



The Twilight Protocol





DEAD LANDS

THE TWILIGHT PROTOCOL

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Alone in the Twilight

As told in Shane Lacy Hensley's graphic novel "The Cackler," the return of that albino devil to the Weird West caused the Union and Confederacy's secret services to invoke the Twilight Protocol. With the Twilight Legion and Explorer's Society lending tacit, secret support, the Agency and the Texas Rangers joined forces to defeat the Cackler and drive back the darkness.

But that doesn't mean everybody's happy with this state of affairs...

THE STORY SO FAR

Back East, shadowy forces secreted within the United States and Confederate governments – forces that were always opposed to manumission although they failed to stop it in the face of the Civil War's depredations – grow bold once more. They're prepared to turn back the clock and spark a brand new War Between the States, and in their view the Twilight Protocol should be the renewed conflict's first bloody casualty.

Dennison's Secret

Years ago, Hellstromme established scores of hidden laboratories throughout Deseret and scattered along Wasatch Rail lines. These labs' purposes were myriad, but a few were devoted to methods of creating new life from small samples of biological material. In this way Hellstromme hoped to create a new female body for his

beloved wife Vanessa to inhabit once he rescued her soul from Hell's flames (see *Deadlands: Good Intentions* for the whole story of the bad doctor's misguided quest).

He built one of these labs under the flyspeck burg of Dennison, Deseret. There his scientists set about attempting to clone variegated lifeforms such as bacteria, dogs, chipmunks, even dinosaurs from genetic material retrieved from fossilized remains in Arizona Territory. The scientists' goal was no less than the creation of new human lives from cellular material. The project showed enormous potential.

But then it all went wrong. In 1879, the only records describing the facility and its personnel were destroyed in Des Moines, Iowa, following the firebombing of Wasatch facilities there by Smith & Robards ornithopters. Hellstromme was the only remaining soul on earth who knew of the installation, and in the conflagration of the

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Great Rail Wars even the world's preeminent mad scientist forgot all about it. That wasn't due to any failing of the genius inventor's mind, Marshal—his forgetfulness was the Reckoners' wont. Finally, events at the Dennison laboratory caused it to fall out of contact with Hellstromme Industries' headquarters in the City o' Gloom.

And so years passed, life in the town of Dennison went on as usual, and a treasure trove of weird science developments languished beneath the Deseret sands.

A Buried Opportunity

A few months ago, Texas Rangers in Richmond, Virginia, uncovered a cell of Deseret spies and a cache of sensitive information. Among these notes were the names of former Hellstromme Industries scientists who'd spent several years in the CSA in hiding from their former employer. When they tracked down one of these, Dr. Archimedes Hatch, he told an astounding story under questioning...one his captors could scarcely believe. Hatch spoke at length about the Dennison lab. Certain members of the Confederate government—with ties to those shadowy forces we mentioned earlier—wondered if Dr. Hatch might not be telling the truth. If he was, he could lead them to secrets so explosive they might just re-spark the war...and prolong it for years to come.

And they weren't the only ones who desired that result. Members of the longstanding Masonic Conspiracy in New York City also sensed the renewed profits and other industrial benefits a war could bring. They hatched a plan: Send Dr. Hatch back to Deseret, where he would lead a handpicked U.S. Agent and Texas Ranger to his mysterious laboratory. With the assets they acquired from the Dennison lab, they reasoned, undoing the ceasefire would be child's play.

In Dennison, the emissaries of North and South dynamited a nearby rail line to discourage interference. With Dr. Hatch's help they found the lab and reignited its sleeping generators, hoping to pick up where the former staff left off. But despite their hopes, they found the project had failed for very good reason. The animals and creatures created in the lab, tainted with the Reckoning's dark energies, turned out *all wrong*.

Where Things Stand

The first Agent and Texas Ranger sent to Dennison—ironically, an effective and simpatico team despite their desire to burn down the Twilight Protocol—remain in the ghost town. They're hoping to salvage *something* from the mess Dr. Hatch unleashed, some boon to return to their masters Back East. A few of the remaining critters look promising. Until then, they hide out from the bizarre, evil creatures they unleashed, biding their time until the situation changes.

Meanwhile, political powers dedicated to fighting the Reckoning and the Cackler's metaphysical twilight catch wind of the situation and pair up their own Agent and Ranger. These two bicker like an old married couple and can barely get out of their own way, much less agree on how to deal with the enigma presented by Dennison. So their superiors order them to hire a band of troubleshooters who can bridge the gap between them and save the day.

And *that*, Marshal, is about where your posse enters the picture.

THE SETUP

You'll want to have a few cowpokes in your posse who are Veteran Rank before they tackle this adventure, Marshal, as well as a mad scientist or other hombre with the Repair skill. It works well as an interlude during the *Good Intentions* Plot Point Campaign (Agent Nevada Smith might even set it up), or as a standalone Savage Tale. In either case, it begins when the heroes are contacted by a very odd couple: a grizzled U.S. Agent and a young Texas Ranger, neither of whom is in a very good mood.

The initial contact can take place wherever works best for your ongoing story, Marshal—at an out-of-the-way location in the City o' Gloom or a secluded spot in some dry, sandy corner of Deseret.

In a saloon or other establishment, or even in the middle of Main Street, a tall, middle-aged man approaches. He has flecks of gray in his beard and a flamboyant, waxed mustache. He wears a battered hat and a long duster whose

outside is gray with dust; the cowpokes can tell it's jet black from the inside of the lapels. And he's clearly not alone: A few other hombres—one a shifty-looking gambler in a bowler hat and the other a cowpoke with a Winchester and a smoking cigarillo clamped in his teeth—loiter nearby, keeping a close eye on the situation but trying to look casual.

The man in black greets the posse members by name even though they've never met, and says,

"Been lookin' for you people for a while now. Name's Bogles, but you can call me Sig. Glad to know you. Why don't you let me buy you a drink? I've got a...friend, for lack of a better term...you ought to meet."

This is U.S. Agent Sigmund Bogles, originally from the plains of Colorado and recruited by the Agency back in 1878. He does his level best to put nervous Nellies at ease, assuring the group he has no ill intent. If the players are truly suspicious, simple success on a Notice roll tells a buckaroo this man's not hiding anything behind his generous offer.

In the nearest watering hole, Agent Bogles escorts the posse to a table in the back, where a man in cowboy garb sits. He has a reddish-brown beard, a pair of Colt Peacemakers, and only a bottle of whiskey for company. His shrewd, green eyes flick across the group, sizing them up. Then he takes another drink and says without much concern, in a Texas accent,

"Well, Sig, you're just full o' surprises, ain't'cha? You managed to get 'em in here even with a face as ugly as your'n."

Agent Bogles scowls at him. He continues,

"Please, don't take that as me bein' unsociable or nothin'. You seem like ace-high folks. It's only ol' Solemn Sig here I don't cotton to."

"Folks call me Pike Nelson. It's my rotten luck to have been paired up with this horse's ass, tryin' to get a job done in a little burg called Dennison. You heard of it? No, I don't suppose you would have. But because o' this new policy they call the Twilight Protocol, we got ourselves a big mess to clean up. Ol' Sig here's about as stubborn as a New Mexico mule, so now we got to bring in some fresh blood."



"Let's just say rumors o' your deeds precede you. And some Salt Lake sidewinder who goes by the handle 'Agent Smith' recommended you. Usually, I don't trust a Yankee's word farther'n I can spit it. But this time I'm under orders."


"So, what do you say? Interested in earnin' enough gold coins to keep you in style for a few months?"

The job seems straightforward, and Pike Nelson—actually Ranger Pike Nelson, although he wears no badge in Deseret—offers the heroes \$300 each to complete it (success on a Persuasion roll takes him as high as \$400 each). He explains,

"Go to Dennison, Deseret, and capture a fella hidin' out there named Archimedes Hatch. There's also a hidden installation o' some kind. We need to know what's in there, and then we need it blown sky high. Think you can do that?"

Nelson doesn't elaborate, but answers a few questions if prodded. Under no circumstances does he reveal his suspicion that another Agent/Ranger pair lurks around Dennison.

 **Sigmund Bogles:** Use the Agent profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

 **Pike Nelson:** Use the Texas Ranger profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

Unnatural Selection

In this chapter we set out locations of interest in the ghost town of Dennison, describe where its last few inhabitants are hiding, take you on a guided tour of the horrors that yet lurk in the abandoned laboratory, and discuss the various ways this little tale might be resolved for better or worse.

ON THE DUSTY TRAIL

Along the road to Dennison, the posse meets up with a family on their way out of the region. As they grow close, eagle-eyed saddletramps see a Conestoga wagon drawn by two oxen, a bearded man in Mormon dress driving it, and a train of four riding horses bringing up the rear. The man has a double-barrel shotgun close at hand, but seems neighborly enough.

The rancher is James Fusselman, and his family—wife Mabel and three daughters ages 8 to 14—ride in the back with all their worldly possessions. If he's greeted in a friendly manner, Fusselman returns the favor. He says,

"Hope you folks ain't headin' to Dennison. Seems like they had a spot o' trouble in the past few days. Then again, there's always been trouble

'round Dennison, ever since them scientists moved in a few years back.

"We thought it was all over 'til last week, when that blasted thunderbird come swoopin' down to steal my stock. These here horses and oxen are all we got left. Few nights back we saw Dennison burnin' just over the horizon. That's when I knew it was time to pull up stakes. You'd best go back if you know what's good for you."

Asked about the "scientists" he mentioned, Fusselman scratches his head and replies,

"This was years ago, mind you. Don't rightly know who them eggheads was workin' for. They started frequentin' the Deepwater Saloon, and nobody knew where they came from or where they went at night. Then they was gone again, and there was no more trouble to speak of until this past week."

If he's asked about the "thunderbird," Fusselman swallows hard and his wife crosses herself. He takes a deep breath and says,

"I never seen nothin' like it before. Biggest bird o' prey I ever encountered, and that's God's honest truth. Big enough to carry off a full-grown sow in its talons. And weird, too – it had a beak longer than my arm, and a big ol'...protrusion on the back of its head. Pretty feathers like some kind o' South American parrot, I reckon, but boy was it mean. Took a blast o' buckshot to the body and flew off without battin' an eyelash."

Fusselman's goal is to get his family safely to the City o' Gloom or a Mormon settlement near it. He shares food and water with a posse in need, but under no circumstances does he accompany the posse back to Dennison.

- **The Fusselmans (5):** Use the Townsfolk profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add Riding d6. James Fusselman is armed with a double-barrel shotgun (Range 12/24/48, Damage 1-3d6, RoF 1-2).

DENNISON, DESERET

Fear Level: 4

Dennison was named for its founder, Bill Dennison, who built a livery next to Deepwater Spring in 1872. A saloon and a few other establishments followed, but the town was never more than a backwater burg with little to recommend it. Little did its inhabitants know, Hellstromme considered the place perfect for an underground installation his people built in 1874.

Folks were rightly curious about the newcomers—scientists and Wasatch rail toughs, mostly—who started drinking at the Deepwater Saloon. But the strangers were tight-lipped and became angry if questioned too much. Their money was as good as anyone else's, so the town's residents chalked it up to "peculiarities of the Great Rail Wars" and left them alone. A few years after that, the scientists seemed to vanish overnight and never came back. *Good riddance*, thought the town's residents.



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About a week ago, Agent Jap Lawless and Texas Ranger Courtney Storms came to town with Dr. Archimedes Hatch in tow. Besides some ravenous fish that lived in the spring, Dennison hadn't seen any trouble in years. First Agent Lawless and Ranger Storms dynamited a nearby Denver-Pacific rail trestle to cut off the town from aid and telegraph communication.

Then they broke the seal on the secret lab Dr. Hatch had fled years before—and that turned out to be one Hell of a bad move. Everything went to Hell. By the time the investigators reach Dennison it's a smoldering, ruined ghost town.

Refer to the map of Dennison on page 5.

Strange Locales

Most of Dennison burned down while its residents tried to defend themselves from the laboratory's creatures. Their battle was in vain, however—almost no one survived.

Encounters: For each hour the posse spends exploring the town, draw a card from the Action Deck. On a red face card or higher, the heroes stir up a nest of chowmunks. On a black face card or higher, they catch the attention of a few hungry thunderbirds soaring high overhead.

- **Chowmunk Swarm (1):** See page 11.
- **Thunderbirds (1d4+1):** See page 14.

1. Deepwater Spring

This cool, clear freshwater spring provides healthy refreshment and pure H₂O, which was a major reason Hellstromme set up his facility here. Travelers can fill a canteen without much trouble, but swimming or bathing is a bad idea. The pool is infested with ravenous nibblers, which swarm to devour any flesh that enters the pond.

- **Nibbler Swarms (3):** See the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

2. Dennison Livery Stable

This building is burned to the ground, its remains still smoking. The fence yet stands, but it's scorched something fierce.

In the middle of the yard lies a horse skeleton with every morsel of meat picked off its fresh, yellow bones.

3. Exploded Steam Wagon

The remnants of a steam wagon lie here in the grass, its boiler burst and its wheels strewn about. Concerted foraging and success on a Notice roll at -4 recovers 1d8 ghost rock nuggets blown clear of the wreck.

4. General Store

Success on a Common Knowledge roll in this burned ruin marks it as the former general store, due to the types of refuse and shredded canvas sacks that remain. A blackened wood stove stands at the center, but not a shred of food or grain remains.

The hurricane cellar doors on the building's south side are intact, and one is wedged open. If the posse investigates downstairs, go to **The Infernal Lab** on page 8.

5. Big Hole

This is just what it sounds like: a big hole in the ground that leads down into a dirt tunnel resembling an animal's burrow. The tunnel is roughly 10 feet in diameter. If the explorers venture into it, it leads down into area I of the laboratory (see page 10).


6. Deepwater Saloon

One of the only buildings in town still standing, the Deepwater Saloon's front and back doors are closed and wedged shut. Success on a Strength roll opens them. The south side of the saloon and its roof are scorched black, but it's otherwise no worse for wear.

Inside, most of the place is smashed up but a few intact liquor bottles remain. Dr. Archimedes Hatch is barricaded in the back room with a meager supply of rations. He's hiding out from Agent Lawless and Ranger Storms, from whom he slipped away during the chaos after they got the lab running again. He's terrified they'll find him and take him back to Richmond in chains, so he only ventures out at night to retrieve water from the spring.

If Hatch can be reasonably sure the posse means him no harm, he tells them about Lawless and Storms and their plan to retrieve the lab's contents for the North and South. He has no idea

where the pair are right now, or who they answer to. He used to work in the laboratory, so he knows its purpose and a few of the weird, angry critters that dwell there. But he won't reenter the place unless he's forced to do so at gunpoint.

 **Dr. Archimedes Hatch:** See page 12.

6a. Ice House: This small shack used to hold ice and features a steam-powered cooling system that isn't functioning. Success on a Notice roll at -2 pinpoints a large number of small burrows all around its foundation, like those a ground squirrel would dig.

A Repair roll and 2d6 hours' work renders the cooling system functional again, but the ravenous chowmunks that live in the burrow underneath it get riled up whenever anyone approaches or opens the door to this place.

- **Chowmunk Swarms (3):** See page 11.

6b. Outhouse: The "jakes" is still fully functional, but it's covered in vines and using it is as bad an idea as messing with the ice house. A bloodwire grows among the foliage, clinging to the inside of the roof. It hasn't eaten in several days, and attacks anyone who enters the place.

- **Bloodwire (1):** See the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

7. Burned Remains

This pile of charred flesh and bones smells awful and looks worse. It's a mixture of some of the town's former residents—who were infested with the corporphage bacteria (see page 12)—and weird critters spawned in the lab, including multi-headed dogs and so-called "thunderbirds."


8. Grassy Bluff

This hill, so named for the tall sagebrush that grows on it, serves as temporary home to Texas Ranger Courtney Storms. She lit out in a hurry when all Hell broke loose in the laboratory, got separated from Hatch in the chaos, and set up camp atop Grassy Bluff to wait for Agent Lawless or the doc to reappear. So far she's plumb out of luck, but she's not quite ready to give them up for dead. A chowmunk swarm ate her horse, so she notes any animals accompanying the posse and figures she can steal one if she needs to make a quick getaway.

Roll Notice for Courtney Storms when the posse approaches town, and once for each hour they spend poking around the ruins. On a success the Ranger notes their presence and readies her gear. If the buckaroos vanish into the laboratory, Storms straps on her six-guns and follows them.

Storms is determined to prevent anyone else from getting away with knowledge she considers the CSA's property, and she isn't above pulling rank as a Ranger to make the heroes trust her. She's never heard of Agent Sigmund Bogles, but she's crossed paths with Pike Nelson a few times. She thinks Nelson is a dang fool; didn't have much respect for him then and still doesn't.

If she's able to convince the cowpokes of her good intentions—roll her Persuasion versus the characters' Notice—Ranger Storms makes use of their aid for exactly as long as she needs to. Then she either traps them in the lab, leaves them to fight some weird critter by themselves, or even goes so far as to commit cold-blooded murder. She considers Agent Lawless expendable, but not Archimedes Hatch.

 **Courtney Storms:** See page 13.

ONE HELL OF A MYSTERY

This adventure presents an intriguingly ruined area and a laboratory that may surprise players expecting yet another of Hellstromme's fear-research installations, but it doesn't go out of its way to explain the whole plot. Players have to collect all the information they can and try to put things together on their own. Since neither Agent Lawless nor Ranger Storms is about to spill the beans on their mysterious masters Back East, Dr. Hatch's untimely death might mean the shootists are left almost entirely in the dark.

But that's all right, Marshal. Sometimes a mystery is just a mystery, and the saddletramps are sure to have their hands full taking care of the lab's unholy creations and figuring out how to blow it to kingdom come. As for the overarching tale, let them wonder.

After all, the Weird West hasn't heard the last o' them shadowy forces Back East...

THE INTERNAL LAB

The lab has two entrances. The first is the one that was intended by its builders: a concrete staircase leading down about 30 feet from the old general store's hurricane cellar doors (see #4 on page 6) to area A, below. The other, a big hole in the ground behind the saloon (#5 on page 6), was dug in the past few days by the thunderbirds and leads into area I on page 10.

The facility's generator is turned off, and must be activated before the electrical lights function again. Until that happens, area A is considered Dark, and all areas beyond it are cloaked in Pitch Darkness (see **Illumination** in *Savage Worlds*) unless the heroes carry their own light source.

Refer to the laboratory map on page 9. If the posse leaves any horses or other animals tied up in town, they are attacked by chowmunk swarms and likely devoured in 1d6 hours' time.

- **Chowmunk Swarms (3):** See page 11.

A. Entryway

This chamber is littered with debris fallen from the ceiling and a number of chewed bones, as well as large brown stains and spatters. A successful Healing, Knowledge (Medicine), or similar roll identifies them as dried blood. Scrawled on the wall in the same substance is a cryptic message, **ABANDON HOPE**. The words look to have been here for a few years at least.

If a pistoleer pokes around in this room for longer than a few rounds or approaches the open ghost steel doors at its northern end, a chorus of growls emerges from the darkness. The mangy three-headed dawg emerges, snarling and ready to defend its lair!

This creature escaped from the vats in area I, and Agent Lawless shut the inner doors to keep it out. It only emerges into Dennison at night to hunt for food—mostly chowmunks, jackrabbits, or other small creatures it can run down.

- **Three-Headed Dawg:** See page 12.

B. Inner Chamber

The doors to this room are made of reinforced ghost steel (Toughness 18) but are not locked.

The stench of rotten flesh is nearly overwhelming to anyone who opens them: Heroes must succeed on a Fear check versus Fear/Nausea (see *Savage Worlds*) when they find the awful corpse within.

Success on a Notice roll without touching the body reveals a blood-spattered nametag reading **HOPE** on the corpse's ruined lab coat. Explorers would do well to heed the warning that was written on the wall, because Hope's body is infested with a genetically engineered bacteria called the coporphage. Anyone who touches the body is at risk of infection.

- **Corpophage:** See page 12.

C. Scientists' Quarters

The scientists and engineers once employed by the facility slept here in a number of beds. The room's contents are smashed and scattered about, and nothing of value remains. A small room in the southwest corner contains a privy.

D. Generator and Turbine

This chamber contains the lab's electrical generator, a large steam-powered turbine, and two large barrels containing nearly 120 pounds of ghost rock to power them. The generator ran out of fuel and shut down, but remains in working order. Success on a simple Repair, Weird Science, Knowledge (Engineering), or similar check gets the generator running again and restores electric power and lights to the facility.

With success on a Repair or Weird Science roll at -2, a hero can jam the generator at its highest setting, which rapidly causes it to overload. If an overload is allowed to continue for 10 or more rounds, the entire machine explodes in grand fashion. The facility's upper level is filled with cleansing flame, and the blast causes the lower level to collapse, crushing everything in it under tons of earth, stone, and shattered concrete.

E. Upper Lift

The lift is a ghost-steel-reinforced, square, wooden platform (marked with a dotted line on the map) connected to a shiny metal podium in the corner of the room. This control stand has a few dials and levers to control whether the lift goes up, down, or stops. The lift is powered by the facility's generator in area D, so it must be

turned on before it functions. When the posse arrives, the lift is in the upper position.

An operator can use her Weird Science or Repair skill, whichever is better, to operate the lift. Lacking those skills, roll Smarts with a -2 penalty to figure out the workings of this device. With success, the lift works as the operator intends and he requires no more rolls for normal use. On a failure the control panel shorts out and does not function again without a successful Repair roll and 2d6 hours' work. If the dice come up snake eyes, the panel explodes for 2d6 damage in a Medium Burst Template, and cannot be repaired at all.

Once activated, the lift takes five rounds to descend a concrete shaft to area F, 50 feet below, and the same amount of time to fully rise again.

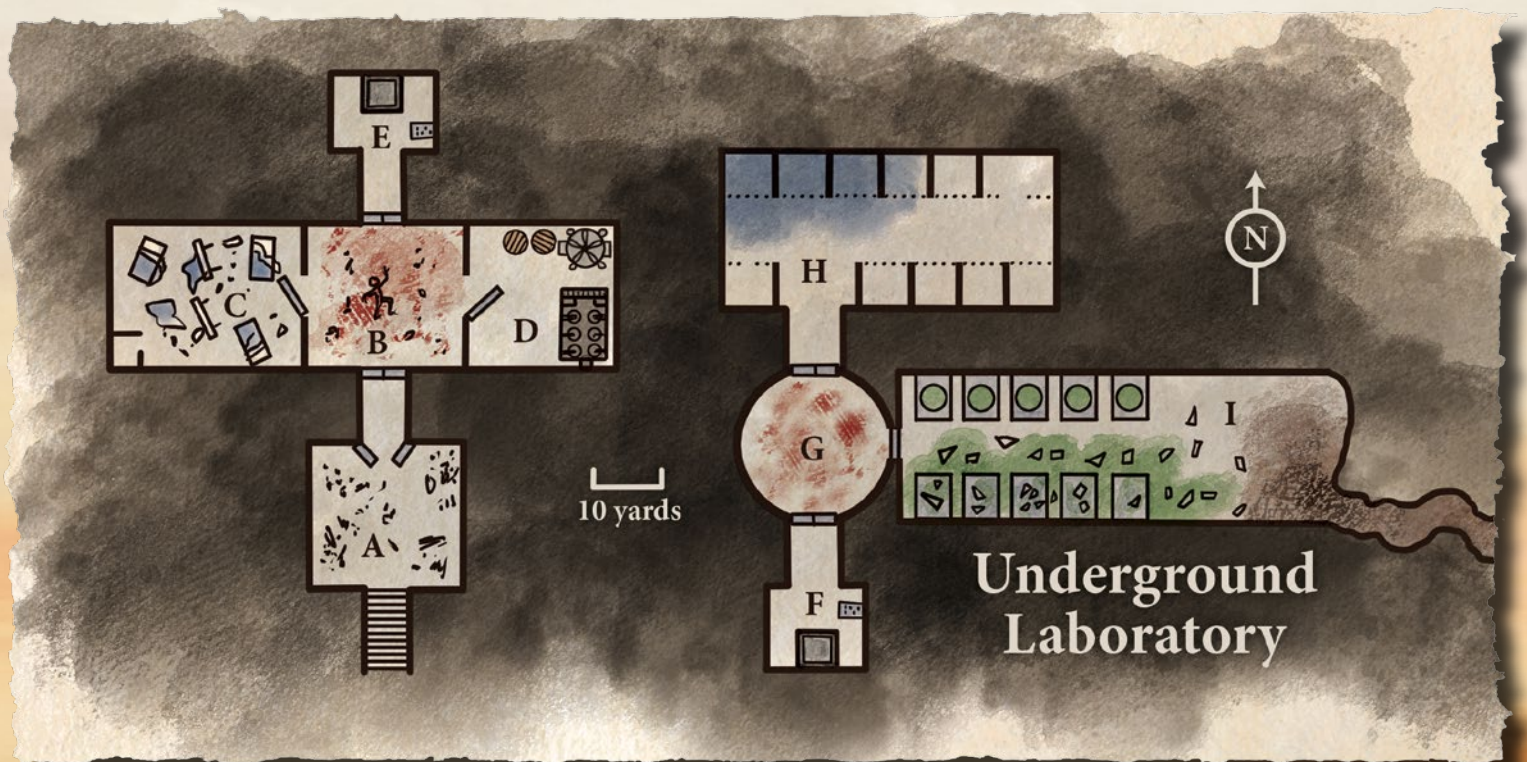
F. Lower Lift

This room is almost identical to area E, above. The dotted line on the map indicates where the lift comes to rest, and a control panel identical to the one above sits in the corner of the room.

G. Middle Chamber


This circular, concrete chamber is empty but for its lone inhabitant, U.S. Agent Jap Lawless. He has a little water left in his canteen, but is suffering from being trapped here with no food for a few days. When the critters in the next room (area I) broke loose, Courtney Storms and Dr. Hatch fled up the lift and left him behind. He was unable to get past the three-headed dawg at the facility's entrance, nor could he fight his way through the thunderbirds to their burrowed egress. So he sent the lift up, returned here, and shut the ghost-steel doors, and has been trapped in the dark since the generator ran out of fuel and shut down roughly 48 hours ago.

Agent Lawless is undercover, so he doesn't wear the black duster and suit one would expect. He dresses like a cowboy, albeit one with a Gatling pistol. Confronted with a posse, he's just grateful for any help they can give him. That being said, his primary goal remains getting out of the lab with all the secrets and samples he can carry, and



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he has no qualms about betraying the group or leaving them to fight the thunderbirds or other creatures while he vamooses for the sunshine.

 **Jap Lawless:** See page 13. He has one level of Fatigue from **Hunger** (see *Savage Worlds*).

H. Holding Pens

Here is where Hellstromme's scientists stored their unholy creations when the lab was still functional. A few of them are broken open (the critters escaped a few years back, which was what prompted the facility's abandonment), and others remain locked. In those chambers are the dessicated, mouldering corpses of a two-headed dawg, a large cat that looks to have had four tentacles on its back, and other, unidentifiable abominations.

A large, standing pool of water on the room's north side has collected from hairline cracks running along the ceiling and wall. The water was pure when it leaked in from the Deepwater Spring, but it has since become infested with corporphage bacteria. Anyone touching or drinking it risks a nasty infestation.

- **Corporphage:** See page 12.

I. Thunderbird Lair

Once upon a time this was the facility's main laboratory area, where creatures were engineered and grown in large, cylindrical glass vats full of pale green nutrient solution. Since Agent Lawless and Ranger Storms fired up the facility again and the thunderbirds burst free (freeing several other critters in the process) it has served as their lair.


The northeast corner of the room is dominated by a huge nest of branches and sagebrush, and is where the largest thunderbird, "Big Momma" (as Courtney Storms dubbed it) spends most of her time. She's nesting on top of eight fresh pterodactyl eggs, any one of which would be a prize for Lawless and Storms's masters Back East. Besides the one who's here with her, Big Momma's children soar all around the nearby region hunting prey, which they kill and carry back here to feed to her. A 10-foot-diameter, burrowed tunnel leads to the surface.

The machinery and vats along the southern wall are all smashed and useless. Five glass vats

(Toughness 5) and their sustaining machinery remain intact on the northern wall. Four of these contain live velociraptors grown from Arizona fossils, which remain in suspended animation as long as their tanks are undisturbed. If the tanks are somehow shattered, however—bullets and explosions generated by a fight with Big Momma could very well break them open—the creatures are freed. It takes them 1d4 rounds to shake off the effects of their confinement, after which they run off through the tunnel and into the wild.

The fifth vat contains a strange and compelling inhabitant, indeed: a woman! The lab's scientists were growing her under Dr. Hellstromme's orders, and she is in fact an exact clone of Vanessa Hellstromme, who has been dead for decades. If she escapes or is freed, it's up to the Marshal to create her profile and decide how that turns out. What the heroes don't know is that her mind is far from human...it's actually a manitou.

Big Momma flies at intruders and does her best to defend the precious eggs in her nest. But self-preservation is actually more important to her than offspring. If she suffers a wound, the huge thunderbird makes for the exit and flies off to gather her spawn. Then they return to Dennison in force to kill every living thing they can find.

 **Big Momma:** See page 14.

- **Thunderbird (1):** See page 14.
- **Velociraptors (4):** See page 14. The creatures remain in stasis unless their vats are ruptured.
- **Female Human Clone (1):** This being is also in stasis unless her tank is opened. In that case it's up to the Marshal to determine her exact capabilities and the manitou's mood.

AFTER THE CHAOS

If the posse succeeds in blowing up the lab, they're paid the agreed-upon bounty and their employers ask no more of them.

But if things don't go quite to plan—which is to say, if Ranger Storms or Agent Lawless escape with lab records or even a thunderbird egg—then the chase is on! Your buckaroos may have to follow them all the way Back East to foil their dastardly plot.

Allies & Enemies

In this chapter we provide you with profiles for the misguided folks, mustache-twirling villains, and horrifying abominations the posse can encounter in the doomed town of Dennison.

Wild cards are marked with a handy marshal's badge to distinguish them from the Extras.

Chowmunk (Swarm)

These nasty critters started out as typical ground squirrels, but Hellstromme's scientists used their genetic material to grow swarms of ravenous eating machines. The rail warriors stationed here dubbed them "chowmunks" because chow is what they turn everything into.

A chowmunk swarm is treated just like a creature. When it is wounded, the swarm is effectively dispersed. A single swarm covers an area equal to a Medium Burst Template and attacks everyone within it every round.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** A chowmunk swarm inflicts hundreds of tiny bites every round to its victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location (victims in completely sealed suits are immune).
- **Split:** Chowmunk swarms are clever enough to split into two smaller swarms (Small Burst Templates) should their foes split up. The Toughness of these smaller swarms is lowered by -2 (to 5 each).
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; Because the swarm is composed of scores of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons inflict no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round. A swarm is foiled by jumping in water (but remember the town's only watering hole is infested with nibblers!).

Corpophage

This awful, scientifically created bacteria's name means, literally, "body eater." And that's exactly what it does. It doesn't have statistics, per se, because how can an hombre fight microscopic critters? The bacteria is extremely contagious.

The corpophage is treated as a Short-Term, Lethal **Disease** (see *Savage Worlds*). It is spread by touch or induction: If a cowpoke touches infected flesh, water, or another surface or substance where the bacteria is present, she must succeed on an immediate Vigor roll at -2. (If the poor sod drinks bacteria-infested water, the roll is at -4.)

Every hour thereafter, the hero must succeed on another Vigor roll at -2 or suffer a level of Fatigue as an itchy rash turns to chills, fever, and finally searing pain. Once a character sustains two levels of Fatigue or worse, she is contagious and may spread the corpophage to anyone who touches her. A character who is Incapacitated by the bacterial infection rolls Vigor at -2 every 10 minutes to avoid death.

There is no mundane cure for the bacteria, but successful application of the *healing* or *greater healing* power kills the infection instantly. A successful Healing roll (-4) slows the bacteria's progress so the hero waits two hours before rolling Vigor, but this only works once per victim.

Dawg, Three-Headed

This terrifying beast was created in a vat of nutrient fluid. It's preternaturally intelligent, and mangy with boil-covered skin and patches of missing fur.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills:
Fighting d8, Notice d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4. The dawg can attack up to two adjacent targets with all three heads each round, with no multi-action penalty.
- **Fear:** The sight of a three-headed dawg provokes a Fear test.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Go for the Throat:** A dawg instinctively goes for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's least-armored location.



Dr. Archimedes Hatch

Dr. Hatch's specialty is the growth and regeneration of living flesh, human or otherwise. He invented the greenish nutrient fluid used in the Dennison laboratory. Hatch detests violence of any sort, and only has a Derringer because Texas Ranger Storms insisted he hold onto it. Given half a chance, Hatch would join a posse bent on destroying the secret laboratory. One shouldn't mistake his pacifism for cowardice, though; the things Hatch has seen have steeled him against the frightful and unknown. He is extremely short and bald, with a fringe of white hair and spectacles.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Healing d10, Investigation d10,

Knowledge (Biology) d12, Knowledge (Medicine) d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Repair d6, Stealth d6, Taunt d8

Cha: 0; **Grit:** 3; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor), Pacifist (Major), Small



Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Brave, New Power, Power Points, Scholar

Powers: *Greater healing, healing* (Regeneration Serum). **Power Points:** 25

Gear: Lab coat, syringes, eyeglasses, Derringer (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 1).



Jap Lawless

Jap Lawless was a Civil War vet and New York City attorney before the Agency recruited him. To him, North and South are mortal enemies; he's never gotten used to peace between them.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Investigation d10, Knowledge (Law) d8, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Lockpicking d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Piloting d6, Shooting d10, Taunt d6

Cha: 0; **Grit:** 3; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Arrogant, Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Agent (Grade 3), Block, Combat Reflexes, Fleet-Footed, Marksman, Rock and Roll!

Gear: Cowboy hat, red bandanna, vest, boots, Gatling pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 2, AP 1), 50× .45 bullets.



Courtney Storms

Courtney Storms was the only girl born to a family of true sons of the South. She outdid her brothers in everything she put her mind to, making her father most proud when became one of the elite Texas Rangers. After the ceasefire, her papa joined Dixie Rails to continue the fight; he died at the Battle of Lost Angels. On that day, Ranger Storms vowed to make the bluebellies—and everyone else—pay dearly for her loss.

Courtney has auburn hair and a mean glint to her brown eyes. She looks young, but anyone who thinks she's soft is in for a rude surprise. She wears no badge within Deseret's borders.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Survival d8, Tracking d10

Cha: -4; **Grit:** 4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Quirk (Spits)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Duelist, Marksman, Rebel Yell, Speed Load, Texas Ranger (Sergeant), True Grit, Two-Fisted

Gear: 2× double-action Colt Peacemakers (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1), 50× .45 bullets, hat, 2× quick-draw holsters.



DEADLANDS: THE TWILIGHT PROTOCOL

Thunderbird

These critters got their name from frightened locals, but they're actually brightly feathered pterodactyls hatched from Big Momma's eggs.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick, scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Claw:** Str+d6.
- **Flying:** Pace 12".
- **Size +2:** A thunderbird is roughly the size of a horse, not counting its wingspan.
- **Swoop:** If a thunderbird flies at least 6" and descends 2" before attacking, it adds +4 to its Fighting roll.

"Big Momma"

The biggest of Dennison's pterodactyls, Big Momma gave birth to all the others.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10, Stealth d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick, scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Claw:** Str+d6.
- **Flying:** Pace 12".
- **Size +3:** Big Momma is the size of a bear, not counting her wingspan.
- **Swoop:** If Big Momma flies at least 6" and descends 2" before attacking, she adds +4 to her damage roll.

Velociraptor

These feathered, land-based dinosaurs are extremely aggressive and have human-level intelligence thanks to the Reckoners' dark influence. If they escape into the wild and reproduce, they soon threaten every living thing in the region.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Swim d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Velociraptors have thick hides.
- **Bite or Rake:** Str+d8.
- **Size +1:** Velociraptors are about seven feet tall.

