



# TRINITY CONTINUUM IN MEDIA RES

COLLECTION OF PRE-CONSTRUCTED  
STORIES FOR TRINITY CONTINUUM





TRINITY CONTINUUM

# IN MEDIA RES

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## SPECIAL THANKS

**Trinity: In Media Res** is dedicated to everyone who believes the impossible is possible.



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# INTRODUCTION

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“Deep in the human unconscious is a pervasive need for a logical universe that makes sense. But the real universe is always one step beyond logic.”

— Frank Herbert, *Dune*

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Science fiction — two words that contain within them infinite possibilities, from fifteen-minutes-into-the-future action-adventure to universe-trotting intrigues. Wonder and fantasy mixes with the chance, however remote, that what we see is a possibility, even if a distant and unlikely one. **Trinity Continuum** is a set of tools for making these dreams into a shared narrative, building on the seeds of stories to create dramatic and entertaining worlds to inhabit.

**Trinity: In Media Res** is an extension of that toolkit. This book is a compilation of four ready-to-go stories, pre-built for a quick start and loaded with plot threads for ongoing play. By default, these stories take place fifteen minutes into the future, with much the same technology we’re used to seeing in our day-to-day lives with a twist or two hidden up someone’s sleeves, though there’s plenty of room to shift details if the Storyguide wishes to spice things

up. Though only two of these stories revolve around unique artifacts with strange properties, the other two could easily incorporate them without changing much about the story itself.

**Codename: Aquarius** is a thrilling tale of espionage in a world of mirrors, with uncertain trust and a choice that will influence the direction of an ongoing story. **Artifacts, Etc.** revolves around ancient artifacts misused by the modern world, and the race to repatriate them to the cultures that created them. **Caper, Incorporated** is a high-flying heist story with a weird twist and super-science that redefines what it means to be a thief — not to mention how to save the world. Finally, **Classified: Help Wanted** is a locked-building game of cat-and-mouse against a hitman, a corrupt cop with SWAT at his beck and call, and the CEO responsible for the whole mess in the first place.

## INSPIRATIONAL MATERIAL

There’s no shortage of media to inspire players and Storyguides when it comes to **Trinity Continuum**, especially when it comes to the four stories we’re providing in **In Media Res**. We’ve sorted them first by story, then by type.

### CODENAME: AQUARIUS

Inspirational media for **Codename: Aquarius** revolves around espionage stories, particularly those where loyalties are questionable at best and the protagonists are well above the norm.

#### TELEVISION

*Mission: Impossible* — Teams of highly trained operatives using every skill and resource at their disposal despite impossible odds? Sounds just about right. Both the original television show and the film franchise are great sources.

*Burn Notice* — Michael Westen’s resourcefulness, not to mention the Miami skyline, are perfect for the story’s setting and conceits.

#### VIDEO GAMES

*Deus Ex* — The entire franchise is about espionage and questionable loyalties, but the original game in particular is the gold standard. It’s nearing its 20th anniversary and shows its age, but nothing has ever quite matched the layers-upon-layers feeling of the game’s kitchen-sink conspiracy story.

### ARTIFACTS, ETC.

**Artifacts, Etc.** takes inspiration from several titans of pop culture, but unlike most of them, it’s set not in hidden jungle temples or secret mountain shrines, but in the heart of Hollywood.

#### FILM

*Indiana Jones* — The archetypal adventurer-archaeologist, probably responsible for more PhDs than any other fictional character. He’s based heavily on pulp figures like Doc Savage and similar adventurer-scientist pulp series that defined so much of the world for readers and viewers in the early 20th century.





## VIDEO GAMES

The *Tomb Raider* Series — Depending on the game, Lara's either a gun-toting no-nonsense professional or a born survivor in a terrible situation, but she's almost always finding her way into temples and lifting forgotten artifacts, many of which have unexplained powers, more for the thrill than anything.

The *Uncharted* Series — A buddy-comedy take on the classic formula, but it doesn't skimp on the rampant violence of *Tomb Raider*, and it's only slightly less likely to involve weird mythological super-science.

## CAPER, INCORPORATED

**Caper, Incorporated** is all about cleverness and a light touch, mixed with heavy intrigues and plots beneath plots broken up by tense situations. Any heist media (of which there is a surfeit) would serve as excellent inspiration for games in this vein, but a couple examples deserve a special call-out.

## FILM

*Lupin the Third: The Castle of Cagliostro* — Lupin the Third is a character with an enormous multimedia footprint, a smooth operator and a master gentleman thief with a rotating cast of friends, followers, hangers-on, rivals, and of course the Interpol inspector obsessed with catching him. This is one of the most influential outings in the franchise, a perfect source for the sort of thieves who wear clever costumes, defy physics on a regular basis, and leave calling cards behind for the authorities.

## TELEVISION

*Leverage* — This series follows a gang of five thieves, each with their own specialty but all essential to a smooth operation. A Storyguide worried about running heists for a large group of players would do well to take notes!

## VIDEO GAMES

The *Dishonored* Series — The powers that Corvo and Emily wield in these stealth games are

explicitly supernatural in origin, but many of the gizmos in **Caper, Incorporated** similarly allow the characters to break the usual rules of heists in weird and interesting ways.

## CLASSIFIED: HELP WANTED

**Classified: Help Wanted** is about a tense situation with no obvious exit, conflicting loyalties, and no backup, centering on extremely competent characters who, despite the situation, are nowhere near in over their head. Any media with scrappy underdog characters down on their luck is excellent fodder for this genre.

## TELEVISION

*The A-Team* — The archetypal hypercompetent-strangers-aiding-the-helpless series.

*MacGyver* — The eponymous MacGyver often works alone and eschews most weapons, but that's alright, because he has science and an almost inhuman knack for jury-rigging devices out of random objects on his side.

## FILM

*John Wick* — One John Wick is enough to put the fear of God into entire criminal syndicates. Imagine what a team of similarly competent violence aficionados could do. The world of these films is full of florid detail about a seemingly universal world of killers operating just beneath the surface of the modern world, a perfect metaphor for the omnipresent and seemingly unconquerable problems the characters, as outsiders, must struggle against.





CHAPTER ONE

# CODENAME: AQUARIUS

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“As a rule, spies don’t like dealing with cops. Covert ops are illegal by definition. If they were legal they wouldn’t need to be covert.”

Michael Weston, *Burn Notice*

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Cold War spymaster James Jesus Angleton described the convoluted world of espionage as a “wilderness of mirrors,” and **Codename: Aquarius** takes the players deep into that wilderness. The player characters are operatives working for 9, a private intelligence firm that employs Talents as agents. 9 is best-known — when it’s known at all — for its dealings with the strange and surreal, but they haven’t forgotten their original mandate included threats from multinational crime syndicates and secret societies. Over the decades, the shadowy figures behind those threats have deduced 9’s existence. Some decide to confront the freelance spies head-on (which typically doesn’t end well for them), while others attempt to beat them at their own game: infiltration and manipulation. In **Codename: Aquarius**, they might finally have succeeded.

The player characters’ mission is to apprehend a rogue CIA spy named Jeffrey Blake, wanted for the murder of a 9 operative who uncovered his ties to a cabal attempting to take control of 9 — or so the characters’ supervisor claims. As is usual in espionage stories, the truth isn’t clear-cut. Will the characters escape their trek through the wilderness of mirrors unscathed, or will the forest of deception and betrayal swallow them whole?

## IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

These are the key figures the characters will encounter during **Codename: Aquarius**.

### JEFFREY BLAKE

Whether he’s an innocent victim of a sinister conspiracy or a ruthless killer trying to cover his tracks, nobody will argue that Jeffrey Blake is anything but an excellent spy. Blake blends overttness and subtlety in determined pursuit of his goals; getting a problem solved is more important than how it’s done. Blake prefers winning others over to his

side, rather than deception — better to leave your assets actively wanting to help you than risk them holding a grudge — but he won’t hesitate to lie or use brute force when needed, and he’s equally good at both.

**Primary Pool:** 13 (combat and escapes)

**Secondary Pool:** 8 (deception and extracting information)

**Desperation Pool:** 4

**Defense:** 4

**Health:** 5

**Edges:** Always Prepared, Danger Sense, Iron Will 2, Skilled Liar

**Source:** 4

**Gifts:** Apex Cunning, Cold Read, Lightning Reflexes, Mirrored Sunglasses

### JOHNNY GARCIA

A local success story, Juan “Johnny” Garcia is the owner of La Sed, one of the many up-and-coming nightclubs on Miami’s Upper East Side. Behind the scenes, he also launders money for several drug cartels operating in Miami. Garcia makes a point of maintaining an air of impartiality by keeping his clients at arm’s length, which has made him something of a neutral third party in the Miami underworld, and the “guy who knows a guy” when it comes to any criminal operation bigger than the







local street gang. Garcia's careful about sharing information — even the appearance of playing favorites could cause any of his clients to feel like they're getting the short end of the stick, and with clients like his, poor customer service means a trip to the bottom of the Miami River.

**Primary Pool:** 9 (negotiations and networking)

**Secondary Pool:** 4 (fistfights and guns)

**Desperation Pool:** 2

**Defense:** 3

**Health:** 3

**Edges:** Fame 1, Power Martial Arts 1, Wealth 2

**Note:** If a fight breaks out during the meeting with Garcia, his bouncers have a Primary Pool of 4 (brawling), a Secondary Pool of 2 (running), and a Desperation Pool of 1.

#### MANUEL DIAZ (M4)

Manuel Diaz manages 9's operations in Miami, and serves as the player characters' handler during the events of **Codename: Aquarius**. A former field communications expert, Diaz is restricted to desk duty after a stray bullet permanently damaged his knee; the former agent clearly favors his left leg when he walks, and his sedentary job is taking its toll on his waist size. Despite his duty restrictions, Diaz is still an accomplished hacker and all-around technology geek, and can act as the characters' tech wizard if they wouldn't otherwise have one. He also spends enough time at the firing range to keep his aim sharp. If he can't run away from danger, he can at least shoot back.



**Primary Pool:** 11 (hacking and building gadgets)

**Secondary Pool:** 6 (guns)

**Desperation Pool:** 3

**Defense:** 3

**Health:** 4

**Edges:** Lightning Calculator, Mr. Fix-It, Weak Spots

**Inspiration:** 3

**Gifts:** Deep System Scan, Public Education, No Stone Unturned

#### MAXINE JOHNSON

Before she was Maxine Johnson (one of the many aliases 9 uses for its executives), she was one of 9's top counter-intelligence agents, safeguarding



the agency that safeguards the world. Nowadays, Johnson is one of the operations managers who oversees 9's agents in North America — she runs spies instead of catching them. With her diamond-edged stare and a presence that looms far above her petite frame, Johnson is an imposing figure who can make even hardened terrorists squirm. She's unfailingly polite and professional, but others would do well to remember that people don't climb the ranks of an intelligence agency by being nice.

**Primary Pool:** 13 (extracting information and spotting lies)

**Secondary Pool:** 8 (bluffing and persuasion)

**Desperation Pool:** 4

**Defense:** 4

**Health:** 5

**Edges:** Covert 1, Iron Will 2, Patron 1, Photographic Memory 2

**Source:** 4

**Gifts:** Cold Read, Don't Lie to Me, Don't Mess with Me, The Hook

## HIT SQUAD

The only two things that anyone knows about this group are that they love to wear black, and they're damn good at putting people underground.

**Primary Pool:** 9 (guns and stealth)

**Secondary Pool:** 4 (leadership and tactics)

**Desperation Pool:** 2

**Defense:** 3

**Health:** 3

**Edges:** Adrenaline Spike, Fast Draw, Hair Trigger Reflexes

# KEY SCENES

The scenes in this section are the high points of **Codename: Aquarius** — the bare minimum the players and Storyguide need to play through the entire scenario. Scene 3 features a decision that leads to two different versions of Scene 4. However, that doesn't mean the scenes have to be played one after the other. There's plenty of room for the Storyguide to insert other scenes, if inspiration or necessity strikes.

## SCENE 1: THE BRIEFING

The characters are summoned to a briefing by their handler, an operations manager named Maxine Johnson, at 9's headquarters in Virginia. Nicknamed "The Block," it's a well-appointed but unobtrusive office building, in keeping with the organization's "public-sector consulting firm" image.

When the characters settle in at the conference table, Johnson starts the briefing. In the past year, several of 9's operations were exposed without warning, suggesting there's a mole inside the organization. 9 followed the leaked documents to a VPN in Singapore and tracked down the user, "bottomofthe9." These documents suggest a group calling itself "Aquarius" is behind the disruptions. Further details are sparse; nobody's been able to discover what Aquarius' goals are, and the only solid name they've found belongs to a rogue CIA officer. 9 sent one of the characters' fellow agents, designated

K30, to get close to the now-independent operative in the hopes of learning more about Aquarius. A short time ago, 9 learned that K30's cover was blown when her body turned up in a city morgue.

A screen lights up on one wall of the conference room, displaying a personnel file emblazoned with the CIA crest, an official ID photo, and the name Jeffrey Blake, the subject of the team's assignment. According to the personnel file, Blake joined the army out of high school after 9/11 and served as a Green Beret in Iraq and Afghanistan. Blake's performance in the field drew the attention of the CIA's Special Activities Division, and when his army service commitment ended, the Agency recruited him as a paramilitary operator.

Two years ago, Blake left the Agency and started his own private intelligence company. 9 believes the Aquarius mole knew they were in danger of being exposed, and hired Blake to kill K30 to maintain their own cover — Blake's firm received a large payment from a shell company shortly after the 9 agent's death.

Johnson informs the characters Blake was recently sighted in Miami and it looks like he's trying to flee the United States. Since time is of the essence, the characters have a few hours to gather or requisition whatever equipment they need and head to the airport, where a company plane awaits. Johnson reminds them that they're to capture



Blake, not kill him; 9 needs to know how and why he exposed their operative, and he can't tell them if he's dead. She also instructs the characters to keep legalities in mind when planning their approach. Johnson doesn't have a problem with the characters breaking the law (often times, that's basically a spy's job), but 9 doesn't have the same level of pull with law enforcement as their government counterparts. If the characters get themselves in hot water with the police, they'll be tossed in a cell like any other criminal, which will give Blake the opportunity to escape. After any questions the characters have are answered, Johnson wishes them good luck and sends them on their way.

## SCENE 2: STARTING THE HUNT

When the team arrives in Miami, they're met by a solid wall of humidity — compared to the cool, dry air of the airplane cabin, South Florida might as well be the world's largest outdoor sauna. They'll also meet 9's local section chief, a senior field agent calling himself Manuel Diaz (M4). He brings the characters up to speed as he walks them to their rental car.

*“Blake's being as hard to find as ever, but I do have a lead for you. One of our assets spotted him at a nightclub called La Sed a few days ago, talking to the owner, Johnny Garcia. Diaz tells the team that local police ‘suspect’ — Diaz makes air quotes with his fingers — Garcia of being a money launderer for the Venezuelan drug cartels, so Blake's probably trying to get Garcia's cartel buddies to smuggle him out of Miami.”*

*“That's all we've got right now, but if you find anything you need run through the system, just call or email. When you find Blake, let me know, and bring him back here to the airport. We'll handle the rest.”*

He hands each of the characters a business card with his contact information, plus the address of the 9 facility where the characters will stay and store their equipment during the operation.

Garcia's club, La Sed, is typical nightclub fare: a bunch of twenty-somethings (and teenagers with fake IDs) dancing to house music and indulging in various mood-altering chemicals. Typically for a weeknight, there's no line, which makes it easy for the characters to approach the bouncer. If any of them are dressed like “suits” (as intelligence officers often are), they'll draw some funny looks,

but that alone won't stop the bouncer from letting them in if the characters pay or socially engineer an exemption to the cover charge. (Bribery is an option, but just paying the cover would probably be cheaper.) Any violence or overt weapons will get the police called, however. Stealthy characters will have a hard time infiltrating the building unseen: the windows are small and the only other entrance is through the kitchen, which would require them to get past both the cooks and the indoor security cameras before they reach Garcia's office.

Once the characters are inside La Sed, they can ask after the owner. Garcia's initial attitude toward the characters will depend on their approach — he'll be cordial if they're polite, or annoyed if they're rude or rough with the staff — but he'll claim he's not available to meet with them at the moment. If any of the characters drop Blake's name, though, Garcia will sigh and beckon for them to follow him into his much-quieter office.

Garcia knows his drug cartel clients will hold him responsible for any trouble that follows Blake, since Garcia was the one who put Blake in contact with them in the first place, and dealing with those same cartels means Garcia isn't easily intimidated. Bribery is an option, but an expensive one: between La Sed's legitimate earnings and the cut he takes of the money he launders, Garcia does well for himself, and his trustworthy reputation is key to his success. If word gets around that Garcia sold out someone he dealt with, it could make him some powerful enemies — a fact the characters could turn to their advantage. Physical violence should be the least effective option, since Garcia (ironically) has the law on his side as well as his cadre of bouncers.

Regardless of the characters' methods, Garcia is a businessman first. He doesn't have any personal loyalty to Blake, and Garcia's on good enough terms with the drug cartels that he can probably mend fences later, if the characters cause any problems. If the characters can reassure Garcia that they'll keep the blowback to a minimum (or present him with a physical threat his bouncers can't deal with), he's willing to talk to get them out of his hair.

When the characters question him, he says:

*“Blake called me last week, said he was in a tight spot and needed a way out of the country, fast — guess you guys are why. I told him I'd need time to talk to some people. He insisted we meet as soon as possible, so I had him stop by here a few days ago. Gave him the number of a guy I know, former Venezuelan army*

*who works in ‘international shipping,’ if you catch my drift. I know for a fact they haven’t had another shipment come in since I talked to your boy, but there should be one in the next few days.”*

If the PCs ask, Garcia can provide them with the phone number Blake used to call him, as well as the security footage from the time of their meeting: it contains the model and license plate number of Blake’s car.

Technically oriented characters may decide to hack Garcia’s various devices for information. Garcia is as paranoid as one would expect from a major criminal, and meticulous about keeping recordings of his meetings, but not computer-savvy. Likewise, Garcia’s smartphone is an off-the-shelf model with no special security features, although the characters won’t immediately know which number is Blake’s if they hack it. His laptop and smartphone are both Difficulty 1 to hack.

By the end of the meeting, the characters should either have the make, model, and license plate number of Blake’s car, or the number of the cellphone Blake used to call Garcia. Either clue can lead the characters to Blake’s location: a warehouse on the Miami River.

## SCENE 3: FACE TO FACE

Characters trying to scout Blake’s safehouse might be in for a difficult time. The building doesn’t possess any exterior windows, except on the shutter door that covers a shallow boat launch. Blake relies on a cobbled-together network of older-model smartphones wirelessly connected to a laptop to stand in for security cameras. He’s also rigged a backup “alarm system” on each of the two ground-level doors, consisting of some copper wire, a LED lamp, and a nine-volt battery. Opening the door breaks the circuit, turning off an LED on his desk.

The one security system that even a Talent won’t be able to circumvent is Blake’s Mirrored Sunglasses Gift. As soon as any of the characters get eyes on him, he’ll know. When that happens, Blake

## LIES, DAMNED LIES, AND PAPER TRAILS

The conflict between Blake’s and Johnson’s stories is the heart of the wilderness of mirrors: throwing doubts on “truth,” never knowing who to trust, making decisions now based on information you can only verify later. The fact that the characters are going after Blake at all is a sign that 9 might be compromised: how else would Aquarius be able to play the two agencies against each other, if not by having influence over both sides?

On the other hand, Blake is a trained spy, and the biggest difference between spies and con artists is that spies collect a salary. Blake knows perfectly well that his explanation only has to hold water until he escapes from the characters. No matter how plausible Blake’s story sounds, the characters shouldn’t rule out the possibility it’s all a carefully back-stopped lie to save his own skin.

In the end, the only things the characters know for sure about “Aquarius” are that it exists and both Johnson and Blake consider it enough of a threat to use its name as a boogeyman. They’ll have to venture deeper into the wilderness if they want to learn which story is true.

will announce that he knows he’s trapped and that he wants to talk. Blake’s lying about the former, but he genuinely does want to plead his case. On the other hand, while he might want to win the characters over, he needs to ensure his own safety and continue his investigation. If he thinks the characters are about to move on him, he’ll bolt.

When the team approaches him, Blake’s manner is cautious, but not hostile. He’s standing pretty much in the center of the warehouse, a few steps from the boat launch, behind a standing desk with a laptop on it. Blake claims that both he and the characters have been set up, and asks to be allowed to tell his side of the story before they take him back to 9’s headquarters.

If the characters agree, Blake explains that he knows the characters are chasing “Aquarius” because he is, too. He first learned of the group’s existence several years earlier, after he suffered a series of compromised operations during his CIA days. Blake started investigating the matter on the side, and was forced out of the Agency by Aquarius’ mole at Langley. Unfortunately for Aquarius, Blake’s sudden lack of employment just gave him more time to hunt them, and he’s been making slow but steady progress.

Blake insists he isn’t responsible for K30’s death, but he admits that he can’t provide them any proof of his innocence: “it’s our job to never have an alibi.”





Instead, he explains that the now-deceased 9 operative (who he knew as Kara-Lynn Trent) was originally sent to apprehend him, just like the characters were. K30 agreed to join forces with Blake after seeing his evidence, and the two of them started to track down Aquarius' moles in other organizations, including 9. After almost two years of searching, they'd finally come up with a possible name: Maxine Johnson, an operations manager at 9's facilities in Virginia.

At this point, the characters should suspect Maxine Johnson wasn't telling them the whole

story. If any of them mention her by name, or visibly react when he mentions her name, Blake will suggest Johnson sent the team after him to cover her own tracks.

Blake has another request: join forces with him, the same way K30 did. If the characters refuse, Blake points out they have nothing to lose by agreeing. If he's lying, Aquarius ceases to be a threat when the characters take him into custody, and if he's telling the truth, they'll be helping to protect 9 from subversion by parties with unknown goals. If they need



it, Blake will give the characters a few minutes to discuss the question amongst themselves. He's not about to let his guard down, though, and he's prepared to run if the characters decline his offer.

## SCENE 4A: THE CHASE

The “default” option is the characters refusing to join Blake (for the differences in the story if the characters accept his offer, see Scene 4B). The rogue spy is expecting this, of course, and has prepared a few options for his escape. In addition to his Mirrored Sunglasses Gift, Blake also possesses

## FINE-TUNING

Although **Codename: Aquarius** is intended to make the player characters grapple with their own loyalties, some groups might prefer to simply capture Blake outright, before the rogue agent has the chance to make his offer. Blake's combination of the Mirrored Sunglasses Gift and the Danger Sense Edge will make it difficult for the characters to get the drop on him, but the Storyguide should remember that those Gifts only give Blake *knowledge* of a threat (or the possibility of one). Characters determined to storm Blake's warehouse might not be able to rely on surprise, but they still have speed and violence of action.

the Danger Sense Edge, allowing him a reflexive Survival + Cunning roll to detect when the characters move to apprehend him.

In a stand-up fight, Blake is easily the equal of even a combat-oriented starting character (he was a soldier before he was a spy), but he knows the numbers are stacked against him. The Storyguide should remember that Blake's priority is to escape, not to “beat” the characters. To that end, when combat starts, Blake will pull the pin of the flash bang grenade taped to the underside of his standing desk and dive into the nearby water behind him; he's a strong enough swimmer to cross the river unseen and reach (or steal) a getaway car. For added difficulty, Blake may have left enough random junk stacked on the warehouse shelves to obscure lines of sight (and fire) from the entrances, giving him a chance to gauge the characters' intentions and potentially escape before the fight actually starts.

Unfortunately for Blake, the haste with which he makes his escape forces him to leave his laptop and cellphone behind. Blake has a much better head for information security than Garcia, and the Difficulty to hack his laptop should be high enough that even experienced hackers have trouble cracking it. If the Storyguide wants to set the bar even higher, they can add intrusion countermeasures that partially erase the information in Blake's stash as a Complication. (If none of the characters can break the security on Blake's laptop, the Storyguide can award Consolation in the form of Blake's cellphone call log, which shows that he called several self-storage companies in the same area of Miami.) The characters can then search the files and figure



out where Blake's headed: a self-storage yard on the far side of Miami, where he's stashed a go-bag with a spare weapon, a fake ID and credit cards, and enough cash to bribe his way past any authorities that might try to stop him from leaving the city.

The characters probably shouldn't spend too much time poring over Blake's files if they want to catch the man himself, but skimming them will reveal that Blake's notes go back several years, and include mentions of evidence discovered by K30. Blake's evidence itself includes a list of suspicious financial transactions through Switzerland, Hong Kong, and Bermuda that both 9 and the local authorities swept under the rug; leaked top-secret communications between NATO intelligence agencies that don't correspond to any active operations; and reprimands, dismissals, and even ominous "disappearances" of agents who were ordered to stop investigating those concerns and refused. At a glance, it's enough to prove that Blake's story is more likely to be true than not — or that when he sells a lie, he's damn thorough about it.

When the characters arrive at the self-storage yard, they're greeted by long rows of storage units, each the size of a small garage. The units are arranged in blocks of five, with two lanes' worth of space for vehicles to drive between them. Blake's unit is deep inside the yard, in the middle of one of the blocks. When Blake's Mirrored Sunglasses Gift alerts him to the characters' presence, he'll stop and raise his hands to show the characters he's willing to surrender. His offer is genuine; Blake knows he's far more valuable to "Aquarius" alive than dead, and is hopeful he'll be able to make a deal to secure his freedom later. Besides, it's far easier to dodge questions than bullets. When the characters take him into custody, Blake will ask them to carry on his investigation in his stead.

Naturally, just when the characters think their job's done, everything goes sideways. Before the team can secure Blake, two black SUVs arrive and box them in, and a four-person hit squad scrambles out, intending to kill both the characters and Blake. The characters should have the chance to notice the ambush, especially if any of them have Edges or Gifts that provide forewarning of events like that. If they don't, Blake will shout a warning before the first shots arrive. The attackers have silenced assault rifles and tactical armor (**Trinity Continuum Core Rulebook**, p. 125 and 126). The characters should have the opportunity to take cover inside Blake's storage unit, unless they opt for a

more aggressive approach (like ramming one of the SUVs out of the way with their own vehicle).

When the battle's won or the characters have escaped, Blake will say, "You still think I'm lying? The only way they could've known we'd be here is by tapping your comms!" If the characters press him, Blake will remind them that he left his phone behind when he escaped the safehouse and claim he didn't have time to get another one, and ask why he'd set up a trap that could easily get him killed along with the characters. Whether or not the hit was real or staged by Blake is left to Storyguide discretion.

Once again, Blake will suggest that he and the characters work together to uncover and undermine Aquarius' operations. At the least, Blake argues, if the characters are going to turn him in to 9 regardless, they should keep their own copy of the intel he's collected and stay alert for any suspicious activity. Blake reasons that if Johnson really is an Aquarius mole, handing him over to her will lull her into a false sense of security and give the characters room to investigate. He'd obviously rather not end up in 9's custody if he can avoid it, but he knows that if he were to conveniently escape in the middle of a firefight, it would draw suspicion to the characters.

Once the characters make up their minds (if they haven't already), they can call Diaz and notify him that Blake's in custody. When they arrive at the airport, Diaz will take Blake off their hands and have him loaded into a prisoner transport van, then congratulate the team on a job well done before sending them back to 9 headquarters for their next assignment.

## SCENE 4B: THE RUSE

If the characters side with Blake after their initial meeting, Blake points out that they'll still need to either deliver him into 9's custody, or provide Johnson with a plausible explanation of how he got away. The characters should be given time to think of a plan, although the Storyguide should warn them that their superiors at 9 will get suspicious if they take more than a day or two to act.

If the characters are coming up short on ideas, Blake has several suggestions of his own. One is to set the warehouse on fire, allowing the characters to claim that as far as they knew, Blake was trapped in the burning building. Another is for the characters to tail him to his supply cache at a self-storage yard across town, where Blake can set up a "trap" that would credibly allow him to escape. He refuses to go

into detail about what that “trap” might entail, claiming that the characters will be able to sell the story more effectively if they’re taken by surprise. In that case, the Storyguide can use the same hit squad attack as in Scene 4A, but allow Blake to escape during the firefight. If any of the characters suggest handing Blake over to 9 as a distraction, he’ll grudgingly admit that doing so would probably let the characters investigate without drawing suspicion.

Whatever strategy they choose, Blake copies the evidence he’s collected on to a USB stick and gives it to the characters, explaining that the team’s bosses would get suspicious if they kept his laptop for themselves. After that, it’s just a matter of contacting Diaz and explaining the “failure” of their mission before the characters hop their flight back to The Block.

## WHERE THIS IS ALL GOING

The wilderness of mirrors can be a headache for characters to navigate, but it’s also a massive boon for a Storyguide. Whose version of Aquarius is the closest to reality? Is Johnson really a mastermind among masterminds, manipulating 9 to serve Aquarius’ ends and using the characters to bury her trail? Or is Blake just spinning a story out of thin air? *Someone* must benefit from the two sides being at each other’s throats. If Blake didn’t kill K30, who did? Do Blake’s cartel connections run deeper than they appear? If his “evidence” doesn’t lead to Aquarius, who’s behind all these suspicious activities, and what are their motives? If the characters agree to investigate Aquarius (with or without Blake’s help), will Aquarius find out, and what will happen if they do?

On the other hand, there’s no reason **Codename: Aquarius** can’t remain a standalone story. Maybe Blake’s just a villain of the week trying to skate justice for an agent he murdered. Maybe the characters decide that if Aquarius exists, rather than make a powerful and mysterious enemy, they should get in the group’s good graces by tying up Blake’s loose end. In return, Aquarius’ leaders decide that trying to silence the characters will be more trouble than it’s worth. There’s always Garcia to look into, after all — despite his lax security, he remains at large, and any number of powerful patrons might be sheltering him beneath their wings.





CHAPTER TWO

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**ARTIFACTS, ETC.**

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“How do you think your ancestors got these? Do you think they paid a fair price? Or did they take it, like they took everything else?”

Erik Killmonger, *Black Panther*

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In 1936, Sam Linn and Dahlia Hayes were household names. The very definition of a Hollywood power couple, they appeared as the lead actors in *The Adventures of Doctor Douglas*. Sam played the dashing doctor, and Dahlia his dewy-eyed heroine in this seven-part serial. Each new episode featured the good doctor adventuring through jungle ruins, desolate tombs, and desert temples to retrieve the artifact du jour, save the locals, and end with a little romance.

Despite the popularity of the franchise, however, the studio making these films shut down in early 1937 over budget concerns. The story ended there, or so it seemed.

A few vintage props from the old films have surfaced at auction houses and movie memorabilia dealers. The sale of Hollywood memories usually doesn't draw extra attention. In this case, though, some of the props from *The Adventures of Doctor Douglas* are artifacts — items imbued with powerful flux energy.

How and why did a small-budget, Depression-era movie studio come into possession of these precious items? More importantly: what should be done with them? Even though only a few are actual artifacts, many of these “props” are nevertheless items of deep cultural and spiritual significance to the peoples they were taken from.

A Lightkeeper sent by Pharos approaches the characters with these questions. Answering them will be their first mission for the Lightkeepers. Working against the characters, however, are agents of the National Office of Emergency Research. Though sympathetic towards the issues of repatriation, they nevertheless insist these artifacts are safest within one of their bunker-warehouses.

## IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

The following Storyguide characters play important roles in the story.

### IMMANENZA DE SANTOS

Immanenza is a tall, slender Brazilian woman with wildly curled hair and a prosthesis in place of her left hand. A veteran of the Brazilian military, she walks with a purposeful stride and always uses direct language. She does not speak of what she did while enlisted, but her skill set indicates intelligence work of some kind.

At some point after her discharge, Pharos recruited Immanenza. The exact details of her initial missions remain unknown, but she must have performed admirably. She is now a handler, in charge of making contact with potential new recruits and shepherding them through their first few missions.

Though Immanenza can be direct and results-oriented, she is not cruel or harsh. She believes strongly in the potential of every recruit she taps for the Lightkeepers, and gives them every available tool to succeed.

**Primary Pool:** 9 (leadership and intelligence work)

**Secondary Pool:** 6 (hand-to-hand combat)

**Desperation Pool:** 4

**Health:** 4

**Defense:** 3





**Edges:** Always Prepared, Patron 3 (Pharos)

**Initiative:** 5

## AMBER ERICKSON



Amber grew up in a small Wyoming town. She attended college only due to a government scholarship, one which came with a few strings attached. Amber must stay with the National Office of Emergency Research for at least seven years or pay back the cost of her degree. This suits Amber quite well; she enjoys her work and knows she's protecting people. Her contract nevertheless hangs heavily in the back of her mind. She doesn't know for certain if N.O.E.R. will cut her loose if her first mission fails, but she doesn't know they *won't*. Thus, she is quite motivated to succeed. She doesn't want to kill anyone, but she's willing to hurt someone if she must.

**Primary Pool:** 8 (hacking, tailing, and surveillance work)

**Secondary Pool:** 5 (guns and other weapons)

**Desperation Pool:** 3

**Health:** 3

**Defense:** 3

**Edges:** Iron Will 2, Ms. Fix-It, Patron 2 (N.O.E.R. Director)

**Initiative:** 4

## CARL CHANG



A high achiever as a child, Carl floundered a bit in early adulthood, with a gap year that somehow lasted half a decade. Recently, though, he's shifted his focus. He reconnected with a high school sweetheart, married her, and now they have a baby on the way. Needing to provide for his new family, Carl found work with N.O.E.R. Yet now the same pressure Carl felt as a teenager is creeping back, driving him to recklessness. Though he can accomplish good work when he focuses, he has a tendency to make impulsive choices in the moment. He is somewhat more understanding of the issues regarding repatriation of the artifacts than Amber, and a charismatic character might persuade him to back down.

**Primary Pool:** 7 (interrogation and persuasion)

**Secondary Pool:** 5 (close-quarters combat and improvised weaponry)

**Desperation Pool:** 4

**Health:** 4

**Defense:** 2

**Edges:** Adrenaline Spike, Danger Sense, Trick Shooter

**Initiative:** 6

## RECURRING ANTAGONISTS

Amber and Carl may have relatively low Trait Pools right now, but they are intended to grow alongside the characters. Storyguides should slowly improve the pair, maintaining them as a credible threat to the characters' goals. While they are relatively innocent and optimistic when **Artifacts, Etc.** begins, the two eventually turn ruthless and pragmatic.

# HISTORICAL CHARACTERS

The following characters are only encountered through the artifact found at Eyrie Studios which recorded them. Since they're ephemeral, they have no combat values; characters must achieve their goals with politics and intrigue. In addition to a historical overview of these characters, their disposition and usefulness to player characters is included.

### SAM LINN

Real name Seamus O'Linn, Sam was second-generation Irish from Chicago who came west seeking fame and fortune. His good looks and talent with blarney made him a rising Hollywood star. However, Sam had more than a few secrets. Despite his apparent romance with Dahlia (faked for the publicity), Sam was semi-openly bisexual — a scandalous situation for his time. He often flirted with Senator Dodson, and had little patience with Dodson's guilt over their mutual attraction.

Sam is ready to move on from the franchise, even though the eighth movie (*Doctor Douglas and the Wand of Eternity*) is starting filming soon. He built up enough star power that he was being offered better roles in larger budget films, but was only vaguely aware of the special funding Eyrie Studios enjoys.

**Primary Pool:** 9 (flirting, lying, and other performances)

**Secondary Pool:** 5 (empathy)

**Desperation Pool:** 5

### DAHLIA HAYS

An ambitious ingénue, Dahlia dreamed of being Hollywood's next major celebrity, and she was certainly the most talented actor on the set of *The Adventures of Doctor Douglas*. She happily played up her false romance with Sam (who she respected as a colleague), but secretly courted several other Hollywood dignitaries. Dahlia knew her future success depended on telling which way the wind was blowing, and cultivated an intuitive understanding

of the interpersonal relationships surrounding her. She built a strong working relationship with Tamara and Marcus, and thus understood that much of the money funding Eyrie Studios came through Senator Dodson.

Dahlia is less willing than Sam to let a good thing go, but she nevertheless knows the value of an upward career trajectory.

**Primary Pool:** 11 (gossip and performance)

**Secondary Pool:** 6 (empathy)

**Desperation Pool:** 4

### TAMARA CARTER

At 26, Tamara Carter enjoyed the rare success of being a female screen writer in Hollywood. She didn't start out as a writer, however — her degree was in anthropology, inspired by the work of her contemporary, Margaret Mead. Carter wanted to write about the cultures featured in her films in an authentic and compassionate way, and deeply resented Senator Dodson's hijacking of her work for his own political goals. She wrestled with a personal ethical crisis, unsure if she should stay and do what good she could, or leave Hollywood for another field entirely. This choice weighed heavily on her mind, and discussed her options with anyone who seemed both sympathetic and discreet.

Tamara vacillates between insecurity and confidence. On the brink of leaving Hollywood, she has no compunctions against spilling every secret she knows (and she knows *many*). If the characters suitably flatter and comfort her, she'll reveal that Eyrie Studios is largely funded by government money, for the express purpose of spreading Dodson's propaganda.

**Primary Pool:** 10 (academics and writing)

**Secondary Pool:** 7 (politics)

**Desperation Pool:** 3



## SENATOR WILLIAM DODSON

Dodson saw himself as a political visionary. During a time in which the United States turned inward, the Senator remained convinced expansion was the way out of the Depression. Colonial Europe was in decline, and Dodson felt sure the US was perfectly poised to take over, if only the political will of the people could be harnessed in that direction. Senator Dodson was the man behind the artifacts ending up at studios. He used his influence to ensure *The Adventures of Doctor Douglas* served as pro-colonial propaganda, intended to persuade the American people to support interventionist policies abroad.

Senator Dodson is a cagey politician who knows how to tell people what they want to hear and is adept at dodging questions. Once cornered, however, he will confess, though he refuses to admit any wrongdoing. Dodson's connections with the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and various diplomats posted across the globe have given him the access he needs to procure the "props" for the *Doctor Douglas* films. The Senator has some sense that he's giving the studios

items of great power; though he remains in the dark as to the true extent of the artifacts' capabilities.

**Primary Pool:** 10 (oratory and persuasion)

**Secondary Pool:** 7 (empathy)

**Desperation Pool:** 6

## MARCUS DAVENPORT

Marcus was convinced he was the director who would define film for his generation, one unfortunately stuck making pulp action movies. His disappointment and frustration bled through his every interaction with others. Davenport attached himself to the Senator, and was hoping to somehow convince Dodson to eventually fund his own magnum opus with the government's deep pockets.

Conversations with Marcus inevitably turn towards his own genius. Characters may pierce his shell with some flattery, but learn only salacious gossip for their trouble.

**Primary Pool:** 7 (leadership)

**Secondary Pool:** 5 (writing)

**Desperation Pool:** 2

# KEY SCENES

**Artifacts, Etc.** is a campaign seed for players interested in a long-running arc associated with the Pharaoh's Lightkeepers. While the team has some degree of latitude, Pharos monitors the characters from afar. His main goal is to see the Artifact, and items like it, repatriated. Pharos will tolerate some shenanigans, if the characters ultimately achieve this goal. A character resorting to lethal violence and mayhem, however, likely has an uncomfortable meeting with Immanenza in her future.

## OPENING CREDITS

The story begins in a downtown diner, where Immanenza waits in the corner booth. Sunlight pours in from wide windows, highlighting the chipped Formica table and stained vinyl seats. Neatly arranged between cups of coffee and slices of the diner's famous bourbon pecan pie are as many copies of a file as characters expected.

As each character arrives, ask the player to narrate her character's first encounter with Immanenza. What was she doing? What personal or professional goals was she pursuing? What was so compelling

about Immanenza's pitch that the character took the next plane to Los Angeles?

Once all the characters are present, Immanenza makes the necessary introductions, and invites everyone to consult the briefing materials. Within these file folders are printouts and press clippings detailing the auction of a few minor pieces of Hollywood memorabilia, and the controversy surrounding the sales.

The items are verified props from the early episodes of *The Adventures of Doctor Douglas*, however, their further provenance has become controversial. A routine insurance appraisal revealed that, rather than fabricated props, these objects are authentic cultural artifacts. Valuable even in their own time, no one is quite sure where or how a small-budget film house came by such precious items. One object already indicates signs of flux energy, and Immanenza wants to know what happened to the props from later episodes.

Immanenza delivers a basic history of the films and the shop which made them, Eyrie Studios. The films never won any contemporary awards, but they

were quite popular in their day. The two principals, Sam Linn and Dahlia Hayes, had a fabled romance. Publicity hype advertised that each movie was filmed “on location” in whatever exotic country Doctor Douglas traveled to for that episode. Those claims were patently untrue — filming happened at local sound stages.

By the end of the scene, Immanenza gives the characters their core tasks: discover how Eyrie Studios obtained the artifacts, retrieve any others which may be lost in forgotten prop houses somewhere, and bring them home.

## INVESTIGATION MONTAGE

Going through Immanenza’s files, the characters uncover a few leads. They may pursue these in any order.

### RESEARCH: TRACING THE MEMORABILIA

One of the more obvious leads is to trace the provenance of the artifacts currently up for sale at local auction houses and vintage dealers. Any investigation should turn up the controversy surrounding these artifacts: the members of the artifacts’ original culture(s) demand their return while those currently in possession are either ignorant or indifferent.

At first pass, the people currently in control of the artifacts — auctioneers, curators, dealers — should be reticent to share the details of how these items came into their possession. If pressed, they reveal that the seller wished to remain anonymous, and contracts signed to that end.

The truth can be ferreted out through persuasion, seduction, hacking, or even some old-fashioned breaking and entering to gain access to purchase records. The memorabilia was sold by one Belinda de Long, the only granddaughter of Dahlia Hayes.

### QUESTIONING: THE HOUSE OF GLAMOUR

On the main drag of Hollywood Boulevard, along the Walk of Fame, is the small storefront museum, the House of Glamour.

Betty and Benjamin Koppel had their first date nearly half a century ago at the movies. It went well, and they’ve been film fans ever since. The House of Glamour is their retirement project, a small museum open to the public for a ten-dollar donation

## ARTIFACTS, ETC.

The artifacts around which this story seed revolves, and the cultures from which they come, are neither defined nor detailed. This is deliberate. **Artifacts, Etc.** deals with issues of appropriation and repatriation; making this story seed about one specific culture goes against the overall goal. Many nations have had their cultural treasures stolen, and all deserve to have their story told.

Storyguides are encouraged to choose cultures local to their troupe and devise artifacts accordingly. Alternatively, mine your characters’ histories for inspiration. Having a cultural connection to these artifacts gives a character an immediate sense of investment.

When creating these treasures, spend time re-searching the cultures involved and ensure both are being portrayed in a respectful manner. Characters (and players) should treat these artifacts the same way an American would want to see an original copy of the Constitution handled.

between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M., Thursday through Monday.

The House contains mostly print memorabilia: photographs, newspaper clippings, and the like. They recently purchased a few items connected to Eyrie Studios, including publicity shots of the principal actors as well as some more candid pictures of opening night galas.

Of main interest is a picture of the cast at one of these galas. Betty names the actors, and also points out the director and the script writer. Another man is unknown to her, but her husband identifies him

## THE FALLEN SENATOR

Further research into Bill Dodson reveals he was a deeply conservative candidate from the Midwest. He frequently railed against cultural degeneracy, and demonized comic books, radio plays, and even Hollywood films as being vectors for the eventual collapse of American society. He lost his 1936 election due to rumors which are rarely put into print, but frequently alluded to.

Dodson surfaces a few years after, working for the OSS and later the CIA. He died in the early 1980s of liver cancer.

as Senator Bill Dodson. Dodson was a favorite of Benjamin's father, a strict law-and-order candidate, eventually pushed out of office by a scandal Benjamin can't quite recall.

Betty and Benjamin won't sell the photograph (it's signed!) but will allow characters to make copies.

Betty and Benjamin are more willing to reveal their source: Belinda de Long.

## INTERVIEWS ON THE BEACH

Eventually, the characters end up at the home of Belinda de Long. She is a woman in her late forties, wearing stylish but worn clothing. The characters find her in Venice Beach, sharing a bungalow with several small dogs.

Belinda was once Hollywood royalty. Her grandmother was Dahlia Hayes, and her mother noted child actress Symphony Hayes. Belinda herself modeled when younger, and married a noted producer after high school. The marriage only lasted a few years, though, and the subsequent bitter divorce pushed Belinda out of Hollywood forever. Currently, her mother is in hospice care and Belinda has been selling her keepsakes to pay the bills. Her desire for anonymity in the sale is nothing nefarious — Belinda just doesn't want paparazzi showing up at either her bungalow or her mother's hospice.

Belinda is happy to entertain the characters, so long as they are reasonably polite. She's currently working on a book chronicling the hidden history of old Hollywood, and loves sharing the stories her mother and grandmother handed down. She mentions that the characters are not the first people to come asking about the memorabilia. A man and a woman Belinda describe as "from the government" stopped by the other day, but they were much more demanding and Belinda sent them packing. She can't remember what agency they were from.

The characters' interview with Belinda should reveal that Senator Dodson was heavily involved in Eyrie Studios, that Dahlia and Sam were never in love, and that Dodson losing his Senate race in 1936 contributed in some vague way to Eyrie Studios closing down. At the end of the encounter, if the characters behave, Belinda gives them a box of relevant items. The box contains things which weren't valuable enough to sell but may prove useful now. Of special note are a set of keys to Eyrie Studios.

## INTERMISSION

The characters are being followed. Include indications of this, and any confrontations it may provoke, when the pacing slows or the characters need some extra motivation.

Perhaps the characters notice the same two figures following them as they traipse across Los Angeles, or they keep spotting the same car on the freeways. Maybe a character with poor security notices her belongings have been rifled through, or a tech-savvy character is alerted to hacking attempts.

Eventually, the characters confront, or are confronted by, their tails. Amber Erickson and Carl Chang are agents for the National Office of Emergency Research and on their own freshman mission. The pair has realized the characters want the same thing as they do, and have decided surveillance is their best strategy (if the characters have met Belinda by now, they should put two and two together and realize these are the agents who visited her earlier).

Amber and Carl are firm but professional. They do not know anything about any government connection to Eyrie Studios, they simply want to recover any artifacts loose in the world. If the issues of repatriation come up, Amber and Carl are adamant that the best place for *any* artifact is in a secure N.O.E.R. vault.

The agents have no wish for hostility at their first meeting. However, should they confront the characters later on in the mission, they are empowered to use force to obtain the artifacts.

If the characters inform Immanenza of Amber and Carl's involvement, she tells them about N.O.E.R. If N.O.E.R. is involved, she says, then the search for the artifacts has just become a race and the characters *must* succeed before the artifacts disappear forever.

## RISING ACTION AT EYRIE STUDIOS

Eventually, the characters arrive at Eyrie Studios. They might have taken the long way by speaking to Belinda and/or Betty and Benjamin. If they decide to spend enough time researching old property records, however, they track down the address of Eyrie Studios in the San Gabriel Valley. Currently, the property is held in trust by a foundation which traces back to Senator Dodson's estate.



Thankfully, the studios are still there! Though they have not been used for some time, the characters see signs that someone has recently taken an interest in them. A chain-link fence bearing the logo of a local construction company surrounds the studio complex and a new trailer sits in the parking lot. If the characters break into the trailer, they discover some quickly assembled office furniture surrounded by file boxes. Studying the contents reveals that the Dodson-Fairbanks Trust recently purchased not only the old studios, but all the creative rights to *The Adventures of Doctor Douglas*. It looks like plans are afoot to revive the franchise – the characters even find some spec scripts which indicate the new films will be quite similar to the old ones.

The complex, apart from the new trailer, consists of three separate sound stages, a prop and costume fabrication shop, and a main office building. All have been abandoned for decades.

The tenor of this scene ought to have the same suspense and sense of discovery as if the characters were exploring the ancient ruin of a lost empire. In a certain sense, that's exactly what they're doing. There aren't any *deliberate* traps, but decaying sound stages have their own hazards. Opportunistic wildlife can be dangerous, too, if the characters tangle with a rogue mountain lion or coyote pack.

In the main offices, the characters discover some letters from Senator Dodson and scripts with notes written in his own hand. These notes reveal the extent to which Dodson pushed the films as pro-colonial propaganda. Response notes by the director, and letters from the scriptwriter indicate his suggestions were taken seriously (though somewhat resentfully, in the case of the writer).

In the prop house are the remains of props, costumes, and various tools and machinery. Partitioned away from the main workspace is a dusty desk, and here the characters find the jackpot they've been looking for. A ledger of the costumes and props includes a list of the artifacts provided by Senator Dodson: an invaluable resource to track down what else might have gone missing. Storyguides should lay the groundwork for future adventures here, dropping strange and mysterious objects (or hints to their whereabouts) into the characters' laps. The characters notice that a wand, an item unfamiliar to them, is listed as being on-set.

The sets are currently arranged to portray a tomb, a remote village, and a temple. Storyguides should

emphasize how cartoonish these sets appear to a modern eye. However, this does not mean the sets don't contain their own lost treasures. The characters should certainly understand by now that Hollywood memorabilia is big business, and a forgotten scarf once worn by Dahlia Hayes is worth quite a lot to modern collectors. Beyond such mundane concerns, however, are the artifacts. Some of the statues, jewelry, artwork, or other "props" are items with immeasurable cultural or historical significance. Interspersed with these mundane objects is the rare flux-empowered artifact.

Eventually, the characters discover *the* Artifact, on a set half-constructed in anticipation of the eighth episode's filming. Based on the scripts found in the office, Doctor Douglas travels to yet another remote location, wherein an evil priest uses a mind-control wand against hordes of innocents. The Artifact sits tangled in a jumble of overblown costuming, nearly overshadowed by the villain's ridiculous papier-mâché mask.

Gently humming with flux energy, the Artifact is a rod just over eight inches long and roughly two inches in diameter, made from some unidentifiable alloy. The metal is as sturdy as titanium and light as aluminum, with six small divots running lengthwise. The Artifact has been decorated and protected by intricate weaving and wrappings, leaving the divots exposed.

Studying the Artifact triggers it. A thin beam of light emerges from one end of the rod, resolving into an image of Sam Linn, backing slowly away in horror. Unfortunately, the characters don't have much time to study the Artifact right now – they're being attacked!

## THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

Unless the characters took pains to neutralize their tails, Amber and Carl follow them to the studios and observe them from a distance. When the Artifact activates, they attack. They're not *quite* ready to commit mass murder, but they've come prepared with stun guns, smoke grenades, and knockout gas to otherwise obtain what they want. If the characters have already permanently neutralized Amber and Carl, then N.O.E.R. responds by sending in a suitably equipped strike team.

The characters have two choices: fight or flee. Amber and Carl don't want to risk their lives, and will retreat if the fight turns against them. Even if



the characters win, they should assume their previous haunts are compromised, and find a safehouse to study the Artifact.

## RELEASE PARTY

Once the characters are safe, they can fully activate the Artifact. The characters find themselves transported to a gala held at Sam Linn's mansion in the Hollywood Hills. The first thing they see is a young man lifting the Artifact from a box, then setting it down on a table before being called away. The scene then unfolds.

The gala is glamorous and decadent. Everything sparkles, and everyone wears the height of 1936 fashion. The characters quickly discover the gala is the wrap party for *Doctor Douglas and the Curse of the Cat-Goddess*.

Though the characters may initially suspect they've been thrown back in time, the truth is a bit different. The Artifact records memories, and replays them in such a way that users experience these memories as their own.

Thus, the characters can interact with events recorded by the Artifact, bound by a few parameters:

- The characters engage with pure memory. They can interact with their environment (play the piano, eat hors d'oeuvres, or even shake hands), but cannot take any physical object back with them. However, neither can the memory physically affect them. Violent attacks push the character out of the memory and back into the real world, unharmed (if a bit shaken).
- The Artifact records events, and can even make extrapolations, but cannot capture nuance. Though the characters are free to engage in conversation, the exchanges eventually become repetitive.
- The characters can end the scene at any time. They may revisit the gala as they wish, but nothing they did or said during previous encounters has any effect on subsequent experiences. There is no overwrite function, only record and replay.

If the characters go back further, the next scene is of an indigenous woman wearing torn and bloody clothes. She speaks to the Artifact in her own language while weeping. Even if the characters cannot understand her words, they certainly understand

the desperation conveyed by her tone and body language. They overhear sounds of warfare and chaos while she speaks. Going back even further reveals this Artifact was revered by many generations for its power to preserve memory. The nation which possessed it used it to record history and allow communion with ancestral memories.

The characters can talk to Dahlia Hayes, Sam Linn, Senator Dodson, and whomever else the Storyguide wishes to have cross their paths. By speaking with the memories of these celebrities, the characters should learn all the information contained in their descriptions.

At the end of the memory, the characters witness the same intern who unpacked the Artifact packing it back away.

## DENOUEMENT

Once returned to the real world, the characters can answer Immanenza's questions: Eyrie Studios came by the items due to their alliance with Senator Dodson and agreement to become a propaganda machine.

Repatriation is the goal of this adventure, so create a scene in which the Artifact comes home. Take care to make this scene emotionally charged for the characters beyond tearful gratitude. This Artifact should have been here all along; the characters simply did what was right. Certainly, Pharos makes his feelings known and ensures the characters are well-compensated if anyone looks for a reward (or even if they don't).

The characters should have the ledger from the prop house, and Pharos instructs them to begin tracking down and returning other artifacts.

## WHERE THIS IS ALL GOING

Despite the characters' success, more questions remain to be answered.

Eyrie Studios received secret government funding to create stealth propaganda. The funding dried up, and the studio failed, when Senator Dodson lost his 1936 election, but he was a man well ahead of his time. Given what they found in the trailer, the characters suspect that the Dodson-Fairbanks Trust is poised to revitalize his work.

But who is involved in the trust? What tactics are they employing? And, perhaps most importantly, what messages will they deliver to an innocent public? The pervasiveness of modern entertainment — television, video games, social media — are a fertile ground for delivering subversive political messages. Perhaps one of the Senator's heirs has taken up the cause, and works to spread their own ideas through more sophisticated, subliminal methods.

The Storyguide should feel free to develop her own ideas as to what this conspiracy may entail, what they want, and how far they're willing to go to achieve these ends. The *Doctor Douglas* films were

made using 1936 technology, and advanced science can accomplish much more these days.

After their confrontation with Amber and Carl, life goes poorly for the characters. By thwarting the National Office for Emergency Research, they have irritated a rather powerful government agency. The characters find their lives full of petty frustrations, the sort of which only vindictive mid-level bureaucrats can inflict. Old parking tickets end up in the hands of aggressive collections agencies, homes and businesses are shut down for not being up to code, critical personal records get lost or corrupted, to say nothing of what sort of reports or complaints may be filed against the characters as they embark on more adventures in the world of **Trinity Continuum**.

The Lighthouse, of course, has the influence necessary to thwart these attacks. Such protection, though, does not come free or even cheap. Pharos expects repayment in kind, and characters will soon receive another communique from this mysterious figure, with another mission to complete.





CHAPTER THREE

# CAPER, INCORPORATED

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“All stealing is comparative.  
If you come to absolutes, pray who does not steal?”  
— *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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Locksley Imports, Inc., transports goods from all over the world. For select clientele bearing a business card embossed with a holographic ghost, some of its employees specialize in “importing” rare and valuable items from secure locations. When a man offers a tidy sum to obtain a mysterious device from an armored car belonging to Bishop Global Logistics, it falls to Angelique Rousseau and her team of associates to liberate the prize. Victory is short-lived, though, as Angelique’s murder by an unknown assailant leads to greater danger and deeper mysteries. The Locksley crew finds itself under scrutiny as more heists strike at BGL, ones far too brutal to be the work of Les Fantômes. A paranoid killer walks between the worlds, seeking retribution for innocents sacrificed on the altar of progress. Investigation uncovers a burgeoning conspiracy with contempt for humanity and a weapon capable of destroying entire cities. To save the world, the Ghosts of Locksley must execute the heist of their lives.

## NOT JUST GHOSTS

This scenario assumes all characters belong to Les Fantômes, specifically a group of Ghosts using Locksley Imports, Inc., as a front for their operations, but you may involve other Allegiances. At the Storyguide’s discretion, Locksley might be a business shared by multiple Allegiances, with the characters regularly working together despite membership in different Allegiances. The characters could also seek out someone with a unique skill set required to accomplish their goals. Finally, the events of the scenario may draw attention from various Allegiances, a common cause forcing them to work together.

# IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

Storyguides may adjust these characters to fit the needs of their stories.

### ANGELIQUE ROUSSEAU, ALIAS THE SCORPION (TALENT)



As a child, Angelique witnessed her archaeologist parents unearthing treasures of the past. While they sought to instill a love of history and respect for ancient cultures, Angelique saw only priceless treasures snatched from her grasp. As a teenager, she rebelled, surrounding herself with unsavory characters. She found Inspiration while “reclaiming” a coveted amulet during her first museum heist. Calling herself the Scorpion, a resin scorpion cast from this amulet became her calling card. Donning a stark white volto mask and a black tricorn hat, she waves to the cameras, leaving a few strands of an auburn wig visible to throw off investigators. Her daring heists drew the attention of Les Fantômes, and she accepted their invitation eagerly.

Torn between greed and justice, Angelique mercilessly pursues her objectives. Currently acting as an operative of Les Fantômes and contact point for the Ghosts operating out of Locksley Imports, Inc., she also maintains a day job as Weston Bishop’s personal assistant at BGL. Having witnessed the Riverside Incident, she secretly undermines the



company, leaking information in hopes of holding the company responsible. Following an assassination attempt by a woman with her own face, Angelique fakes her own death, breaking contact with everyone. Unfettered by her previous restraint, the Scorpion wages a one-woman war against BGL.

**Primary Pool:** 12 (ancient cultures, stealth, and thievery)

**Secondary Pool:** 8 (gaining trust, infiltration, and whips)

**Desperation Pool:** 4

**Health:** 5

**Defense:** 4

**Edges:** Free Running 3, Photographic Memory 2, Precise Martial Arts (Whips) 3, Skilled Liar, Striking, Wealth 2

**Enhancements:** Chain Whip 2, Knife 1

**Initiative:** 8

**Source:** 6

**Gifts:** Death Defiance, Eyes Like a Cat, Forgettable, Repeating History, Slip the Cuffs

of the true events, he believes BGL was responsible. His efforts to draw attention to the coverup earned the company's ire, and he was Inspired while escaping from hitmen sent to silence him. Rescued by a team of Pharaoh's Lightkeepers, he has since kept on the move under the name Anthony Jones, using his talents behind the wheel to search for the truth.

**Primary Pool:** 11 (endurance and trucks)

**Secondary Pool:** 7 (mechanical repairs, roadside culture, and small automobiles)

**Desperation Pool:** 4

**Health:** 5

**Defense:** 4

**Edges:** Alternate Identity 1 (Anthony Jones), Covert 2, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Free Running 1, Hair Trigger Reflexes, Mr. Fix-It

**Enhancements:** Pistol 1

**Initiative:** 7

**Source:** 4

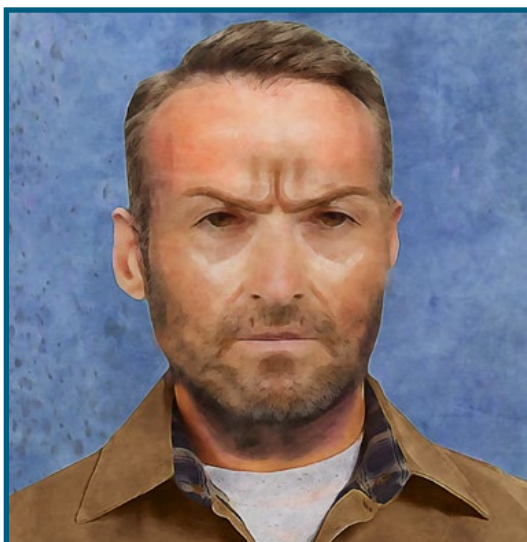
**Gifts:** Daredevil, Head 'Em Off at the Pass, Navigation Hazard, Wheelman

### FRANKLIN HALE (TALENT)



Frank never dreamed his life would take the turns it has. He once had a wife and children, and his greatest sorrow was his delivery routes keeping him from home for too long. Everything changed when he returned from a long route to find Riverside abandoned. Unable to locate any of the people allegedly evacuated, including his own family, Frank began trying to unravel the mystery. While unaware

### WESTON BISHOP



Weston Bishop's charming smile puts strangers at ease, and he has little difficulty convincing new business associates of his competence. His furious temper ensures his underlings remain obedient. Greedy and entitled, Weston acts on his whims like a spoiled child, chasing trophy girlfriends and the latest luxuries, or destroying the lives of those who displease him.

Since the Riverside Incident, he displays marked shifts in priorities and behavior. Weston seems more serious and distant, coldly focusing on business matters to the exclusion of his social life. This is because Weston is among Marius Harding's agents in this world. A mere civilian in his own dimension, he was deemed a vital component to Harding's plan and conscripted into service. While his counterpart lives on as a prisoner, Weston lacks proper training for infiltration and finds himself overwhelmed by the stress of maintaining the identity. He avoids contact with his counterpart's loved ones to minimize the risk of compromising his cover. He awaits open invasion, as it would allow him to return to his life of relative ease.

**Primary Pool:** 10 (business management and shady deals)

**Secondary Pool:** 7 (charm and intimidation)

**Desperation Pool:** 4

**Health:** 4

**Defense:** 3

**Edges:** Skilled Liar, Striking, Wealth 5

**Enhancements:** Pistol 1

**Initiative:** 4

### MARIUS HARDING (TALENT)

Sergeant Marius Harding loves his world more than anything, and living in a substandard reflection of it for twelve years is a constant source of frustration. During an exploratory reconnaissance mission, Harding's piercer ship exploded, stranding him in this reality and leaving his masters in the Terran Multiplicity believing he'd encountered formidable



opposition. Harding swiftly eliminated his local counterpart, assuming his place to construct a web of power and influence. Swooping Eagle Security, assembled mostly of ex-military personnel, offers its services as mercenaries and private security to the highest bidders.

Despite his time in this reality, Harding remains on mission. Two years ago, he finally cobbled together a working device to contact the Multiplicity, and began laying groundwork for invasion. While he believes this reality is weak enough for conquest, he worries secret factions may have destroyed his ship. He's constructed a crude dimensional transport chamber, capable of pulling three people from his world at a time. Doing so consumes considerable power, potentially drawing unwanted attention,

## THE RIVERSIDE INCIDENT

Once an up-and-coming railroad town, a tornado crippled Riverside, condemning it to slowly die as the decades wore on. A year ago, Riverside was used as a test site for an experimental device Bishop Global Logistics believed would revolutionize military transportation. The plan was simple. Prototype STID-0001 would be set up late at night along Riverside's boundaries, and when activated, the population of approximately two hundred people would be transported roughly fifty feet to the west before being brought back. A train wreck was faked, and the confused people would be evacuated by official-looking individuals wearing protective gear. The device seemed to work well initially, as the townspeople vanished, but attempts to bring them back met with failure — shunted to another world, they've become unwilling "guests" of the Terran Multiplicity, an alternate Earth that slakes its thirst for conquest by seizing resources from other realities to replenish those they've tainted or consumed. The Multiplicity tests the defenses of newly encountered realities, fleeing from formidable worlds or launching full invasions of vulnerable ones.



so he uses it sparingly. His operatives infiltrate this reality, eliminating and replacing their local counterparts.

**Primary Pool:** 13 (hand-to-hand combat, shooting, and tactics)

**Secondary Pool:** 9 (intimidation and reconnaissance)

**Desperation Pool:** 5

**Health:** 7

**Defense:** 4

**Edges:** Always Prepared, Covert 1, Danger Sense, Demolitions Training 2, Forceful Martial Arts 3, Hair Trigger Reflexes, Iron Will 2, One Against an Ocean, Small Unit Tactics, Wealth 3

**Enhancements:** Assault Rifle 2, Knife 1, Pistol 1

**Initiative:** 13

**Source:** 6

**Gifts:** Death Defiance, Don't Mess with Me, Knee Deep in Brass, Murderous Totality, Superlative Poise

## KEY SCENES

Storyguides should adjust these scenes to fit their stories and the strengths of their players' characters.

### THE GAUNTLET HEIST

Stars shine down from a cloudless sky upon the slumbering city. The Ghosts of Locksley await the arrival of an armored security van employed by Bishop Global Logistics. Rerouted by strategic placement of barricades and detour signs, the van shall soon bring their prize directly to them. A man named Alan Schmidt hired Locksley Imports, Inc., to steal a prototype device, claiming BGL used it to harm his town of Riverside. Angelique provided information about its transport and assisted with preparations for the heist.

Two guards (medium threats) armed with pistols protect the van. Breaching it without proper means to open it requires an extended Larceny action

(Difficulty 3, with three milestones of four minutes each). The van is durable and heat resistant, so using Technology to breach it raises the Difficulty to 4: this method requires ten minutes, but only a single milestone. Law enforcement (medium threats) may be drawn to the scene by the rerouting signs or any commotion. The van contains the Ghost Gauntlet in a sealed metal case, which Angelique takes to Schmidt, later returning with the money agreed upon for the successful completion of the job.

Three days later, Angelique is dead. Her body is discovered in her apartment, covered in stab wounds. Signs of a vicious struggle are obvious, but forensic investigation recovers only her own DNA. Many valuable items were taken, and Les Fantômes notes the absence of Angelique's heist gear. Angelique hadn't reported anything about their recent heist or its target to Les Fantômes. Upon learning of it, Locksley's replacement contact, Judith Lawson, asks the characters to cautiously investigate any connection.

Due diligence on Alan Schmidt reveals he was among the Riverside residents reported missing by Franklin Hale. Resourceful or fortunate characters learn Schmidt is actually a small-time con artist named Evan Chadwick. Confronting him reveals Angelique employed him to hire the characters personally, and he saw her last when she paid him. He never expected to receive the prototype, and knows nothing about it or Angelique's death.

Angelique's funeral is well-attended, despite the cold rain. Her cherry wood casket waits beside the grave, her family and associates sharing condolences and memories. Several well-dressed men stand removed from the crowd, watching the mourners intently from beneath their umbrellas. These observers are private investigators employed by BGL, but they aren't immediately hostile. They will question many of the mourners later, including the characters,

### STORYGUIDE HINTS

For players new to the **Trinity Continuum**, this heist provides an opportunity to learn the basics. While most of the scenario allows the Storyguide to arrange challenges and threats for the characters based on their capabilities, this heist provides some suggestions to get started. Play to their strengths, giving each character a chance to shine. For those talented in the Physical Arena, start off with physical stunts, such as dropping from an overpass onto the vehicle. Characters focused on the Social Arena may have turned a guard to their side, either through seduction or blackmail using information uncovered by investigative characters. Encourage Dramatic Editing to reflect their preparations. Angelique assists where necessary.



approaching them at home or their places of work. They seek information and the prototype stolen from their employer, and suspect Angelique's associates might be involved. While speaking to the characters, they reveal Angelique had been Weston Bishop's personal assistant at BGL, and they are trying to recover important data she possessed. If the investigators suspect the characters are hiding something from them, they come back later with muscle to uncover what they know by force.

Within a week of the funeral, a series of heists strike BGL facilities in quick succession. At each location, a resin scorpion is found, and so the heists are attributed to the Scorpion by law enforcement. This disturbs Les Fantômes, as the thief leaves a trail of bodies behind, including one of BGL's top researchers, Dr. Marilyn Greene. BGL refuses to disclose the nature of her research, but a shaken Weston Bishop swears to see her murderer brought to justice.

## WONDROUS ITEMS

The following are some of the super-tech devices that **Caper, Incorporated** centers on. All interact with the Mist (p. 35).

### THE GHOST GAUNTLET

Prototype WID-0004 creates minor flux events, transitioning the wearer and carried equipment through the dimensional barrier into the Mist. The Ghost Gauntlet encases a user's left arm up to the elbow, increasing the Difficulty by 1 for actions requiring it. Intricate plates cover the device, the circuits visible between them glowing with grayish light when activated. Activation requires a Technology roll (Difficulty 2), costing 1 Inspiration. Anyone touching the wearer during the transition is affected, each individual adding a Complication of 1 to the roll. Failing to overcome the Complication potentially scatters the group through alternate realities or times.

### THE BROKEN OBELISK

Artifact UIDM-0014 is a fragment of Harding's piercer ship, specifically its dimensional phase regulator, recovered by BGL. It resembles a three-foot tall obelisk, with cracks running through the intricate plating covering it. A specially constructed base allows it to connect to external power sources. While the base is mobile, the Broken Obelisk requires large sources of electricity to function,



rendering it immobile when in use. When activated with a point of Inspiration, the Broken Obelisk creates a flux event, pushing everything mobile within a fifty-foot radius into the Mist. It takes three turns to transition, but once in the Mist characters can move freely. Leaving the Mist requires returning to the Broken Obelisk within an hour of activation or finding another flux event.

## RING FLARES

Prototype EID-0008 was built to provide expendable means of transporting multiple individuals and equipment into the Mist. Ring flares consist of eight small cylinders connected by telescoping links, allowing the device to quickly expand into a ring ten feet in diameter. When activated with a point of Inspiration, ring flares create minor flux events, transporting anything within the ring into or out of the Mist. The device is consumed in the process, brilliantly flaring and leaving a charred ring on the ground. While useless for stealthy infiltration, ring flares proved reliable enough that BGL created several duplicates for research purposes.

## THE ROANOKE DEVICE

Prototype STID-0001, dubbed the Roanoke Device after the Riverside Incident, was designed to stealthily transport military units over long distances, affecting only living beings or portable equipment. The device consists of three smooth obelisks on separate mobile bases and a central control sphere, which includes the dimensional core of the device. The obelisks channel flux energies generated by the control sphere, affecting everyone within the resulting triangle. When activated, antennae extend from the top of each obelisk, crackling with grayish light. An energetic net, intended to hold passengers for insubstantial transport to a new location, failed to deploy properly during tests. Flux events created by the Roanoke Device pierce the dimensional barriers, shunting those affected directly into the next reality. In addition to spending a point of Inspiration, activating the device requires large amounts of electrical power, but the obelisks have internal batteries capable of activating twice before recharging.

## THE DATA HEIST

Franklin Hale, under the pseudonym Anthony Jones, approaches Locksley Imports, Inc., bearing the ghost card and money for a special job. If

Locksley previously investigated Schmidt and Riverside, they recognize Franklin Hale at once, despite his attempts to change his appearance. If confronted, he admits his true identity. He seeks internal documents from BGL to bring the company down, preferably ones revealing the Riverside Incident. Frank doesn't know where they'd be kept, but insists upon helping with the heist. Judith Lawson directs them towards a facility unscathed by the Scorpion's capers. While Les Fantômes haven't learned what the Scorpion has stolen, they suspect the information might be stored on BGL's internal systems. Judith requests they obtain that information while searching for Frank's data. If they can steal the Scorpion's next target first, so much the better.

The Bishop Global Logistics Research and Development Facility is a large five-story building outside city limits. Day and night, security guards armed with assault rifles patrol the grounds, their numbers increased due to the recent heists. Entry to the building through one of the four main entrances requires a keycard. Other potential points of entry include a single loading bay door on the west side of the building or the windows of the upper floors. Regardless of the chosen point of entry, failure to bypass the facility's alarm system mobilizes Swooping Eagle Security. Frank wishes to accompany the characters — if the characters can't convince him to wait in the vehicle, they'll need to compensate for his inexperience.

The characters must bypass another keycard lock to breach the central laboratory. Upon entry, the Scorpion rises from a computer desk brandishing her chain whip. A scientist burning the midnight oil lies dead nearby, an obvious victim of her weapon. She hesitates at the sight of the characters, then briefly lowers her mask, revealing Angelique Rousseau. She immediately interrogates them about the Gauntlet heist — once satisfied with their answers, she visibly relaxes, promising to answer their questions if they help. If they seem reluctant, she offers to turn herself over to Les Fantômes after everything is over.

Angelique discloses her fears of a hidden invasion, kindled by her battle against her counterpart, who attacked her in her home and who Angelique left dead on the floor. She quickly made the connection with Weston Bishop's changed behavior, and from there a connection between BGL and the doubles. Uncertain who to trust, she broke ties with her

life, believing herself the only one standing in their way. She infiltrated the laboratory using the Ghost Gauntlet, which she refuses to remove. She killed Dr. Samuel Singleton to deny BGL his expertise, and plans to copy their data to mine for incriminating evidence before destroying their records. She also intends to steal an object from the lower levels she believes to be critical to their plans.

Searching the room reveals a terrified intern hiding in the supply closet. Natalie Benton witnessed the Scorpion's sudden appearance, hiding while Angelique dispatched Dr. Singleton. If discovered, Natalie begs for her life while Angelique orders her elimination. Angelique can be convinced to spare her, but isn't happy about it. Natalie's access and Angelique's familiarity with BGL's systems both aid any attempts to hack into BGL's network.

Hacking into the network uncovers an internal memo indicating an important item is being transported to Weston Bishop's estate for a private auction with an exclusive guest list. Angelique recounts the Riverside Incident and the ensuing debate about whether to perfect the Roanoke Device or sell it as a weapon to the highest bidder. She warns of the danger the device poses for the world, emphasizing its capability of depopulating entire cities even if the characters are skeptical about the invasion. Files covering the Riverside Incident have been heavily redacted, but reveal an unexpected disaster occurred, BGL was responsible, and they've been actively covering it up. Most data related to Angelique's previous thefts were removed from the network, but what remains indicates most targets were prototypes of stealth transportation technologies, which sound suspiciously like teleportation devices. Angelique explains the devices shunt users into the Mist, and her heists are intended to dismantle their dimensional technologies.

Other information potentially uncovered during their search includes details on Swooping Eagle Security, which recently assumed control over BGL's security operations, followed by numerous private meetings with Marius Harding. More suspiciously, BGL has recently purchased a large facility in the mountains far from major population centers. The facility includes an underground hydroelectric plant, and company resources are being diverted surreptitiously into bringing the facility online as soon as possible.

Once the data is retrieved, Angelique insists they go to the lower levels to steal BGL's oldest

## THE MIST BETWEEN THE WORLDS

An interdimensional space exists between the dimensional barriers, which BGL termed the Mist. Visibility is limited in this grayish haze, obscuring details and leaving people on the other side visible as faint shadows. Places experiencing active flux events appear sharper, clear beacons to characters lost in the Mist, offering hope of escape to those stranded. The Mist feels claustrophobic, giving travelers the impression the weight of two worlds could crush them at any moment. Despite this, the air feels thin, leaving characters gasping for breath.

Travelers are functionally invisible to those outside the Mist, though particularly sensitive individuals might glimpse ghostly movement out of the corners of their eyes. Characters also gain a limited form of intangibility, easily passing through anything mobile. Permanent structures like walls impede movement normally. Characters may attempt to pass through barriers like doors or windows, but the less frequently they're opened, the longer it takes. While moving through such barriers, travelers are unable to breathe, rendering movement through thick or seldom opened barriers perilous.

dimensional technology device. The Broken Obelisk resides in a subbasement laboratory, sealed behind a biometric scanner. The fingerprints of several guards and scientists could unlock the door, but Natalie doesn't have access. Without the right fingerprints, the characters must find another way to gain entry. Within, two guards await any intruders. Upon entry, they need to be disabled swiftly before they can activate the alarms. If the characters failed to locate Natalie, they have twenty minutes from the time they leave the laboratory before she comes out of hiding to trigger the alarms.

If the alarms are triggered, the characters won't have long before guards swarm their location. Once the Broken Obelisk is disconnected, Angelique calls everyone to help move it. If they are in immediate danger or have difficulty planning an escape route, Angelique uses a ring flare to bring everyone into the Mist. She uses another to bring them out once they've made it safely away from the facility. While she stole several of them during a previous heist,



## THE GUEST LIST

A who's-who of the influential and important were invited to the auction at Weston Bishop's home, ranging from deniable representatives of various world governments to high-ranking members of criminal syndicates, with a smattering of glitterati and a few whose names are only known to the connected. A partial list includes:

- Calvin "Huck" Novotny, a wealthy and notorious gambler with a preternatural degree of both luck and charm. He's been banned from more than one casino, but he always manages to find takers for high-stakes games of chance and skill alike.
- Mira Desjardins, youngest of a family of assassins with a history reaching back to the 16th century. Supposedly, she's already killed twice as many people as her parents combined.
- Casus "Sean" Denuo, a well-known philanthropist who invests in second chances, from reformed criminals to failed clinical trials looking for another shot at funding.
- Alexis Argyris, an envoy from the Zhukov Syndicate. They're quiet and reserved, eating and drinking nothing despite the festivities. They haven't sat down once since they arrived.

she has no way of replenishing them once she runs out. If the characters conceive an escape plan, she reserves the ring flares for an emergency.

Once the characters escape the facility, Frank leads them to a nearby safe house to lay low while planning their next course of action. He wishes to go public with the stolen data at once. While Angelique agrees the data should go public, she insists stopping the Roanoke Device must take precedence. Angelique previously obtained plans for the device, intending to dismantle its core. Doing so takes time, though, so they must remove the core from the device and get it to a secure location. Destroying the rest of the device would be an added bonus. Despite little preparation time before the auction, Angelique is reluctant to accept aid from anyone outside their small group, but her desperation to prevent another Riverside Incident trumps her paranoia.

## THE CORE HEIST

Weston Bishop's sprawling and luxurious property is bounded on all sides with high walls. Swooping Eagle Security monitors the event, highly trained guards armed with assault rifles patrol the grounds and the mansion. Most of the guests brought their own personal security guards as well. All manner of treasures will go to the auction block this night, and no one intends to let others poach their winnings.

The reinforced vault at the heart of the mansion is heavily guarded, the obvious target for anyone seeking to steal the device prior to the auction. Biometric scanners require the retinal and fingerprint scans of Weston Bishop or Marius Harding to open — but the device isn't inside. Weston promised a demonstration to his attendees, and he is true to his word. The Roanoke Device has been set up within the mansion, the auction a ruse to lure clandestine but influential individuals to a common location. The demonstration will shunt the guests to Earth Prime, where Multiplicity forces stand ready to seize them for subsequent replacement.

Angelique, being familiar to Weston, infiltrates the mansion using the Ghost Gauntlet. If the characters wish to enter through the Mist with her, the Broken Obelisk is activated far from the mansion to avoid detection. The Ghosts can also gain entry to the event by breaking in or by impersonating guests or staff. Mingling with the crowd risks recognition by the characters' criminal contacts or rivals, or making an impression on dangerous individuals who might seek them out later.

While well-defended, Weston is the Multiplicity's weakest link. He possesses sensitive information about the invasion, but lacks training and experience to resist attempts to draw it out of him. Once isolated from his guards, Weston is easily intimidated into surrendering information. He knows the vault is empty, and the locations of each part of the device. The central control sphere is concealed behind a curtain on the stage of the banquet hall. If pressed, he reveals his counterpart is imprisoned in the basement.

The auction itself begins promptly after the meal. While the Roanoke Device is the centerpiece of the auction, Weston and Harding have provided several other items, including weapons, blueprints, and sensitive information. These are intended to lull the attendees into a false sense of security. After the last are sold, a video of the Riverside Incident is displayed.

If the characters fail to abscond with the core, at midnight the Roanoke Device is activated. If they are inside the mansion, they are transported to Earth Prime along with everyone else. They find themselves surrounded by hostile forces, making escape a difficult proposition. The chaos of the ensuing battle between Multiplicity forces and the attendees of the auction does provide a good distraction. Angelique's flare rings still work to escape into the Mist, but returning to their own world requires they hijack a piercer ship or locate a sympathetic local willing and able to assist them.

If the theft succeeded, the attendees fall to blaming each other, each assuming another faction was behind the theft. Harding suspects Angelique, assuming she's part of a secret faction opposing the Multiplicity's invasion. If the characters were spotted during the heist, he quickly accuses them of the theft, burdening them with powerful enemies. Angelique seeks someone technologically inclined to dismantle the device, preferring one of the characters if possible.

## WHERE THIS IS ALL GOING

Success in these heists raises the Ghosts of Locksley higher in the esteem of Les Fantômes. In recognition of their achievement, Locksley will receive other high-profile jobs going forward.

Les Fantômes may wish to bring Angelique to justice, or at least obtain the Ghost Gauntlet. Angelique refuses to part with it, feeling she must use it to fight against the Multiplicity's invasion. She maintains contact with Locksley, however, as she has few she can trust, the isolation and loneliness taking their toll on her psyche. As her sole lifeline, she'll regularly seek the characters' aid in her missions.

While his desire to bring down BGL doesn't waver, Frank latches onto the hope his family might be alive in an alternate reality. He wants to cross over to Earth Prime to rescue the people of Riverside, but lacks the skills and equipment necessary to execute such a plan alone. He will seek the characters to help him with his plans.

Harding believes his piercer ship was destroyed by hidden factions of this reality, but he is mistaken. Corporal Bobby Sipes was one of his own people.

A conscientious objector disgusted by endless conquest, Sipes activated the ship's self-destruct mechanism in an attempt to protect this reality from his own. Scarred by the blast, he's lived on the fringes of society ever since. As signs of the hidden invasion become apparent, he seeks anyone who might help protect this reality. This could lead him straight to Locksley's door. Sipes is an excellent source of information on the Multiplicity, making him valuable for plans to deal with it directly.

The loss of the Roanoke Device would be a setback, but doesn't stop Harding's plans. The mountain facility is mere weeks away from becoming fully operational. A large dimensional transport chamber is being constructed at the location. Once completed, Harding will be able to discreetly bring large numbers of his people through at once, the power requirements fulfilled by the facility's hydroelectric plant. Disabling the facility deals a significant blow to Harding's plans, but also pushes an open invasion closer to reality. If such a thing comes to pass, data and technology stolen from another world may become the only hope for their own.





CHAPTER FOUR

# CLASSIFIED: HELP WANTED



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“If this works, it’ll keep us from getting caught.  
If it doesn’t, it’ll keep us from getting old.”  
— *Angus MacGyver, MacGyver*

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Babylon Towers was to be the crown jewel of the Pruett Group’s corporate empire, a multi-story building containing only the most fashionable boutiques, high-priced luxury apartments, and the throne of Damon Pruett Senior’s financial empire, a multi-floor executive office cum corporate pleasure palace. Some things aren’t meant to be. Babylon Towers has been cursed by construction problems since the groundbreaking in the 1980s and even to this day is not fully complete. A massive die-off in the local bird population almost immediately after construction began led to the discovery the land was contaminated with toxic chemicals. Lowest-bid contractors would hardly start work before no-fault severing on the job. A few years ago, Damon Pruett Senior died, passing on the never-ending construction to his son, who would rather wash his hands of the whole thing, but isn’t above using it to make an extra buck here or there in quasi-legitimate ways in the meantime.

**Classified: Help Wanted** takes place entirely within Babylon Towers, as the cast is caught up in the understandable but poorly conceived revenges of Damon Pruett’s victims.

## ALLEGIANCES

**Classified: Help Wanted** is compatible with a variety of Allegiances. A team working with Archangel may find themselves working the Babylon job between rescue operations or even get swept up in the action while preparing for a much higher stakes mission. The Theseus Club could easily have reason to suspect the Pruett Group has handled finances for the Society of Minos, even if Pruett’s financial services aren’t privy to even the outermost circle of the organization. It also works entirely without Allegiances, serving as the sort of self-motivated situation that could lead to recruitment offers from groups like Archangel, the Neptune Foundation, or even Les Fantômes.

Assume that if using Allegiances, the organizations are either politically unmotivated to fix the situation or out of communication. This is a story about the heroes fixing the problem, not an organization using its resources to repair structural inequality.

# IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

The following Storyguide characters play important roles in **Classified: Help Wanted**.

## DAMON PRUETT JUNIOR

Damon Pruett wears many hats in the city. He is a distinguished and well-respected property owner, investor, and real estate developer. Unfortunately, he is also a huckster and a con artist, skirting the razor-thin edge of legality with predatory buying practices, business opportunities a step away from Ponzi schemes, and zero respect for those that say no to him. The Pruett Group started building Babylon Towers over thirty years ago and little would make Pruett happier than getting rid of the building to make a tidy profit — he knows better than to mention the poison soil though.

## PRUETT’S GUNS

Pruett’s security force are all minor threats with the following traits:

**Primary Pool: 9**

**Secondary Pool: 4**

**Desperation Pool: 2**

**Defense: 3**

**Health: 3**

The security force is equipped with pistols (+1 Enhancement, Ballistic, Range: Short, Concealable) and a few are additionally equipped with shotguns (+2 Enhancement, Non-Penetrating, Range: Short, Spread).



Pruett's office safe holds routing numbers, account information, and a variety of documents outlining the financial loopholes used by the super-rich to launder money — an excellent MacGuffin for an ongoing campaign. If he has to flee his office, he'll transfer these to a fingerprint-locked briefcase. He also has a security force, nothing of Macklin's caliber, but still professionals with guns who won't hesitate to shoot. If it comes to it, Pruett has a firearm as well, but it's a chromed-out overlarge showpiece Desert Eagle that he's fired exactly once at the Babylon Towers indoor shooting range. Thing is, if you're holding a gun to someone's head, it doesn't matter how good your aim is.

**Primary Pool:** 9 (backstabbing, financial malfeasance, and manipulating others)

**Secondary Pool:** 4 (intimidation and pistols)

**Desperation Pool:** 2

**Defense:** 3

**Health:** 4

### ARTHUR MACKLIN

Despite what people assume, Arthur Macklin was not the sort of person who was a bully as a child, nor was he mean to animals. His cruelty is a skill he developed and honed to a killing edge while working for people who need a handyman with moral flexibility like their own but more practical "problem solving" skills. He works recovery for the Society of Minos, making sure incriminating information doesn't make its way into the light of day — which,

right now, means killing Kim Penzig and anyone else poking their noses into Pruett's business and ensuring no one ever finds the bodies. He is tall, with dark hair and eyes and a face you could easily lose in a crowd. Even in a firefight, he's inhumanly calm and methodical. He's never failed an assignment, and he's not about to start now — he's got a reputation to maintain.

While Macklin isn't there for them, if the player characters make themselves an obstacle he won't hesitate to kill them too, especially if he thinks they've learned about the Society of Minos. Macklin's an excellent way to make the players feel hunted, because that's precisely what he's there to do. He's not *quite* relentless, but he comes close, and he's just as skilled as the player characters are — maybe even a little more so. He should be a figure of dread for all but the most steadfast.

**Primary Pool:** 13 (hand-to-hand combat, guns, and knives)

**Secondary Pool:** 8 (stealth and tracking)

**Desperation Pool:** 4

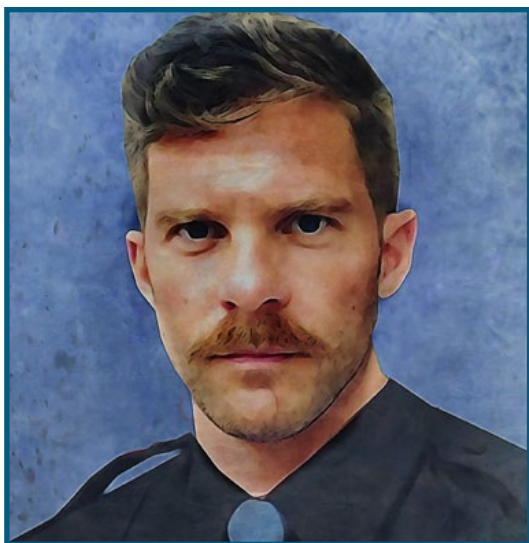
**Defense:** 4

**Health:** 5

**Edges:** Cool Under Fire, Fast Draw, Skilled Liar

### MICHAEL GUTHRIDGE

Michael Guthridge has been with the cops since his father (then captain of the force) got him a job. He worked his way up, not so much failing upward as always conveniently finding an open position every



time he was ready to file for promotion. Along the way, he's made connections on both sides of the law, and now that he's running the city's entire police force, he's perfectly happy to play those connections to his own advantage. Pruett was one of them, but Guthridge caught word that he means to demolish the blight that is Babylon Towers — a blight that provides cover for his network of less-than-legal contacts — and he's not having any of it.

Guthridge is using the alarm in Babylon Towers as an opportunity to lean on Pruett, effectively letting the players' characters do the dirty work of pressuring him. Once Pruett confirms he'll keep Babylon Towers open for business (legitimate and otherwise), Guthridge will send in the SWAT team and, miraculously, each and every witness will turn out to be armed and resisting arrest.

**Primary Pool:** 9 (cover-ups, giving orders, and intimidation)

**Secondary Pool:** 4 (actual police work, office politics, and pistols)

**Desperation Pool:** 2

**Defense:** 3

**Health:** 4

### WINONA ELLIS

Winona's been around for a long time — long enough to have worked for the OSS in Occupied France, to remember when the city was about a tenth the size it is now, when television was the new-fangled thing. Now, she's pushing a hundred. Her

husband passed almost a decade ago, and she's every bit the elderly recluse — her apartment is brimming over with knickknacks from every era of her life, the walls lined with bookshelves. She only leaves to venture down to the corner market when she runs out of the essentials that meal delivery services won't provide. She's small, walks with a cane, and her voice gives out from time to time, but her mind is still like a steel trap.

**Primary Pool:** 9 (encryption, puzzles, and tradecraft)

**Secondary Pool:** 4 (cooking and first aid)

**Desperation Pool:** 2

**Defense:** 0

**Health:** 2

**Edges:** Calm Blue Ocean

### KIM PENZIG

Kim came *highly* recommended, not only for her 4.0 GPA and her 120 WPM typing skills but for her knack for multitasking and anticipation — she's the most efficient administrative assistant Babylon Towers has ever had, so much so that she probably extended the operational life of the boondoggle for a year or two. She handles all of Pruett's private accounts, which is how she's embezzled so much money from him without anyone noticing until now — not only is she setting aside a nest egg for herself after Babylon Towers collapses, but she's guaranteeing decent elder care for her mother, whose Alzheimer's seems worse every time she sees her.





**Primary Pool:** 9 (Babylon Towers knowledge, finance, and office administration)

**Secondary Pool:** 4 (office politics and subterfuge)

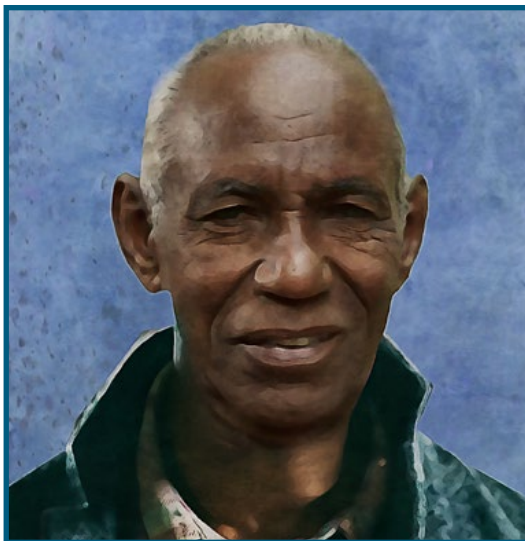
**Desperation Pool:** 2

**Defense:** 1

**Health:** 3

#### DWAYNE PERRY

Dwayne spent the '80s and '90s in the Army motor pool, fixing crankshafts, rebuilding engines, and the like. He was good at his job, but age is implacable, and he's now retired from that life — and, to make ends meet, he supplements his pension with a job mopping



floors in Babylon Towers, socking a little away each month for his grandnephew's college fund. He's getting on in years, and there's a persistent tumor that VA healthcare just can't manage to get rid of growing somewhere in his abdomen, but thanks to an ironclad union contract, his job's safe — unless Pruett decides to shut down Babylon Towers, of course.

**Primary Pool:** 9 (jury-rigging and repairs)

**Secondary Pool:** 4 (blunt weapons and firearms)

**Desperation Pool:** 2

**Defense:** 2

**Health:** 2

## FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END

Unlike the other scenarios, **Classified: Help Wanted** doesn't present a linear story. Rather than starting at the beginning, we begin *in media res* — no matter who the characters have come to aid, there are other plans in motion, resulting in total fiasco. This is the situation the characters find themselves in and must find their way out of, all the while keeping their eyes on the objective. This makes for a fast-paced, tense, and action-packed story, all confined within a single massive unfinished mess of a stillborn high-rise complex.

#### HELP WANTED: KIM

Read this to the players if they're here to help Kim: *She has access to everything, which mean she's entirely aware of what a mess Babylon Towers is, and,*

*ever thinking ahead, moved a few zeroes around here and there to shore up a nest egg for when Pruett finally pulls the plug on the architectural and financial monstrosity. In doing so, however, she found that Pruett was up to his ears in illegitimate financial transactions and money laundering, including deals with a shadowy entity called the Society of Minos.*

*Knowing she was already as good as dead, and would only make the problem worse if she tried to blow the whistle, she used her not-insubstantial funds to make contact with you and secure your aid.*

#### HELP WANTED: WINONA

Read this to the players if they're here to help Winona:

*She's the oldest resident of Babylon Towers, and one of the few remaining tenants still on the original lease — one that can only be terminated by the lessee, and Winona has never missed a rent payment. She has no desire to be evicted from the home where she lived with her husband for his last years, where she made a life of her own after he passed, and where she very much means to die. Pruett, of course, is only too happy to hasten that particular process.*

*Despite her advanced age, Winona's mind is still razor-sharp, and she knows full well the danger she's in — so she's pulled a few strings with some of her surviving friends from her Office of Strategic Services days, and they put her in touch with you. She may be pushing her centenary, but she still knows how the game is played.*

### HELP WANTED: DWAYNE

Read this to the players if they're here to help Dwayne:

*He had a plan to help his grandnephew attend college and make something of himself instead of following the Perry tradition of scraping along with whatever job will have you — just a few more years, and it'd be enough (with some judicious application of student loans). Now, those years have been taken from him by Pruett's legal loopholes, his investment account plundered to cover the contractual costs of shutting down the Towers, and Dwayne won't stand for it. He's going to see Pruett, and either Pruett is going to pay, or he's going to pay — but Dwayne needs backup to make sure Pruett can't weasel out of this, and that's why he's gotten in touch with some old Army buddies with connections, connections that led right to your door.*

## THE BOILING POINT

Then, read the following:

*Some jobs are supposed to be simple, helping simple people with simple problems with simpler solutions using a very complicated skillset that you rarely discuss the origins of with the people you're helping. Not every job can stay simple. Some of them just start that way and turn into something new at the last minute. Sometimes the simple little feel-good job ends with you huddling in an empty lobby with half the sheriff's office outside and the other half hurrying over with a SWAT team.*

*This all began with somebody needing help, but no matter the request that brought you here, it's lead to*

*this exact moment. Outside is an armed group that doesn't feel like negotiating, and inside with you is the man responsible for it all: Damon Pruett.*

*The cardinal rules of courtesy, conduct, and civility seemed to fly out the window as quickly as you could remember them. One second you're helping somebody in need, and the next you're staring out over an ocean of police officers. Whatever simple job you thought you were doing went out the window hours ago. This is a complex situation, and unfortunately for the opposition, you're entirely prepared to deal with it.*

Discuss with the players how they got into this situation — pinned in Babylon Towers by police surrounding the building — but keep it brief, with no more than a sentence or two for each. What were they doing when the alarm went off? What was their plan, and how did the alarm ruin it? Short and sweet is the goal here because once this housekeeping is out of the way, they're free to react to the situation at hand.

## STORIES ON THE FLY

**Classified: Help Wanted** doesn't have a set narrative, so Storyguides will need to put themselves in the role of the villains. We've provided the core of what they want, but Storyguides will be the ones drawing reactions forth from that, inspired by the players' actions. Then, once the villains' reactions are clear, take a step further back, and consider the narrative — is a villain's course of action exciting? If not, what's the best way to kick it up a notch? Storyguides might want to hold off on executing it until a tense moment — or use it to turn up the tension after the pace slackens.

They might try to turn the police to their advantage, whether by manipulating them or by convincing them that they're working to the same ends, in

### SAVING THEM ALL

*While sometimes choices are completely unanimous, there is a chance players will feel divided about who to save. This is perfectly fine — none of the three problems are mutually exclusive and aiding one victim doesn't mean ruining another's life. Funny things can happen in the world sometimes — including several experienced mercenaries, crooks, spies, or scientists having a meet-cute while trying to steal the same fingerprint-locked briefcase.*

## CONTINGENCIES AND CALAMITIES

There's all sorts of other ways things could go wrong, and Storyguides shouldn't feel required to adhere to the plots described above in perpetuity. Babylon Towers is a hotbed of criminal activity, and any faction with ties to the underworld might well get involved. Macklin may not be the only agent the Society of Minos has dispatched to the Towers — or Pruett may be more involved in the Society of Minos than he's let on, meaning he's a far more dangerous opponent than the spoiled brat with a gun described above. Ultimately, every aspect of the crisis in Babylon Towers is mutable, able to be changed to suit the needs of any campaign.

which case the Storyguide needs to pull them further and further into potential iniquity, playing up just how corrupt Guthridge is — if that's the road they want to walk, so be it! Players might choose to retreat into the depths of the Towers and prepare for some massive confrontation, laying in defenses and traps and waiting for the enemy to come to them, in which case the Storyguide should provide those enemies in spades — that army of SWAT officers outside isn't just for window dressing, after all!

Every Storyguide character in this drama should always be trying to push their agenda. Winona wants to stay in her apartment come hell or high water, Kim wants assurances of protection against a killer, and Dwayne wants to secure his grandnephew's future. Guthridge, Pruett, and Macklin have their motives, but those provide the spark that's turning this problem into a true fiasco. They're the most likely sources of violence in the story, and therefore the main sources of leverage for the Storyguide to force the players into action.

### VIOLENCE SOLVES EVERYTHING

If it works for the bad guys, there's no reason it can't work for the good guys, as long as they're willing to get their hands dirty. If the players favor a direct and violent approach to Pruett, the story will be one of getting to Pruett and finishing him off. For the Storyguide, this is a sign that you need to fill the player characters' path with obstacles to overcome. Macklin is an excellent example — he may not be there to protect Pruett, but he's not something the players can ignore. People with weapons out and ready are an open invitation for police snipers, which makes any

area open to the outside (through windows or otherwise) a shooting-gallery-slash-obstacle-course. Not every challenge has to be violence-met-with-violence, though — Babylon Towers is a mess, and the infrastructure of the place itself can cause problems from failing elevators to ruptured steam pipes. There's also the ethical element — Pruett may be a bad guy, and Macklin may be a straight-up killer, but a life is a life, and that's not always an easy thing to deal with.

### GHOSTED

The police may be outside, and Macklin may be hunting them, and Pruett may be holed up behind a security system and a dozen men with guns, but the common element here is that all of the above *have to know you're there* to have any effect. If the players are skillful, they can use Babylon Towers against their enemies, moving silently through back corridors and utility spaces. Hackers and sneak thieves can have a field day with the electronics and mechanics of the building, and it might just be possible to get access to the financial documents and escape without having to fire a shot. Storyguides should provide obstacles to overcome in the form of penetrating systems, dealing with malfunctioning infrastructure, or avoiding Macklin or Pruett's security forces (to say nothing of the police, who are watching every window like a hawk). Getting spotted doesn't mean the end of the mission, but it does mean consequences, so make sure those consequences are called out and present, a sword of Damocles ready to drop should the characters slip up.

### CONFLICTED LOYALTIES

The pen is mightier than the sword, and that goes for the right word in the right place, too. None of the antagonists in this scenario are truly loyal to the others — they're all here for their own reasons. Player characters, if they're clever, could drive a wedge between them, playing one against the other to their own ends. The trouble is that none are particularly predisposed to listen to the characters (and would be just as happy to see them dead) so characters will have to apply indirect pressure — Guthridge's need to maintain at least a veneer of incorruptibility, Pruett's self-interested disregard for anything but the number of zeroes at the end of his bank account, and Macklin's dedication to cleaning up any of the Society of Minos' loose ends are the three most immediate examples, but the Storyguide can always come up with more. A combination of Procedural and Intrigue play will ferret out countless secrets that could serve as excellent blackmail or bait, depending on how obvious the characters wish to be — as long as they can stay out of the crosshairs while they do their work.





## KEY LOCATIONS

The following locations are excellent places for dramatic moments to take place. Each has advantages and drawbacks, due either to the architecture itself or the actions of Pruett, Macklin, and Guthridge. These locations should provide everything a Storyguide needs to respond to the player characters' actions, but if they do something unexpected, it's simple enough to put in a security office, a courtesy phone, or anything else one might find in such a high-rise complex — and those things can easily lead the player characters back to these locations, if desired.

### THE EXECUTIVE OFFICES

Babylon Towers may be permanently unfinished, but Pruett, Sr. spared no expense in the executive offices — and, unlike most of the rest of the Towers, they've been updated through the decades, so they no longer have the look of architectural and furniture stylings of the late 1980s. These offices are relentlessly modern and have a commanding view of

the city through floor-to-ceiling windows — half the top floor consists of corner offices, of which Pruett's is the largest and the most conspicuous.

Virtually everything on these floors is visible to the police helicopter circling the building, shining the spotlight in through the windows. Guthridge has ordered this mainly to pressure Pruett, but unless they're extremely circumspect, everything the players do here will be known to the police below. The uncovered windows also make sightlines easy for police snipers.

### PRUETT GALLERIA

Pruett Galleria is three floors and over a million and a half square feet of sheer retail extravagance — or at least, that was the idea when it was built. Now, there's empty storefronts dotting several of the wings, the elevators in the main plaza always hang for a second between the second and third floors, and the Muzak from the loudspeakers is uneven,

louder in some places than in others. Still, virtually every kind of store you can imagine can be found here, from weird knife boutiques to bootleg DVD clearinghouses.

The Galleria is an excellent place for a running gunfight or a hostage exchange. If the Storyguide feels like complicating matters, it's also a great spot to introduce other Storyguide characters that Macklin and Guthridge can menace — staff, customers, or even residents of Babylon Towers caught inside when the alarm went off and the security doors came down. There's plenty of cover and staff hallways to take detours in, and lots of “modern” art, fountains, and other installations to completely destroy in the course of the action.

### WINONA'S APARTMENT

The residential section of Babylon Towers has been all but deserted for a few months — most residents were happy to take the buyout on their lease, and those who weren't rapidly got the message when the rough-looking goons in suits came around. Half of the walls in the hallway have been stripped to get access to the wiring, and several of the fluorescent lights just plain don't work. Winona's apartment is showing its age — some of the paint is peeling, and the linoleum in the kitchen looks like it belongs in a museum (then again, so does most of the stuff in the apartment) — but it's still homey, if a little cramped between stacks of books and cabinets full of little porcelain figurines.

The biggest drawbacks of Winona's apartment are twofold: it's very cramped, and Winona is almost certainly here. On the other hand, it's very defensible — there's only one way in or out, making it an excellent choice for a safehouse — and it's got running water and a surprisingly complete first aid kit, thanks to Winona's habit of preparedness. It's also a good location for a moment of downtime, if the Storyguide wishes to let the tension slacken a bit — a tender moment or a sorrowful confession would fit in well here.

### THE UNFINISHED FLOORS

Even after thirty years of construction, Babylon Towers is unfinished, and the top ten floors or so (barring the executive offices) are as empty as they've ever been, exposed concrete and rebar hidden behind the facade of a finished exterior. There's generators, tools, and the like around here, and several open holes between floors only loosely covered

with boards. The entire place is a safety inspector's nightmare.

Second only to the steam tunnels for creepiness, the unfinished section of Babylon Towers is much more open place for a confrontation. It could also serve as a meeting place with the enemy — the plastic sheeting over the windows makes it quite invisible to the police.

### THE ROOF

If the executive offices are exposed, the roof is doubly so — there's nothing here but air-conditioning units, pipes, tar paper, and a helicopter landing pad that looks about as reliable as the rest of the Towers. It — or any other high-story window, for that matter — might be a possible venue for escape, given some means of safe egress (ziplines, parachutes, etc.).

The roof is a great place for a dramatic confrontation, but it's also a potential entry point for SWAT teams should Guthridge pull the trigger on this threat to send them in.

### THE PERIMETER

Every entrance to the building — not to mention the entirety of the perimeter — is currently watched by the city's finest, all with guns drawn and ready to fill the air with hot supersonic lead. Characters attempting to leave the Towers must succeed on a Difficulty 5 Athletics or Larceny + Dexterity roll to remain unseen; those spotted will be pursued, fired upon with less-lethal weapons if they attempt to escape, and arrested if captured. Alternately, one could walk out with one's hands on one's head and surrender — a certain way to be taken into custody and complicate matters.

### STEAM TUNNELS

Babylon Towers may be an architectural monstrosity, but it's a self-contained one, and for all its faults it has a robust utility system, accessible through literal miles of tunnels that stretch from fifteen or more levels below the ground to halfway up the Towers in some places. They're claustrophobic, poorly lit, full of potential chemical and heat hazards, and the smell is, to say the least, weird. Somewhere deep below the building, they connect up to the city's sewer, water, and electrical access spaces, making it another possible escape route.

The steam tunnels would be fantastic for an extremely tense chase scene. They're also a great place for booby traps or ambushes, but that goes for Macklin as

well as the players, so Storyguides should always play up the tension whenever the player characters come through here — attack could come at any second!

## PARKING GARAGE

Babylon Towers has an enormous multi-level parking garage deep beneath it, providing ample space for a truly obscene number of cars. It has never once been filled to capacity, however, and so the construction companies still working on the Towers often store their equipment and vehicles here. Like the steam tunnels, it's poorly lit, and the ventilation is iffy at the best of times. A few exits lead to the

streets, but like the lobby, they are heavily guarded and barricaded.

The parking garage provides not only a location for a tight and tense car chase that never leaves Babylon Towers, but the construction equipment offers an opportunity for characters who like to craft their way out of problems to do practically anything. If the characters would like to take this route but none chose to specialize in crafting, they can always ask Dwayne — a career in the Army motor pool and another in Babylon Towers' environmental engineering division has made him a past master at practically anything they might want to jury-rig.

# WHERE THIS IS ALL GOING

The story doesn't have to stop here — there's plenty of unfinished business to resolve, even if the players have managed the hat trick of taking down Macklin, Guthridge, and Pruett.

Pruett's tied to plenty of illegal activities, and the federal investigation after this fiasco will bear that out if he's not around to fight it with high-end legal counsel. This is a perfect opportunity for the Storyguide to introduce criminal cartels looking to silence anyone with knowledge of Pruett's activities (including the player characters!), corrupt government officials trying to sweep everything under the rug, or potential patrons drawn to the player characters' skill (if not their respect for the law), if the players' characters aren't already affiliated. Archangel and 9 are clear possibilities, but so is the N.O.E.R. or La Révolte Éclatante.

Guthridge is just as corrupt as Pruett, but unlike Pruett he's got the force of law (not to mention a lot of

firepower) backing him up. Even if he's taken down, he'll have friends who won't want a federal investigation to ruin their gravy train — another enabler is sure to step up, or a puppet for someone working behind the scenes, perhaps someone who isn't even a cop. If players are interested in a long-term struggle against corrupt authority, this is a golden opportunity to provide it.

Macklin works directly for the Society of Minos — which means if his presence here is revealed, it'll bring the player characters to the attention of the Theseus Club as well as their bloodthirsty foes. The Society of Minos will certainly send other assassins after the player characters — and if that doesn't work, the Minoans themselves might well decide they'd make a spectacular quarry. If Macklin survived this encounter, he will continue to hunt the player characters, dogging them throughout the campaign — he *never* leaves work unfinished and this is *personal*.





*“We call them Talents because they’re different. They have certain qualities about them, certain knacks. It’s subtle, never quite superhuman, and no two are the same. They all have one thing in common, though — they’ll adapt to whatever you throw at them. I’ve seen Talents survive situations that’d kill you or me five times over, and come out of it looking like they’d just gone for a jog. Don’t ever underestimate them. These people are capable of anything, as long as they want it hard enough.”*

— *Dr. Stephanie Levine,*  
*Director of Dimensional Sciences,*  
*Project Echo*

TRINITY: IN MEDIA RES is a collection of pre-constructed stories for TRINITY CONTINUUM, each centering on Talents — hyper-competent individuals with uncanny abilities and a hefty dose of luck whose lives always seem to take turns for the exciting. Storyguides can use these ready-to-go adventures to start off a new campaign with a bang, weave in as an interstitial story, or modify to suit their own ongoing games.

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