what a kick he gets out of the scary, dangerous events he causes (most of which, to be fair, are more embarrassing than harmful – after all, this is supposed to be a humorous adventure).

The PCs' assignment is simple – figure out who's causing the trouble at Callahan's, and arrange for Rudy to get his comeuppance.

Alternate Callahan's

A complete and entertaining *GURPS Callahan's Crosstime Saloon* campaign can be played using only this book and the *Basic Set*. If the GM wants to expand a standard *Callahan's* campaign, he can look to *GURPS Psionics*, *GURPS Aliens* and *GURPS Ultra-Tech* (listed more-or-less in the order of their usefulness to the campaign.)

Virtually any *GURPS* book, though, from *Cyberpunk* to *Robin Hood*, can use the concept of the Harmonian Wonderful Conspiracy as either the focus of the campaign, or a significant background detail. A few of the more exotic possibilities for such an exotic campaign can be found discussed in detail in chapter 6.

There is also another option, which takes an intermediate stance between the above two campaign types. This sort of Campaign uses not only the Harmonian Conspiracy, but also Callahan's Place and the usual cast of regulars. But while the bar is the same, the outside world works rather differently than the science-fictional universe presented in the original stories. For example:

Time Travel

First of all, the Time Patrol has it all wrong about the "absolute now." The real "absolute now" is far, far ahead – in Harmony, as our hapless Time Patrol agents begin to discover when they stumble upon Callahan's on a trip to the early '70s. This campaign can bring the Harmonian conspiracy itself to the forefront of the campaign, as the PCs' understandably suspicious superiors assign the agents to discover where the Harmonians are stationed throughout history, and whether they're really as enlightened and benign as they claim to be. In the meantime, the Time Patrol can become a major pain in the Harmonians' collective neck, as their increasingly crude and intrusive investigations start to jeopardize sensitive operations, and eventually Harmony itself. Finally, it's only a minor tweak of the established continuity to make Time Police = Time Patrol, making Josie Bauer Callahan's patrolman in residence.

Several of the other campaign types mentioned in *Time Travel* can adopt Callahan's in a similar way.

Continued on next page . . .

This bonus, however, should be kept track of separately from other earned character points, and may be spent only in certain ways, and in a certain order.

1. The character must save up bonus points until he can purchase Empathy, if he doesn't already possess it.

2. The character may use bonus points to "buy off" any mental disadvantages which stand between him and the Harmonian ideal. Good candidates for elimination include Chronic Depression, Addiction, Alcoholism, Bad Temper, Bully, Compulsive Lying, Greed, Gullibility, Intolerance, Jealousy, Jinxed, Kleptomania, Miserliness, Paranoia, Phobias, Shyness, Stubbornness, Unluckiness and Weak Will. Others may be appropriate in certain circumstances. For instance, a Harmonian would not consider Cowardice a fault in a clerk or author, but would help the coward overcome his cowardice if he really wanted to be an activist or rescue worker, or some other profession where personal fortitude is necessary. Bonus points can be used to buy Dead Broke Poverty up to Struggling, but they should not be used to increase wealth further. Status, Appearance, and physical and social limitations should not be increased with bonus points.

This is the trickiest level of the progression, and requires a good deal of discretion on the GM's part, as to which disadvantages are appropriate for buying off with bonus points. A Harmonian would never dream of influencing a priest to give up his Vows, but might enthusiastically encourage a racist to abandon his Vow to keep Jews and blacks out of the community. In the end, it's up to the discretion of the player and the GM.

3. Bonus points can be used to purchase certain advantages. These include Charisma, Alertness, Common Sense, Intuition, Luck, Unfazeable and Strong Will. Advantages that come in multiple levels – i.e., Charisma, Alertness, Luck and Strong Will – may only be raised one level using bonus points. Even though many of these advantages are not normally available at all after initial character creation, Callahan's is not a normal place. It's part of the wonder of the place that the regulars often find strengths and talents within themselves at Callahan's that they never imagined they had before.

4. The character can increase any of his basic attributes by one using bonus points (he must still, however, pay double cost for attributes bought with earned experience – see p. B81).

5. Bonus points may be used to increase any skill actively used at Callahan's (Carousing, Juggling, Bard or any others). If the skill is increased using *only* bonus points, it raises *immediately*, without any formal training or additional practice needed.

6. Finally, with the GM's *specific* permission, bonus points can be used to purchase or increase Telepathic power (or other psionic powers, again with the GM's specific permission).

The above options should be taken in order, with the PC taking *something* from each one before moving on to the next. Of course, it is entirely possible to skip the first two, simply by already having Empathy when you start to earn bonus points, and not having any disadvantages that particularly conflict with Harmonian ideals. The player is welcome to go backwards along the continuum, for example buying up a skill and then going back to buy off a disadvantage.

Bonus points may be freely mixed with ordinary earned character points at levels 1 and 4. At level 2, mixing bonus points with normal character points will result in a longer transition period, while the bought-off disadvantage "fades away." At level 3 they cannot be mixed at all, unless the advantage

being purchased is one which can normally be acquired after initial creation. At level 5 mixing of points will necessitate a normal practice and study time to learn the new skill level, and at level 6, again, the GM's permission is required to mix points.

If the GM fears that these options will make his PCs too powerful, too fast, he may ignore them entirely, or place a ceiling on the maximum number of bonus points any given character can earn. 75 and 100 points are both good ceilings, depending on the campaign. If a character reaches his personal bonus ceiling and decides that visits to Callahan's are no longer worth his time, fine. Many former regulars stop coming around when they've gotten what they need from Callahan's – their friends understand.

For a less radical variation on the same theme, the GM may eliminate the bonus points altogether, but allow Callahan's regulars to use normal earned experience to buy normally unavailable advantages, or to increase skills used in the bar without the normal training time.

Callahan's Online

"Ladies and gentlemen and regular customers," he announced, "tonight is Riddle Night. By our customs, I am Riddlemaster, on account of I wiped the floor with you mugs last week. But I am yielding the floor – or at least part of the counter – to a guest Riddlemaster." He reached under the bar, and took out a flat object patchcorded to the back of the television. His microprocessor keyboard. He did something to it, and the stripes stopped chasing each other up the screen.

OK, I'm slow. "The computer is going to make riddles?" I asked.

"Not exactly."

"What's that thing wired to the back of the terminal?" Long-Drink asked.

"A modem" Callahan said, and just then there were two sounds. My digital watch chirped, and the phone rang.

The big redheaded barkeep picked up the handset and put it down on the modem cradle. At once letters began to appear on the screen.

HI FOLKS. I'M YOUR RIDDLEMASTER FOR THE NIGHT. MY NAME IS BILLY WALKER.

– "Involuntary Man's Laughter"

GURPS Callahan's Crosstime Saloon is uniquely suited to a new but growing kind of roleplaying campaign – the kind that takes place via computer modem. In fact, UseNet users have been visiting "alt.callahans" – a message base dedicated to spreading Callahan's-style camaraderie – for several years.

An on-line **Callahan's** campaign can be run in more-or-less the traditional fashion, with a GM and players with fully-designed player characters. Periodically (typically weekly or biweekly), the GM will post a "move" – a situation which the players need to deal with. The players will then post their responses to the problem at hand. After the usual interval, the GM will post another move, integrating the player's actions, updating the situation and setting up a new conflict to be dealt with.

There's also another kind of on-line roleplaying that's uniquely suited to the **Callahan's** milieu. In a free-form RPG there's no rules, no GM, no pre-rolled characters, and no pre-determined plot. Instead, anyone interested in participating simply adopts a general *persona* (I'm a big, mean demon on vacation; I'm a junior at SUNY studying for my BMS – Bachelor of Mad

Alternate Callahan's (Continued)

GURPS Supers

Callahan's can easily be plopped down in the universe of **Wild Cards** or the ISTs. The only real difference is that Bill Gerrity is no longer the only regular wearing tights and capes – and the fact that powerful beings like Mickey Finn and the MacDonald Brothers are significantly more common and more public. Due to the slam-bang nature of four-color roleplaying, Callahan's probably fits better into the background of a **Supers** campaign, rather than as the campaign's focus – but in that role it works just fine.



GURPS Horror

A **Horror** campaign would be virtually identical to the original stories, except that instead of (or in addition to) the time travelers, psionics and aliens dealt with in the original stories, the regulars have to cope with werewolves, demons and sorcerers.

Autoduel

Move the Place and its customers 50 years into the future, put it behind a wall and add a couple of armed guards to the staff, and presto, Callahan's Place becomes a 2040s-style roadhouse. As with **Supers**, Callahan's probably isn't sanguinary enough to serve as the focus of an **Autoduel** campaign, but it can make a refreshing and entertaining break from on-road combat.



Callahan's in the '90s

GMs who don't want a "historical" campaign may move Callahan's into the '90s, if they wish. Callahan's is a pretty timeless place anyway . . . the differences should seldom be noticeable.

Also, after the destruction of Callahan's place and the departure of the Callahan family, the regulars announced their intention to build a new bar in the neighborhood, dedicated to nurturing and passing on the lessons they learned from Callahan's (and to having a hell of a good time too, of course).

Jake was appointed bartender/manager, by general acclaim, and he dubbed the new place "Mary's." At this writing Mary's Place has been going strong for more than five years, and Jake won't even reach minimum retirement age until after the turn of the century. GMs should feel free to use Mary's Place as a plot point or background detail in any '90s campaign or scenario.

Science) and introduces his character, thereafter interacting with the others according to his chosen personality.

A moderator (probably taking the part of Callahan himself), *will* be a great asset to such a game, though. Moderators can suggest new threads when things slow down, suppress old threads that have become boring, squelch feuds that threaten to pass from "funny gag" to "personal attack," and throw out jerks who refuse to take the game in the spirit intended.

Freeform on-line games are always tremendously silly, but can also be tremendously entertaining. For a long-lived and exemplary (but non-*Callahan's*) free-form on-line RPG, check out "Illuminati University," on SJ Games' Illuminati BBS (512-447-4449).

The Life and Times of Callahan's Place

"Friends," he said slowly, "This isn't going to be easy. A lot of words I need, I don't have. Not that they don't exist, but none of you know 'em – and I don't have time for a language lesson. Um . . . Mary and I aren't from around here –"

"We know that, Mike," Long-Drink said. "Brooklyn, right?"

"Dat's where me and Mike hooked up," agreed Eddie, the oldest denizen of Callahan's Place. "At Sally's joint."

Callahan shook his head. "That ain't where I'm from, boys."

Eddie shrugged. "Well, you never said it was."

"Thanks, Eddie." Callahan smiled at the monkey-faced little piano man. "I'm pleased you noticed that."

– "The Mick of Time"

There are many contradictory dates given in the stories – Jake and Spider wanted their stories to be taken as fiction, and were not particularly interested in giving exact dates that could be used to link the events in the stories with real people. For example, in "Fivesight" – which took place on the fifth anniversary of the death of Jake's family, i.e., 1975 – Doc Webster is mentioned as dancing with Josie Bauer, however Josie wouldn't become a regular for several years, until a couple months before the events of "Have You Heard the One . . . ?". (The correct name of Doc's dance partner, Margie – not otherwise referred to in the stories – is mentioned at the end of the story, however.)

In short, if you find continuity errors in the stories or in this book, don't bother yourself to tell this writer. He knows, and it's not his fault. Don't bother Spider Robinson, either. He knows and doesn't care. He and Jake put them in on purpose.

In particular, the stories in *Callahan's Crosstime Saloon* tend to be dated just prior to the date they were published. This timeline, however, accepts as accurate the implication from "The Wonderful Conspiracy," that all the events in the first book took place during one very busy year – 1972.

No attempt has been made to assign arbitrary dates to events with dates that are unknown, or known only in general terms – e.g., the achievement of Harmony, the civilization of the Time Police, the destruction of Mickey Finn's people and Finn's subsequent reactivation, or the ages of Doc Webster, Fast Eddie and Long-Drink McGonnigle. Some fairly trivial dates (e.g., the births of the MacDonald brothers) have been included just because they were explicit in the stories.

Timeline

BC – Sometimes before the year 1 AD, the Krundai begin their cultivation of humanity.

c. 1200 – Broodseven-Sub-Two Raksha born on Earth.

1741 – Rachel born, Oct. 25

1936 – Jake Stonebender born.

1938 – Paul MacDonald born.

1942 – Lady Sally McGee opens her “House” in Brooklyn early in WWII.

1945 – Fast Eddie Costigan is discharged from the armed services and takes a job playing piano at Lady Sally’s. In early autumn, shortly after Japan’s surrender, Fast Eddie meets Michael Callahan, who’s building a bar on Long Island. Eddie agrees to work for Callahan when the bar is finished.

1946 – Callahan’s completed and open for business.

1947 – Callahan cracks his door with the head of Big Beef McCafferty, would-be cheat.

1949 – Jim MacDonald born.

1952 – Bobbi Joy born.

1958 – Paul MacDonald goes into a catatonic state. Josie Bauer’s father recruited by the Time Police.

1963 – Tom Hauptmann and his wife imprisoned in Pasala.

1966 – Jake Stonebender finds his guitar, Lady Macbeth. Bobbi Joy is an experienced professional prostitute.

1970 – Jake Stonebender’s wife and daughter killed in a car accident – Jake arrives at Callahan’s several months later, on the recommendation of Doc Webster. First Annual Darts Championship of the Universe.

1971 – Tom Flannery arrives at Callahan’s with 9 months to live. Rachel finds Callahan’s a month or two later. Tom Hauptmann released from prison and returned to the U.S.

1972 – All the stories in *Callahan’s Crosstime Saloon* take place, in the order presented, beginning with the arrival of Tommy Janssen and Mickey Finn in February. Tom Hauptmann hired as assistant bartender. Tommy Janssen married in Callahan’s in late April;

becomes *priori* terminus for the first time jump. Tom Flannery dies in mid-June and is cryonically frozen. Broodseven-Sub-Two-Raksha arrives at Halloween, and Finn destroys the Krundai conspiracy between Halloween and Christmas. Jake begins to suspect Callahan’s true nature on Christmas eve. Spider Robinson arrives at Callahan’s late in the year, begins his collaboration with Jake Stonebender.

1973 – “The Guy With the Eyes” published in the February Issue of *Analog*. The stories that will make up *Callahan’s Crosstime Saloon* continue to be written through 1976.

1974 – Domingo Montoya fakes his own death and goes underground. Josie Bauer joins the Time Police.

1975 – Spider Robinson moves to Nova Scotia. “Fivesight.”

1976 – “Dog Day Evening” – Ralph Von Wau Wau arrives at Callahan’s. “Mirror/roirriM off the Wall” – Robert Trebor establishes his dimensional interface to the mirror dimension behind Callahan’s bar.

1977 – *Callahan’s Crosstime Saloon* published.

1978 – Josie Bauer arrives at Callahan’s.

1979 – “Have You Heard the One . . .” takes place on the 4th of July.

1981 – *Time Travelers Strictly Cash* published.

1982 – Lady Sally’s closes. “The Blacksmith’s Tale” takes place in the summer.

1983 – “Pyotr’s Story,” and “Involuntary Man’s Laughter” take place.

1984 – The Night of the Cockroach – Callahan’s destroyed on New Year’s Eve.

1985 – “Mary’s Place” opens, under the management of Jake Stonebender.

1986 – *Callahan’s Secret* published.

1989 – *Callahan’s Lady* published, chronicling events that took place at Lady Sally’s approximately a decade earlier.

1995 – The Meddler uses the first successful time machine to travel back to 1972 to save Bobbi Joy.

5 STRANGE FOLKS AND ODD GIZMOS



This chapter is devoted to the strange races and cultures of the Callahan's universe, whether they come from other planets, our own future, or live in secret among us.

Cockroaches (AKA "The Masters")

Callahan cleared his throat.

"Mickey," he rumbled, "you're alone, we get it now. It's a hard thing to be alone. Everyone in here as been alone, some of us are now –"

"Not as I am," Finn stated. "Even the most unfortunate of you is less alone. No matter how remote the chance of your finding a mate . . . there is always the chance. Always you have hope, even as you despair. No human will ever pair-bond with me – and I dare not leave your planet. My Masters believe me dead; if they ever learned otherwise –"

"– they'd kill you," Long-Drink finished.

"Worse."

"They'd punish you."

"Worse."

"What's worse?" Shorty Steinitz asked.

"They would put me back to work, unpunished. They are not like humans, who sometimes kick a machine that is not working. They would simply restore the machine to service. And, as an afterthought, they would exterminate the organisms which caused the machine to malfunction."

"Us, you mean," Callahan said.

"Yes."

Mary and Callahan exchanged a look I didn't understand. "There's no chance you could sneak back to your home planet without these Master clowns catching on?" she asked Finn.

"None whatsoever," Finn said expressionlessly. "To begin with, my home planet no longer exists. It has not existed for several centuries, and I am the last of my people."

Mary winced. "What happened?"

"The Masters found us."

"Jesus – and killed everybody but you?"

"They killed everybody including me. But the Masters are a prudent and tidy race; they always keep file copies of what they destroy, each etched on a molecule of its own. Like all my people, I was slain, and reduced to a single, encoded molecule. Some time after my death they felt need of a new scout, fashioned this body, and caused to be decanted into it a large fraction of my former awareness – withholding the parts that did not suit them, of course."

Mary gasped; she was horrified. "God, you must hate them."

Finn's voice was bleak. "I wish greatly that I had the ability. That is one of the parts that does not suit them."

– "The Blacksmith's Tale"

Physically, the Cockroaches are, well . . . cockroaches. They stand five or six inches tall, have six limbs, a hard, chitinous shell and multifaceted eyes.

The relationship between the Cockroaches who are Mickey Finn's former masters and the cockroaches that live under human sinks is approximately equivalent to the relationship between a lemur and a Harmonian. How a close evolutionary cousin of one of the known universe's most advanced spacefar-

The Beast

Cockroach deviant; 6", 1 lb.; age unknown; no hair, multifaceted eyes.

ST 1, DX 14, IQ 17, HT 14/4.

Speed 7, Move 7.

Dodge 7.

Damage – none

Advantages

In addition to the normal racial advantages of his race (see main text), the Beast has Strong Will +3.

Disadvantages

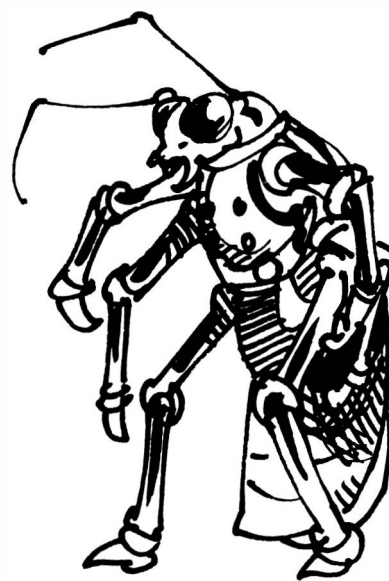
In addition to the racial Intolerance and Sense of Duty, the Beast has a -15 point social stigma. Among his own people this stigma takes the form "disgusting pervert," while among humans it takes the form "soulless monster."

Skills

Little is known about the Beast's skills, but he can be assumed to have a comprehensive education in TL14 hard sciences, to include Astrogation, Astronomy, Electronics, Engineer, Mathematics, Physics and Nuclear Physics, all at IQ level or better.

During the battle at Callahan's he displayed a high Psychology score (a skill he'd picked up literally only a few seconds before, from tapping the mind of Paul MacDonald), and a good grasp of Tactics. It has its racial equivalent of the Pressure Suit skill.

Continued on next page . . .





The Beast (Continued)

The Beast had high skill levels of Tele-sense, Telereceive and Timeshare Telepathy skills. It also seems to have something akin to the Aspect skill from *GURPS Psionics*, which it used to try to overwhelm and intimidate its victims.

Story

The Beast was the name the survivors of the Night of the Cockroach gave to the Master who attempted to recover Mickey Finn.

The Beast was a psychological deviant – a pervert among his race. Humans cannot understand the crimes that made the Beast what it was, but by its own lights, the Beast was disgusting. Cockroaches are incapable of self-hatred, but the Beast did feel an intense desire to be other than what it was – a response roughly analogous to human shame.

When its perversion was discovered, the Beast was immediately placed under sentence of death, and all its personal slaves were reprogrammed to others.

Placed in this hopeless situation, the Beast rejected the normal course – suicide – and instead elected for the one other option its racial psychology allowed . . . to declare genocidal war on every other member of its race.

First, the Beast needed weapons. It knew that a scout had disappeared in the vicinity of Earth, and reasoned that there was a strong possibility that it had either been destroyed by a technologically superior race, with super-armaments that the Beast could steal, duplicate or otherwise support, or (though it was less likely) had somehow been disabled, in which case the scout's own weaponry could be salvaged and turned against the other Cockroaches.

What actually happened, of course, was that the Beast found Callahan's.

ing races happened to arrive on Earth millions of years before there were humans – or even dinosaurs – on our planet remains a complete mystery.

The resemblance between the earthly insect and the interstellar civilization might be due to an amazing stroke of parallel evolution (though the Beast implied a real evolutionary connection). The most obvious conclusion is that the earth was visited by Cockroaches in its primordial past (the Cockroaches have almost a billion years of recorded history), and the visitors left behind the racial equivalent of lab monkeys or unevolved slaves, who survived and thrived on the new world.

No hard facts are known about the Cockroach homeland. There is some evidence, though, that it is (or was originally) extremely Earthlike. This is suggested by the remarkable racial success of their earthly evolutionary cognates, and (to a lesser extent) by their choice of the humanoid Mickey Finn for a scout. The Beast (see sidebar) entered Callahan's wearing a pressure suit, but this might have been for the trip, or for general protection – not necessarily because Earth's atmosphere was hazardous to him.

The stories give no clues as to the location of the Cockroach homeland, or any of their colonies or outposts. The center of the Cockroach civilization might lie in a remote and uncharted galaxy, or just a little further down our spiral arm of the Milky Way.



Advantages and Disadvantages

The following racial template may be used for the Cockroaches. Many of these values are highly conjectural, and the GM should not hesitate to modify them for his own campaign.

Cockroaches have -9 to ST (-80 points), +3 to DX (30 points), +5 to IQ (60 points) and +3 to HT (30 points), but they have -10 to hit points (-50 points), giving them a racial average HT of 13/3.

They have Peripheral Vision (15 points) and Two Extra Arms (20 points). Their small size and hardy metabolisms make it possible for them to travel

through space much more efficiently than humanoid races (the Decreased Life Support advantage from *GURPS Aliens* – 10 points). They have Enhanced Time Sense (45 points; see p. 44), Telepathy Power 20 (100 points), and the Unfazeable advantage (15 points).

Their only significant racial disadvantages are a -10 point Intolerance (all non-Cockroach lifeforms), and a -15 point Sense of Duty to the race.

All Cockroaches have the psionic skills Mindshield, Telereceive, Telesend and Timeshare Telepathy at at least IQ level (16 points total).

Racial cost for the above package is 186 points.

Strong Will is very common among the Cockroaches – perhaps universal. In a human-dominated campaign, cut off from their home technology, they would have the -10 point Inconvenient Size (Small) disadvantage, from *GURPS Aliens*.

Psychology

Here's how Jake described the psychology of the Beast in "The Mick of Time."

There was only one Master. We didn't even know then just what a break that was. The telepathic aspect of the creature was largely untranslatable, but you might think of it manifesting as a kind of giant space-going shark, a moving appetite, a vast, fast, terrible eating-machine . . . Like a shark it was implacable, remorseless, unreachable. What made it much more terrible than any shark was that it was highly intelligent and very learned.

This doesn't begin to convey it. The thing was alien, and nothing on Terra is as old or cold or deadly as it was. If I'd been alone, I think I'd have snapped like a twig and begged it to kill me quickly.

Like their earthly relatives, the Cockroaches are masters of survival. They have no recognizable morality, in human terms, other than an emotionless and implacable drive to propagate their race at all costs.

They despise waste and emptiness, and do not permit either to exist on their worlds. They find emotions repugnant. (Cockroaches can display responses analogous to hate and anger, but these are pragmatic responses, designed to maximize performance against specific threats – they in no way interfere with the Cockroach's logic or efficiency.) Freedom is a meaningless concept to the Roaches – if an individual is useful to the race, his welfare is guarded in proportion to his utility. If he ceases to be productive, or the resources necessary for maintenance exceed those he produces, he is ruthlessly exterminated.

They are particularly repulsed by anything resembling human love. To the extent that we can understand this horror, it seems that putting another above both yourself and the rest of society, and sharing your ego with that other, is what so repulses the Cockroaches. Whenever they find a race that can love, they exterminate it with a special enthusiasm. It is instructive to note that while the Cockroaches could permanently disable Finn's capacity to hate them, they could not similarly eradicate his ability to love.

For all their terrible pitilessness, however, Cockroaches do not waste when they destroy. Rather they store, record and recycle, with inhuman efficiency. Mickey Finn's people, for instance, were not simply slaughtered – each one was *recorded*, down to the cellular level, in a single encoded molecule. With the proper raw materials Finn's entire race could be resurrected exactly as they were when the Cockroaches came, all memories intact. In fact,



Mickey Finn (néé Txffu Mpwfs)

Alien cyborg; 6' 11½", 600 lbs.; apparent age 40; dark brown hair and eyes.

ST 20, DX 15, IQ 15, HT 14

Speed 7.25, Move 7

Dodge 8

Damage: Thrust 2d-1; Swing 3d-2.

Point Total: unknown

Advantages

Acute Hearing +3, Attractive Appearance, Combat Reflexes, High Pain Threshold, Immunity to Disease, Lightning Calculator, Eidetic Memory (60 pt. level), Night Vision, Voice.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor – Callahan's regular, Honesty, Intolerance (mildly repulsed by all humans except his friends at Callahan's), Odious Personal Habit – generally creepy behavior -5 points, Sense of Duty – Callahan's regulars.

Continued on next page . . .

Mickey Finn (Continued)

Supers Advantages

Doesn't Eat or Drink, Doesn't Sleep, Enhanced Time Sense, Flight, Hyperflight, *Immunity to Poison (can be knocked out by chloral hydrate), Increased Density (300 lbs.), *Invisibility (effective against all known detection devices), *Invulnerability – all physical and energy attacks, *Pressure Support, Super Flight (exact level unknown), *Vacuum Support.

Powers marked with an (*) have an ultra-powerful version of the "Affects Others" enhancement. This enhancement allows Finn to *permanently* imbue other characters and inanimate objects in his presence with these abilities. He can grant limited versions of the abilities – e.g., Immunity to Hard Radiation and Blast Forces only – and even make the bestowed powers switchable (most of Finn's friends only get rained on when they want to, otherwise they stay dry in the worst storm). He can also grant the abilities on a more temporary basis. His ability to grant invulnerability does, however, seem limited to individuals or objects in his immediate vicinity – within a few yards at most. No attempt has been made to attach a point value to this enhancement, which should *not* be available to PC supers.

Continued on next page...



given that sufficient mass and a suitable star are available, Finn's whole *planet* could be exactly duplicated. Currently, all this information waits on the Cockroach homeworld, occupying a total volume smaller than a normal earthly telephone.

For all their alienness, humans and Cockroaches can communicate efficiently, at least on the telepathic level. In fact, the Beast displayed a dry and cruel, but very recognizable sense of humor. Of course, this might have been a product of the Beast's perversion, or of the telepathic interface with the MacDonald brothers, or merely an excellent imitation of human responses, rather than representing a true racial characteristic.

It is unknown whether the Cockroaches use any sort of individual names, though presumably some sort of personal designator would be necessary for efficiency's sake. It is likely that they regard art as wasteful and absurd. It is doubtful they have any religion except egotism.

Culture

Nothing is known of the Cockroaches evolution or physiology, other than that it is in some ways similar to an earthly insect's.

An off-hand comment from the Beast revealed that the reproductive cycle of the Cockroaches involves what humans would regard as incest between the mother and her progeny (the Beast also revealed that it is a very small part of his personal perversion that he does not engage in this activity). This is the only hard fact about the Cockroach life cycle which is recorded in the stories.

Likewise nothing is known about Cockroach daily life or society, except that all Cockroaches have personal slaves, which are neurologically programmed to obey their master. Presumably, the more important the Cockroach, the more slaves he's allowed.

Cockroaches are not gregarious in any Earthly sense of the term. But while they avoid one another's presence, they absolutely require one another's *respect*. A Cockroach who is cast out of society (as the Beast was) is under sentence of death from any of his peers he may meet. The crimes which would earn a Cockroach this ultimate punishment are literally incomprehensible to humans. Deprived of the respect he requires to live, Cockroach psychology allows such an outcast only two choices – suicide, or to declare genocidal war on the rest of the race. Deviant Roaches are very rare, and only a few of these have taken the second option – their names are metaphorical symbols for evil itself.

Cockroach technology appears to be about TL14. They still require material artifacts to usefully manipulate energy, and therefore cannot quite match the feats of the post-technological Harmonians.

The Cockroaches are an imperialistic race, constantly looking for new directions in which to expand their dominion.

They do this by sending out scouts, like Mickey Finn (see sidebars). These scouts are created to be almost completely indestructible, and given formidable offensive capabilities as well. A Cockroach scout can operate at full efficiency at absolute zero or in the core of a star. The stories never reveal exactly what a scout's destructive potential is. It can be assumed to be less formidable than its defensive capability, but at least as powerful as a conventional nuclear warhead.

The scouts apparently have the ability to permanently alter objects in their immediate environment on the subatomic level. Mickey Finn used this ability to give his friends at Callahan's Place a portion of his invulnerability. Presum-

ably, this ability is designed to allow the scout to preserve particularly interesting artifacts for further analysis.

No individual Roach is ever allowed to use technology that even remotely approximates the offensive or defensive potential of a scout. This is because a Master, unlike a slave, could bring himself to turn a destructive weapon on another Master. (If this theory appears to fall apart under logical analysis, it's only because humans can't really understand how the Cockroaches think.)

When a scout discovers a planet that falls within his preset parameters of investigation, he travels there and automatically makes a thorough survey of the area. When the survey is complete, the scout automatically transmits the data back to his Masters. The data is then analyzed, and a plan is devised to exploit the new region to its fullest. If the plan includes the extermination (or, more accurately, the encryption) of a race inimical to Cockroach civilization (such as Finn's people or humanity), the sterilization is completed in a matter of Earth days.

If, for any reason, a scout fails to report on schedule, no attempt whatsoever is made to contact or recover it, or even determine its fate – space is big and the Cockroaches are a pragmatic race. It is assumed that any force capable of disabling or destroying a scout is a force which the Cockroaches do not want to deal with. It is much more efficient to simply declare the area of space where the Scout was last seen off limits to further investigation, and continue the race's expansion in less-hazardous directions.

Harmony and the Cockroaches

Though there's no way to know for sure, there's no reason to believe that Harmony had any notion of the Cockroaches' existence before Michael Callahan reported Finn's arrival on Earth.

Once the existence of the Cockroach race was known, it seems certain that Harmonian civilization would undertake a detailed investigation of this possible menace. The best evidence for such an investigation in the stories is Mary Callahan's apparently random choice of the sobriquet "Cockroaches" for the race that Finn had always referred to simply as the Masters. In retrospect, it seems most unlikely that Mary could have selected such an astonishingly accurate name at random. It seems likely that she had access to Harmonian reports on the race (though it's also possible that Finn had confided more details about his Masters to Callahan than to the regulars at large, and that Callahan in turn passed these details on to his family).

It may be that, by the time the Harmonian epoch is reached, the Cockroach race will be extinct or hopelessly decadent. This seems rather unlikely, however, on the evidence of the longevity of the race, and the extreme evolutionary vitality of earthly cockroaches.

So the question arises: in a war between Harmony and the Cockroaches, who would win? The Harmonians have the technological edge, particularly in their mastery of time travel, which the Cockroaches seem to have no concept of. However, the Cockroaches quite likely outnumber the Harmonians by several orders of magnitude, in addition to their ability to decant slave races at will and throw them into battle – even using the same warrior race an indefinite number of times, for as long as the raw materials of reconstruction hold out. Furthermore, the Cockroaches would be completely unencumbered by the general respect for all sentience which might restrain the Harmonians from using the full destructive potential of their resources.

Mickey Finn (Continued)

Super Powers

Mind Shield (Power 20, Skill 15)
Destruction Power (Power – see below, Skill 25)

Skills

Agronomy-16, Anthropology-16, Architecture-14, Astrogration-21†, Astronomy-20†, Ecology-18, Economics-15, Engineer-18†, First Aid-16, History-16, Linguistics-20, Mathematics-21, Mechanic-17†, Naturalist-16, Nuclear Physics-19†, Physics-17†, Physiology-15, Prospecting-17, Psychology-16, Research-19.

Skills marked with an † are known at TL12. All other skills are known at TL7.

Quirks

Speaks very formally; Seems less emotional as he becomes more emotional (he forgets to imitate human responses).

Appearance

Finn is tall, craggy and deeply tanned, with short, unruly dark hair.

When he first arrived at Callahan's, after only a couple of days on our planet, he dressed oddly and his manner seemed stiff and alien. Over his years on Earth he became better and better at mimicking human reactions.

Although there is little except his size to outwardly set him apart from earthly humanity, when he lets his guard down he becomes noticeably alien. In particular, looking into Finn's dark eyes when he's thinking about his people, or his former Masters, can be a terrifying experience.

Finn is capable of physically opening his chest and revealing . . . something, presumably his power supply, which cannot be adequately described in human language. Anyone who sees Finn's interior, and doesn't know his origin, must make a Fright Check.

One of the more unusual things about Finn's masquerade as human, is that the more emotional he actually is, the less emotional he seems. This is because Finn must consciously mimic emotional responses that are instinctive to humans, and during moments of stress he sometimes forgets to do so. Among other disconcerting habits, when distraught he forgets to blink. None of his human friends, except Mary and perhaps Callahan, are able to interpret Finn's natural responses.

Given the number of Harmonians scattered throughout history, it seems unlikely that the Cockroaches could completely exterminate the race, but they could very likely cripple or destroy the utopian Harmonian civilization, at least for a time.

Mickey Finn's Story

Mickey Finn is an alien organic/technological construct of immense power. Although he's technically a cyborg, his workings have little to do with any currently conceived cybernetic technology.

Some time after Finn's people were destroyed and recorded by the Cockroaches (see p. 79), Finn was revived and reconstructed as a self-contained advance scout for the Cockroach race.

Finn's mission was to seek out suitable systems for the Cockroaches to expand their dominion. His internal systems would analyze a world automatically, and report the data to the Cockroaches when the analysis was complete. He had no conscious control over these mechanisms, though he had to be conscious in order for the transfer to take place.

To expedite his mission, the Cockroaches made him almost completely indestructible and gave him powerful offensive capabilities as well.

For many centuries Finn roamed the universe opening pathways for his masters. In time, he even became reconciled to his people's fate, and began to take some pride in his work.

Then his Masters sent him to Earth, where he found a people very like his own (though much more primitive). When he wandered into Callahan's Place he discovered something even worse – he found that the Earthlings had the capacity to love. Then and there he discarded his profession, and resolved to save the Earthlings, even at the cost of his own life.

Although he could take no overt action to prevent himself from carrying out his programming, he managed to subtly alert Callahan to his weakness for chloral hydrate (this is how Finn got his name – a "Mickey Finn" is a mixture of chloral hydrate and alcohol, which will put out a human just as fast and as thoroughly as it put out Finn). His transmission time arrived to find Finn deep in a drugged slumber. Space is a big place, and if a scout fails to report at the appointed time, the Cockroaches customarily assume that it encountered something they do not want to deal with under any circumstances, and simply write off the probe and send no more after it. As long as Finn remained in the immediate vicinity of the Earth, both he and it were out of danger (apparently . . . but see *The Beast*, p. 78).

Continued on next page . . .

Finn's People

"When first we encountered the Masters, we considered the problem they represented and evolved two possible solutions. One involved their complete annihilation, root, stock and branch; the other was more risky. We loved Life, and especially Sentience, and they were sentient. We took the risk and were destroyed. Perhaps it was the wrong choice."

– *"The Blacksmith's Tale"*



Mickey Finn has revealed little about the race of his birth.

When he first arrived on Earth, most of his friends assumed that he had been issued a specially-constructed body that would allow him to pass as a human being. This was not, in fact, the case. Finn's people are (outwardly, at least) remarkably humanoid, and the alien cyborg construct Finn now is remains very close to the body he inhabited before the destruction of his race.

One fact which is known about Finn's people is that they represent a more extreme degree of sexual dimorphism than humanity. While the men of Finn's race are all tall, thin and craggy, the women are much shorter and (by human standards) extremely fat – in the average neighborhood of 5' 6" and 300 lbs.

They were an advanced and altruistic race. The fact that they detected the Cockroaches before they were attacked, and that they seriously thought they

had a reasonable chance to annihilate the Cockroach race, puts their tech level at at least 12, and very probably higher.

The degree of their moral development can be gauged by the fact that they preferred to submit to xenocide, rather than commit it. Finn's comments suggest that this abhorrence for killing extends to all sentient creatures, on an individual as well as racial basis. (Finn himself no longer shares his people's scruples. Presumably this was one of the personality traits "edited out" by the Cockroaches.)

The following template can be used for Finn's people: ST +3, IQ +3, HT +2, the advantages Night Vision and Acute Hearing +2, and the disadvantage Pacifism: Total Non-Violence. Racial cost is 79 points.

Finn has said that he can see further into the infrared than humans, and hear an extra octave on either side of the human range. This has been interpreted as Night Vision and Acute Hearing +2. Finn also identified himself as having the Enhanced Time Sense advantage, but whether this is a racial trait or a function of his cybernetic implants is unknown – GM's option. Finn is also able to shout much louder than a human, and this likewise may be a racial trait or a side-effect of his reconstruction.

The above values are for a male of Finn's people. The physical abilities of a female of the species are unknown. Females would *not* however, have the Fat disadvantage – obesity is a measure of one's deviation from the norm. If you're the same size as everybody else in your culture, you're not fat.

Finn's People and Harmony

Finn's people present a unique problem for the Harmonian race. Their moral and technological development puts their civilization very close to Harmony itself. Certainly they would make a welcome addition to Harmonian civilization.

If they had truly been eradicated, the Harmonians would have simply chalked it up to the fundamental unfairness of fate and gone about their business, but *Finn's people are still out there . . .* stored neatly away in some Cockroach data bank.

It is difficult to imagine the Harmonian civilization not making some attempt to recover Finn's people (and even if they don't, it's impossible to imagine Mary Finn failing to do so). Mickey Finn would be no help, except as a source of intelligence data – any attempt to use his powers directly against his masters would trigger a total system freeze, at best. (At worst, the Cockroaches would manage to recover control of Finn, turning him against the Harmonians.)

However, any such attempt might bring Harmony (or, if attempted at an earlier historical epoch, humanity) to the attention of the Cockroaches, and as mentioned above, that could be catastrophic.

For a GM who finds the concept of Harmony especially interesting, the above conundrum offers an outstanding opportunity for a high-point-value, high-tech *Space* campaign.

The Krundai

"Third, we have an ingrained loathing for killing or violence."

That cheered me quite a bit, although I don't think I was really scared with Finn around. That guy could maybe use this Earth to light a cigar with if he

Mickey Finn's Story (Continued)

Although he had been willing to sacrifice his life to save the Earth, once that crisis had passed Finn discovered that he did not want to die. He knew that he'd need maintenance within the next three centuries. He determined that, with the proper stimuli, humans would be able to provide the level of technology he needed by that time.

In the meantime, though, Finn was horribly alone. He was genuinely grateful to his friends at Callahan's, and he had a deep moral respect for the racial potential of humanity, but on a personal level he found humans repulsively savage and primitive – much like a modern, civilized man forced to live among a tribe of half-sentient apes. His greatest fear was that humanity would annihilate itself in a nuclear conflagration before they could develop the technology he needed. Such an event would leave him utterly alone, with no choice but to return to his masters and resume his former profession – a choice he now found intolerable.

For his first several years Finn lived in various remote parts of the globe, adopting various human professions that allowed him maximum solitude – farmer, fisherman, lighthouse keeper, forest ranger. Nonetheless, he did what he could to help his human neighbors improve their lives. With no aid but Michael Callahan's advice, he single-handedly ended the Krundai conspiracy on the Earth. Still, his loneliness, fear and repulsion were growing within him, until he came to a crisis point. In frustration, he turned once again to Callahan's Place.

That night he met Callahan's daughter Mary, who recognized his personal needs more clearly than he himself did, as well as the great potential for good and evil he offered to the human race. Mary proposed marriage to Finn, and after his doubts were calmed, Finn accepted the proposal.

The Finns made an ideal couple. Mary's calm, objective insight into human culture and psychology was exactly what Finn needed to sort out his emotional turmoil and turn it into constructive action. Together, they worked up a solution to one of the biggest problems of the 20th century. In the meantime, Mary was studying Finn just as carefully as she had studied Earth culture – humanity would have probably been doomed on the Night of the Cockroach if it hadn't been for her insight into the nature of Finn and his masters.

When the Callahan family returned to Harmony at the end of "The Mick of Time," Finn went with them.

Finn's Powers and Special Abilities

No attempt has been made to assign a specific point total to Mickey Finn. This is simply because the precise extent of Finn's powers are not known and cannot be accurately deduced from the stories.

For example, it is known that Finn travels through space at finite, but trans-light speeds. It is not known exactly how fast he can travel, or whether his range is measured in interstellar or intergalactic distances.

Mickey Finn is, essentially, an ultra-tech data collection and transmission device of immense power. Apparently he has some control over his sensors, as they allowed him to track the Krundai across the globe. Exactly how much of this ability he has conscious access to, however, remains a mystery. It is known that his automatic sensor array receives and processes data separately from his natural sensory apparatus, which is only marginally more acute than a human's.

Likewise, it is unknown what his exact destructive potential is. He appears to be able to simply destroy an object with a thought – perhaps through direct transition from matter to energy. He can only attack one object at a time, but what his maximum destructive potential is is not known. At a minimum, he seems to be able to equal the destructive potential of a powerful thermonuclear weapon, with far more exact control. In general, it's safe to assume that there's no single physical object on Earth that can stand up to an attack from Mickey Finn.

In *GURPS* terms, Finn's most impressive power is probably his ability to grant his defenses to others, at will. He does this instantaneously and with no outwardly visible actions. Jake calls this ability "reprogramming reality." No attempt has been made to give this ability a point value, simply because it's so far beyond the pale of even *GURPS Supers* abilities. The effects of this ability on other PCs are discussed below.

Finn's Super Abilities

Below is a short summary of Mickey Finn's superhuman abilities for those who do not own *GURPS Supers*. Finn's Mind Shield works exactly as described in the *Basic Set*.

Several of these abilities are self explanatory – e.g., Doesn't Eat or Drink, Doesn't Sleep, Immunity to Poison.

Flight, Hyperflight and Super Flight: Finn can fly at translight speeds when out of the earth's atmosphere, and at supersonic speeds within it.

Continued on next page . . .

had a mind to. Besides, if the Krundai had intended us harm, it seemed to me they'd have done so centuries ago.

"We realize," Raksha went on, "that such things must be: the prime datum of the Universe is that life survives by eating life, and no other way. The expense of eating is, in great part, the resistance the second life offers to being eaten. For instance, the roast-beef sandwiches you have provided for your friends, Mr. Callahan (and by the way, they are easily the thickest I have ever seen in a tavern) are currently quite expensive, because of the size and unwieldiness of the system required to supply them to us.



"Suppose you could induce the cow to come here and drop obligingly dead next to your chopping block?"

"Still, there are always some who prefer not to do their own butchering. No Krundai will do so voluntarily if it can be avoided. A surprising percentage of your own society, with all your heritage of murder, would like to believe that Life survives by going to the supermarket. So the ideal would be to train cattle to make butcher knives and take turns cutting each other up at a convenient location."

I didn't like the turn this story was taking.

"Which brings me to the fourth significant fact about my people. We have made an exact science of socio-psychology, both Krundai and animal, and refined it beyond your imagining. The closest things you have to it, I suppose, are what you call mob psychology and the actuarial tables your insurance companies use, and you do not even know why they work. The principles behind them, however, are universal, and part of a grand picture which your race will probably never perceive. One of your great writers invented something akin to it called 'psychohistory,' but even that unfulfilled dream pales

beside our knowledge – for psychohistory worked only for humans, and could not predict the appearance of genius or mutation. We can manipulate any sentient race that lives, produce genius to order by manipulating society's laboratory conditions; and the nature and causation of mutation are fundamentals of Krundai psychology.

“Of course, like psychohistory, our science works best in the mass, imperfectly with regard to individuals. You humans are at least aware of that supreme paradox – that free will exists to an extent in the individual, but disappears in the group – although you can't work with it. Brood! – you haven't even learned how to measure emotion yet. But we can predict the effects of even one man's actions on the society as a whole . . . and we know how to bring about the effects we desire, large scale or small, long run or short.

“Which leaves only one more basic attribute of my people: we are very, very hungry.”

– “Unnatural Causes”

Based on the one Krundai we have a hard description of, the race is approximately humanoid, in that they have two arms and legs, one head, and their features are configured similar to a human's. Their height and weight fall within human norms. They also have green fur, a somewhat wider mouth than humans, and pointed, oversized ears. Their shoulders are knobby and tufted. On close examination, their eye surfaces ripple with faintly-glistening semi-circular lines that shift position in a way different from the specks on a human eyeball – independent of the movement of the eyes themselves. Krundai have a natural lifespan of 3,000 to 3,600 years (equivalent to the Unaging advantage, in terms of point cost).

Krundai come from Krundar, a planet which orbits a remote and uncharted star. Krundar is presumably very earthlike, based on both the evidence of the Krundai's structural similarity to humanity (though it is possible that some of Broodseven-Sub-Two Raksha's similarities to humans were artificial modifications, designed to make it easier for the Krundai mission on Earth to pass among humans), and Raksha's mention that Krundar has an environment where it was possible for primitive Krundai to build fires.

Advantages and Disadvantage

The stories reveal little about the abilities of individual Krundai. As a starting point, GMs can assume that they have a racial +3 to IQ, Acute Hearing +2, Unaging, Pacifism: Cannot Kill (but see “Ecology,” below) and a -15 point Sense of Duty to the propagation of their race.

With any race they have studied, Krundai are able to produce effects equivalent to Charisma +4, by tailoring their responses to produce the maximum impact on the alien psychology.

Racial base cost is 39 points. Krundai do not seem to be psionic. GMs should feel free to add any exotic abilities they feel might make the race more interesting in their campaign.

Any Krundai who come into contact with other races will very likely have a high score in a unique racial skill, which can be called Krundai Psychohistory. This skill is Mental/Very Hard for Krundai – GM's option whether it's even comprehensible to other races. It is this science which allows Krundai to manipulate the social development of their victim races with such precision.

Finn's Powers and Special Abilities (Continued)

Increased Density: Finn is much heavier than his size and build would indicate. A reasonable weight for a human Finn's size would be about 300 lbs., but he actually weighs almost 600. This extra density gives him +3 DR vs. Crushing damage, and -3 hexes to knockback.

Invisibility (effective against all known detection devices): This is pretty self-explanatory. There is nothing known to Earthly technology that can detect Finn when he does not want to be detected.

Invulnerability – all physical and energy attacks: Simply put, Finn *cannot* be harmed by any force known to science. If the Earth were to suddenly collide with an antimatter body of equivalent mass, Finn would be left in the wake, floating in space, unharmed.

Pressure Support: Finn can survive comfortably at any pressure, even those found in the heart of a star.

Vacuum Support: Finn does not need to breathe, nor is he subject to explosive decompression.

Special Abilities

Finn has displayed a couple of unique abilities which are not properly advantages or disadvantages, except under highly specific circumstances.

Under sufficient emotional pressure, Finn will freeze, going into a sort of psychic feedback loop. In this state he's capable of doing nothing except standing stock-still, perhaps mindlessly repeating a single phrase over and over. He can be brought out of this by Mary, but unless the conflict has been resolved, he's liable to go right back into the feedback mode. So far, the only known situation capable of sending Finn into feedback mode was the entrance of one of his former Masters into the solar system.

Mary can also put Finn into a less-stressful neutral or standby mode, where he can take no action and receive no sensory input. He can be brought out of this state – “rebooted,” as it were – by any stimulus he cares to specify at the time he enters the state. Finn and Mary have worked out several personal reboot commands which will work under any circumstances.

In both of the above states, Finn is still receptive to direct commands from his masters. However, chloral hydrate (whether or not it's mixed with alcohol to make a Mickey Finn knock-out dose), will put Finn out so completely that not even the Cockroaches can reach him until it wears off. Callahan estimates that it takes about 30 ccs of straight chloral hydrate to put Finn out reliably.

Finn is able to shout *much* louder than a human being. His unamplified voice can reach about 80 decibels – equivalent to a loud rock concert.

Finn's Friends

Many of Finn's closest friends, including everybody who was present on the Night of the Cockroach, have been granted a portion of his invulnerability. Since Finn was obsessed with nuclear holocaust, he made the invulnerability very specific – it only operates against blast forces and gamma radiation. In other words, it protects against all physical attacks, but no energy attacks except explosive forces and hard radiation – not even normal fire.

Also, in commemoration of the rainy night when he met Mary, Finn has given everybody who was at Callahan's that night, or for his wedding (which includes all the regulars and many occasionals) the ability to stay dry in a rainstorm. This ability extends to clothing and objects held, and is switchable – if the person wants to get wet, he can. Whether this protection extends to more severe sorts of exposure is up to the GM.

This protection would be worth about 225 points in *GURPS Supers* terms. Obviously, there's no way any sort of typical Callahan's character would *ever* be able to pay for this ability with earned character points.

Therefore, Finn's gift of invulnerability comes under the heading of GM's fiat – if the GM wants his PCs to have it, they do, and if he doesn't, they don't. The only recommendation here is that if *anyone* in the party receives an Invulnerability from Finn, *everyone* in the party should get the same benefit.

Anyway, due to the unique nature of the Callahan's milieu, this ability is liable to be less unbalancing than it would be in some campaigns – one is seldom called upon to throw oneself on a grenade in a *Callahan's* campaign.



Krundai intelligence works differently from human IQ. In many ways their thought processes represent the obverse of the Enhanced Time Sense advantage. Krundai take the long view, and plan in terms of centuries and generations, rather than days and years. In game terms, this means that Krundai plans are tremendously effective – provided the Krundai have sufficient lead time to plan the situation thoroughly. If the GM needs to make a roll to determine whether a Krundai plan comes successfully to fruition or not, he should give a positive modifier based on the amount of time the Krundai have had to plan. The modifier should be +1 to +5, depending on the complexity of the situation and the lead time available. WWII, for instance, was planned in just over half of a century – very rushed for an undertaking of that magnitude. Still, over the previous two millennia, the Krundai had done a tremendous amount of preliminary research, and doubtlessly devised many complete and useful contingency plans. Call it an overall +2 to the Psychohistory roll.

However, if the PCs can somehow introduce an X-factor into a Krundai plan, like Mickey Finn or a Harmonian time agent – something psychohistory cannot predict – this throws the whole thing out of balance. Krundai lack the instincts and intuition that make humans so good at coping with the unexpected. A Krundai trying to cope with an X-Factor will be at -1 to -5 to *all* IQ-based rolls, depending on how much he knows (if anything) about the random factor, and how close he is to his deadline.

There is no cost for the above trait, it is merely a “special effect” of Krundai intelligence.

Psychology

Raksha described the Krundai psychology in great detail to the regulars at Callahan's.

The Krundai are, in many ways, an extremely moral and idealistic society (so were the Nazis and the Stalinist communists . . .). They appear to have a complex religion (patterned, like many human religions, on the structure of the family unit), which they believe implicitly and follow fervently. The outlines of this religion, as hinted at by Raksha, are familiar to humans: the religion is based on the teachings of a (possibly mythological) Broodmaster. Krundai who enthusiastically follow the teachings of the Broodmaster are admitted to the Great Pouch after death, where they can suck for all eternity.

Central to the Krundai's racial image is what Raksha called “an attribute for which there are naturally no words in your tongue. That attribute is central to the Krundai: without it, even if you went to the Great Pouch at the end of your days, you could not suck. To us you are less-than-Krundai. The Sign of the Brood is not upon you: you are food.” This “attribute” may be nothing more than religious mumbo-jumbo, like the Nazi concept of Aryanism – an artificial moral justification for xenocide. On the other hand, it may be a real trait which humans are truly incapable of. It would be instructive to know if any race had ever been accorded “honorary” Krundai status, based on their possession of the “attribute.”

Raksha did reveal that he was not the first Krundai to be morally challenged by the human trait of love. While it is not the “attribute” itself, love is normally considered infallible outward evidence of it. That humans possessed the one without the other presented the Krundai with a difficult moral dilemma. (Eventually, of course, the dilemma was resolved against the humans and in favor of the food supply).

Based on the evidence of Raksha, a Krundai who fails in his duty is expected to work to correct that failure. If the failure becomes uncorrectable, the responsible Krundai is expected to suicide – sometimes under compulsion.

Ecology

The Krundai are, essentially, scavengers. Their loathing for killing and violence of all kinds seems to be an instinctive imperative, rather than a moral choice. Nonetheless, their non-violence is absolute. Their natural defense is not to counterattack, but to hide. This is perhaps one reason why they were so successful at concealing themselves from the more predatory humans.

Krundai appear to biologically closest to Earthly marsupials, in that they nurture their young in a pouch. Family ties appear to be close, with the offspring continuing to work closely with the parents long after maturity is reached.

The fact that the destruction of the Krundai bases on Earth was perceived as deep seismic shocks indicates that the bases were deep underground. This may indicate that the Krundai are naturally subterranean. Or, it may also mean that the Earth's crust was simply the most efficient concealment the Krundai could devise on this planet.

Before the dawn of their civilization, the Krundai learned to make fire. This was possibly an even greater cultural leap forward for them than it was for mankind, for the Krundai discovered that a native creature called a *fleegh* would throw itself fatally into the fires. This was the Krundai's first inkling that they could alter the environment of their food, to encourage it to present itself for scavenging. Eventually, the native game was used up, so the Krundai invented space travel, and induced a blue-skinned race on a neighboring planet to destroy their own atmosphere, just before the blueskins developed their own space science. Then there were the warlike *Krill*, from a neighboring system, who warred to extinction among themselves. . .

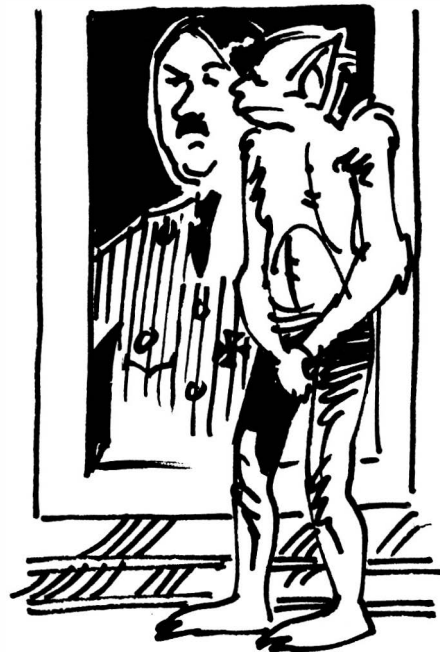
An important question left ominously unanswered in the stories is, *what, exactly, do the Krundai eat?* As physical beings they no doubt need solid food of some sort, but surely they could easily obtain their essential proteins from unintelligent animals bred to prepare themselves periodically for scavenging. In fact, with Krundai technology they should be able to synthesize necessary compounds from raw materials, with no need to dirty themselves with living creatures at all.

Yet the Krundai insist on harvesting only clever and dangerous intelligent races. Why? And the chosen end of the human race was a nuclear firestorm – not the ideal source of fresh meat.

It seems strongly possible that the sustenance Krundai gain from their intelligent prey is psychic in nature. Raksha has said that his people can precisely measure emotion. Perhaps they can also store emotion, to be decanted later and consumed by hungry Krundai back home. Perhaps they feed, not on the meat of their cattle, but on their very death-agonies.

Culture

Little is revealed in the stories about day-to-day Krundai life. It seems that they have a harmonious culture strengthened by ties of religion, duty and family. Their names seem to be composed of a family or clan designator (Broodseven-Sub-Two) followed by a personal name (Raksha), but the explanation of Raksha's name may be considerably more complex.



Broodseven-Sub-Two Raksha

Krundai male; 5' 6", 120 lbs.; age 800;
green fur, yellow eyes.
ST 10, DX 11, IQ 15, HT 11
Speed: 5.5, Move: 5
Dodge 5
Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d.
Point total: 255.

Advantages and Disadvantages

In addition to his racial advantages (see p. 85), Raksha had the Voice advantage. His only non-racial disadvantage was a prolonged and crippling crisis of conscience, defined here as a -10 point Odious Personal Habit (indecision and lack of resolve).

Skills

Acting-17, Administration-16, Anthropology-15, Bard-22, Biochemistry-14, Chemistry-13, Detect Lies-15, Diplomacy-18, Disguise-17, Ecology-13, Economics-15, Genetics-14, History-16, Intelligence Analysis-16, Interrogation-15, Krundai Psychohistory-19, Leadership-20, Linguistics-14, Literature-13, Occultism-14, Politics-19, Psychology-18, Research-16, Savoir-Faire-17, Strategy-16, Teaching-17, Theology-14.

Continued on next page . . .

Broodseven-Sub-Two Raksha (Continued)

Story

Raksha was the youngest member of the Krundai team on Earth. He was born here, 800 years ago, and only saw Krundar once, on a brief visit.

When the order came from Krundar to begin preparing humanity for the harvest, Raksha was assigned a key role in arranging humanity's development of atomic weapons during WWII. He took on a human identity – Adolph Hitler – with the assignment of prolonging hostilities until atom bombs could be invented.

However, during the war Raksha began to be troubled. He was becoming increasingly aware of a curious thread of dignity that ran through human art and literature. More disturbing still was the humans' capacity to love – a trait not normally associated with not-Krundai. These doubts undermined his confidence sufficiently to interfere with his mission, and he terminated the Third Reich prematurely. Disaster (from the Krundai point of view) was only narrowly averted when his fellow Krundai managed to prolong the Pacific conflict just long enough to develop the bomb.

Continued on next page . . .



More information is available about their cultivation of other intelligent species. It seems to take only a century or two for the Krundai to prepare and harvest another race. Much of the efforts of the Krundai cultivation teams go towards preservation, not extinction. They're less butchers than cowboys, keeping the herd healthy and thriving until it's time for the slaughter.

Krundai control their charges subtly, with rumor, myth and propaganda. However, at key points they find it necessary to take direct action. On Earth, they disguised themselves as humans.

How they disguise themselves is unknown. Certainly more is involved than a body shave and a latex mask. Most likely, they grow a human body to order, and transfer their consciousness into it for the duration. (This is probably due to technology, though there is also the possibility that this ability to grow and transfer to new bodies is innate to the race, and the reason for their longevity.)

On Earth, they began their mission by rotting the Roman empire from the inside, then began centuries of cultural stagnation. Mankind was being kept in a fallow state, waiting for the proper season for cultivation and harvest. Plagues became a risk to the necessary population base, so the renaissance was permitted to encourage human medicine.

In the mid-19th century, the word was received from Krundar – a food shortage was anticipated. Mankind was to be prepared for harvest. Technology and population were both accelerated to the breaking point, along with a mood of general despair. The goal was the nuclear extinction of humanity before the end of the 20th century.

Raksha revealed that great historical figures who were actually Krundai include Saul of Tarsus (the author of most of the books of the New Testament), Torquemada (the Grand Inquisitor of the most bloody period of the Spanish Inquisition), Thomas Edison, Otto Hahn (20th-century physicist whose work established the theoretical possibility of nuclear fission), and Adolph Hitler (see sidebar).

Krundai technology is apparently in the TL11-12 range. They travel in UFOs – that's why government inquiry into UFOs was cut off so abruptly in the late '60s, and why people who sight UFOs are so seldom taken seriously.

Given the Krundai nature, it seems very likely that a good deal of their hard technology is scavenged from their victim races, rather than being the product of original Krundai inspiration.

Harmony and the Krundai

It is difficult to imagine that the Harmonian time mission was unaware of the Krundai before Michael Callahan reported Raksha's visit to his Place.

Much more probably, it seems likely that the Harmonians knew all about the Krundai, and tolerated their two millennia of tinkering with human social evolution as an unpleasant but necessary step on the road to Harmony. No doubt the Harmonians considered carefully the option of neutralizing the Krundai influence on Earth before it began, and decided that the long-range harm of this action would outweigh the good. Probably, in some way, the Krundai intervention was necessary if mankind was to survive long enough to achieve harmony.

It seems much less likely, however, that Callahan knew that Raksha was going to walk into his Place that Halloween, and betray the existence of his people to Mickey Finn, the one being on Earth capable of exterminating the Krundai.

More likely, the Harmonians knew when the Krundai arrived and, in general terms what they were doing to humanity. They also probably knew that the Krundai were planning to “harvest” humanity at the end of the 20th century, but instead it was the Krundai who vanished from human history. This is very likely one of the primary reasons that the Harmonians were seeded so liberally in our time – so that they could watch for the cause of the Krundai’s fall, and encourage it to occur with a minimum of peril to humanity or Harmony.

Raksha mentioned that, during his role as Adolph Hitler, he was under orders to prolong the war until the combatants developed nuclear weapons – a task that should have been childishly easy. However he began to be plagued with doubts, and aborted the Third Reich too early to achieve his goal (though the nuclear goal was reached – barely – due to the combined efforts of the Krundai coordinating the Allied and Asian phases of the conflict).

Why did Raksha’s mission go so strangely awry? Why did Krundai science not predict his potential failure and compensate for it?

We’ll never know, but it seems likely that the WWII operation was compromised by some X-factor beyond the reach of Krundai science. The most obvious such factor is, of course, the Harmonian time mission. Were the master-manipulators themselves manipulated into destroying their own mission by the advanced descendants of their would-be cattle? There’s certainly an intriguing campaign possibility in the idea.

Vampires

“I know,” I said. “There’s no more time for lying.”

Pyotr tried to look uncomprehending, and failed, and there just wasn’t any time for it.

*“You don’t drink blood. You filter it.” He went white with shock. “I can even see how it must have happened, your trip at Callahan’s, I mean. When you first got over here to the states, you must have landed in New York and got a job as a technician in a blood bank, right? Leach a little bit of nourishment out of a lot of whole blood and you can feed without giving serious anemia to the transfusion patients. An ethical vampire – with a digestion that has trouble with beef broth. I’ll bet you’ve even got big canines like the movie vampires – not because size makes them any more efficient at letting blood, but because there’re some damned unusual glands in ’em. You interface with foreign blood and filter out the nourishment it carries in solution. Only you couldn’t have known how they got blood in New York City, who the typical donor is, and before you knew it it was too late, you were a stone alcoholic.” I was talking a mile a minute, but I could see every single shot hit home. I had no time to spare for his anguish; I grabbed him and hauled him off the bed, threw clothes at him. “Well . . . You know young Tommy Janssen, well he’s down the block with about three quarts of hooch in him, and the last two went down in a gulp apiece, so you move your skinny Transylvanian ass or I’ll kick it off your spine, you got me? **Jump, goddammit!**”*

– “Pyotr’s Story”

Vampires in the *Callahan’s* milieu are not supernatural creatures. They’re not exactly a separate race either. They seem to represent a recessive hereditary mutation which is rare, but persistent. Vampires are known to all human races and cultures, but they seem to be especially common in Eastern Europe.



Broodseven-Sub-Two Raksha (Continued)

Raksha spent the next 30 years trying to come to terms with his new thoughts. He knew that he must confide his confusion to somebody. After 15 years he determined that he could not speak to any of his fellow Krundai. For 10 years more he debated whether he could possibly unburden himself to a human. Then, unable to resolve the question, he spent another five years identifying those humans in whom he could possibly confide.

On all of the Earth he found two or three thousand people who possessed sufficient empathy to understand his problem and help him come to terms with it.

During the course of his research, he found one out-of-the-way location where these remarkable people were wont to gather.

He determined that no fewer than 35 people of sufficient empathy would be on hand at Callahan’s Place on Halloween. Furthermore, they would all be there in costume – Raksha could attend in his true form.

Raksha told his story to a group of regulars and asked for absolution for the upcoming extinction of the human race, but Callahan refused him when he could not bring himself to match his deeds to his new convictions and take action to save humanity from his fate.

Refused absolution, Raksha killed himself in a powerful explosion in Callahan’s parking lot. Mickey Finn, who had been present while Raksha told his story, was able to use what he’d learned to hunt down the rest of Raksha’s people on Earth and end the Krundai threat.



Pyotr

Male human vampire – Romanian; 5' 7", 140 lbs.; age about 60; thinning gray hair and pale blue eyes.

ST 12, DX 11, IQ 13, HT 12

Speed 5.75, Move 5

Dodge 5

Damage: Thrust 1-1, Swing 1+2

Point Total: 40

Advantages

Empathy, Night Vision.

Disadvantages

Alcoholism (illegal), Regular's Code of Honor (see p. 46), Shyness (mild), Sense of Duty (Callahan's regulars), Vampiric Dependency (see p. 48).

Quirks

Never smiles; Likes classic horror films; Very formal manners.

Skills

Diplomacy-13, Driving (car)-13, First Aid-13, Language (English)-13, Musical Instrument (guitar)-14, Occultism-13, Old Movies (hobby skill)-15, Professional Skill (lab technician)-12, Savoir-Faire-13.

Continued on next page . . .

Though unknown to science, the human vampire is, of course, well chronicled in folklore. Of course, in legend their true nature is unknown – they are assumed to be horrible monsters, ghosts or demons, in much the same way that uneducated people believe the insane or epileptics to be possessed by demons.

The legends have only two details right about vampires. They do bite necks and drink (but *not* drain!) blood, and they tend to have much better night vision than humans.

The unique metabolic requirements of the vampires are detailed in full on p. 48, as the Vampiric Dependency disadvantage. In addition to this characteristic, most vampires also have the Night Vision advantage. If the vampire's true nature is discovered, it will carry a -15 point Social Stigma.

Though it is not specifically mentioned in the stories, it seems likely that vampire saliva might contain a mild soporific/anesthetic, which would serve to keep sleeping victims/donors asleep, and deaden the pain of the insertion of the fangs. If the GM decides to use this option, it is an additional 5-point advantage. This soporific is very mild and its effects are easily overridden by adrenaline – it won't have any effect on anyone who's actively resisting the vampire, it will just help see that individuals who are already asleep or unconscious stay that way (-5 on any rolls to wake up for the duration of the vampire's "meal" and 10 minutes thereafter).

Pyotr has revealed nothing about his life before he came to America, and the stories reveal nothing about how vampires grow and develop. It seems most logical to assume that vampires are born to normal human parents, and that their condition is due to a rare recessive gene. It seems unlikely that vampires would survive infancy if they were born with their need for blood, so presumably they can take nourishment normally, as children. Their unique metabolism most likely develops during the major metabolic reshuffling that takes place at adolescence.

It's tragically easy to see how the modern vampire myths were born . . . centuries in the past, a young vampire was discovered feeding. In horror, the other villagers drove him out of town. Tormented by hunger and loneliness the vampire took to hiding in the wilderness and waylaying victims for nourishment, or sneaking into homes at night, to feed from sleepers. Because his superior night vision gave him an advantage in a fight, the vampire stalked his prey at night. Because of his nocturnal existence, his skin began to take on a corpse-like pallor. To protect himself, he took to killing his victims after he fed – perhaps using his fangs to tear out their throats after he had filtered sufficient nourishment. Repeat this scenario a dozen or so times over a matter of centuries, and you have the legend of a nocturnal ghoul who drains his victims' blood and then kills them – obviously this can only be the work of the devil! Perhaps a vampire who had been raised with high religious standards was once confronted with a holy object, and overcome with remorse, turned away or committed suicide. Another layer on the legend. As to the wooden stake through the heart . . . that'd do it, all right.

Unlike the nonhuman races in this chapter, vampires would make interesting and challenging PCs.

Vampire Victims

It takes a vampire 2d minutes to feed. Feeding does no damage to the "victim," other than a sore neck the next morning (no game effects). A single session with a vampire does more good to the "victim" than harm – it cleanses

the blood of a variety of toxins and impurities (see p. 48). However, in addition to these toxins and impurities, the vampire is also draining away important nutrients. Constant usage by a vampire would undermine the health of the victim. Eventually it would prove fatal (though a modern, scientific nutrition program could help). Not only would the health of the victim suffer, but the health of the vampire as well, as his food becomes increasingly anemic, and less nutritious. Fortunately, vampires do not have to feed every day. Pyotr feeds more often than most vampires – several times a week – not because he needs more nutrition, but because his Alcoholism requires the alcohol from the blood of drunks.

Tradition says a vampire's victim will die after the vampire feeds three times in a row. Since Pyotr fed two consecutive nights on Jake, the facts (as usual) seem considerably less dramatic.

Assume that if a vampire feeds from the same person on consecutive nights, the victim will suffer one point of damage. The damage increases cumulatively on successive days – on the third day the damage is two points, three points on the fourth day, etc. (Yes, that means Jake was at -1 to HT after his second night under Pyotr's care – he shrugged this off as the effects of two nights of hard partying.)

The Time Police

"Time travel is severely proscribed," she said. "The possible consequences of tampering with the past are too horrible to contemplate."

"Sure," Callahan said. He may not be an sf reader – but all of us at Callahan's know that much about time travel. We had another time-traveler in here once, who was worried considerable about that very issue – whether it was moral and/or safe to change the past of a lady he loved, to keep her from being hurt.

"And precisely because it's so tempting to 'mine the past' for all the precious things you wasted and used up on us, that is the most strictly prohibited crime on the books. Pennies are the best dodge for copper: you acquire a bunch in this era, bury them somewhere, then go back home and dig 'em up, properly aged and no way to prove it wasn't a lucky dig."

"And you –"

"Temporal agents approached my father twenty years ago and convinced him to sign up as a kind of local way-station for authorized time-travelers, on a part-time basis. He's a science fiction writer – who else would they dare trust to understand the terrible dangers of time travel? He kept it from Mother and us kids – about five years ago I found out. I blackmailed his employers into giving me a job on the Time Police."

"Why?" Callahan asked.

"Because it's the most exciting job I can think of, of course! You know my nature – I love jokes and paradoxes." She grinned. "I'm not sure, but I have a hunch I'm going to grow up to be Mom."

– "Have You Heard the One . . . ?"

Little is revealed in the stories about the Time Police and their mission. What is known is that they are headquartered in a relatively recent future, and that they take a very serious attitude about the sanctity of history.

Based on the scant evidence available, the society of the Time Police seems to be coping efficiently with an environmental crisis precipitated in our

Pyotr (Continued)

Story

Pyotr is Callahan's designated driver, and a vampire.

He was born in Romania, and immigrated to America as an adult. He settled in New York and took a job as a technician in a blood bank.

This seemed an ideal setup at first. He could get the nourishment he needed, with minimal chance of discovery and no danger of hurting others.

Pyotr did not know, however, that the most common blood donors in the city were alcoholics and drug addicts, who sold their blood to feed their addiction.

Soon, Pyotr was a full-fledged alcoholic and addict. And he could not feed his addictions directly – only through the blood of other addicts.

How Pyotr survived this period is not known, but sometime after he hit bottom he met Michael Callahan. Eventually, Pyotr was able to overcome all his addictions except alcoholism, and he was able to bring that under control. (Pyotr has alcoholism at the higher, "illegal" point value because the law is liable to take a dim view of blood-sucking for any reason.)

When Callahan discovered Pyotr's hangover-curing ability, however, he had an inspiration. He made Pyotr his designated driver.

Pyotr would take the drunk patron home in the patron's car and put him safely to bed. Then, when the drunk was passed out, Pyotr would feed, taking care of his own twin needs for blood and alcohol, while saving his donor from a crippling hangover the next day. Then Pyotr and his donor would both sleep it off. The next day, the donor was expected to drive Pyotr home at his earliest convenience.

Eventually Pyotr decided to make his nature known to Callahan's other regulars. Much to his surprise, they did not reject him – things went on pretty much as before. Pyotr stayed on at Callahan's until it was destroyed. It's not known if he continued to work as the designated driver at Mary's Place, but he was certainly offered the job.

Pyotr is a 40-point character, but that includes full value for -90 points of personal disadvantages.

Josie Bauer

Human white female; 5' 5", 120 lbs.; age 28; strawberry blonde hair and blue eyes.

ST 10, DX 13, IQ 14, HT 12.

Speed 6.25, Move 6.

Dodge 6, Parry (hand-to-hand) 8.

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d.

Point Total: 145

Advantages

Appearance (Beautiful), Charisma +1, Empathy, Legal Enforcement Powers (5 points), Unusual Background (access to Time Police technology – 15 points).

Disadvantages

Regular's Code of Honor (see p. 46), Time Policeman's Code of Honor, Duty (to Time Police, 12 or less), Lecherousness, Sense of Duty (Callahan's regulars).

Quirks

"Comedy groupie" (see below). Pretends she's Philip José Farmer's daughter.

Skills

Acrobatics-12, Beam Weapons-14 (TL8), Carousing-13, Criminology-13, Electronics Operation (TL8)-13, First Aid-14, Forensics (temporal)-12, Guns-14 (TL7), History-13, Holdout-13, Interrogation-13, Karate-13, Law (temporal)-13, Physics (TL8)-13, Punning-14, Research-14, Sex Appeal-13, Stealth-13, Streetwise-14, Swimming-13, Temporal Operations-14, Temporal Physics-13.

Story

In the late 1950s, Time Police agents approached Josie Bauer's father (who is *not*, in fact, science-fiction author Philip José Farmer – that claim was an elaborate joke Josie played on Jake – see p. 13) with a business deal. In return for considerations not specified in the stories, the senior Bauer would allow his house to be used as a sort of a way-station for authorized time travelers in this era.

In her early 20s, Josie discovered the true nature of her father's odd guests, and – to use her own terms – "blackmailed" the Time Police into giving her a job, presumably by threatening to expose their secret if they refused. They agreed to her request – most likely more from eagerness to recruit a gifted and enthusiastic agent than out of fear of reprisals.

Continued on next page . . .

time, and to have a thorough grasp of the dynamics of history and the constraints of temporal physics. They appear to be Tech Level 8 or 9, though they could be higher.

The society behind the Time Police could represent the first mature and ethical society since the chaos of the 20th century, or it could be a repressive totalitarian society that regulates its populace unmercifully, or it could be anything in between. It's certainly not a utopia – in addition to the environmental shortages mentioned above, there also seems to be a population crisis. Personal living space is the most valuable commodity in the economy.



They do seem to have an enlightened penal system, by today's standards. Al Phee was not incarcerated or punished for his crime. Instead he was assigned to work that could make the best use of his unique skills, and proscribed from time travel (through a biochemical process that would, if he ever tried an unauthorized time jump, give him a massive and permanent case of B.O. – the B.O. may have been a humorous interpolation on Jake's part).

Josie's remarks (see above) indicate that controlling resource banditry is one of the bread and butter jobs of the Time Police. No doubt there are considerably more dramatic, more rare and more dangerous crimes as well. For a Time Policeman, the worst-case scenario is no doubt terrorist manipulation of history with a view to eradicating enemies by destroying their forerunners.

Josie Bauer should not be taken as a typical Time Policeman. It should be remembered that she's a fairly recent local recruit, who acquired her position through self-described "blackmail." Most likely Josie's position can be compared to that of a local "irregular" recruited to aid and assist the full-fledged time cops from the future. On the other hand, the fact that Josie is allowed to

keep and use a personal time machine bespeaks a good deal of trust in her discretion and abilities. (It seems logical to assume that, at least at first, Josie's time machine was pre-set to take her only between our time and that of Time Police headquarters. Later, as she gained the organizations' trust, perhaps she was given a user-programmable model.)

The GM is free to devise his own skill template for a fully-trained Time Policeman. Time Police should have some training in History, Temporal Operation and Temporal Physics, in addition to appropriate combat and social skills. Criminology (Temporal) is the scientific detection of time criminals. There is considerable overlap between conventional and temporal Criminology, and the skills default to each other at -2.

If a player wishes to create a Time Policeman PC, the GM should charge a 25- to 75-point Unusual Background, for the character's access to future technology. The UB should cost 25 points times the difference between the Time Policeman's TL and the campaign's. For a local recruit like Josie Bauer, access to future tech is probably restricted, and the UB can be reduced to 10 or 15 points, depending on how much future tech the GM wishes to make available the character. (The above assumes, of course, that the Time Police have an overall *higher* level of technology than the rest of the campaign. This is true in a conventional *Callahan's* campaign, but might not apply in some variants.)

Active-duty Time Policemen (including local irregulars) must take a 10-point Duty, and at least a 5-point Code of Honor (never intervene unnecessarily with history, or do anything to compromise the security or mission of the Time Police).

It is strongly recommended that all GMs who wish to make the Time Police a central part of their campaign obtain *GURPS Time Travel*.

Harmony and the Time Police

It seems that Josie Bauer was unaware of Callahan's true nature right up until the Night of the Cockroach. This does not mean, however, that the upper echelons of the Time Police are unaware of the existence of Harmony.

If the Time Police are aware of Harmony's existence "up the line," however, they are certainly smart enough not to interfere with any Harmonian operations they might encounter.

In turn, the Harmonians seem content to let the Time Police take care of petty temporal meddlers like Al Phee, leaving Harmony free to deal with the grand shape of history.

It does seem strongly likely that Josie Bauer was *assigned* to become a regular at Callahan's, but it is not known whether this is because her superiors knew that the bar was a Harmonian operation, or whether they simply detected the probability nexus (see p. 24), and wanted an agent handy to report on whatever showed up.

The Mirror Dimension

"Yes, I am an inventor," he began, "and I did invent a dimensional Bridge – which my counterpart in this dimensional continuum could not do, since as I said thiotimoline doesn't work right here."

"Then this ain't a perfect mirror of your world," Long-Drink interrupted.

"No," Trebor agreed. "Not a perfect mirror. There are subtle, generally unimportant differences. In my continuum, for instance, all the rock groups are different and Shakespeare wrote Bacon. Disparities like that, that make no



Josie Bauer (Continued)

After training in Time Police methods and equipment, Josie was assigned to Callahan's place, which the Time Police recognized as a probability nexus, and the *priori* terminus of the first human time jump.

Josie fit in at Callahan's better than her superiors could have imagined. She was an enthusiastic fan of Punday Night and Tall Tales night – so much so that she soon developed the habit of spending the night (or at least offering to) with the winners of both competitions every week. (It was the mid-'70s – the height of the sexual revolution – when such a behavior was not as shocking as it would have been in an earlier or later decade. Anyway, if a woman wants casual lovers, Callahan's is an excellent place to seek out liaisons that minimize emotional and physical risk.)

Josie was forced to blow her cover when Al Phee (see p. 94) tried to make Callahan's a target for a con job. She remained a regular, though, and was the first one to arrive when the MacDonald brothers sounded the alarm on the Night of the Cockroach.

When the Callahan family returned to Harmony, they invited Josie to go along (probably because her mechanical time machine was needed to carry Mickey Finn's mass forward in time). Presumably, she continues to frequent Mary's Place.



Al Phee

White male; 5' 7", 190 lbs., age 55;
graying black hair, blue eyes.
ST 10, DX 14, IQ 13, HT 11
Speed 6.25, Move 6
Dodge 6
Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d

Advantages

Ambidexterity, Charisma +2, Combat
Reflexes, Double-Jointed, Voice.

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior – push it too the
limit (-10 points), Greed, Impulsiveness,
Odious Personal Habit – loud, pushy odd-
ball (-10 points), Overconfidence, Over-
weight.

Quirks

Too many to list – quirkiness is a way of
life to Phee. This is covered under the Odi-
ous Personal Habit, above.

Skills

Acrobatics-18, Acting-14, Bard-18,
Dancing-13, Fast Talk-16, Hypnotism-18,
Juggling-17, Merchant-13, Performance-
15, Punning-19, Singing-14, Temporal Op-
erations-14.

Continued on next page . . .

tangible difference to the world at large. But they're essentially similar – like 'identical' twins. It's only because of their vast congruencies that the two continua lie close enough together for a Bridge to be feasible at all."

– "Mirror/roirriM Off the Wall"

The mirror dimension is an alternate reality that represents a very close cognate to our Earth. Because of the high degree of similarity between the two dimensions, establishing a connector between the realities is relatively simple.

The biggest difference between the mirror earth and our earth is that right and left are reversed – most people are left-handed, clocks run counterclockwise, drivers drive on the left in America and on the right in Europe . . .

According to Robert Trebor, the social differences between the two dimensions are minimal – mostly in the realm of popular culture. Most individuals seem to have their mirror cognates, though again the twinning appears to be imperfect – the mirror Robert Trebor was a criminal sociopath, while ours is a reasonably honest, upright citizen (of course, we only have his word on that . . .)

The most profound differences between the mirror world and our world lie within the realm of chemistry. Many biologically important molecules are asymmetrical; that is, the same atoms, arranged in a certain order right to left, will produce a very different substance if aligned in the same pattern, only left to right. It is this fundamental law of nature which produces the major differences between our world and the mirror world.

Because of these chemical differences, a dimensional Bridge between the two worlds can only be established from the mirror side. The reaction which produces the Bridge requires as a catalyst the rare compound thiotimoline, but this element will not catalyze properly on our side of the interface.

("Thiotimoline," incidentally, is a fictional compound invented by Isaac Asimov in his classic short-story "The Thermodynamic Properties of Resubliminated Thiotimoline." The story is a parody of a report in a chemical journal, about a compound that's so reactive it reacts *before* it comes in contact with the agent. The name of the mirror-catalyst could be an example of partial interdimensional correspondence, but more likely Jake forgot or chose not to record the real name of the compound. Or maybe Trebor is an sf fan.)

The chemical differences are also what makes the transformation of King Kong and Tiger Breath into the Wonderbooz possible (see below).

Finally, because of the different biochemical properties of food on either side of the Bridge, mirror people cannot derive nutrition from our food, and vice versa. The food is not poison – it can be eaten, and even enjoyed (depending on the chemicals it contains), but the person who eats it will starve just as quickly as if he was on a complete fast (see p. B128). On the upside, mirror food cannot be converted to fat either. After Trebor's visit, Doc Webster went on a mirror-food diet, and actually managed to lose 100 pounds (until the mirror-food ran out).

Harmony and the Mirror Dimension

The Mirror dimension has its own Callahan's Place, complete with its own Mike Callahan. And if it has Harmonian time agents, the mirror world must be on the path to its own Harmony. Furthermore, since Callahan knows about his counterpart, the two Harmonies know about one another.

The interesting question this raises is, are the two alternate Harmonies in communication? Can a Harmonian get on an interdimensional telephone to himself, arrange a trade of a case of King Kong for a case of Tiger Breath, and generally check up on things in mirror land? The answer is left to the GM.

Weird Tech

The stranger produced a smooth blue sphere about the size of a tennis ball from one of his pockets, and held it out toward the fireplace. The shimmering of the air over the crackling fire intensified and became a swirling, then a dancing, and finally a coalescing. The silence in Callahan's was something you could have driven rivets into.

Then the fireplace was gone, and in its place was a young black woman seated on a rock, a guitar on her lap and starry night sky all around and behind her. Her face was in shadow, but even as we held out breath the moon came out from behind a cloud and touched her features. It gave an obsidian sheen to her skin, a tender softness to a face that God had meant to be beautiful, and made a harsh shadow-line of the nearly straight slash that began an inch below her left eye and yanked sideways and down to open up lips that had been wide already, like a jagged black underline below the word "pain." She was black and a woman and scarred, and as the thought formed in our minds we realized that it was a redundancy. Her scar was visible externally, as well.

– “The Law of Conservation of Pain”

The gadgets below were all brought to Callahan's by time or dimensional travelers.

Confinement Loop

This is the Time Police's answer to handcuffs. Confinement loops are cheap, easy to use and easy to conceal.

The device looks like a toothpaste tube. The tube contains some kind of sophisticated biochemical preparation. When exposed to air, the contents instantly solidify into a strand with remarkable tensile ST. The strand can hold a victim with ST 20.

A special solvent is used to release the victim from the bonds. Presumably, the bond naturally degrades after a day or two, in case an officer is bound by his own loop without access to the solvent.

A single tube contains enough to bind six victims hand and foot, or twice that many with just their hands bound.

Time Patrol Agents are able to actually use the tubes in combat, to restrain an actively defending and counter-attacking foe. This can be done with a roll vs. DX-4 or Judo, assuming the character has some familiarity with the tubes' capabilities.

Confinement tubes are TL 8. Full tubes weigh ¼ lbs., and are Legality Class 5. Professional quality, ST 20 tubes like the Time Police use cost \$100 each.

Dimensional Bridge

This is the device used by Robert Trebor to travel between the mirror dimension and ours. Actually, it's not so much a device as a technique.

Al Phee (Continued)

Story

Phee was the fourth and final (recorded) Time Traveler to come to Callahan's, not counting Tom Hauptman or Callahan and his family. He arrived posing as an extraterrestrial trader, prepared to offer three amazing ultra-tech devices in exchange for every copper penny in Callahan's Place at that moment (Callahan kept several thousand pennies in a bag under the bar – the boys pitched them on Friday nights).

It was all a con job. Phee was not an alien; he was a Time Traveler from the era of the Time Police. The miraculous alien jewels he offered for sale were shams – his only real ultra-tech device was his hypnotic amplifier (see p. 96). Fortunately, his ruse was foiled by Josie Bauer, who took him into custody.

Phee was a remarkable individual. A preposterous-looking fellow, he was a chubby man with an oddly-shaped salt-and-pepper beard, wearing an expensive blazer over a polka-dot pajama top, boxer shorts with happy Buddhas on them, lederhosen and jester's shoes with curly-toes and bells at the tip. He wore wire-rimmed glasses and a spinning propeller beanie (the secret hiding place of his amplifier) tipped rakishly over one eye.

A blur of energy, Phee entered Callahan's through the dumbwaiter, and immediately began an incredible performance that included juggling full shot glasses, various acrobatic maneuvers, cutting off the end of Long-Drink's tie and patting Jake on the butt.

All the time, Phee kept up a bewildering and hilarious line of patter. Interspaced with his sales pitch was a good deal of teasing, mild insults, exclamations and puns in a bewildering array of languages. (Phee was not given any language skills above, because he never displayed any grammatical knowledge or practical vocabulary beyond mild oaths and one-liners in any of the languages he used; that doesn't mean he *didn't* know all the languages he used in Callahan's, though.)

Phee is a brilliant salesman and hypnotist, whose fatal flaw is an uncontrollable urge to push his stunts and cons as far over the top as he can. Despite his disrespect for the law, he doesn't seem to be a bad soul at heart. His compulsion caused him to hold out false hope of a miracle cure to Chuck Samms, but he felt genuinely bad about this thoughtless cruelty, later.

As listed above, Phee is a 150-point character. He seems a resourceful fellow, though, and probably has many skills that he did not demonstrate during the events of “Have You Heard the One . . . ?”

Legality Class

This tells how likely the gadget is to be legally available. Generally, *Legality Class 6* items are available with no questions asked.

Legality Class 5 might be licensed for safety reasons, but it's usually easy to get one (e.g., an automobile today).

Legality Class 4 are strictly licensed and only available if society thinks you have a good reason for owning one (e.g., drugs for a doctor, a rifle for a colonist).

Legality 3 and 2 indicate devices even more restricted; only very open societies will permit ownership.

Legality 1 and 0 are illegal for anyone but a government (or international corporation) to own except in completely open societies like Harmony.



Robert Trebor

White male; 5' 10", 155 lbs.; age 42; dark hair and eyes.

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 15, HT 11

Speed 5.75, Move 5

Parry 5

Damage: Thrust 1-2, Swing 1

Point Total: 125

Advantages

Appearance: Attractive, Charisma +1,
Wealth: Comfortable.

Disadvantages

Greed, Paranoia. (Note – the mirror-dimension Trebor is definitely a sociopath, but the Trebor from our dimension claims to be a decent citizen without the above disadvantages – there's no reason given in the stories to doubt his word.)

Continued on next page . . .

The dimensional interface takes the form of a two-dimensional projection that exists simultaneously in both continua at once. Known components in the generation of these interfaces are an ordinary mirror and the rare element "thiotimoline" (see above). The thiotimoline is used as a catalyst to produce a reaction which will project the dimensional interface over the mirror. Other requirements for the reaction are not recorded in the stories.

A Dimensional Bridge reaction can only be initiated in the mirror dimension – thiotimoline cannot catalyze properly in our dimension.

Dimensional Bridges are a late TL7 innovation. The weight and cost of the generating device are unknown. A Dimensional Bridge is Legality Class 0.

Glass Guns

The glass guns were introduced to Callahan's by the Meddler and his brother, in "The Law of Conservation of Pain." The patrons never saw one fired, so its exact effects are unknown – GMs can use either the laser pistol or the stunner found in the weapons table of the *Basic Set*. The glass guns, however, really *are* made out of glass – or something just as clear and brittle. They have 1 HP and no DR, and can even be shattered by certain sonic frequencies.

Jake assumed that the glass gun was the handgun of the '90s, and indeed maybe it is, in the alternate timeline of the Meddler. On the other hand, glass guns don't seem particularly efficient as a means of self-defense, so perhaps they were an invention of the Meddler's inventor brother.

Glass guns are TL7 inventions from a close alternate timeline. Legality class is presumably analogous to that of handguns in our time. Other stats are identical to the laser pistol or stunner (GM's choice) from the *Basic Set*.

Holo

In the Meddler's near-future alternate timeline, holos have replaced other recording media. The holo produces high-quality sound, and also projects a vivid, opaque three-dimensional image. No screen is necessary – the holo projects its image in the air. It can be used to play anything from film to the local equivalent of rock videos.

Holos are a late TL7 invention in a near-future alternate timeline. Legality class is 6. Price and weight are approximately equivalent to a contemporary CD player. As a recording executive, the Meddler had a very compact and sophisticated unit, weighing less than a pound, and probably costing more than \$1,000 on the open market.

Hypnotic Amplifier

This device (disguised as a propeller beanie) was used by Al Phee in his attempt to con Callahan's patrons out of their pennies.

When used by a trained hypnotist (the training, of course, must be at the appropriate Tech Level), the amplifier can create realistic, multi-sensory, three-dimensional illusions. The amplifier can even cause someone to believe an illusion about himself – while under the influence of the amplifier, Chuck Samms believed he was completely cured of his partial paralysis. All this requires is a successful skill roll on the part of the hypnotist (GMs can assess

appropriate modifiers for very complex illusions). The subjects of the illusion do not get a Will roll to disbelieve the illusion (though under some circumstances the GM could allow an IQ roll, to deduce that there's something incongruous about the situation).

Hypnotic Amplifiers are a TL8-9 device. They are Legality Class 4 and weigh about one pound. Cost is unknown – presumably a unit as compact and efficient as Al Phee's would be worth a good deal of money – plus a good deal more if obtained on the black market.

Time Machines

There are three different sorts of time machine mentioned in the stories. The most versatile and sophisticated – the Harmonian interface screen – is discussed in full on p. 36.

The other two seem to be two different models of the same device. The Meddler's time machine was a bulky belt with manual controls. The time machines used by the Time Police (and Al Phee) are so easily concealable that the stories can't tell us what they are – Josie kept hers in her purse, and Jake never got a good look at it.

Obviously, then, time travel does not require a tremendous amount of energy or hardware. Nonetheless, time machines are not easy to make. Presumably they require a good deal of very sophisticated software to make time travel possible, reasonably safe and paradox-free.

Time machines are Legality Class 1. TL7 machines weigh about 5-10 lbs., while Time Police models weigh only a few ounces. The Meddler's time machine was developed from scratch over the course of several years without using up the resources of a modestly wealthy man. Presumably the Time Police models can be made for only a few thousand dollars (assuming they do the same thing – the Time Police models may have many sophisticated and expensive features that are not recorded in the stories).

Wonderbooze

The Wonderbooze, aka the Four-Eye Monongahela, is created when any one of several brands of particularly vile rotgut whiskey is brought by an inhabitant of the mirror dimension to our dimension or vice versa. Particularly appropriate brands tend to go by brand names like King Kong and Tiger Breath. The symmetrical alcohol molecules are left unchanged by the transfer, so the booze remains intoxicating, but the esters, which produce the taste and the impact, are asymmetrical, and they change into something nearly divine. Wonderbooze far surpasses the most exquisite alcoholic beverages ever distilled on our earth.

If using the drinking rules on pp. 53-57, the +1 to creative endeavors from level 1 remains at *all* levels (though other modifiers to attributes accrue normally). Wonderbooze will *never* make a drinker vomit, pass out, or go into hallucinations, a berserk rage or an alcoholic coma. The sole effect of failing a HT roll that would normally induce one of the above effects is that the drinker loses his desire to drink, and passes into a deep peaceful sleep within 3d minutes. Hangover effects the next day are halved.

Until such a time as trade between the mirror dimension and our Earth becomes common, Wonderbooze is literally priceless. A true connoisseur would surely pay \$1 million or more for a single bottle.

Robert Trebor (Continued)

Skills

Acting-14, Carousing-12, Chemistry-16, Computer Operation-15, Electronics-15, Electronics Operation-15, Engineer-15, Fast-Talk-14, Guns-13, Mathematics-15, Merchant-14, Physics-17, Research-15, Savoir-Faire-14, Streetwise-13.

Story

Robert Trebor is the man from the mirror dimension who invented the Dimensional Bridge. A thorough sociopath, wanted for unspecified crimes, he mercilessly kidnapped his cognate from this dimension and left him to starve in the hands of the authorities.

Once he'd made his escape from his own world, he began exploring our dimension and looking for ways to profit from his invention. Most of his ideas were fatally short-sighted. For example, his plan to exchange one dimension's smog for the other's, molecule by molecule. This would mean that smog would no longer be toxic, but it would still block sunlight and displace good air. However, when he discovered the Wonderbooze, he seemed to have discovered a profitable, foolproof and even reasonably legal means to make his fortune.

However, on the other side of the interface, his cognate had managed to convince the authorities of his true identity – even the federal government had difficulty doubting a man whose heart was on the wrong side of his chest, and whose fingerprints had mysteriously jumped from one hand to another.

Somehow, through computer analysis, the mirror dimension's I.B.F. had managed to predict that the fugitive Trebor had a strong chance of ending up in Callahan's Place. With access to his cognate's notes and mirror-Thiotimoline, "our" Trebor was able to recreate the Bridge, which the feds set up behind Callahan's bar. In the meantime, under the influence of the Wonderbooze, the regulars at Callahan's deduced (with some help from their mirror cognates) that Trebor was up to no good, and a swift kick from Callahan's size-13s sent the mirror Trebor to justice, and our Trebor back to his real life.

There's a strong possibility that Trebor's adventure pushed the two dimensions far enough that it's no longer possible to construct a Bridge between them at our tech level.

As written, Trebor is a 125-point character. As usual, he may possess many traits which he didn't display in the story.

6

HARMONIANS IN OTHER GENRES



This chapter presents four suggestions for using the Harmonian time mission in campaign settings radically different from those in the Callahan's stories. These campaigns use the themes and background of the stories, with different characters and settings.

Cliffhangers/Horror: **Professor Weatherstone's Salons**

This is a Cliffhangers/Horror campaign set in the 1920s or 1930s. Cliffhangers GMs can set the PCs to hunting down anarchists, Nazis, Krundai agents and renegade time travelers. For a more horrific campaign, the GM can throw in demented cultists who worship inimical alien Things Man Was Not Meant to Know.

This is a globetrotting campaign, but it's centered on Elgin College, a small but respected co-ed college in the midwestern United States, with a student body of less than 500. Elgin is justifiably proud of its high ratio of graduates who go on to graduate studies abroad or at the best Ivy League schools.

By far the most popular member of Elgin's respected faculty is Professor Josiah I. Weatherstone, the chairman (and sole faculty member) of the department of classical studies.

Professor Weatherstone is known for his Salons. Several nights a week, he opens his parlor to students, faculty, community members or anybody else who might be interested in good company and good conversation. Professor Weatherstone serves his guests coffee and tea, lemonade in the summer and cocoa in the winter, and (in quiet defiance of Prohibition) sherry and a particularly piquant homemade elderberry wine.

The purpose of the Salons is to promote the art of conversation, and there's a good deal of vigorous (but always polite – Professor Weatherstone has no tolerance for dogmatism in his parlor) debate on subjects ranging from philosophy, to mysticism, to international affairs, to scientific developments. This routine is broken up by frequent word games (any of the contests from Callahan's will do) and story-telling competitions. Professor Weatherstone is also an ardent cribbage and whist player, and holds monthly card tournaments (the game alternates each month).

When Professor Weatherstone isn't holding a salon, it's usually because Mrs. Esterhaus is open for business. Mrs. Esterhaus is a respectable widow in her 70s who lives in a huge mansion a couple of blocks down from Prof. Weatherstone. Since Prohibition, Mrs. Esterhaus has been quietly running a speakeasy out of her house's Grand Ballroom on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights (she refuses to open on Saturday, because she doesn't want her patrons hungover at church the next morning). Mrs. Esterhaus runs her establishment for her own amusement, not for money – she owns a large percentage of the county. Consequently, the local authorities look the other way.

Professor Weatherstone is also known for his "excursions." The professor is known to have inherited a small but comfortable fortune, and he has invested it wisely. He lives modestly for most of the year, then in the summer he travels all over the world. He's been to every continent, including Antarctica, at least twice. He has an open invitation to any interested students or faculty to accompany him on his excursions, and he seldom leaves the country with less

Rachel

Being practically immortal, Rachel (from "A Voice is Heard in Ramah") is uniquely suited to appear in any of the first three alternate campaigns described in the main text.

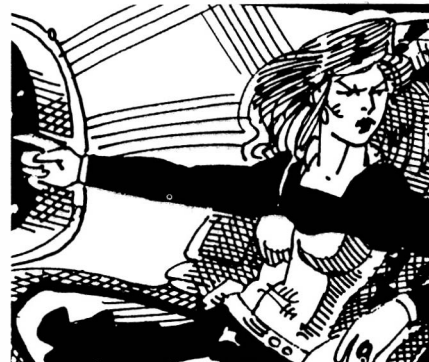
In a Professor Weatherstone campaign, she'd be well past her stint as a whaler's whore in Nantucket, presumably with a good deal of money saved up from her years on the docks. She could be introduced into the campaign as a mysterious lady whom the professor met back East, and who now comes to visit him once or twice a year.

In a cyberpunk campaign, Rachel would probably be at her zenith. She might well be a high officer in Harmonian Amusements, or possibly the CEO of a major multinational corporation. As a recipient of the telepathic SOS that the MacDonalds sent out on the Night of the Cockroach, as well as a personal friend of Finn and Tom Flannery, she'd know Mary's true nature and be a valuable ally to the Harmonian conspiracy. A romance between Tom Flannery and Rachel is an intriguing possibility – he seems her type.

In a cyberpunk era, Rachel would certainly take a keen interest in biotech. In fact, she's very likely to have already cloned herself several times, and be raising clone "daughters" (and perhaps cross-sex clone "sons") of herself at several ages. She may even have had a new reproductive system installed, and finally managed to produce a healthy, growing brood the old-fashioned way.

In the *Space* campaign, she'd be at least 500 years old, and probably slowing down a bit (though TL10 eugenics would probably keep her healthy and beautiful). She might have used her accumulated wealth from across the centuries to buy her own private garden planet to retire on, perhaps surrounded with a few select descendants.

If her mutation cloned or bred true, she'd have a large number of descendants by now, all considerably longer-lived than ordinary humans. For advice on incorporating an immortal human subculture into an interstellar society, see Robert A. Heinlein's novel *Time Enough for Love*.



Josiah I. Weatherstone

Harmonian male; apparent age 55; 5' 7", 135 lbs.; receding brown hair, brown eyes. ST 14, DX 13, IQ 18, HT 15
Speed 7, Move 7
Dodge 7, Parry 10
Damage: Thrust 1d, Swing 2d
Point total: 725

Advantages

Absolute Timing, Charisma +3, Eidetic Memory 2, Empathy, Enhanced Time Sense, High Pain Threshold, Immunity to Disease, Luck (30-point level), Status +1, Time Jumping (Harmonian), Unaging, Unfazeable, Unusual Background (Harmonian), Voice, Wealth: Wealthy.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Harmonian), Sense of Duty (to students and friends).

Skills

Acting-19, Anthropology-20, Archaeology-18, Architecture-19, Area Knowledge-24, Bard-24, Brawling-13, Climbing-13, Cooking-20, Dancing-14, Diplomacy-24, Ecology-18, Economics-18, Fencing-15, First Aid-20, Fishing-20, Genetics-17, Guns-15, History-26, Holdout-19, Hypnotism-18, Language (Greek)-27, Language (Latin)-27, Language (Russian)-21, Leadership-22, Linguistics-24, Lip Reading-19, Literature-22, Naturalist-18, Navigation-18, Occultism-21, Psychology-24, Research-23, Riding-13, Savoir-Faire-22, Seamanship-20, Stealth-14, Strategy-18, Streetwise-19, Survival (Jungle)-19, Swimming-13, Tactics-18, Teaching-23, Temporal Physics-19, Theology-20, Writing-19. (9 points reserved for 9 additional languages of the GM's choice. 1 point will buy a M/A language at 21).

Psionics

Mind Shield: Power 15, Skill 19.

Continued on next page . . .



than half a dozen companions. Normally, the students are expected to pay their own way, but there are usually at least one or two each year who couldn't afford the trip on their own, who Professor Weatherstone finances, under the guise of some nominal hired position – usually “research assistant” if the beneficiary is a student, and simply “companion” if he's not. Many of the students who've gone on an excursion with Prof. Weatherstone have returned with stories of quite remarkable adventures.

In this campaign the PCs are students, faculty or locals who frequent the Professor's salons and accompany him on his excursions.

The Characters

Professor Weatherstone

The professor is a slight man in his mid-50s, with the traditional receding hairline and gold-rimmed glasses of a quiet academic sort. He always wears a suit (on excursion he wears jaunty sporting tweeds). He smokes a pipe. (See sidebar.)

Mrs. Esterhaus

Mrs. Esterhaus is the last scion of the founding family of the county. She's pushing 70, has no living relatives, and she's let it be known that when she dies all her property is to be divided up between the church and the community. Consequently, nobody is making much of a stink about her “hobby” – anyway, it keeps the college boys off the street.

She's every inch the proper midwestern widow, from her high lace collar to her black buttoned shoes. She normally likes to keep to the background when her place is open, sipping mint tea and people-watching. Those who do take the time to pass a few hours with her find that beneath her prudish exterior she's a merry and worldly lady with a sharp, subversive wit.

GM's note: Players who know that this campaign has something to do with Callahan's, but aren't sure exactly what, can be kept guessing for quite a long time about whether Mrs. Esterhaus or Professor Weatherstone is the Harmonian.

Mrs. Gregarskivech

“Mrs. G” is Professor Weatherstone's housekeeper. A respectable matron in her 60s, she fled Russia after the revolution. She's quite happy working for the Professor – the only thing that bothers her about the town is that Professor Weatherstone is the only person within 50 miles who speaks Russian. Mrs. G. just can't get the hang of more than rudimentary English. Unknown to anybody except the Professor, Mrs. G is a brilliant and innovative biologist, who was on the verge of several major breakthroughs before the Bolsheviks came. She worked with her husband, who she believes was killed by the revolutionaries the night they escaped.

Clem

Clem is a taciturn American Indian of indeterminate age. He's served for more than 30 years as Mrs. Esterhaus' stableman and gardener. Clem is an excellent musician, and these days he plays guitar, banjo and sometimes fiddle when the speakeasy's open.

Roy Gresham

Mrs. Esterhaus refers to Roy as her “butler,” but what he is is her bartender and chauffeur. An immense man with a quick mind and an irrepressible good humor. Roy is the one who escorts the rare troublemakers out of Mrs. Esterhaus’s establishment – sometimes with the aid of a shovel he keeps under the bar.

Winston Greengrass

Winston is a young Indian in his mid-20s who wandered in from the Southwest a couple years ago, and now works for a rancher outside of town. Though he has little formal education, Winston has a brilliant mind. He’s worked his way through about half of the professor’s library, and is presently teaching himself Latin because he’s running out of books in English to borrow. Professor Weatherstone is trying to figure out a way to get Winston enrolled in the college, but Winston won’t take charity and there are few scholarship opportunities for a young Indian man who never went to high school.

Sheriff Andy Durham

Andy Durham is an excellent small-town sheriff – a quiet, moral man with a steel will when things get tough. He’s a frequent visitor to the professor’s salons, but he refuses to acknowledge that Mrs. Esterhaus’ place even exists.

Mike and Sally

If the GM wants to bring this campaign closer to the Callahan’s milieu, he can introduce these two students. Red-headed Irish kids, he’s an Easterner on an athletic scholarship and the captain of the football team’s defensive squad. She’s the ward of a rather mysterious gentleman from Denver, and active in most of the university’s social and service organizations. For all their activity, they keep surprisingly quiet most of the time, but they’re known as rock-solid sorts when the chips are down. They’re silly in love, and shoo-ins for king and queen of the Homecoming. Their names, of course, are Michael Callahan and Sally McGee. (This is Mike and Sally’s first time mission – they’re to observe and assist Professor Weatherstone for a few objective years before choosing their own temporal assignment.)

The Mission

Professor Weatherstone’s mission is to prepare humanity in general, and America in particular, for the upcoming depression and second World War. The Krundai conspiracy is shifting into high gear, and Professor Weatherstone and others like him have been sent to act as a stabilizing influence on the wildly-accelerating social pressures being inflicted on humanity by the Krundai. The biggest part of Professor Weatherstone’s mission is to indoctrinate certain gifted young people with Harmonian ideals, then seed them out to important behind-the-scenes posts in government, industry and the military, where they’ll put what they’ve learned to use in coordinating America’s response to the depression and WWII.

In addition, mutations and wild psionic talents are starting to appear in the population. Only a few – here and there – but Professor Weatherstone makes an effort to seek out such individuals, encourage them to develop their powers and keep them from triggering a social panic or a witch hunt. This is one of the main reasons for the Professor’s excursions.



Josiah I. Weatherstone (Continued)

To all appearances, Professor Weatherstone is a small, mild-mannered, middle-aged man. He’s a world-renowned scholar in his own little field, and publishes frequently in journals in several languages. He’s been teaching at Elgin since shortly after the turn of the century.

He never loses his temper and he never raises his voice. In crisis situations he radiates a calm certainty that everything will turn out all right in the end.

He always wears suits. On excursions he wears sporty tweeds. He smokes an ancient cherrywood pipe.

He lives alone with his housekeeper, in a sprawling, three-story house a few minutes walk from the college. He never learned to drive.

As a professor, Weatherstone is so popular that the administration has had to limit his classes to 50 students each – and he makes his students work to earn their grades.

He’s known to be a tad liberal politically – he enthusiastically campaigned to admit female students to the college, when the idea was first proposed during the Great War (when tuition-paying young men were in short supply).

Space: Kingdom Come

In this *Space* campaign, the Harmonian is Met Baynor, an independent interstellar trader who plies a trade route between about 100 colony worlds in a remote corner of human space in his freighter, the *Kingdom Come*.

Met is a handsome, effusive man known far and wide for being an honest-but-tough dealer. He's legendary among the colonists for his ability to procure luxury items that shouldn't be available within parsecs of the sector, and sell them for little more than they'd cost on Terra itself.

Met can either be the center of the campaign, with the PCs as his crew, or he can be a significant background detail, with the PCs as colonists or regional Patrol officers.

In this campaign, human technology is late TL 10. Time traveling technology has been allowed to stagnate. Technology is more oriented toward expansion to other worlds – most pre-colonization Scout teams, however, do have a temporal technician, who uses old Time Police technology to do a quick eyewitness historical survey of the world.

The Mission and the Crisis

In this case they're the same thing. Interstellar society is well on its way to Harmony, and Met's mission is very specific. Sometime in this generation, humanity will encroach on the Cockroach dominions, bringing the two races into unavoidable, violent and probably xenocidal conflict.

Met's mission is to prepare humanity for the onslaught. On the most basic level, he's been doing some discreet gunrunning – bringing in heavy weaponry that there's really no reason for a colony world to have. He's also, with the help of other Harmonians on Old Earth and other major human centers, been seeding his sector liberally with psis – in fact, a large fraction of the galaxy's most powerful psionic talents have now resettled in Met's remote frontier sector. These wild talents are expected to bear the brunt of the first Cockroach attack, *not* the inferior human technology.

The most basic part of Met's mission, however, is psychological. He's trying to build up in the widely-scattered colonists of his sector an identity – a sense of community – that will give them the will to face a foe as terrible as the Cockroaches.

Met also has a secondary goal. This epoch, where the Cockroaches remain unaware of humanity's existence, yet lie so close to human territory, is the perfect time to mount a mission to recover Mickey Finn's encrypted people (see p. 79), for transport uptime and integration with Harmonian society. Such a venture would, of course, be horribly risky, and could not be allowed to interfere with the primary goal.

The Crisis

The other reason for the excursions is that temporal analysis of the era shows what seems to be a full-blown crisis of completely unknown origins. The anomaly appears with little fanfare, then vanishes completely. Harmony can't guess at the nature of the situation, but they do know that it's something big – if it's caught early it will pass almost unnoticed by the general public, if not the consequences will be . . . major.

The problem (as any admirer of classic pulp horror can probably guess) is that ancient alien beings have been “sleeping” in/over/around the earth, and they're starting to wake up in the 1920s. These beings are ancient, wise (but not exactly sentient in any sense we understand), hungry and entirely inimical to humankind – much more so than even the Cockroaches. The Cockroaches are at least rational. The Cockroaches are at least *biological*. The problem, in short, is that Things Man Was Not Meant To Know are being stirred up by social chaos and various vicious sacrificial cults. Professor Weatherstone's challenge, then, is to discover the Things' existence, and deal with them before they can wake up fully and start breakfast.

Cyberpunk: Harmony Amusements Ltd.

This is a dystopian future campaign. The Harmonian front is a relatively small multinational corporation called “Harmony Amusements Ltd.” Harmony specializes in coordinating recreational and morale-building activities for other, larger megacorps. Harmony will do anything from arranging an office birthday party to designing a recreation center for a 300,000-person arcology.

The three lower floors of the Harmony headquarters building are occupied by “Cheerful Charlie's,” a super-club. Charlie's includes two major concert venues, five restaurants, three dance clubs, and a dozen small theme bars (the jungle room, the *Toon* room featuring holographic cartoon characters, and a meticulously-restored traditional Irish pub are among the most popular). In addition, almost a third of the club's floor space is devoted to an exact reproduction of a legendary brothel from 20th-century New York.

The chairman of Harmony Amusements is Thomas Flannery, who made headlines almost 30 years ago as the earliest cryonics subject ever successfully thawed out and cured.

The PCs in this campaign can be Harmony Amusements security or troubleshooters, or just regular patrons of Cheerful Charlie's.

The Characters

Tom Flannery

Yes, this is the same Tom Flannery from the Callahan's stories. He was successfully revived after his cryonic suspension . . . Harmonian agents sent back by Mike Callahan made sure of that. (The Harmonians can't endanger the structure of time, even to save members of their “families” – but it was Flannery himself who made the decision to be frozen. All Callahan did was make sure it worked out.)

Flannery's an excellent CEO – he comes up with good ideas, then gives his subordinates free rein to work out the details on their own. He's also very popular in society, and makes many valuable contacts for the company.

Mary Finn

Harmony Amusements is Mary's first solo time mission – subjectively, she began working in the 22nd century immediately after her family left the 20th. Ostensibly, she's Flannery's personal assistant. In reality, she runs the company. Flannery's no puppet – he's a genuine asset to the company – but he also knows what Mary is and why she's here, and he doesn't try to tell her what to do.

Michael Finn

Only Tom and Mary still call him “Mickey.” Finn is Harmony Amusement's chief of security. He has a rep on the street as being the baddest piece of work in town. Most people think Finn is some kind of Ninja master – he's supposed to be able to walk through walls and kill people with a look. Top names on both sides of the law think they're lucky that Finn chooses to spend his time with a low-key outfit like Harmony, rather than moving in on one of the big crime syndicates, or even one of the less scrupulous megacorps.

Finn is getting better and better at being human. He's constantly adding to his repertoire of emotional reactions – as befits his position, he's gotten particularly good at “quietly menacing” and “monolithically reassuring.”



Scuzzy John

Scuzzy John is a street person. He lives in a packing crate near a heating duct about a block from Harmony H.Q. He's an important street-level contact for Mary. Scuzzy John has the run of Cheerful Charlie's (Mary's offered him an apartment in the building, but he refused). He gets left alone on the streets because he's known as Mickey Finn's friend. Secretly, Scuzzy John is a brilliant historian, who got his position by deducing the Harmonian mission from

Met Baynor

Male Harmonian; apparent age 35; 6' 2", 180 lbs.; blond hair, blue eyes.
ST 15, DX 16, IQ 16, HT 16
Speed 8, Move 9
Dodge 8, Parry 10
Damage: Thrust 1d+1, Swing 2d+1
Point total: 760

Advantages

Absolute Timing, Appearance: Handsome, Charisma +4, Combat Reflexes, Empathy, Enhanced Time Sense, High Pain Threshold, Immunity to Disease, Luck (30-point level), Rapid Healing, Reputation +2 (colonists, all the time), Time Jumping (Harmonian), Toughness +1, Unaging, Unusual Background (Harmonian), Voice, Wealth: Wealthy

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Harmonian), Sense of Duty (to crew and customers).

Skills

Accounting-14, Acrobatics-15, Acting-15, Administration-15, Armoury-15, Astro-
gation-17, Astronomy-16, Bard-21, Beam
Weapons-20, Carousing-17, Climbing-15,
Computer Programming-14, Demolition-15,
Diplomacy-17, Economics-14, Electronics-
15, Electronics Operation (shipboard sys-
tems)-16, Engineer (Star Drive)-14, Fast
Draw (pistol)-17, Fast Talk-16, First Aid-16,
Forgery-14, Forward Observer-15, Free
Fall-15, Gambling-15, Gunner-17, History-
17, Holdout-15, Judo-16, Leadership-21,
Mathematics-14, Mechanic-16, Merchant-
17, Metallurgy-14, Navigation-17, Nuclear
Physics-13, Physics-14, Politics-17, Psy-
chology-15, Research-15, Running-14,
Savoir Faire-18, Sex Appeal-17, Shipbuild-
ing-14, Stealth-15, Streetwise-15, Swim-
ming-16, Tactics-16, Teaching-15, Temporal
Physics-17. All skills at TL10.

Psionics

Mind Shield: Power 20, Skill 17.

Met Baynor is the captain, sole owner and proprietor of the free trader *Kingdom Come*. He plies a route of about 100 remote colony worlds, putting in about three times per standard Earth year at the sector capitol to restock. Most of his ports of call he visits anywhere from twice a year to once every three years.

Continued on next page . . .



Met Baynor (Continued)

Met isn't interested in trading major goods, like picking up a crop and leaving behind settlers. Instead, he goes for the luxury trade, bringing the settlers the few essential non-necessities they can't make themselves, and giving them a place to spend their few extra credits on the little things that make life worth living – art objects, publications from home (wherever that may be), the newest toys and games from the galactic capitals . . .

Met is a handsome, dashing fellow and a true swashbuckler. He's earned a reputation as somebody honest folks can turn to in a crisis, due to his part in halting the para-Luddite revolution on Bluestar, and his rescue of the hostages in the Septad cluster.

He can also be a slick salesman, selling people more than they swore they'd ever buy. But he always gives full value for the money, and his goods always work as advertised, or full money back.

Met's generally regarded as having a dewy-eyed girl in every starport. That's an exaggeration. He does have several intimate female friends who he sees on his route, but he generally prefers his women mature, sophisticated, experienced and companionable.

He gets along excellently with all the aliens on his route, including a couple of real oddball races who won't talk to any other human.

historical patterns. He even determined that Mary was one of the most active time agents in our time – and he e-mailed her some very trenchant questions about the Harmonian conspiracy. It took Finn almost three months to trace the question back to Scuzzy John the bum. John still writes both scholarly and popular works on history and sociology, under several different pen names.

Doc

Doc is an A.I. He's also the coordinator of one of Harmony Amusement's most profitable ventures, Joyeux, the world's most advanced virtual reality amusement park. Doc (yes, his personality is modeled as closely as possible on Doc Webster's) is particularly adroit at catching netrunners who try to slip into Joyeux without the proper credit. Since the kind of person who'd try to hack into an amusement park is usually young and imaginative, Doc has revived a quaint custom from the dawn of the computer age – when he catches a hacker he offers him a job working security. Many of these recruits have gone on to important positions with Harmony Amusements.

The Mission

Humanity is going through its most chaotic time since the end of the 20th century. The megacorps are replacing the national governments, and the sociological consequences of this shift in society won't be fully felt for generations. Harmony Amusements is designed to try to keep society sane – to keep people from becoming completely obsessed with power and credit, by reminding them how they can use technology for fun. In the meantime, establishments like Cheerful Charlie's are there to remind people that they don't have to rely on computers and drugs to escape from their daily lives – that there's still no substitute for old-fashioned human contact.

In more concrete terms, the Harmonians want the cyberpunk society to give way (peacefully, if possible) to the more stable pre-Harmonian society of the Time Police (see p. 92). Also, psionics and other mutations are becoming less and less rare. Frequency of wild talents is now about 1 in 100,000 births, as compared to 1 in 1,000,000 in the 1960s, or 1 in 5,000,000 in 1900, and the Harmonian goal of successfully integrating such sports into society to promote Harmonian evolution continues. There are enough wild talents now that it's no longer possible to keep them underground – Harmonian agents like Mary need to bring psis and other mutants into the public awareness in a non-threatening manner.

The Crisis

For the first time since the 20th century, the nuclear threat has returned. This time the problem is not nations lobbing missiles at each other, but megacorps employing terrorists to sneak small pony nukes into competitor's headquarters, arcologies and key projects. Obviously, Finn's defensive satellites won't help against this kind of warfare.

Time travel research is progressing at a frightening rate, and if cheap, effective time travel is developed too soon, before a suitable social structure is in place, it could lead to major temporal chaos, as various mega-corps start time-tinkering in order to give themselves a competitive edge over their rivals.

Finally, if an alien presence is desired, the Krundai will have had a couple of centuries to digest their failure on Earth and devise a counter-plan. They

start to re-infiltrate humanity, this time without any plans to cultivate or harvest the human race, but simply to destroy it as quickly as possible, before the humans have a chance to develop interstellar travel and threaten Krundar itself.

Fantasy: Lean Theo's Inn

Theodoric "Lean Theo" Brewer is the sole Harmonian agent in the world of Yrth. The Harmonians don't spend a lot of time or effort on this unique variant reality, but they do like to keep an agent or two on hand, with a view towards research, observation, and possibly the reintroduction of Yrth humanity (or the other Yrth races) into a reality on the path to Harmony.

Since Lean Theo is more of a research scientist than a secret agent, he takes an even more laid-back view of his assignment than most Harmonians.

Lean Theo's Inn lies two days south of Megalos on the road to Ekans. It's the economic center of a village of about 90 people. Its real name (based on the signboard that hangs by the road, which shows a bird flying up with a stolen ear of corn in its beak) is the Crow and Corn, but everybody just calls it "Lean Theo's."

As his name implies, Theo brews his own beer, and it's well known as as fine a country brew as you'll find on any of the emperor's roads. Theo's is too small to accommodate the big supply caravans – they usually camp at a caravanserai about two hours further south. Theo's business comes from Emperor's messengers, travelling churchmen and merchants, minor nobility on holiday, knights errant and similar travelers.

The People

Lean Theo

As his name implies, Theo is a scarecrow of a man who stands well over 6 feet tall. Despite his ungainly proportions, the muscles in his thin arms bunch like coiled wire, and he's been known to throw troublemakers twice his weight out of the Inn.

He's a steady, thoughtful man with a slow but ready smile and an unexpectedly booming, boisterous laugh. As might be expected from a Harmonian innkeeper, Theo likes his place rollicking with songs, stories and games of all descriptions.

Solaniel Lakanan

Lakanan plays lute and harp evenings at the inn, and is Theo's general assistant during the day. He's a quiet, somber Elf who does his duty well and avoids talking to anybody except Theo. Solaniel is a master musician, and nobles have been known to travel the two days' trip from Megalos just to hear him play. Particularly moving are his sad songs, which seem to burn with loss and loneliness.

Unknown to anyone besides Theo, Solaniel is an expatriate Dark Elf. He's also a skilled mage and a master assassin. He always has at least three blades concealed about his body, and sometimes wears others openly. He specializes in spells of Mind and Body control, and has been known to quietly put unruly customers magically to sleep.

"Lean Theo" Brewer

Male Harmonian; apparent age 45; 6' 3", 120 lbs.; sandy blond hair and brown eyes.

ST 14, DX 14, IQ 15, HT 14

Speed 7, Move 7

Dodge 7, Parry 8, Block 7

Damage: Thrust 1d, Swing 2d

Point Total 660

Advantages

Absolute Timing 5, Charisma +2, Empathy 15, Enhanced Time Sense 45, High Pain Threshold, Immunity to Disease, Luck 30, Magical Resistance +3, Reputation +3 (travelers, all the time), Strong Will +2, Time Jump 75, Toughness +1, Unaging 15, Unusual Background 100, Voice, Wealth: Comfortable.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Harmonian), Sense of Duty (to regulars), Skinny.

Skills

Accounting-13, Acting-14, Administration-14, Alchemy-12, Animal Handling-14, Anthropology-16, Area Knowledge (Yrth)-18, Bard-19, Botany-13, Brawling-16, Buckler-14, Carousing-15, Carpentry-15, Climbing-13, Cooking-15, Dancing-14, Diplomacy-17, Ecology-13, Economics-14, First Aid-15, Fishing-16, Heraldry-14, History-16, Holdout-14, Language (Elvish)-16, Leadership-16, Linguistics-15, Merchant-15, Metallurgy-13, Naturalist-14, Occultism-14, Parachronic Physics-18, Politics-16, Professional Skill: Brewer-16, Psychology-17, Research-14, Riding-14, Running-15, Savoir-Faire-17, Shortsword (cane)-14, Singing-17, Sling-13, Stealth-13, Swimming-20, Teaching-15, Temporal Physics-12, Theology-13, Ventriloquism-16.

Psionics

Mind Shield: Power 15, Skill 16.

Lean Theo is not as fantastically gifted as many Harmonian agents in more crucial eras, but he is no second-rater. Basically a research scientist, he's one of Harmony's leading experts on parachronics, and he's written a standard work on the theoretical mathematics of magical energies that would shatter the worldview of any mage who happened to read it. (Fortunately it's in Harmonian, and can't be translated into any language that hasn't reached at least TL13.)

Continued on next page. . .

“Lean Theo” Brewer ***(Continued)***

Theo truly loves Yrth. He is fond of all the non-human races, and is particularly fascinated by Elves. Mages amuse him. He’s quietly gained the confidence of many surprisingly important people who have had the occasion to pass by his inn, including a half dozen nobles, two bishops, and Brennan the rebel leader. Before he opened the inn he traveled all over Ytarria, and he probably has other, even more important friends from those days. His contacts are kept very discreet, though several of the merchants who travel the Emperor’s South Road regularly know that he gets more mail than any other commoner they’ve ever seen, some of it with fascinating and ornate seals on the envelope.

He absolutely refuses to keep slaves or attend gladiatorial spectacles. Other than that, he’s not overtly political.

He owns a sword, shield and helmet, but only wears them twice a year when the men from the village go to the next town for militia practice. When he’s out alone he usually carries a stout walking stick, which he’s been known to wield with remarkable effectiveness. He’s occasionally found or been given a magic item or two, but when this happens he inevitably takes it to Harmony for analysis, then either sells it (if found) or gives it to somebody more needy (if a gift).

Skip and Hop

Skip and Hop (Theo might know their real names, but nobody else does), are Theo’s assistant brewers, who manage the day-to-day work of the brewery behind the Inn. Skip – the dominant member of the team – is a very competent, very intelligent, rather pushy Halfling, and Hop is a fat, sleepy-looking dwarf.

Both are veterans of the Emperor’s armies. Hop, in particular, is a brilliant axe-man, particularly on the rare occasion when his temper is roused. Skip can’t match his friend’s physical prowess, but makes up for it in sheer ferocity – his opponents can’t believe that so much violence can be balled up in such a small package. Of course, these days Skip and Hop seldom get to use their skills, unless an exceptionally stupid bandit gang moves into the area. They’re both extremely content with their retirement.

Anne Overby

Anne is the town whore, and makes no bones about it. She approaches her profession with enthusiasm and skill. A large, attractive, boisterous and companionable woman, Anne usually works out of Theo’s inn (though she also sees guests at her own cottage, by appointment).

A kindly and intelligent woman of almost 30, Anne keeps herself scrupulously clean, and never behaves in a shocking or brazen manner in public. She has two daughters, ages 9 and 13, both of whom attend an expensive convent school in Megalos. The older girl is already betrothed to the son of a wealthy merchant of Anne’s acquaintance.

Theo is tremendously fond of Anne, and she’s supposed to inherit the Inn in the event of his death (or his return to Harmony, though she doesn’t know his secret). She figures she has a good 12 or 15 more years of whoring in her, though, and has no intention of retiring before her time.



The Mission and the Crisis

As previously mentioned, Lean Theo’s is more of an observation post than a real time mission, and Theo doesn’t have any particular job other than to watch the social and political situation on Yrth, and draw his own conclusions. The eventual reintegration of the Yrth and pre-Harmonian cultures is a goal (or at least an option), but one which lies many generations in the future. Theo definitely thinks it can be done, though.

Since Theo is traveling across continua, as well as through time, he cannot transport himself instantly to Harmony like most Time Agents can. If he wants to return home for a while, he has to do so using a special interface screen, which he keeps behind a tapestry in his bedroom at the Inn.

Theo does have one serious, vital task in his assignment – he needs to monitor Banestorm activity carefully, and the Dark Elves in general. If a serious Banestorm flare, or some Dark Elf plot to send the “intruders” back where it came from, started funneling Yrth mana or Yrth people back to the pre-Harmonian timeline, that could precipitate a major Harmonian crisis.

FRIENDS, REGULARS & PAINS-IN-THE-BUTT



This chapter contains character descriptions of the most important people in the Callahan's stories.

Unless otherwise noted, the listed age is for the character's *first* appearance in the stories. As usual with characters drawn from fiction, no attempt has been made to hold disadvantages to -40 points or less.

The descriptions have been confined to traits the character definitely displayed in the stories, or which can be logically

deduced from his profession or background. This means that the GM should feel free to add traits (particularly skills and quirks) wherever he feels it necessary to "round out" the character.

The first three characters are the Harmonians, Mike, Mary and Lady Sally. The rest of the major characters are listed in alphabetical order.

Michael Callahan



Age 300-400; apparent age about 55; 6' 3", 200 lbs.; red hair, blue eyes.

ST 15, DX 14, IQ 17, HT 16

Dodge 7, Parry 7

Damage: Thrust 1+1, Swing 2+1

Point total: 710 points

Advantages

Absolute Timing, Alcohol Tolerance, Charisma +4, Eidetic Memory 1, Empathy, Enhanced Time Sense, High Pain Threshold, Immunity to Disease, Luck (30 point level), Reputation +4 (small group of people, all the time), Time Jumper (Harmonian), Toughness +1, Unaging, Unfazeable, Unusual Background (Harmonian), Voice.

Psionics

Levitation (single skill power): Power 6 (-75% levitation – only up and down, only while relaxed). Skill 14.

Mind Shield: Power 10 (3 levels free from Empathy), skill 18.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Harmonian), Duty (to Harmony), Sense of Duty (to regulars).

Quirks

Likes his place merry. Tolerant of "rannygazoo." Smokes foul-smelling cheap cigars.

Skills

Accounting-15, Acting-17, Administration-17, Anthropology-15, Area Knowledge (20th-century Earth)-20, Bard-23, Brawling-16, Carousing-18, Darts (hobby)-15, Detect Lies-20, Diplomacy-18, Driving (car)-13, Ecology-16, Economics-16, Fast-Talk-17, First Aid-18, Gambling-17, Genetics-15, Guns-16, History-24, Holdout-17, Interrogation-17, Law-15, Leadership-22, Literature-16, Merchant-17, Musical Instrument (piano)-14, Nuclear Physics-18, Occultism-17, Professional Skill: Bartender-20, Psychology-22, Punning-20 (default), Research-17, Savoir-Faire-20, Shortsword (baton)-16, Stealth-16, Streetwise-17, Swimming-14, Teaching-17, Temporal Physics-22, Theology-16.

When he was born, on Harmony, his parents named him Justin (last names are no longer customary on Harmony). But Harmonians can call themselves whatever they please, and he has come to regard Michael Callahan as his "real" name.

Callahan began his career as a Harmonian deep-cover agent at the end of WWII – the dawn of the nuclear age. His assignment was to prepare for and deal with the temporal crisis expected during the '70s and '80s – very likely a nuclear war.

He built his bar in Suffolk County in the image of countless other roadside Irish taverns in New York. To his patrons, Callahan is a serene and reassuring presence. He always keeps his place "merry." He looks like a big, dumb Irishman, but it's impossible to talk to Callahan for more than a few minutes without realizing that he is a man of unusual depth, wisdom and sensitivity.

Callahan keeps a quiet place, and has no time for troublemakers. From Big Beef McCafferty, who tried to shortchange Callahan, to the Mafia flunky who tried to scare Callahan into renting a jukebox, anybody who tries to put the muscle on Callahan gets the same treatment – a free trip to the parking lot and probably a broken bone or two to remember it by. He often blusters and acts angry to keep folks in line, but those who know him well know that on the extremely rare occasions when Mike's *really* mad, he doesn't say a word. On those

occasions, it's best to just keep quiet and discreetly look for cover, in case debris starts flying.

He's an excellent punster and storyteller, but during the formal competitions he usually plays the sponsor and sits out the action. When it's not too busy he joins in on Riddle Night.

His clothing is comfortable, casual and a bit old-fashioned. He always wears brogans. When he's on duty he wears an old but clean apron.

Callahan smokes big cheap cigars that he lights with non-safety matches he imports from Canada. He prefers the non-safety matches because he can strike them with his fingernail.

As a time agent, his style is much quieter and more conservative than Lady Sally's or Mary's. His reverence for human dignity, privacy and liberty verges on the religious. He never resorts to anachronistic technology as a short cut to solving a

problem. Callahan has a deep aversion to killing, but that won't hold him back if deadly force is really necessary. His knowledge of time travel is prodigious, even for a Harmonian.

Callahan never mentions his subjective age. It is assumed that he's about the same age as Lady Sally, who's well into her third century.

Callahan has displayed a few unusual powers to his friends. His levitation appears to be more of a meditation technique than a practical psionic ability. When Noah Gonzalez was badly burned on the Night of the Cockroach, Callahan gave him a "nerve block" that stopped the pain. This is considered to be an example of the capabilities of TL16 First Aid, rather than a distinct advantage. He speaks at least a half dozen modern languages, but which ones and how well is up to the GM.

Lady Sally McGee

Age 300-400 years; apparent age about 50 (she'd look younger if she didn't use makeup to age herself); 5' 2", 100 lbs.; red hair, green eyes.

ST 12, DX 14, IQ 16, HT 14

Speed 7, Move 7

Dodge 7, Parry 10

Damage: Thrust 1-1, Swing 1+2

Point total: 745

Advantages

Absolute Timing, Alertness +2, Ambidexterity, Appearance: Beautiful, Charisma +4, Combat Reflexes, Empathy, Enhanced Time Sense, High Pain Threshold, Immunity to Disease, Intuition, Luck (Extraordinary), Reputation +4 (large

group of people, all the time), Time Jumper, Unaging, Unfazeable, Unusual Background (Harmonian), Voice, Wealth: Wealthy.

Psionics

Mind Shield power 15 (3 points free from Empathy), skill 17.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Harmonian), Duty (to Harmony), Sense of Duty (employees and regular customers), Social Stigma -1 (brothel keeper).

Quirks

Speaks in obviously phony British accent.

Skills

Accounting-13, Acrobatics-13, Acting-15, Anthropology-15, Area Knowledge (20th-century Earth)-16, Area Knowledge (Brooklyn)-18, Bard-21, Breath Control-14, Carousing-16, Climbing-15, Computer Operation-15, Dancing-15, Detect Lies-15, Diplomacy-16, Electronics Operation (surveillance devices)-14, Erotic Art-20, First Aid-15, Guns-16, History-18, Holdout-15, Hypnotism, Judo-15, Language: Arabic-14, Language: Chinese-14, Language: French-14, Language: Japanese-14, Language: Russian-15, Language: Spanish-14, Law-14, Leadership-20, Literature-14, Performance-15, Politics-18, Professional Skill: Courtesan-21, Psychology-18, Punning (default)-18, Research-15, Savoir-Faire-19, Sex Appeal-20, Stealth-14, Streetwise-16, Teaching-17, Temporal Physics-16, Theology-14, Whip-13.

Lady Sally is Mike Callahan's spouse and counterpart in the battle for time. Sally opened her famous brothel in Brooklyn at the height of WWII, when such enterprises were tolerated, because of the large numbers of restless servicemen at large in the city. By the time the war was over, she had so many influential friends that there was no question of closing her place down.



A tiny, trim woman, Sally is not an incredible beauty. It's not her features, but her manner that accounts for her astonishing sexual appeal.

Sally considers sex an art, and has studied it extensively. Her employees are called "artists" (*not* prostitutes, and *never* "whores" or "hookers"). Sally's artists are paid a regular salary and allowed to keep all their tips (tipping, however, is strictly optional). They're given room and board at the house (though living in is not mandatory). Her clients pay according to their means. Her artists are of both sexes, and she caters to all sexual preferences except the dangerously violent.

Sally herself seldom entertains clients privately. Her time cannot be had for mere money – an invitation from Sally to spend time alone with her is considered a great honor, by her clients and artists alike.

Unless dealing with a crisis of some sort, Sally always seems just pleasantly tipsy. She speaks with a New Yorker's idea of an upper-class British accent. When on duty as the

Hostess of her house (which is practically every waking moment) she dresses as though for an elegant party. Her clothes are all stylish and tasteful.

Her marriage to Callahan is not secret (she wears a wedding ring), but they keep it private. Her artists have all seen Mike around the place, but few know him well. And fewer of Callahan's regulars knew who Mike's wife was until Lady Sally closed her place (even Jake, who spent a good deal of time at Sally's, as both a client and an entertainer). Almost nobody knew that Mary was Sally's daughter.

Sally is much tougher than she looks, mentally and physically. She's been known to subdue or hold off skilled attackers more than twice her size.

She has fewer scruples than Callahan about killing evil people. She keeps a small cache of ultra-tech gadgets hidden away for emergencies, and in general seems much more willing than Callahan to resort to time tricks.

Mary Finn

Age unknown; apparent age early 30s; 5' 9", 210 lbs.; brown hair, blue eyes.

ST 14, DX 14, IQ 16, HT 14

Speed 7, Move 7

Dodge 7, Parry 9

Damage: Thrust 1, Swing 2

Point total 640

Advantages

Absolute Timing, Alertness +2, Appearance: Attractive, Charisma +2, Combat Reflexes, Empathy, Enhanced Time Sense, High Pain Threshold, Immunity to Disease, Luck (30 point level), Strong Will +3, Time Jumper, Toughness +2, Unaging, Unusual Background, Voice.

Psionics

Mind Shield power 15 (3 points free from Empathy), skill 17.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Harmonian), Duty (to Harmony), Fat (+50%), Sense of Duty (Callahan's Regulars).

Skills

Accounting-14, Acrobatics-13, Anthropology-15, Architecture-15, Bard-19, Blacksmith-18, Breath Control-14, Carousing-15, Climbing-14, Criminology-15, Dancing-14, Diplomacy-17, Electronics-14, Electronics Operation-20, Erotic Art-15, First Aid-17, Guns-16, History-18, Holdout-15, Interrogation-16, Judo-14, Karate-14, Law-14, Leadership-16, Lip Reading-15, Literature-14, Mechanic-16, Metallurgy-14, Professional Courtesan-16, Psychology-18, Punning (default)-16, Research-15, Savoir-Faire-18, Sex Appeal-18, Stealth-14, Strategy-14, Streetwise-15, Swimming-18, Tactics-15, Temporal Physics-16, Traps-15, Whip-13.

The only (known) child of Mike Callahan and Lady Sally, Mary was born and raised on Harmony (one of the advantages of being an immortal, professional time traveler is that your job never takes you away from your children while they're growing up).

When she reached adulthood, she began working for her mother, where she soon established a reputation as one of the most professional and popular artists in the House.

After a few years of this, however, she transferred to working literally behind the scenes, as Lady Sally's chief of security. She used Sally's sophisticated electronic surveillance system to monitor all the activities going on in the house – and



stopping unpleasant situations before they had a chance to happen. This required physical intervention only on the rare occasions when Sally's primary bouncer, Priscilla, was incapacitated. Even so, Mary is a formidable physical combatant.

After Lady Sally's closed, Mary visited her father's bar to install Sally's spiral staircase there. As she finished that job she met Jake, and there was a tremendous mutual attraction. But that same night Mickey Finn came to Callahan's seeking some solution to his terrible loneliness. Seeing how deep Finn's need was, and knowing how important he was to the Harmonian mission, Mary proposed marriage. Finn accepted. Jake, of course, was deeply hurt (though he didn't take personal offense), and Mary – who still cares deeply for Jake – has always regretted causing him this pain. To try to help him, she searched for a way to use time travel to save Jake's family, but was unable to do so.

She truly loves her husband, and is completely loyal to him. She's probably the foremost human expert on Cockroach tech-

nology – she understands how Finn works better than Finn does.

Where she got her training as a blacksmith is unknown, but ironwork is her avocation, and she's capable of doing exemplary professional work.

Mary is completely comfortable with her size and weight, and is liable to become annoyed at any persistent suggestions that she should "shape up."

Since 20th-century fashions are not designed to flatter large figures, Mary usually dresses for comfort, rather than fashion. Nonetheless, she is always careful of her appearance.

Mary is a cheerful woman with a tremendous capacity for fun and no tolerance for evasions or self-delusions.

Perhaps because of youthful impetuosity, Mary is less circumspect and reserved in dealing with others than her parents. In particular, she has little use for her father's prohibition against prying. She won't interrogate anyone just to be nosy, but if she feels she needs to know something, she's not particular about what kind of questions she uses to find out.

Anders, Cass

Age 40; 5' 8", 160 lbs.; blond hair, brown eyes.

ST 10, DX 10, IQ 12, HT 10

Speed 5, Move 5

Dodge 5

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d

Point total: 40

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (-5 points – do what you can to relieve any suffering you foresee), Shyness (mild).

Psionics

Precognition Power 12; Fivesight -50%, Misfortune Only -25%. Skill 12.

Skills

Accounting-14, Bowling (hobby)-12, Computer Operation-13, Fast-Talk-13, First Aid-13.

Cass Anders was a completely average, rather dull man with a strange curse – Fivesight (see p. 50).

For many years Cass coped stoically with his power, always doing what little he could to minimize the suffering when his visions came to pass.

When Cass married Kathy (see p. 126), his life took a turn for the better. Kathy knew what he was and loved him anyway. In return Cass was completely devoted to his wife.

Soon, though, the strangeness of her life with Cass began to weigh on Kathy. When her son from a previous marriage, Bobby, was killed in a school bus crash, the relationship went completely sour. Even though logically she knew that it was impossible, she could not forgive her husband for not even trying to save her son. She left Cass briefly, and when she returned things weren't the same.

Finally, several months later, she made a date with a stock-boy at the local supermarket named Wally (her first infidelity).



It was Cass's bowling night and she'd have the house to herself. That morning, she found a manila envelope and Cass's service revolver on the mantelpiece. She guessed that Cass had foreseen her infidelity and was planning to kill her. Instead of keeping her date with Wally, she went to Callahan's.

She didn't tell Wally though, and he showed up on schedule and slipped into her bed. Meanwhile, Cass's bowling league had been canceled due to a broken air conditioner.

At Callahan's, Kathy suddenly remembered Wally and called home, just after Cass returned. Wally answered – the manila envelope contained Cass's will. He had foreseen his

own suicide. The people at Callahan's provided Kathy and Wally with alibis for the night, so they wouldn't have to face a murder investigation. But nothing could be done to change Cass Anders' fate.

Kathy Anders implies that her husband was in the army. If so, in addition to the skills above, he may have retained some of the military skills he learned in the service.

Cheerful Charlies

Les Glueham

Age 35; 5' 9", 160 lbs.; blond hair, blue eyes.
ST 10, DX 11, IQ 12, HT 11
Speed 5.5, Move 5.
Dodge 5
Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d
Point total: 100



Merry Moore

Age 30; 5' 7", 135 lbs.; brown hair, hazel eyes.
ST 10, DX 12, IQ 13, HT 10
Speed 5.5, Move 5
Dodge 5
Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d.
Point total: 90

Advantages

Both have Empathy. Les has Charisma +2, Merry has Appearance: Attractive and Charisma +1.

Disadvantages

Both share the regular's Code of Honor and Sense of Duty to Callahan's regulars.

Skills

Les and Merry use the same skills in their profession. Les' score is given first, Merry's second

Bard-13/14, Dancing-12/13, Literature-10/12, Psychology-12/12, Carousing-13/11, Diplomacy-12/13, Fast-Talk-12/13, Performance-13/12, Savoir-Faire-13/13, Sex Appeal-12/12, Sleight of Hand-13/12.

In the early '70s, Les Moore and Merry Glueham were not happy people. As if their names weren't bad enough, they were also both completely unable to hold a job. Figuring they had nothing to lose, they each called a guy named Flannery who cheered people up for a living – satisfaction guaranteed, or your money back.

It worked. Tom Flannery not only cheered Les and Merry up, but when he introduced them, they fell in love. Then he gave them jobs as his assistants. When they got married, Les and Merry swapped last names – it seemed to work better that way.

When Tom Flannery died a few months later, Les and Merrie kept the business going. They called themselves the Cheerful Charlies and ran their ad in several New York papers:

DEPRESSED? Gamble a little time on the Cheerful Charlies. \$25 if we cheer you up, nothing at all if we don't: you decide! 24-hour emergency service available (rates double from 10 P.M. to 8 A.M. Call... for an appointment: What have you got to lose?

They printed up business cards with the motto: HAVE FUN – WILL TRAVEL.

While the Cheerful Charlies are good entertainers, they're not clowns or comedians. They work mostly through talking to their clients, and taking an interest in what they have to say. Then, when they've got their problems off their chest, turning their attention to something more pleasant.

Occasionally they'll lose a client to suicide, but in general their record is exemplary. The Cheerful Charlies take their job seriously, and they'll do almost anything necessary to cheer up a client. From time to time, if all else fails, they've even been known to use sex to get lonely people interested in life again (they don't accept money in such cases). If even that fails, they bring their client to Callahan's.

The Cheerful Charlies introduced Billy Walker to Callahan's Place.

Costigan, Fast Eddie

Age 53; 5' 5", 145 lbs.; black hair, brown eyes.
ST 13, DX 14, IQ 10, HT 13
Speed 6.75, Move 6

Dodge 6, Parry 7
Damage: Thrust 1d, Swing 2d-1
Point total: 225

Advantages

Alertness +4, Combat Reflexes, Empathy, High Pain Threshold, Intuition, Musical Ability +5, Toughness 1.

Disadvantages

Appearance: Unattractive, Code of Honor (regular's), Duty (Callahan's bouncer, 6 or less), Sense of Duty (to regulars).

Quirks

Speaks with stereotypical Brooklyn accent; In love with Rachel; Loves blues and ragtime music; Prefers action to talk; Practically worships Callahan.

Skills

Blackjack-17, Brawling-15, Climbing-13, Carousing-14, Interrogation-11, Performance-12, Piano-20, Punning-10, Stealth-13, Streetwise-12, Swimming-14, Throwing-15.

Eddie is Callahan's bouncer and piano player. He's been with Callahan's since before there was a Callahan's – he met Mike after the war at Lady Sally's, and accepted a job as the piano player in the bar Mike was building out on Long Island.

Eddie's a former street kid and he looks it. He resembles a badly-shaven chimpanzee.

He's one of the few surviving masters of barrelhouse piano. He doesn't record, though, and he seldom plays anywhere except Callahan's or Lady Sally's. Eddie could play ragtime anytime, anywhere – an armored battle, a protest march, the floor of the stock exchange – and never miss a note.

As a bouncer, his technique is subtle and effective. If somebody tries to start trouble, Eddie slips up behind him with his omnipresent blackjack, and the troublemaker is asleep literally before he knows what hit him.

Eddie knows that he's not as clever as the other guys at the bar, and he's comfortable with that. When there's a personal crisis to be dealt with, he usually lets the other guys deal with



straightening out the guy's life – Eddie sticks to keeping his glass filled. On Punday and Tall Tales Nights Eddie usually stays on the sidelines. Still, he often surprises his friend with an unexpected insight or brings down the house with a quietly hilarious pun or wisecrack.

Eddie is fiercely in love with Rachel. Though she still doesn't fully reciprocate his feelings, she's very fond of Eddie, and the two do sometimes see each other at Lady Sally's.

He'll literally do anything for his friends. When Jake broke his one-of-a-kind guitar, "Lady Macbeth," Eddie drove cross country to kidnap Domingo Montoya and bring him to Callahan's Place to fix the guitar.

Flannery, Tom

Age 45; 5' 8", 130 lbs.; thinning brown hair, brown eyes.
ST 9, DX 10, IQ 12 HT 8
Speed 4.5, Move 4
Dodge 4
Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1-1.
Point Total: 0

Advantages

Charisma +2, Empathy, Strong Will +2.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (regular's), Sense of Duty (to regulars), Terminally Ill (75-point level).

Skills

Bard-15, Carousing-10, Detect Lies-15, Diagnosis-10, Diplomacy-13, Fast-Talk-13, Leadership-12, Literature-11, Performance-13, Psychology-14, Punning-15, Savoir-Faire-13, Sleight of Hand-11, Teaching-11.

Though he was only a regular for a few months, Tom Flannery made a lasting impression on Callahan's Place.

The day he first came to Callahan's, Doc Webster gave him nine months to live. The prediction proved accurate, almost to the day.

Tom is remembered by his friends as a gentle, quiet, smiling man, always ready with a joke or a friendly word. He was a strong contender on Punday Night.



The first thing Tom did when Doc Webster gave him the news was start a new business, the Cheerful Charlies, dedicated to cheering up unhappy people. The business was a success – if all else failed, Tom could always put his client's problems in perspective by telling them about his condition. In the few months he had with the Cheerful Charlies, Tom managed to introduce Merry Glueham and Les Moore and recruit them to carry on the business after he was gone.

The stories don't record the exact reason for Tom's condition, but it was not greatly incapacitating, and the end came quickly. One night, Tom just didn't show up at Callahan's, and everybody knew that he was gone.

Most of his friends believe that Tom's spirit hangs around Callahan's Place – not in an awkward, noisy, moans-and-clanking way, but as part of the spirit of merriness and compassion that permeates the place.

Tom was not buried or cremated upon his death, but was cryonically frozen, in the hopes that sometime in the future, he can be revived and cured.

Fogerty, Dink

Age 35; 5' 9", 200 lbs.; thin red hair, pale blue eyes.
ST 12, DX 9, IQ 9, HT 13
Speed 5.5, Move 5
Dodge 5
Damage: thrust 1d-1, swing 1d+2
Point total: 145

Advantage

Toughness +1.

Disadvantages

Appearance (Unattractive), Overweight.

Psionics

Desire (single-skill power) 12, skill 12 (see p. 50).

Quirk

Wears a silly-looking floppy yellow hat.

Skills

Boating-11, Brawling-10, Mechanic-11, Shipbuilding-9, Fishing-12, Seamanship-12, Navigation-11, Merchant-10.

Dink Fogerty was a local fisherman who wandered into Callahan's to attempt to use his mutant power to cheat his way to the Third Annual Dart's Championship of the Universe. Fortunately, Dink proved much too stupid to make his win even look honest (his darts technique was beyond pathetic), and the regulars soon deduced that Dink was a telekinetic. Doc Webster managed to instill in Dink a seemingly-permanent Centipede's Dilemma block (see p. 51).

Fogerty is a stupid, awkward man with a raspy, ugly voice. He wears crumpled working clothes wherever he goes, topped

by his indescribable floppy yellow hat. He has few morals or scruples, but fortunately he lacks the imagination to use his power for anything more than petty larceny and sophomoric tricks. Even with his gifts he continued to make a mostly honest living as a fisherman – a profession at which he excelled, since he could make his nets "want" fish (see *Desire*, p. 50).

His fate after his single visit to Callahan's is unknown, though Jake claims that his talent never worked again. Of course, it's possible that Fogerty's psionic block will snap off some day, just as fast as it was locked on.



Gonzales, Noah

Age 45; 5' 9", 150 lbs.; black hair, brown eyes.

ST 12, DX 14, IQ 12, HT 12

Speed 6.5, Move 3

Dodge 6, Parry 7

Damage: Thrust 1d-1, Swing 1d+2

Point total: 210

Advantages

Absolute Timing, Alertness +2, Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, Empathy, Legal Enforcement Powers (5-point level), Military Rank 1, Strong Will +2.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (regular's), Duty (cop, 12 or less), Lamé: Crippled Leg, Sense of Duty (Callahan's regulars).

Quirk

Science fiction fan.

Skills

Administration-12, Area Knowledge-14, Brawling-15, Darts (hobby)-16, Demolition-17 (optional specialization, Ordinance Disposal-23), Driving (car)-15, First Aid-13, Guns-16, Interrogation-11, Juggling (hobby)-17, Language: Spanish-13, Law-12, Leadership-13, Punning-14, Savoir-Faire-13, Shortsword (baton)-14, Stealth-14, Streetwise-12, Swimming-15, Traps-13.

Sgt. Noah Gonzalez is Callahan's resident cop. He's the senior man on Suffolk County's bomb squad, and known throughout New York state as one of the top ordinance disposal men around. He's good enough that when his leg was blown off in an on-the-job accident, the force didn't even think about arguing with his refusal to retire (he uses an excellent prosthesis to get around, thus the Crippled Leg disadvantage,



above, rather than One Leg). His commander on the force is named Captain Whitfield, and his partner in the mid-80s was a young officer named Jimmy Wyzniak. He has reached that enviable state in his career where the junior officers practically worship him, and even his superiors no longer try to tell him how to do his job.

Noah is a third-generation New Yorker of Portuguese descent. His skin tone is very light, and he has no detectable accent. He learned Spanish in night school, because his superiors on the force kept expecting him to know it.

At Callahan's Noah is one of the quieter regulars. He's no real contender in the weekly punning contests (though he does acceptably). He's usually right out in front of any more physical contests however. He's probably Doc's best challenger for the Darts Championship of the Universe.

He juggles to keep himself in shape (reflexes and timing are all-important in Noah's profession), but he also knows an impressive array of tricks. His best trick by far is a routine involving full shot glasses that he picked up from Al Phee, described in

"The Blacksmith's Tale."

Noah played a crucial role on the Night of the Cockroach. A "terrorist organization" (it may well have actually been Harmonian time agents) left a small, homemade nuclear device in a public building, and Noah and Jimmy were called in to disarm it. If Noah hadn't thought to bring the bomb along when Callahan's call came, humanity would have been left completely defenseless when the Beast landed at Callahan's.

Like many of the regulars, Noah has a dark secret that only the guys at Callahan's know – he's a science fiction fan. He and Jake have become good friends through this shared vice, and they often trade books.

Hauptman, Thomas

Age 40; 5' 6", 125 lbs.; light brown hair (balding) and brown eyes.

ST 10, DX 10, IQ 13, HT 9

Speed 4.75, Move 4

Dodge 4

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1

Point total 80

Advantages

Charisma +1, Clerical Investment, Empathy, Strong Will +1, Voice.

Disadvantages

Bad Sight with Glasses, Code of Honor (regular's), Sense of Duty (to regulars).

Quirk

Tone deaf.

Skills

Administration-13, Bard-16, Diplomacy-14, History-13, Holdout-12, Language (Greek)-11, Language (Hebrew)-11, Language (Latin)-12, Literature-14, Occultism-12, Profes-

sional Skill: Bartender-(14), Punning-13 (default), Psychology-13, Research-14, Savoir-Faire-15, Teaching-14, Theology-15, Writing-13.

Tom Hauptman looks like a small-town preacher, which is what he would have been if his life hadn't taken a bizarre and horrible turn in the early '60s.

Tom and his wife, Mary, were visiting Mary's sister Corinne, a Peace Corps nurse in the tiny Central American country of Pasala. While they were there, the government was overthrown in a communist coup led by a man named Miranda, with the inevitable title of "El Supremo." Corinne was kidnapped, raped and murdered by Miranda himself, and to cover up this crime, Miranda locked Hauptman and his wife in a cell where they'd spend the next nine years.

When Mary died of malaria, somebody noticed her body being removed from the jail and asked themselves why she looked like an American. Eleven months later, Tom Hauptman was finally released and returned home. Upon his release, he discovered that El Supremo had been assassinated by the CIA two years after his imprisonment. The various U.S. puppet governments that had followed had just never bothered to look into the status of "Hildago, Tomaso and Maria, subversives."

Hauptman found himself projected 10 years into the future of a nation he no longer recognized. Distraught and unemployed (he was trained for no job except the ministry, and he'd lost his faith), he turned in desperation to crime. He bought a gun and the first place he tried to rob was Callahan's Place. Instead of handing over the money, Callahan and the regulars listened to his story and Callahan offered Hauptman a job as relief bartender.

Hauptman tends bar alone on Thursday and some Wednesday nights, and with Callahan on weekends and holidays. He also comes into the bar most days to help Callahan and Fast



Eddie clean up from the night before. It's part-time work, but Hauptman is a man with few needs, and together with the under-the-table government pension he's received since his release, he gets along.

Hauptman is a slender, balding little man with wire-rimmed spectacles. He usually doesn't participate in Punday Night or Tall Tales Night. He's an excellent listener and a good source of common-sense advice. Most of the patrons call him "padre."

Janssen, Tommy



Age 23; 5' 10", 110 lbs.; long blond hair and blue eyes.
ST 9, DX 12, IQ 12, HT 11
Speed 5.75, Move 5
Dodge 5
Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d-1
Point total: 45

Advantages

Empathy, Strong Will +2.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (regulars), Skinny, Social Stigma -1, Stubbornness, Susceptibility to Poison, Wealth (Struggling).

Quirks

Does decent impressions; Doesn't like being reminded of his past.

Skills

Bard-14, First Aid-13, Performance-13, Holdout-12, Lock-picking-12, Scrounging-13, Streetwise-14.

The youngest of Callahan's regulars (until Billy Walker came along, anyway . . .), Tommy Janssen was a young man from a well-to-do family who fell in with the wrong crowd. By the time he dropped out of high school, he was mainlining heroin.

Tommy soon turned to petty crime to support his habit. When petty crime wasn't enough anymore, he tried to break into the safe of a man named Hennessy. He was caught at it, and injured Mr. Hennessy during his escape. Tommy's father paid Hennessy's medical bills, to keep Tommy out of jail, then disinherited his son.

Abandoned by his family, Tommy somehow managed to kick his habit. But even after he'd been clean for a year he still couldn't get a decent job and his family wasn't talking to him.

Seriously considering retreating to the drug, Tommy bought a fix and some works. Before shooting up, though, he stumbled into a place he'd heard about called Callahan's. He made

his toast – "to smack." In the end, the needle ended up in Callahan's fireplace, rather than Tommy's arm. Within a year, Tommy had a regular job and was married in Callahan's Place.

Usually cheerful and enthusiastic, Tommy's also moodier than most of the other regulars. He has a temper – mostly it flares at people who insist on treating him like he's still a low-life junkie. He also has a stubborn streak.

When an old friend who Tommy had originally turned on to heroin finally died of an overdose, Tommy got into Long-Drink's stash of Jack Daniel's and almost drank himself to death. Only Pyotr's ability to filter the alcohol out of Tommy's blood saved his life.

Tommy's a good storyteller with a quick wit, but his humor tends to run more to incongruity and absurdity rather than puns. Consequently, though his Tall Tales Night stories are always amusing (he often does them using humorous impersonations of celebrities and old movie stars like W.C. Fields), he seldom wins.

Tommy grew up with a severely retarded sister, and therefore feels a great concern for the handicapped.

Joy, Bobbi

Age 43 (in 1995); 5' 5", 125 lbs.; black skin, black hair, brown eyes.

ST 9, DX 12, IQ 13, HT 11

Speed 5.75, Move 5

Dodge 5, Parry 7

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d-1

Point Total: 185

Advantages

Alertness +2, Charisma +3, Musical Ability +10, Reputation +4, everybody, all the time, Status 2, Strong Will +3, Voice, Wealth (Wealthy).

Disadvantages

Paranoia, Shyness (mild), Social Stigma (disfigured) -1, Stubbornness.

Skills

Bard-20, Brawling-13, Fast-Talk-14, Guns-14, Holdout-13, Knife-14, Merchant-12, Musical Instrument-21, Pickpocket-12, Professional Skill: Courtesan-13, Scrounging-14, Sex Appeal-13, Singing-25, Stealth-13, Streetwise-15, Writing-15.

This is Bobbi Joy at the height of her fame, just before the Meddler went back in time on his mission to save her.

Bobbi Joy was born Isadora Brickhill in Harlem in the early '50s. By the time she was 14, she was an experienced professional prostitute. She was popular and skilled at her profession, and was actually making a decent living for herself until 1972, when somebody missed a payment and Hannah's House was raided by the cops.

When a patrolman named Duffy attempted to take for free what Bobbi was accustomed to giving only professionally, she

kneaded him in the groin, and Duffy laid open her cheek with the butt of his revolver. The sergeant ignored the wound, locking Bobbi in a cell with the other girls, in the hopes that he could pass it off as the result of a knife fight in the cells.

Without medical care, the jagged wound, which ran from her left cheekbone to the right side of her chin, became a permanent scar. The houses wouldn't hire a girl with a scar, and the only trade Bobbi could get on the street was too kinky to be contemplated. Deprived of the only livelihood she knew, she became bitter.



Bobbi had taught herself to play the guitar, and almost a year later she sent off an unsolicited tape to a producer with a recording of an original piece she called "The Suicide Song." Almost overnight she became a star. She displayed a combination of talents almost unequaled in the history of American pop music. What most people remembered about Bobbi Joy's music, though, was its almost unendurable pain and sadness. In some areas her music was banned from the airwaves, because the suicide rate rose so alarmingly when her songs were at the top of the charts.

Fame and wealth didn't do anything to make Bobbi Joy happy. The scar on her soul was permanent.

Her producer had fallen in love with her, though, and when his crazy brother announced that he'd invented a time machine, he stole the device and went back to try to change Bobbi Joy's life.

It worked (see "The Meddler," p. 120, for details). Bobbi Joy never met Patrolman Duffy, and never got her outward scar. Eventually she found her musical gift, but now her music was joyful, not despairing.

The Bobbi Joy who existed "before" the Meddler's mission was a morose woman who honestly believed that life was not worth living. Consequently she cared nothing for her fans, and made life hell for those who had to work with her. The more they admired her genius, the more she abused their respect. The Bobbi Joy "after" the Meddler's mission is still a tough-minded, temperamental artist, but she has much more respect for herself, and therefore for her fans and co-workers. Those who meet her will find her serious and quietly fascinating. This Bobbi Joy does not have the Social Stigma or the Paranoia of her cross-time cognate, but does have the additional advantage of Beautiful Appearance.

MacDonald, Jim and Paul



Jim: age 23; 5' 8", 195 lbs.; brown hair and eyes.
Paul: age 34; 5' 9", 205 lbs.; brown hair and eyes.
 ST 11, DX 10, IQ 16, HT 11
 Speed 5.25, Move 5
 Dodge 5
 Damage: Thrust 1-1, Swing 1+1
 Point Total: 400 each

Advantages

Charisma +1, Eidetic Memory 2, Empathy, Strong Will +4.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (regular's), Overweight, Sense of Duty (Callahan's regulars).

Psionics

Telepathy Power 30 (3 points free from Empathy). Skills: Psi Sense-20, Emotion Sense-20, Telesend-20, Telereceive-24, Mental Blow-15, Mind Shield-19, Sleep-16, Mindwipe-14, Telecontrol-14.

Skills

Biochemistry-15, Chemistry-16, Diplomacy-18, Genetics-16, Physician-20, Physiology-15, Psychology-24, Research-17, Surgery-15.

Yes, the two MacDonald brothers, Jim and Paul, share exactly the same character sheet. Even though Paul's a decade older than Jim, and a half brother, their physical capabilities are very similar. And their mental powers are exactly the same – because they share a single mind and personality.

Their father, a successful used-car dealer, divorced Paul's mother and remarried when Paul was three. When Paul learned to talk, his parents soon discovered he was an instant echo, able to say anything simultaneously with anyone, even when he didn't know the words being used.

When Paul was in his early teens, a team of scientists from Duke University came around with a truckload of equipment. After a few days they announced that Paul wasn't a telepath – Paul had fooled them.

Paul graduated from high school at 15, and showed no desire to go on to college or a job. His stepmother – a greedy, contemptible woman – wanted him to earn a living on the stage, doing his echo trick.

When Jim was about 10, he learned Paul's secret. Paul suffered from Gestalt Shock (see p. 50), and could not bear to be around people for more than a few minutes, for fear of "flashing" their entire psyche.

Soon thereafter Paul "flashed" his stepmother. He beat her to death with a lamp and entered a catatonic state which he stayed in for more than a decade.

Jim's powers were less than Paul's. He'd only "flashed" once, and that was with Paul himself. He'd begun to hope that it was a freak accident. Then, in his junior year of high school, Jim "flashed" an entire party. The experience was almost fatal. Over the next 5 years the flashes grew steadily in frequency. They were hitting almost daily when Jim stumbled into Callahan's.

The guys at Callahan's came up with a crazy idea. Since Jim's psychic defenses were crumbling, maybe he should give up on blocking out telepathic signals, and instead throw himself wide open and seek out his brother's mind. Together maybe the two of them could figure out a way around their problem.

Jim tried the experiment, supplementing his own power

with the empathic energy of Callahan's Place. It worked better than anyone could have predicted – Jim and Paul's minds meshed perfectly, and became something more. Their personalities merged into one, their IQ and psychic powers shot up and their psionic limitations were banished forever. Soon they got Paul's body released from the institution, and they breezed through med-school, becoming trained psychiatrists in record time. They opened up an exclusive practice upstate, where they took only the most desperate and exotic cases, with success that verged on the miraculous.

The MacDonald brothers heroically led the battle against the Beast on the Night of the Cockroach.

If met before their psychic merger, Jim and Paul would still have very similar character sheets. Their IQs were only 13 each, and they had no advantages or skills beyond those learned from a high school education. Paul had Telepathy Power 20, and Jim had Power 15. Paul had a few points in Telereceive skill, but Jim's psi was blocked and never manifested at all except during "flashes." Both brothers had the full -75% suite of Gestalt Shock disadvantages.

McGonnigle, Phil "Long-Drink"

Age 40; 6' 7", 150 lbs.; sandy hair, blue eyes.

ST 10, DX 13, IQ 14, HT 13

Speed 6.5, Move 6

Dodge 6, Parry 6.

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d

Point total 135

Advantages

Charisma +2, Empathy.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (regular's), Laziness, Odious Personal Habit: facetious punning, Sense of Duty (to regulars), Skinny.

Quirks

Bootlegs whiskey in his garage; Practical joker (semi-reformed); No regard for any external authority; Wargamer.

Skills

Bard-17, Brawling-13, Carousing-16, Darts (hobby)-14, Detect Lies-15, Driving (car)-13, Fast-Talk-16, Gambling-15, Guns-14, Holdout-13, Juggling (hobby)-14, Mechanic-13, Professional Skill: Distiller-14, Punning-17, Shortsword (baton)-13, Stealth-13, Streetwise-13.

The toughest and least charismatic of Callahan's regulars, Long-Drink (he's "one long drink of water") is an indolent and independent man with a razor-sharp tongue and no time for nonsense – unless it's amusing nonsense.

In his youth, Long-Drink admits, he was a "jackass." He hasn't changed much. His pranks are no longer as sophomoric



as they once were, but he still can't resist a chance to question authority or deflate the pompous. Long-Drink will pun at a funeral or an oration – he can't help himself. It's a reflex. He's always a finalist on Punday Night.

Long-Drink works as a night watchman. Sitting around watching nothing happen all night is a task suited perfectly to his personality. He's actually pretty good at his job, just because he's alert enough that he seldom misses anything important, and when he does he's bright enough to talk his way out of trouble.

He has a profitable sideline making and selling moonshine whiskey from his garage. (Callahan knows about and respects

Long-Drink's stuff, but they have an understanding. Long-Drink won't bring more than a hip flask into the Place during business hours, both to avoid undercutting Callahan's business, and to keep Callahan clear of any unpleasant legal ramifications if Long-Drink's business became generally known.)

In spite of his attitude problem, Long-Drink isn't as shallow as he likes to pretend. He genuinely cares about people who are hurting – and not just his friends, either. He has a daughter named Anne who lives in another state, and he worries about her as any father would. He also has a very Irish sentimental streak – he cried openly when Jake broke Lady Macbeth.

The Meddler

Age 45; 5' 10", 155 lbs., black hair, blue eyes.

ST 10, DX 10, IQ 12, HT 10

Speed 5, Move 5

Dodge 5

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d

Point total 80

Advantages

Charisma +1, Wealth: Wealthy (in his own time continuum the Meddler would also have Status +2 and Reputation +4 among a small group of people – the recording industry, most of the time).

Skills

Accounting-12, Administration-12, Beam Weapons-12, Diplomacy-12, Electronics-10, Electronics Operation-14, Engineer-11, Fast-Talk-12, Guns-12, Merchant-13, Professional Skill: Producer-13, Research-11, Savoir-Faire-12.

Henry, the Meddler's Brother

Age 50; 5' 9", 160 lbs., graying black hair and blue eyes.

ST 10, DX 10, IQ 16, HT 10

Speed 5, Move 5

Dodge 5

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d.

Point total 145

Advantages

Mathematical Ability, Wealth: Comfortable.

Disadvantages

In his own time continuum, Henry would have the disadvantage Social Stigma -1, Crackpot – at least until his invention becomes well-known.



Skills

Beam Weapons-12, Computer Programming-20, Electronics-17, Engineer (Electronic)-18, Mathematics-22, Nuclear Physics-15, Physics-17, Research-16, Temporal Electronics-17, Temporal Physics-15.

"The Meddler" (his first name is John, his last name is not revealed), was the first-ever time traveler from Earth.

He was also the producer to whom Bobbi Joy sent her first tape. He recognized her genius and made her records available, rocketing her to stardom. He also fell in love with her, and became more and more obsessed with relieving her seemingly-bottomless despair. Even the fortune he made from Bobbi Joy's records was no consolation – he gave most of it away to his crackpot brother, Henry, who thought he could build a time machine.

When Henry somehow succeeded in his project, the Meddler conceived a mad plan; he would go back in time and kill Patrolman Duffy before he could scar

Bobbi Joy. He knocked out his brother and stole the time machine. The first-ever human time jump landed him right outside Callahan's Place.

Meanwhile, in the future, Henry waited for his brother to return. When John reappeared Henry subdued him and took the time machine. Then Henry also traveled back to the past determined not to let his brother change history – even if it meant using force.

In the end, with the help of Callahan's regulars, John managed to find a way to protect Bobbi Joy that didn't involve murder, setting her on the road to a new fate that didn't lead her to despair.

There is some evidence, though, that the Meddler managed to create an alternate timeline with his tampering. See p. 38.

Montoya, Domingo

Age 65; 5' 11", 140 lbs.; white hair, blue eyes.
ST 10, DX 14, IQ 14, HT 9
Speed 5.75, Move 5
Dodge 5
Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d
Point Total: 115

Advantages

Acute Vision +2, Charisma +1, Musical Ability +3, Reputation +4 (small group of people, recognized 7-), Status +1.

Disadvantages

Age +15 years, Code of Honor (work on no instrument that's unworthy of your talents).

Quirk

No longer accepts payment for his services.

Skills

Engineer (acoustical)-16, Language (English)-13, Musical Instrument (Guitar)-17, Savoir-Faire-16, Teaching-14, Woodworking (optional specialization: Guitar Making-27)-21.

Don Domingo Montoya is the last living guitar wizard. He doesn't play guitars – he builds them, and sometimes he repairs them. He is beyond a master craftsman. Montoya is to guitars what Stradivarius was to violins.

In 1974, despairing at what he saw as the cheapening of the art of the guitar at the hands of popular culture, Don Domingo faked his own death and moved to Chicago under a new name. He swore to never again work on an instrument that was beneath his talents. He also stopped taking money for those few instruments he did work on. And he took on an apprentice. Although sworn to secrecy, the man could not resist telling just one person – a fellow-musician who he'd grown up with in Brooklyn, named Eddie Costigan.

When Jake broke his beloved, one-of-a-kind acoustic guitar, "Lady Macbeth," Fast Eddie drove all night to Chicago to get Don Domingo. When Montoya refused to come along of



his own free will, Eddie brought him at gunpoint (it was really a transistor radio, but Montoya didn't know that).

When they arrived at Callahan's Place, Don Domingo instantly saw that Eddie had been right – the Lady was worthy of his attention, and only he could help her. Two months later, Lady Macbeth returned to Jake, so close to as good as new that Jake himself couldn't tell the difference.

Don Domingo is a thin old man with piercing blue eyes. He projects an air of quiet old-world dignity that commands respect. He is completely assured – without any arrogance whatsoever – that he is the greatest master of his craft in his generation. If anybody would be so foolish as to attempt to deny Domingo's supremacy, he would not become offended – he would simply never again bother to notice the fool.

Rachel

Age 231; apparent age 30; 5' 10", 140 lbs.; dark hair and eyes.
ST 11, DX 13, IQ 14, HT 12
Speed 6.25, Move 6
Dodge 6, Parry 6
Damage: Thrust 1-1, Swing 1+1
Point total 250

Advantages

Alertness +2, Appearance: Beautiful, Charisma +2, Empathy, Immunity to Disease, Rapid Healing, Unaging, Voice.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (regular's), Sense of Duty (to regulars).

Quirks

Grieves for the loss of her children; Always dresses impeccably; Feminist, but tries not to be strident about it.

Skills

Animal Handling-13, Boating-12, Brawling-13, Climbing-13, Cooking-16, Detect Lies-16, Diplomacy-15, First Aid-14,

Fishing-14, Guns-15, History-16, Holdout-15, Leatherworking-14, Literature-14, Merchant-15, Naturalist-13, Professional Skill: Courtesan-15, Punning-16, Riding (horse)-14, Savoir-Faire-17, Scrounging-14, Sex Appeal-15, Stealth-12, Streetwise-14, Swimming-13, Theology-14.

Rachel was born Oct. 25, 1741. Like most women of her time she married young and had several children right away. Her husband and six of their children burned to death in a fire while Rachel crouched below in a tiny root cellar.

Her next husband, a minister, went insane and killed their five children and himself, because anybody who wouldn't age as God intended her to was obviously a witch.

Her next husband, and two more children, died in the Battle of Lake Champlain in 1814. After that she became a whaler's whore in Nantucket – a life which she didn't find much worse than marriage. Her three children from her whoring years died in the Civil War. Her last child was an idiot, who never learned to feed himself and took 35 years to die. She had one more child after that – her first in a hospital. When it was stillborn, she had herself sterilized. The O.B. was astonished to find a 30-year-old woman with a womb that had seen 18 pregnancies.

She was deeply in love with the man she was married to at the time. She told him the truth and he accepted her for what she was. A couple months before she found Callahan's, he was murdered by a mugger for the \$1.50 he had in his pocket.

Rachel was Callahan's first female regular (see p. 16). Jake described her as playing Wendy to the other regulars' Lost Boys. Fast Eddie fell instantly and hopelessly in love with her. She was at the bar for Tommy Janssen's wedding and the night Tom Flannery died. She was a strong contender on Tall Tales Night.

After four months at Callahan's, she broke down one night when somebody made a toast "To Motherhood." That night she revealed her secret, and her great sorrow. She knew she was mortal – she could feel herself aging – and all her children were dead. When she was gone, she'd leave nothing behind. It was Fast Eddie who came up with a grain of hope – she could have tissue samples preserved. Cloning was a scientific certainty, and someday – almost certainly within her long lifetime – Rachel could create a younger duplicate of herself.

Soon thereafter she stopped coming around to Callahan's, when she accepted a position as one of Lady Sally's artists. At Lady Sally's, she and Eddie now have a steady, and somewhat more than professional, relationship.

Rachel is a beautiful, statuesque woman with striking eyes, straight dark hair and fair skin. She remains absolutely poised in any situation. Her taste is superb – she never over- or underdresses, and she always looks good. She will not tolerate either impertinence or patronization from men. She doesn't lash out against those who offend her, she just cuts them cold. She's not touchy, though, and if she makes a mistake about someone's intentions, she admits it.

Stonebender, Jake

Age 35; 6', 110 lbs.; brown curly hair worn long, beard, brown eyes.

ST 10, DX 13, IQ 14, HT 12

Speed 6.25, Move 6

Dodge 6

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1

Point total: 170

Advantages

Acute Hearing +1, Alertness +2, Charisma +2, Empathy, Intuition, Musical Ability +7, No Hangovers, Voice.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Regular's), Sense of Duty, Skinny, Struggling.

Quirks

Likes large women; Hates loud music; Still grieves for his wife; Loves his guitar, and calls it "her"; Hopelessly in love with Mary Finn.

Skills

Acting-13, Bard-17, Carousing-14, Cooking-14, Darts-14, Diplomacy-14, Fast-Talk-13, First Aid-14, Leadership-16, Lip Reading-14, Literature-12, Musical Instrument (guitar)-22,



Performance-13, Punning-15, Savoir-Faire-16, Sex Appeal-13, Singing-21, Swimming-13, Writing-13.

At the dawn of the 1970s, Jake Stonebender was a very lucky man. He was doing what he wanted to do – playing folk music – and actually making a decent living at it. He had a beautiful wife and a baby daughter to whom he was utterly devoted.

Then one day he decided he could save a few bucks by fixing the brakes on the car himself, instead of going to a garage. That night he took his family to a movie. The brakes failed and the car rolled. Jake got away with minor cuts and bruises, while his wife and daughter burned to death inches away. When the rescue worker came and cut Jake out of the wreck, he smiled and tried to throw himself on the power saw. (It would be almost 15 years before Mary Finn would discover that it wasn't Jake's homemade brake job that had failed – it was the other set of brakes that had given out.)

After his second suicide attempt, Jake's physician, Doc Webster, took Jake out for a drink at Callahan's Place. Soon Jake was spending every night when he didn't have a gig at Callahan's.

Jake is a likable, lanky man with shoulder-length hair and a beard. He usually wears jeans and a battered cowboy hat. He doesn't mind smoking a social joint every now and then. If he doesn't watch himself, he can get a bit strident about his liberal politics.

Jake is a brilliant performer. Like any artist, Jake has seen lean times when he's had to live off Callahan's free lunch for as much as a week at a time (once he had to take a job in a boiler factory – that's where he learned to read lips). But years after what Martin Mull called "the great folk music scare of the '50s," Jake was making a better living than ever, playing clubs that would never even think of hiring any other folkie. Jake knows that he's best in a live, intimate context where he

can tell stories and relate directly to his audience. If he records, his records are strictly regional. If he tours, his tours are short and they're not recorded in the stories.

He loves his guitar like family. It's a handmade original that fell into his hands in the mid-'60s. Jake calls her "Lady Macbeth," because before he learned her idiosyncracies, she was always "stabbing him in the back" – breaking strings, going out of tune. When she's on her best behavior, though, she's the kind of instrument guitar players dream about. He also owns and plays an electric guitar – a Country Gent 6 – and some very loud amplifiers, but he seldom uses them. Jake tried to play in a rock band once, when he needed the money, and it left him with a lasting contempt for loud rock music.

Jake is a master storyteller, and he's Doc Webster's most consistent competition on Tall Tales Night and Punday. Actually, Jake's jokes are objectively funnier than Doc's – he just doesn't have *quite* as many, or tell them *quite* as well.

Of all the patrons at the bar, he's closest to Fast Eddie and Noah Gonzalez. Noah shares Jake's love of SF books, and Fast Eddie shares his love of music. Eddie also introduced Jake to Lady Sally's. Sally lets Jake busk tunes in her parlor for tips anytime he wants, and this has become one of his most consistent and profitable gigs.

Jake co-wrote all the *Callahan's* stories with Spider Robinson. They consider their financial arrangement confidential.

While Jake doesn't have the most brilliant mind at Callahan's, he may well have the quickest. He's often the first one to react in a crisis, or to come up with a crucial insight when a problem needs to be resolved fast. He trusts his instincts implicitly, and they seldom let him down. He certainly saved everyone at Callahan's, and likely the whole planet as well, through his quick actions on the Night of the Cockroach.

After Callahan's was destroyed, Jake became the manager of Mary's Place – a job he holds to this day.

Telasco, Tony

Age 26; 5' 9", 150 lbs.; black hair, brown eyes.

ST 12, DX 13, IQ 11, HT 11

Speed 7.5, Move 7

Dodge 6, Parry 7

Thrust 1d-1, Swing 1d+2

Point total 155

Advantages

Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, Empathy.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (regulars), Sense of Duty (to regulars), Social Stigma -1 (radical), Vow (work for peace, whatever the personal cost).

Skills

Armoury-12, Bard-12, Brawling-14, Camouflage-12, Climbing-13, Demolition-12, Diplomacy-11, First Aid-12,

Guns-16, Knife-13, Law-11, Politics-12, Running-12, Savoir-Faire-11, Scrounging-12, Spear-12, Stealth-13, Streetwise-12, Survival (Jungle)-12, Swimming-13, Tactics-10, Theology-10, Tracking-11, Traps-12.

Like many young men of his generation, Tony Telasco's life was changed forever in Vietnam. His best friend in basic training, Steve McConnell, was sent to military prison when he refused to touch or fire his weapon. His best friend in Vietnam, Sean Reilly, was captured, tortured and killed by the Viet Cong.

After Sean died, Tony went "kill crazy." He hated "gooks," and he enjoyed killing them. He raped women, he clubbed babies, he tortured prisoners and he enjoyed it. The army made him a squad leader.

Then, just a couple weeks before he was scheduled to go back to the states, he got a letter from the U.S. Steve McConnell had been beaten to death in prison – the death was officially ruled "accidental."

The letter moved Tony's personal insanity into a new channel. The next day when he took his squad out, Tony tried to get himself killed. Instead he got his second Purple Heart, a Silver Star and a ticket home.

Back in the states, Tony moved rapidly from booze to grass to cocaine to heroin. Then he discovered transcendental meditation and kicked his habit. The T.M. scene was OK for a while, but then Tony noticed he wasn't accomplishing anything.

So Tony took Doc Webster's advice and started hanging around Callahan's Place. A few months later, he started attend-

ing anti-war activities and even giving speeches. Soon, he was a full-time anti-war activist.

Between that first speech and late 1972, Tony was arrested four times and had his leg broken by a county cop. They took his name off the Native Sons Honor Roll in his home town, his father wouldn't talk to him and his phone was tapped. Tony was finally happy with his life.

Tony's fate after 1973 is unknown. Most likely, after the war he moved on to other activist causes. He may well still be working for an organization like Amnesty International or a lower-profile counterpart.

Von Wau Wau, Ralph

German Shepherd; age 7 years; 3' at the shoulder, 125 lbs.; buff and black coat, brown eyes.

ST 10, DX 13, IQ 14, HT 12

Speed 7.75, Move 7

Dodge 6

Damage: Thrust 1d cutting.

Point Total: 230

Advantages

Alertness +3, Animal Empathy, Appearance: Attractive, Charisma +2, Combat Reflexes, Eidetic Memory 2, Empathy, Reputation +1 among science fiction fans, Voice.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (regular's), Color Blindness, Sense of Duty (to regulars), Social Stigma -2 (animal).

Quirks

Frequents both Callahan's and Lady Sally's; Likes human women; Science fiction fan.

Skills

Acting-14, Animal Handling-16, Area Knowledge (Long Island)-15, Bard-18, Brawling-14, Camouflage-15, Fast-Talk-15, Gesture-14, Jumping-14, Language (English)-15, Lip Reading-15, Performance-14, Punning-18, Running-12, Savoir-Faire-17, Scrounging-15, Stealth-13, Streetwise-14, Survival (urban)-15, Swimming-13, Tracking-14, Ventriloquism-18, Writing-15.

The first thing most people notice about Ralph Von Wau Wau is that he's a talking dog. Once they get past that, they find that he's funny, charming, a bit sarcastic and extremely intelligent.

Ralph speaks with a deep, rich voice with a slight German accent. His voice reminds many people of Arnold Schwar-



zenegger. He's a large dog with attractive markings. He does not customarily wear a collar or clothes of any kind.

Ralph was given the ability to talk by a research scientist named Malion who hoped to teach him to parrot human speech. However, Malion could not know that the puppy he picked for the experiment was a mutant, with above-average human intelligence.

Ralph kept his abilities secret from Malion for several years, but Malion was a cruel and petty man, and one day Ralph could no longer hold back – he told Malion exactly what his opinion of him was, in no uncertain terms. The next day Malion locked Ralph's doggy door and left town.

Ralph found it tough on the street. He had no problem hunting and scavenging enough food to survive on, but he wanted more out of life than survival. He taught himself to read, then found an old typewriter and taught himself to type. He started writing science fiction stories, selling them to

several major magazines under various pen names. This was creatively satisfying, but that was all Ralph got out of it – he couldn't open a bank account or cash his checks.

His life took a turn for the better one night when he found some drunks teasing a mute bum outside a bar in a tough neighborhood. Since the bum couldn't tell the creeps what he thought of them, Ralph said it for him. The creeps ran off, and a partnership was born.

Ralph and his new friend, Joe, started roaming from bar to bar working a talking dog scam. Ralph was an accomplished ventriloquist, and he gave Joe a voice. Joe grew a big bushy moustache to hide their occasional mistakes.

Then one night they tried the talking dog gig in Callahan's, and their secret was discovered. Ralph and Joe both ended the

evening with real jobs – Ralph started hosting a late-night radio call-in show.

Ralph soon became a fixture at both Callahan's and Lady Sally's. At Callahan's he soon established himself as a strong contender at Punday Night and Tall Tales Night.

He generally prefers the company of human women, and has several frequent companions. Occasionally, for a "walk on the wild side" he'll seduce a canine. He prefers wild bitches to house dogs.

Webster, Doc

Age 50; 6' 4", 400 lbs.; graying, thinning dark hair and blue eyes.

ST 11, DX 13, IQ 15, HT 14

Speed 6.75, Move 6

Dodge 6

Thrust 1d-1, Swing 1+1

Point Total: 275

Advantages

Alcohol Tolerance, Charisma +3, Empathy, No Hangover, Reputation +3 (patients and former patients, all the time), Unfazeable, Voice, Wealth: Comfortable.

Disadvantages

Code of Honor (regular + medical ethics), Fat (+100%), Pacifism (total non-violence), Sense of Duty (regulars and patients).

Quirk

Sometimes forgets to take off his stethoscope when he comes to Callahan's.

Skills

Acting-16, Administration-14, Bard-20, Biochemistry-14, Botany-13, Carousing-17, Chemistry-14, Dancing-13, Darts (hobby)-17, Detect Lies-17, Diagnosis-16, Diplomacy-18, Driving (car)-12, Fast-Talk-14, Forensics-13, Gambling-14, Genetics-12, History-13, Hypnotism-13, Juggler (hobby)-14, Law-13, Leadership-24, Literature-13, Performance-16, Physician-17, Physiology-15, Poisons-15, Psychology-16, Punning-20, Research-14, Savoir-Faire-17, Sign Language-14, Singing-16, Sleight of Hand-13, Surgery-17, Teaching-14, Zoology-13.

In many ways Sam "Doc" Webster is the leader of the gang at Callahan's, even more than Callahan himself. While Mike Callahan is the unmoving center around which the bar orbits, Doc Webster is usually the one out there pushing the other patrons to do things, have fun and keep the place merry.

Doc is Callahan's most profound drinker. He drinks Peter Dawson's whiskey by the beer-mug full, and he's good for a half dozen mugs a night – and he can perform an emergency operation the next morning with nary a twitch or tremor.

An immense man, Doc broke so many of Callahan's chairs that the guys pitched in and had a special, oversized bar-chair made just for him. Doc did manage to lose 100 lbs., briefly, by dieting on the food Robert Trebor brought with him from the mirror dimension. He didn't change his eating habits though,



and gained all the weight back within a month or two of when the mirror-food ran out.

Doc has never mentioned how he himself came to Callahan's, but he's the Bar's most active recruiter. Mostly, when a patient has an emotional problem that's beyond the reach of medicine or psychology, Doc prescribes a visit to Callahan's. He referred both Jake and Tony Telasco to the Place, among many others.

He's an excellent physician. He once took out Shorty Steinitz's appendix on Callahan's bar. He will assist at home birthings, if the mother prefers not to go to the hospital – a practice that would probably get him in serious trouble with the AMA if they heard about it. A true renaissance man, Doc keeps abreast of all the latest medical developments, as well as staying conversant in art, literature and current events.

What most people remember about Doc, though, is his immense, almost mythic joyousness. Like a Falstaff or Bacchus, Doc projects an air of merriness that fills a room even more completely than his great physical bulk. A master humorist and storyteller, Doc could break up the Sphinx with a one-liner that was old when it was built.

Doc is the crowned master of all the traditional Callahan's

amusements – Riddle Night, Punday Night, Tall Tales Night or the Darts Championship of the Universe – if Doc's in top form, he can't be beat by anybody in the Place.

Doc's home life is ambiguous. He's referred to himself as "a happily married man," but he spends family holidays at Callahan's. Maybe his marriage remains happy as long as Doc stays out of the house – more likely he's a widower.

And The Rest . . .

The list below represents almost every character ever mentioned by name in the Callahan's stories. Some of them (Shorty Steinitz, Chuck Samms, Slippery Joe Maser) appear in several stories, but not enough is known about their personal life to make it possible to create a plausible complete character description – the GM is free to flesh out these characters as he wishes.

Others (Jimmy Wyzniak, Sean Reilly) have never even been to Callahan's. They can be used by the GM when he wants to "drop names" to make the scenario seem more authentic.

In the list below a "former regular" is someone who was a regular for a while, but stopped coming to Callahan's because of moving away or other obligations – such folks still pop up for holidays and occasional visits. An "occasional" is someone who comes in every now and then for a drink at Callahan's, but isn't really "one of the family."

Anders, Kathy: Wife of Cass Anders. Kathy's first husband, Freddie, left her for a woman named Kitten. See p. 111 for her life with Cass.



Bauer, Josie: See p. 92.

Beast, The: See p. 77.

Finn, Mickey: See p. 79.

Flynn, Spud: Regular. Helped by Callahan, Spud once sat fire to a cushion in the middle of the floor, to settle a bet about which way the draft was coming from.

Gerrity, Bill: Regular. Bill is a heterosexual transvestite. Before he found Callahan's, the only place he could wear women's clothes was in gay bars. However he found it uncomfortable dealing with gays who assumed he was interested and tried to pick him up. Eventually, Bill found Callahan's, where nobody cares what he wears (though he can still get sincere compliments on particularly fetching ensembles). Bill does an outstanding Marilyn Monroe impersonation.

Hennessy, Joe: Injured by Tommy Janssen when he caught Tommy robbing his safe for drug-money. Tommy's father paid his medical bills in order to keep Tommy out of jail.

Jerry (last name unknown): Former Regular. Former real-estate developer who became depressed over the destruction of the environment. After coming to Callahan's Place, he decided to use his fortune to campaign for environmental causes.

Joe: Ralph Von Wau Wau's former human companion, a mute hobo. Joe is thin, with a large nose. He grew a moustache when working with Ralph to disguise Ralph's ventriloquism. Ralph taught him to type, and he got a job working on a teletype machine on an artificial intelligence experiment. See p. 124 for more.

Kilian, "Gentleman John": Occasional, from England who visits Callahan's whenever he's in the states. Very strong contender on Punday Night. Spider Robinson has hinted that he is actually SF writer John Brunner.

Latimer, Isham: Callahan's only black regular. Enjoys making fun of racial stereotypes and clichés.

Margie (no last name): Regular. Helped provide an alibi for Kathy Anders.

Maser, Slippery Joe: Regular. Slippery Joe has two wives – Susie and Susan. The three of them all live together, apparently quite happily. Slippery Joe makes a notable chili, which he brings to Callahan's on special occasions. The Masers' house burned down on the Night of the Cockroach, when they answered Callahan's call, leaving the chili untended on the stove.

Maser, Susan: Regular. Slippery Joe's junior wife.

Maser, Susie: Regular. Slippery Joe's senior wife. A modern dance choreographer by trade.

Matthias, Marty: Regular. Gave up gambling after coming to Callahan's

McConnell, Steve: Black Californian who met Tony Telasco in basic training. Was sent to military prison for refusing to take or use a rifle, where he was subsequently murdered by parties unknown. The death was officially ruled an "accident."

McGonnigle, Anne: Long-Drink's daughter, in her early '20s in 1972. Anne lives on a commune called The Farm in Tennessee, which Long-Drink calls "Callahan's Place for hippies" (it's unknown if there was a real Harmonian presence at The Farm).

Montgomery, Spud: Regular. Transplanted Southerner who never stopped fighting the Civil War.

O'Toole, Thirsty: Occasional. Long-Drink McGonnigle's father-in-law. Old-country Irish.

Pyotr: see p. 90.

Reilly, Sean: Army friend of Tony Telasco, killed and mutilated by the VC. Wanted to be an artist.

Robinson, Spider: Former Regular. Co-author, with Jake, of the Callahan's stories. Writing about Callahan's allowed him to escape a job guarding sewers and become a successful and respected science fiction writer. In the mid-'70s he moved to Nova Scotia. See p. 3.

Samms, Chuck: Regular. Chuck was clinically dead for five minutes before Doc restarted his pacemaker – he said he found the experience simultaneously pleasant and frightening. Chuck was partially paralyzed on one side from a stroke. He was briefly hypnotized by Al Phee into believing himself miraculously cured. Phee later apologized for this unnecessary cruelty.

Steinitz, Shorty: Regular. Seems to be accident prone (possibly has the Unlucky disadvantage). Had his appendix removed by Doc Webster on Callahan's bar. Broke his ankle coming down from the roof just before Callahan had the stairs put in. Had his beloved restored '57 T-Bird stolen on the Night of the Cockroach. Broke the face bone of one Weasel Wetzel for unknown cause. Services industrial air conditioners for a living. Sculptures as a hobby.

Thayer, Sam: Former regular who returns for Halloween parties. Present during Raksha's confession, dressed as Mortimer Snerd.

Trebor, Robert: See p. 96.

Walker, Billy: Regular. 18-year-old man afflicted at 15 with crippling Tourette's Syndrome (see p. 48). Billy's disorder causes him to bark and grunt in a way that even the most sober and compassionate person will find perversely, uncontrollably funny. Supported by his parents. Seldom leaves his cottage in Rocky Point. Formerly lived for two years with a blind and deaf man he met at Johns Hopkins; then his friend died. Became a regular at Callahan's via modem. Sponsored by Doc Webster, Billy applied for and received a grant to start a computer network for shut-ins.

Walter (no last name): Suicidal client of the Cheerful Charlies on the Night of the Cockroach. When the Charlies literally abandoned him on a ledge to answer Callahan's summons, Walter became indignant and followed them to Callahan's, where he participated in the battle with the Beast. This makes him arguably Callahan's final regular.

Wally (no last name): Stockboy who had a date with Kathy Anders on the night of Cass Anders' suicide. Came to Callahan's where he was given an alibi for the evening.

Wetzel, Weasel: Punched out by Shorty Steinitz for unknown cause.

Whitfield, Captain: Noah Webster and Jimmy Wyzniak's commander on the Suffolk County police force.

Wyatt, B.D.: Occasional. Would-be punster of unexceptional abilities.

Wyzniak, Jimmy: Young Suffolk County policeman. Works under Noah Gonzalez.



INDEX

1970s, 18.

Advantages, 43-44.

Alcohol Content Table, 54.

Alcohol Tolerance advantage, 53.

Alcoholism disadvantage, 46.

Allies, 43.

Anders, Cass, 9, 14, 50, 111.

Anders, Kathy, 9, 126.

Bar fights, 21.

Bauer, Josie, 9, 13, 17, 75, 92.

Baynor, Met, 103.

Beast, The, 11, 25, 77.

"The Blacksmith's Tale" 11, 21, 77, 82.

Brewer, Theodor "Lean Theo," 105.

Broodseven-Sub-Two Raksha, 87-89.

Callahan's Crosstime Saloon, 75, 7.

Callahan's Lady, 34, 75.

Callahan's neighborhood, 10.

Callahan's Place, 6, 38, 75.

Callahan, Michael, 4, 7, 101, 108.

Callahan's Secret, 11, 75.

Campaigns, 58-75.

Centipede's Dilemma, 51.

"The Centipede's Dilemma," 7.

Characters, 41-57.

Cheerful Charlies, The (Les Glueham and Merry Moore), 11, 102, 112.

Chronic Depression disadvantage, 47.

Closing ritual, 22.

Cockroaches, 77.

Code of Honor, 46.

Confinement loop, 95.

Costigan, Fast Eddie, 6, 9, 11, 14, 18, 20, 75, 112.

Counterclock, 8.

Cowardice disadvantage, 55.

Crisis points, 25, 67.

Darts, 13, 16, 51.

Desire power, 50.

Dimensional bridge, 95.

Disadvantages, 29, 46-49.

Dog disadvantage, 47.

"Dog Day Evening," 9, 66.

Drinking, 53.

"The Drunkard's Song," 20, 53.

Dwarfism disadvantage, 55.

Empathy, 42, 49; *advantage*, 43.

Enhanced Time Sense advantage, 44, 50.

Erotic Art skill, 51.

Families, 40.

Fat disadvantage, 55.

Finn, Mary, 11, 38-39, 103, 110.

Finn, Mickey, 7, 11, 25, 39, 75, 77, 79, 103; *friends*, 86; *race*, 82.

Fireplace, 13.

Fireside Fill-More, 11, 20.

Fivesight, 50.

"Fivesight," 14, 57, 59.

Flannery, Tom, 75, 102, 113.

Flynn, Spud, 8, 126.

Fogerty, Dink, 7, 50, 51, 114.

Four-Eye Monongahela, 11, 97.

Framing devices, 70.

Future Tech, 37.

Gerrity, Bill, 17, 126.

Gestalt Shock, 50.

Gigantism disadvantage, 55.

Glass guns, 96.

Glueham, Les, 112.

God's Blessing, 9.

Gonzales, Noah, 14, 15, 20, 52, 115.

"The Guy With the Eyes" 6, 7, 13.

GURPS Aces Abroad, 31.

GURPS Autoduel, 73.

GURPS Cliffhangers, 99.

GURPS Cyberpunk, 102.

GURPS Fantasy, 105.

GURPS Horror, 73, 99.

GURPS I.S.T., 73.

GURPS Space, 102.

GURPS Supers, 49, 73, 30.

GURPS Time Travel, 34-35, 72, 97.

GURPS Wild Cards, 31, 73.

Halloween, 22.

Hangovers, 56.

Harmonians, 24-40; *death*, 32; *morality*, 31-32; *operations*, 36.

Harmony, 24-40, 81, 83, 88, 94.

Hauptman, Tom, 7, 15, 75, 115.

"Have You Heard the One . . . ?" 9, 13, 91.

Heinlein, Robert A., 3, 14, 99.

Hennessy, Joe, 126.

Historical recruits, 40.

Hitler, Adolf, 9, 88.

Holo, 96.

Human drama, 59.

Humorous roleplaying, 65.

Hyperesthesia, 57.

Hypnotic amplifiers, 96.

Interface screens, 33, 36.

Intoxication, 53; *table*, 54.

"Involuntary Man's Laughter," 11, 73.

Janssen, Tommy, 7, 11, 14, 57, 75, 116.

Jinxed disadvantage, 47.

Joy, Bobbi, 8, 75, 117, 38.

Juggling, 51.

"Just Dessert," 8.

Kilian, "Gentleman John," 13.

Krundai, 9, 25, 75, 83, 99.

Lady Macbeth, 11, 75.

Lady Sally's, 11, 18, 110.

Latimer, Isham, 126.

"The Law of Conservation of Pain," 8, 53.

Legality Class, 96.

Light Hangover advantage, 44.

Long Island, 12.

Luck advantage, 15, 43.

MacDonald, Jim and Paul, 8, 75, 118.

Martial arts, 29, 31.

Mary's Place, 3, 74.

Maser, Slippery Joe, 11, 14, 127.

Masters, The, 77.

McCaffrey, Big Beef, 6.

McGee, Lady Sally, 18, 33, 38, 75, 101, 109.

McGonnigle, Long-Drink, 13, 16, 119.

Meddler, The, 38, 75, 120, 8.

Megalos, 105.

"The Mick of Time," 11, 25, 79, 34, 36, 37, 68, 74.

Mirror Dimension, 93.

"Mirror/RirroM Off the Wall," 39, 94, 11.

Montoya, Domingo, 11, 75, 121.

Monty Python, 63.

Moore, Merry, 112.

Mrs. Wagner, 26.

No Hangover advantage, 44.

Nuclear war, 25.

O'Toole, Thirsty, 127.

Observer Effect, 35.

Option, The, 6, 13, 19.

Other genres, 98-106.

Overweight disadvantage, 55.

Patrons, 43.

Phee, Al, 9, 13, 94-95.

Point totals, 42.

Probability nexus, 24, 37.

Professional Skill: Bartender, 52.

Professional Skill: Courtesan, 52.

Psionics, 39, 49.

Punday Night, 59.

Punning skill, 52.

Pyotr, 8, 11, 15, 89-91.

"Pyotr's Story," 11, 89.

Quirks, *alcohol-related*, 46.

Rachel, 14, 17, 18, 75, 99, 121.

Regulars, 42-43.

Riddle Night, 8, 66.

Robinson, Spider, 4, 14, 74, 75, 127.

Route 25-A, 7.

Samms, Chuck, 127.

Shyness disadvantage, 55.

Sixth column, 40.

Skills, 51-52.

Skinny disadvantage, 55.

Sobering shock, 56, 57.

Sobering up, 56.

Spam, 63.

Square dances, 16, 22.

Steinitz, Shorty, 8, 127.

Stonebender, Jake, 4, 11, 14, 16, 18, 20, 75, 122.

Suffolk County, 12.

Susceptibility to Poison disadvantage, 48.

Tall Tales Night, 13, 19, 61, 63.

Telasco, Tony, 9, 123.

Telekinesis, 7.

Telepathy, 49.

Temporal Electronics skill, 52.

Temporal Operation skill, 52.

Temporal Physics skill, 52.

Terminally Ill disadvantage, 48.

Tiger Breath, 9, 11.

Time Jumper advantage, 44.

Time machines, 97.

Time Police, 75, 91.

Time skipping, 38.

Time travel, 33-40.

"The Time Traveler" 7.

Time Travelers Strictly Cash, 9, 39, 75.

Timeshare Telepathy, 50.

Tourette's Syndrome, 11, 14; *disadvantage*, 48.

Trebor, Robert, 14, 75, 96.

"Two Heads are Better than One," 8.

Txfu Mpwf's, 79; *see also Finn, Mickey*.

Unaging advantage, 45.

Unfazeable advantage, 45.

"Unnatural Causes," 9, 71, 85.

Unusual Background advantage, 43, 49.

UseNet, 73.

Vampires, 89.

Vampiric Dependency disadvantage, 48.

"A Voice is Heard in Ramah . . .", 8, 14.

Von Wau Wau, Ralph, 9, 75, 124.

Walker, Billy, 11, 14, 127.

Wally, 127.

Watergate, 18.

Weatherstone, Josiah I., 99-101.

Webster, Doc, 7, 16, 22, 125.

Weirdness Magnet disadvantage, 49.

Wetzel, Weasel, 127.

Wonderboozie, 97.

"The Wonderful Conspiracy," 9, 17, 24.

Wyzniak, Jimmy, 127.

Yrth, 105.

Welcome to Callahan's!

Callahan's Place – from the outside it looks like any other roadside tavern. Looks can be deceiving. It's a place where time travelers and alien cyborgs drink with vampires and talking dogs – and *anything* can happen. On any given night the regulars might be called upon to save a life, save the planet, or just make some of the worst puns in history.

GURPS Callahan's Crosstime Saloon brings all the fun of Spider Robinson's award-winning stories to your roleplaying campaign. Callahan's Place can fit into virtually any campaign, or become the starting point for infinite adventures in time and space.

Here, you'll meet . . .

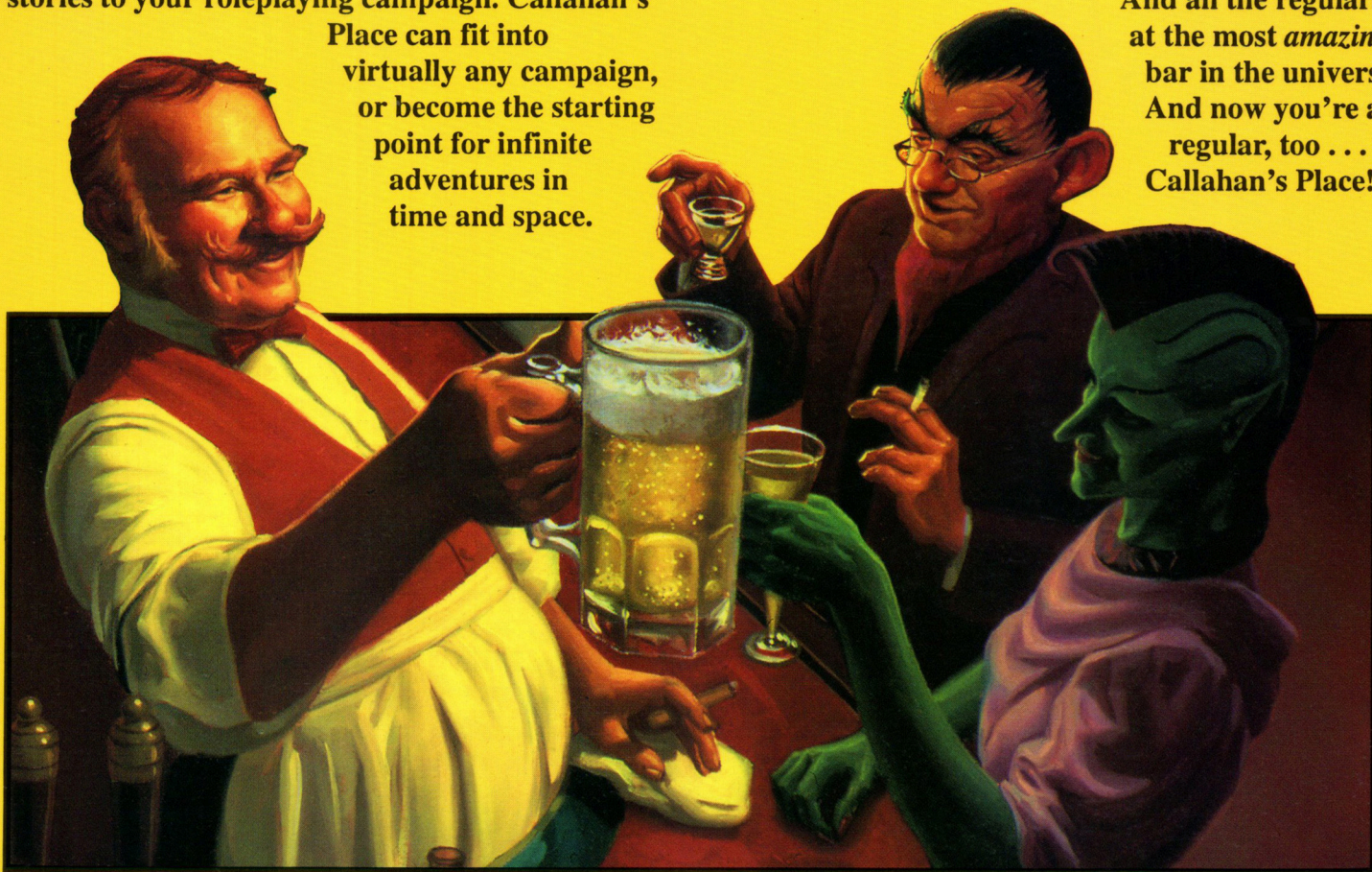
Mike Callahan: A big Irish barkeep with a wonderful secret.

Mickey Finn: A cyborg sent to destroy the Earth, Finn is the most powerful creature on the planet . . . and Callahan's son-in-law!

Ralph Von Wau Wau: A talking German Shepherd and respected science fiction author.

Josie Bauer: Sexy secret agent for the Time Police of Earth's future.

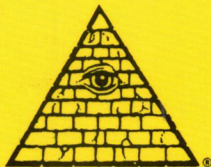
And all the regulars at the most *amazing* bar in the universe. And now you're a regular, too . . . at Callahan's Place!



Also included are:
New rules for *GURPS Time Travel* and *GURPS Psionics*.
Three new alien races.

Ideas for adapting the Callahan's stories to *GURPS Cyberpunk*, *Space*, *Horror/ Cliffhangers* or even *Fantasy* campaigns!

Written by Chris W. McCubbin
Foreword by Spider Robinson
Edited by Jeff Koke and Steve Jackson
Cover by James Warhola
Illustrated by Donna Barr



STEVE JACKSON GAMES



ISBN 1-55634-221-7

SJG01695 6047

Made in U.S.A.