

# Høltør Skøltør



A **Gods & Monsters** Adventure



# Helter Skelter

A *Gods & Monsters* adventure suitable for four to six 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> level characters

by Jerry Stratton

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**There are things known and things unknown.**

**In between are the doors.**

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See [godsmonsters.com/Guide/conversions/](http://www.godsmonsters.com/Guide/conversions/) if you'd like to use *Helter Skelter* in AD&D or other old-school games.

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1. *Lost Castle of the Astronomers*, for 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> level
2. *Haunted Illustrious Castle*, for 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> level
3. *The Vale of the Azure Sun*, for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> level
4. *The House of Lisport*, for 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> level

# Involving the characters

Why should the characters go on this adventure? The usual answers: knowledge and/or power. Or they might be tracking someone down who is using the doors for unfair advantage in the worlds, or to escape the characters.

In many ways this adventure is more a guideline than a full series of rooms and events. It was designed specifically for characters looking for the crossroads. It may still be fun for characters that aren't looking for the crossroads (or the silver city), but there won't be the urgent need to choose the right doors in the right order.

2—Involving the characters

## Red Jack's Riddle

Before they can go on either of the adventures, they need to enter Red Jack's. Some sage or oracle may give them the gambling house riddle, telling them that if anyone knows the answer (or can put them on the road to finding it), it will be Red Jack.

*"Before Druid and Christian there were other tribes, and before these tribes dimly remembered are the elder races. In Sin City there is a gambling house that was when the world began. In a lost alley there is a door behind a door and within it a deck of cards and fortune's wheel. Upon the deck are forgotten gods; upon the wheel the world rests. The door is guarded by a riddle, and the riddle is this:"*

*Come, Master Red-Jack, where are you creeping?  
"To the halls of the ivory pillars I'm leaping."*

*Oh, shall you return, noble red-cloak, again?  
"My bones may return, yet my flesh shall remain."*

You may use a vision:

*The sun sets in the East, and the forest thins. You are dropped inside the walls of a cramped and bustling city. The river runs beneath a bridge filled with carriages and carts; barges load and unload their wares in the port.*

*Inside the city you find yourself in a cramped alley, a mist covering your vision, but you count the doors to your left: One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. You do not knock at the seventh door; you open it and walk inside. A roulette wheel spins, and you pray that it continues spinning. A deck of cards lies on the table, face down, dedicated to gods you do not know.*

Or they might happen upon it as part of a murder mystery. Red Jack is a serial killer.

# Crossroads symbolism

The door to San Francisco is marked with a crude crossroads. Introduce crossroads symbolism (perhaps in the Celtic lands, or using ankhs in some abandoned castle). You may also use the same oracle that brought them to Red Jack's:

*"Can you not feel it in the seasons? Have you no tales of ancient times? The world is a wheel, and the wheel is winding down."*

*"The eternal crossroads. Where, or whether, it stands today I know not. It may lie beneath the ocean, or hidden deep in the cavernous earth. Or it may lie across the world. You have seen echoes of it, I think. The eternal crossroads is the pivot of the world. Its echoes ripple through the roots of the world. Cartoril was the first and strongest echo. The Brilliarch's Rainbow City was dimmer but an echo all the same. Tialnambe walked in its shadows; her husband knew the crossroads itself."*

You might include this with the vision that brings them to Red Jack's:

*A wave of orange, yellow, and brown rolls over you, like an autumn at the edge of a clearing. Then there is the silence as between thunder and lightning. The ground cracks open in a tumult of noise. You tumble into an endless abyss; below you a dull fire sucks in sound and feeling. Ancient gears of a giant mill turn slowly in the unearthly orange glow, grinding the world into dust.*

*A rust-red path leads out of the gears and into a coruscating mist. The mist rolls back as you fall and reveals a great city upon a green lily-covered plain. Two wide ochre roadways wind through the plain and intersect at the center of the city. Crystal spires rise from the city; they project all of the colors of the rainbow and then some onto the thin mist. Great silver towers, lined with green and gold, reflect the stars—unless the stars are a reflection of the great silver city.*

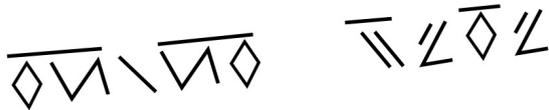
*As the world crumbles into the city, vines rise from the crossroads, twirl around the pieces of the world, and roll them together. A woody vine twines itself around you and lifts you from your descent. You are passed from vine to vine, root to root, branch to branch, soaring now high above a great green forest. Mighty roots thread across the two sides of the world, sealing them together like a jagged unmatched puzzle. Far in the crevasse of the world, insects of rust and worm climb from the burning gears, eating at the vines. One of the vines snaps. The world teeters, and the great forest bends around you at the horizon.*

#### 4—Involving the characters

The San Francisco adventure shows a world in its death throes. All the foundations of society are crumbling, and there is nothing anyone can do about it. Only a small group called “The Summit” is even bothering to try.



The crossroads are almost always near a pyramid, and a field of lilies. In Highland, there are ruined pyramids at the far south of the Dark Forest, and a ruined road that leads into the mountains but never arrives there. There is also a painting in the castle of the Stigmas di Cristo that depicts the crossroads.



**murders**

**The Cherry Blossom**

A serial killer in Fork can bring them to Red Jack’s. Brutal murders, and strange words written in blood on the walls: “Ebeorie” at first, and then strange symbols. The first word doesn’t translate magically (as is common with place names or personal names) but the second two mean “master of unrest” or “master of chaos” or “lord of discord” or “conflagration king”. Something like that.

Place three or four murders in the general vicinity of the door, spaced maybe two to three weeks apart. Model them after the Jack the Ripper murders: surgical removal of organs, lots of blood, etc. Then, one more after the player characters become aware of the murders, with the strange runes written in blood on a nearby wall.

There are occasionally cherry blossoms at the scene of the crime. The authorities won’t notice them, but the player characters, being attuned to the strange, will.

The victims are prostitutes. The murders are committed by a ride-along of the demon Ebeorie. In his madness, the murderer sometimes writes the voice he hears on the walls: the words of power that summon Ebeorie.

# Chasing Joe Lakono

If the player characters would chase Joe Lakono or his alter ego Orlando Fontaine, he's a great way to get them through the doors. If they've come to really hate Joe, he might summon a waxen assassin to take his form, and send it against one of them, so that they end up chasing his twin through the doors.

*Waxen Assassin: (Demon: 6; Chaotic Evil; Survival: 43; Move: 12; Attacks: 1; Damage: d6; Defense: +8; Special attack: 6-yard illusions; Special defenses: immune to weapons, cold; resistant to elements)*

The adventure pretty much assumes a waxen assassin or someone with illusory magic, so you'll want to bring something like that into the adventures before this adventure starts.

## The Bird of Paradise

The door to Las Vegas is marked with the symbol of the Bird of Paradise, which is the symbol of the Paradise Island Lounge in Vegas. If they will encounter Joe Lakono in their world before entering Red Jack's, they might find one of Joe's matchbook's with that symbol on it.

## A life and death dilemma

As if altering the fabric of time and space is not enough of a moral dilemma, you can add more to suit your game group. In our game group we have one player who can only make it to about a third of the get-togethers. We play little enough as it is, so we can't cancel the games when he can't make it.

Since he started playing a little more regularly just a few sessions before I realized the characters were going to enter the Butterfly Halls, I concocted (with the help of Joe Lakono) this little scheme. It helped that the player's character had been involved in a crime that resulted in a murder.

One way to snap the vines that hold the world together is to force the world to confront two different versions of itself. Joe has set the world shimmering between two realities. In one version of the world, Arun has been executed for murder in the commission of a burglary. In the other version of the world, Arun escaped the authorities.

## 6—Involving the characters

Joe Lakono (as Orlando Fontaine) used his Watch of the Red Ants to engineer Arun's double life. Later, he might also give the timepiece to the military leaders of Black Stag as they go to war against the (what they think is a token) army of Illustrious Castle. They need merely twist the red ants backwards to gain a second chance if things go wrong.

If this dissonance continues, the vine will snap, and the world tree will retreat. This world will crumble into the abyss, much like the Dead Rome that the characters saw at the Crossroads.

If the characters ask either Joe or Jack why they keep having these strangely realistic dreams about Arun existing/not existing, he'll tell them. And he'll tell them how to solve the problem. If Arun dies when the world isn't looking, that will solve the paradox. That is, if they let Arun die (or kill him themselves) while on the other side of the doors, they'll save the world for a little longer. Joe will be satisfied with either outcome.

## **Watch of the Red Ants**

This rusted iron watch is surrounded by a circle of red ants twined among themselves. The watch flips open to reveal rusted gears covered in dust.

When the ants are twisted, they burn red and time flips back to the last choice made that could make a significant difference in the current situation the bearer wants to avoid. The person in control of the watch can then attempt to forge a new path in time. However, both paths still exist, and different people will remember different paths at different times.

Any person can use the watch but once.

# The Butterfly Halls

This adventure centers around two of the doors in the Butterfly Halls and a scheme of Joe Lakono and the Autumnal Swarm to bring down a world and weaken the world-tree that holds all worlds together. These doors open into twentieth century America. This is a new world for the characters, and the boundaries of the adventure won't be as obvious because of this. The players will need clear clues and guidance if they're to avoid getting lost in this new world.

If you are using Highland as your game world, your players might not know the skin tones of their characters. In Highland no one cares. In Vegas and in San Francisco, skin color matters. In Las Vegas, any characters who can't pass as white will be stuck on the Westside. In San Francisco, black is beautiful.

In San Francisco in the late sixties there are several cultural issues playing out that may confuse, intrigue, or completely pass by adventurers from Highland. Where in Highland all skin tones share the same culture, in 1968 San Francisco there are default cultures for each skin tone, white, black, brown, yellow, you name it, they have their own culture.

Further, there are cultures according to age. While even in Highland there are some behavioral differences between the old and the young based on experience and energy, this effect is far more pronounced in San Francisco 1968. To Highlanders watching replays of the 1968 Democratic Convention or just paying attention to the interactions between flower children and the town guard in San Francisco, it could easily look as if there's a full-scale generational war, especially if the police let the Hell's Angels through a cordon to oppose an anti-war march.

How much you want to play this up will depend on how interesting your players find it. Pay attention to them, and follow their lead. It is perfectly reasonable that they will completely ignore the strange culture; if we happened upon a culture in which hair color was moderately correlated with different (but similar) cultures, how long would it take for us to notice?

Within this adventure, Deanna Carmen is African-American. Joe Lakono is a Pacific Islander.

If they research the history of this world, they'll realize that it's like their own world but without the cataclysm of earth. Also, if they've been to Dead Rome at the Crossroads, they'll recognize the buildings and the cars (although they may be surprised to see them moving). Chinatown and Fisherman's Wharf may look like home, with bigger

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ships and buildings. What they won't likely recognize are the light shows and light show-like posters; silver jets streaking across the sky; and amplified music. Rock music alone is pretty strange. Psychedelic rock while watching a light show the first time you've used LSD is a completely new trip.

I've also provided sketchy notes on another door that may be used for effect, the *Jack the Ripper* era of London.

You may also want to design some doors of your own that foreshadow or lead to future adventures.

Finally, *Helter Skelter* is not a historical reference. While I have researched the events experienced in this adventure, some rumors are taken as fact, some facts are altered to fit the timeline, and other facts are manufactured to fill the needs of the adventure. These worlds are like our own, but they are not our own.

# The doors

*The door opens upon a long hallway. The wall is covered in butterflies. A flutter shudders down the hall as wings beat in a wave flowing to your right; but the butterflies do not move from their position on the wall.*

*To your right, on the same wall whose door you've just opened, are a series of six doors, each marked with a symbol.*

The butterflies are pinned living to the wall, and contain the souls of people killed by Red Jack in his travels through these doors. Light from some of the butterflies dimly illuminates the hall.

If they're chasing somebody who is trying to lead them into an ambush, that door (the crossroads door) will have a cherry pit just off to the side in front of it.

There are seven doors, including the one they came in on. The seventh leads to Red Jack's Gambling House. The other six lead to various places and times. Each of the doors has a hand-drawn symbol.

1. Sun in a mountain pass: Hamokera slums;
2. Top hat and cane: London, 1888
3. Discordant Celtic-style crossroads: San Francisco, 1969
4. Stylized bird of paradise: Las Vegas, 1955
5. Eagle and fasces: Dead Rome at the Crossroads, Roman Year 2279
6. Two discordant playing cards with a heart and a diamond on them: Red Jack's
7. Eliazu's symbol (Illustrious Castle): Fork, the present time

## Which door?

Only San Francisco and Vegas are important to this adventure. The other doors may be used for your purposes, replaced with other symbols. You'll want to somehow let the player characters know that those symbols are interesting, preferably well before they enter Red Jack's. Also, note that the symbol on Fork's door assumes that Eliazu (from Illustrious Castle) is either free or otherwise powerful in Highland. You'll want to use a symbol that points toward an adventuresome source of discord in your game.

For this adventure, I recommend that they go to San Francisco first, and then Las Vegas. If Joe Lakono (or some other enemy) is their reason for going through, give them some clue that their enemy has gone through the "crossroads" door – one probably left deliberately by their enemy to lead them into the ambush.

If they're looking for the crossroads, they're pretty likely to choose San Francisco first, as that door has the crossroads symbol on it. You can also just tell them if they ask: "The doors with the crossroads symbol and the bird symbol are the adventure; it doesn't really matter, but it will probably be more fun if you go through the crossroads door first."

## Time and magic

Time beyond the doors is variable. When the characters return to Highland, there is a 50% chance that however long they spent behind the doors, divide by d20 for how long has passed in Highland; otherwise, multiply by d20 for how long has passed in Highland. Time spent within Red Jack's gambling hall can take no time or it can take years.

If the characters have the world tree on their side, the tree will try to keep time held so that they arrive at the "right" time in Vegas and San Francisco. But once time slips forward, it never returns.

Magic is difficult in San Francisco, Vegas, and London. It costs *half level of effect* extra verve to cast for classical sorcerors, and an extra *half spell level* verve to memorize for mnemonic sorcerors. Ritual works normally, as do ritually-created magic items.

## The characters are unique

If you've read the Highland book, you'll notice lots of people from our world show up in different, but similar, roles in Highland. This adventure takes a lot of more recent people from our world and puts them into very

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similar roles and re-uses them. What about the player characters? Do different versions of them exist in other worlds? I recommend that the player characters be unique throughout the worlds they visit.

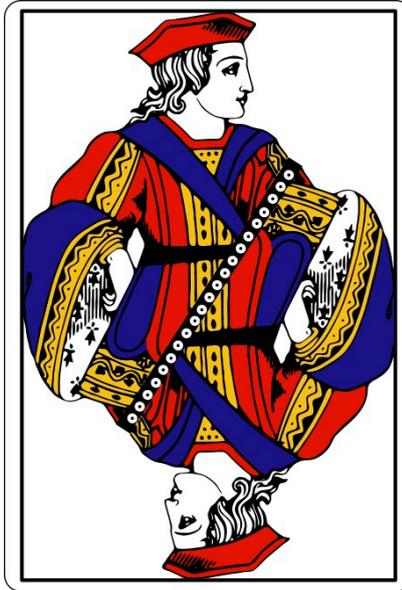
The player characters are the main characters. They're not NPCs, not even in other worlds. Shane, the man with no name, and Roland Deschain are cool partially because they are one of a kind. If there's a Shane policeman in one world, a Shane diplomat in another, and a Shane accountant in yet another, this dilutes the coolness of that character.

This isn't to say that it can't be done well. Michael Moorcock supposedly did a good job (I haven't yet read any of those books). But it's going to be difficult, and easy to make mistakes.

Now, this doesn't mean you can't bring *players* into the game. If some of your players happen to have been in San Francisco in 1969, it might be a great bit to meet that player.

# Rød Jack's Gambling House

"Maria makes the mountains sound like folks was out there dyin'."-Lerner and Lowe



Within Fork is a door to a gambling room where the gambler may gamble the world. Red Jack's House can be part of any adventure, or used on its own. Somehow, the player characters must hear about the house with many doors. Some sage, or ancient writing, or rambling old man, may provide the rumors.

A cherry tree marks the alley that leads to Red Jack's. Anyone who eats a cherry from the tree will be able to pass into Red Jack's House. Others will pass into an abandoned gambling house.

The doors of Red Jack's hall open in slums and gambling centers. For example, besides Fork in the current era, it opens into Las Vegas in 1955, San Francisco in 1969, and London's East End in 1888. When Jack leaves through one of those doors, he takes a form appropriate to the time and place, perhaps even taking over a weak-willed evil person's body.

Five yards around Jack's door in Fork is a level 2 Chaotic Evil place of power.

## Legends of Rød Jack

The Legend of Red Jack comes in many forms. They all share a strange lanky noble dressed like a dandy with a hat, a dark alley, and a sense of hopelessness. Few come unscathed from Red Jack's. Within Red Jack's you can lay odds against your wealth, your name, and your friends. You can play cards for your soul, and roll the wheel of fortune for good or ill.

1. A young noble stumbles drunk into an alley after a hard night of gambling. He is broke, and the cheap port he's been drinking wants to regurgitate. But he's also hungry. He is afraid to return to his wife and children, so he's eating food off of the street. He sneaks into an apartment hoping to steal something, but inside he finds Red Jack, and Jack beckons him to the table. The nobleman loses every game. The next morning he awakes to find that he lost his fortune as a child, and has lived in the streets for his entire life. He has no wife, nor children, nor friends.
2. God plays cards with Red Jack for the fate of the world. Satan joins in the hand.

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3. Red Jack holds regular games for demons, and men who stumble upon these games must play carefully.
4. Ghosts play at his table and fade away. Faeries play for butterflies and mushrooms.
5. A prostitute enters Red Jack’s and returns with a child to find a life of fortune she has always lived.

Any city that opens into Red Jack’s will have tales like these in the underworld.

Red Jack’s clothing will always include a cape, cloak, or long coat; a hat; a weapon at his side. Whatever he wears, he goes overboard with style. If they come from Highland, he is the red jack from the deck of cards: a prince’s gaudy suit and white stockings, with an épée at his side and a long hat with a white feather.

If they came from San Francisco, he wears a tight-fitting lime green suit, a purple fedora, with a bright orange feather sticking out of the side, mirrored sunglasses, a gold chain and a dirk.

If they came from Vegas, he’ll wear a long black leather coat, tight leather leggings, black leather boots, a black pancake hat and green-tinted pince-nez glasses, and a huge sandalwood revolver by his side.

From London they’ll see him in a long coat, a top hat, and carrying a heavy cane with a gold tip. From Hamokera he’ll wear a white robe lined with gold, an orange turban, and a scimitar by his side tied with an orange belt.

## Words of power

Red Jack cannot leave the hall of doors, but he can ride along with other minds beyond the doors. This includes the player characters once they go through the doors. Red Jack doesn’t control the killers he rides along with, but he does talk to them, cajoling them and pushing them to murder in strange and frightening ways. Red Jack prefers victims with low willpower and low perception so that they are easily manipulated.

Jack can only take one mind at a time. He will make his victim see some other people as insects with the cross on their forehead. Later, he will make his victim think that the insects are looking back. Then, he’ll make his victim think that the sign of the crossroads on their forehead will ward off the insects. First drawn, then carved.

Finally, it’s time to start fighting back against the insects.

*Ebeorie temet hpiti.* Strange words for a nervous time. These are the words of power that call Red Jack. Speaking this phrase in a city where Red Jack has a door will give Jack the opportunity to latch onto the character’s mind, see what the character sees, and alter the character’s perceptions. If Jack wants to try, then the player must make a Willpower roll; a failed roll means that Jack has entered the character and can see what the character sees. Once Jack has latched onto a victim, it can leave and enter them at will.

Most people are strangely uneasy about those odd letters at the end a madman's ravings, but enough of them will try to pronounce the Zodiac's strange words that a few of them will successfully do so. Jack will have a wide pick of people to choose from, but will prefer people with power: a player character, or someone near a player character. If any of the player characters speak the words of power, Jack will try to ride their mind.

## Red Jack and the Autumnal Swarm

What is the relationship between the swarm and Jack? Who controls which killers? Red Jack thrives on discord. The swarm desires to create discord—in the short term. For that reason, he's happy to work with them. He'll ride along in the minds of uninfected dupes, such as the Zodiac killer, and feed off of the discord they create.

The swarm needs charismatic leaders to convince followers to accept the insect infection.

## London

"Shall man be given marvels only when he is beyond all wonder? Your days were born in blood and fire! Think not to be inured to history. Its black root succours you. Are you asleep to it, that you cannot feel its breath upon your neck, nor see what soaks its cuffs?"-Alan Moore's Jack the Ripper

London's 1888 Whitechapel murders are not an integral part of this adventure, but a glimpse of the misty London streets may help set the mood for the adventure. If you want more details about the mood and scene of London in 1888, I recommend the graphic novel "From Hell".

The murders were rituals as well. As the Ripper progressed through his victims, the mutilations became increasingly severe. Annie Chapman's uterus was removed. Catherine Eddowes's uterus and kidney were removed, and her face mutilated. Dismembered bodies were found throughout London during this period, including a torso in the basement of the Metropolitan Police headquarters.

*A thick fog rolls through the doorway, bearing with it the smell of rotten eggs and the sour, rank smell of human waste and horse droppings. Beyond the fog you hear the sound of horses trotting on cobblestone, carriages clattering behind them on stone. Walls loom out of the fog on the other side of a cramped, dark alley.*

# San Francisco

"There was madness in any direction, at any hour. You could strike sparks anywhere. We had all the momentum; we were riding the crest of a high and beautiful wave."—  
Hunter S. Thompson

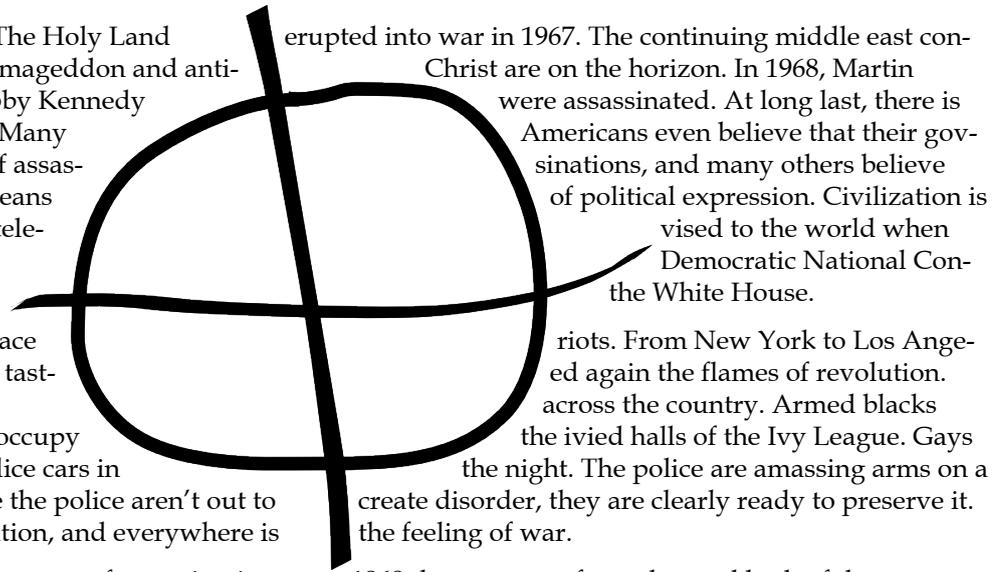
What are the seventies to you? Free love? Consciousness expansion? Lava lamps and bell bottoms? They all spread as a rainbow from San Francisco's Summer of Love. But every light has its darkness, and the shadow of 1967 fell across California in 1969.

The world is at a crossroads. The Holy Land conflict is, to some, a sign that Armageddon and anti-Luther King, Jr., and then Bobby Kennedy nothing can be depended on. Many government is behind the wave of assassination that assassination is a valid means unraveling. Police riots were tele- they reached the gates of the convention. Sandbags surround

Now, in 1969, America fears race les, the cities of America have taste- Home-grown terrorists attack march on the state assembly, occupy and transvestites overturn police cars in scale to fit an army, and while the police aren't out to A red pall drops across the nation, and everywhere is

For California, 1968 was the summer of assassination, from the crossroads. For California, this is the summer of the Zodiac killer and the Manson family.

All empires crumble, and now may be the end for the United States. But the United States is in the grip of a cold war, and should the United States fall, the world falls with it. When the United States brings its might home, as Rome did when it fell, what will happen in Africa, in Asia, and Latin America? What happens in western Europe? Revolution will break out around the world, and simmering enmities will erupt into fire.



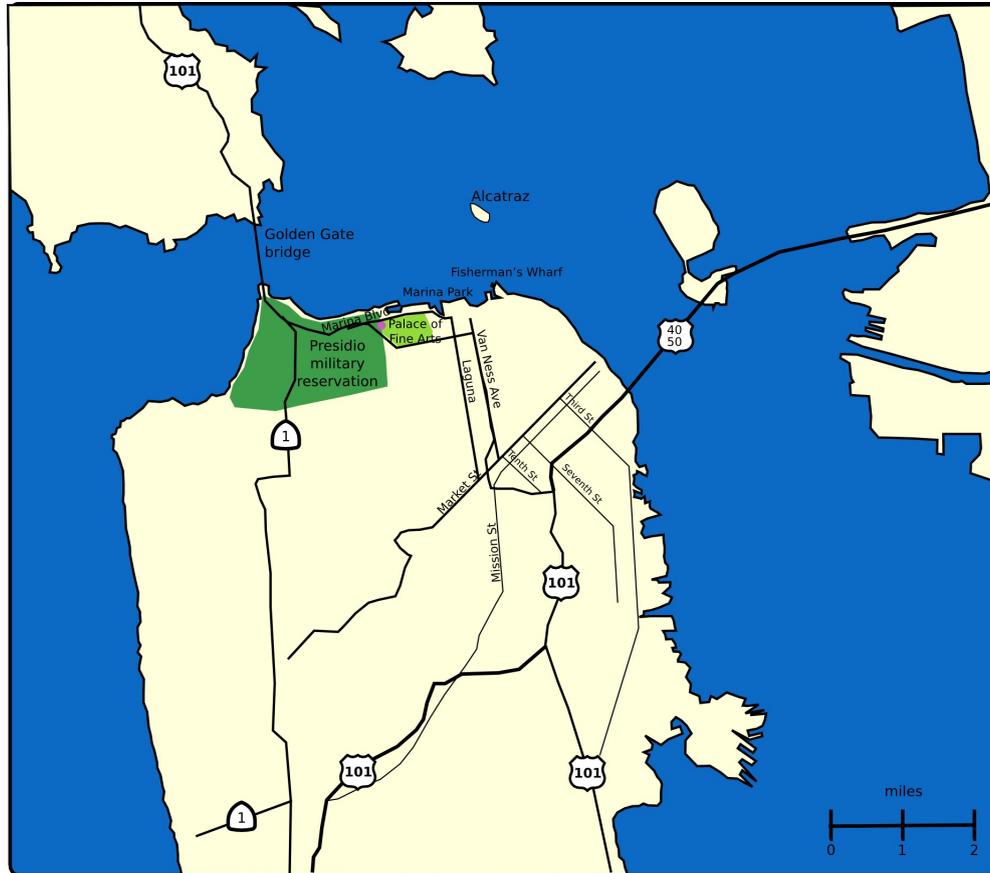
erupted into war in 1967. The continuing middle east con- Christ are on the horizon. In 1968, Martin were assassinated. At long last, there is Americans even believe that their gov- sinations, and many others believe of political expression. Civilization is vised to the world when Democratic National Con- the White House.

riots. From New York to Los Ange- ed again the flames of revolution. across the country. Armed blacks the ivied halls of the Ivy League. Gays the night. The police are amassing arms on a create disorder, they are clearly ready to preserve it. the feeling of war.

1969 the summer of murder, and both of them rose

Some look to ensure that they hold power when America falls, and some work behind the scenes to ensure its failure. Others are resigned to its fall, for if the world does not fall quickly to revolution or nuclear conflict, it will be strangled slowly by overpopulation and a long, icy decline. The future is bleak, so why not avoid it altogether?

This world is one of the thicker roots of the tree. Should it snap, the tree is that much closer to tumbling, depending on how you want to go with this: how critical you want this adventure to be.



## The guest list

There are a lot of people hanging out in this adventure. The most important are the swarm hosts, but there are a few historical figures and a few red-shirted mafia hirelings.

Charles Manson	swarm dupe	the streets	white male
August Wey	rising political star	Saturday's rally	black male
Jesse Hill	swarm dupe, assassin	Saturday's rally	white male
David Stoley	the zodiac	a night on the town?	white male
Bernardine Dohrn	weatherman	Sausalito	white female
Andy Cochino	swarm host	ambush	white male
Deanna Carmen	special agent of the summit	San Francisco	black female
Lin	Manson family member	hive strikes back	white female
Abbie	Manson family member	hive strikes back	white female
Waxen assassin	special (JC, Orlando Fontaine)	hive strikes back	white female
Dana	Manson family member	hive strikes back	white female
Dinah	swarm host, Manson family member	hive strikes back	white female
Mary	swarm host, Manson family member	hive strikes back	white female
Mark Wilford	swarm host	Alcatraz	black male

There are also several unnamed swarm hosts and free swarm.

## People are strange

"Expand your consciousness and find ecstasy and revelation within."-Timothy Leary

The hippie manifesto was described by Time in 1967 as "Do your own thing. Blow the mind of every straight person you can reach. Turn them on, if not to drugs, then to beauty, love, honesty, fun."

In 1969 San Francisco, especially the Haight-Ashbury and Tenderloin districts (and Berkeley if they get that far), there are stranger people than adventurers running around in a robe and pointed hat, or with a sword by their side. They'll be panhandled just like everyone else, and asked if they want to sell or be turned on to marijuana, LSD, and mushrooms. They'll be offered new religions and new politics. And they'll be offered flowers, a place to stay, and free health care.

This was a period when people believed that a Yaqui shaman could turn into an eagle and hop across dimensions. Who knows? Perhaps Don Juan was a Gods & Monsters character.

The *Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic* is a sight as well, and may provide information and health care if needed.

In 1969, the Mission district was still predominately Hispanic. Tongs still maintained control in Chinatown. The Tenderloin and the Castro both contained large gay communities. All of them met on Market Street.

## Queen of the highway

"The policeman is not there to create disorder. The policeman is there to preserve disorder."

The creatures of the Autumnal Swarm all bear a symbol on their bodies: the crossroads, its symbolism twisted and bloodied to their own purpose. This symbol has been taken by the Zodiac killer as well as the Manson family.

The Autumnal Swarm's plans in 1969 call for discrediting the growing Chaotic Good movement. They need to end this movement before it takes root in the world. Giving their acolytes a hippy veneer before dispersing them into the world is part of this plan.

Like Red Jack, the Autumnal Swarm prefers most of its victims to be of low charisma and low wisdom. But they do need a few victims of high charisma to lead the rest of its pawns. They will carefully nurture leaders such as Charles Manson who can motivate their cruel and less self-willed recruits.

The goal of the swarm is to bring down all order. In 1969 San Francisco, this means race riots. The counterculture movement is already on edge because of the Bloody Thursday People's Park riots. The swarm's infiltrators are keeping these groups anxious; all of the underground expects revolution soon.

The trigger will be the assassination of prominent black activist August Wey. Wey came to prominence as a neighborhood activist and youth organizer for the NAACP. While he succeeded at long-lasting improvements to recreational facilities for impoverished youth of all races in Oakland and San Francisco, Wey is most known for brokering a truce between the black, Hispanic, and Chinese gangs in the area. His death at the hands of a white soldier will cause riots in the black community – and beyond, if the swarm can work the factions well. If a bloody war can be engineered between the military and the rioters, the swarm will try to enter organized underground movements into the fight through bombings and direct confrontation.

Their plan also includes the assassination of other leaders and famous people. Sammy Davis Jr. (“father”) is on their list, as is governor Ronald Reagan.

The swarm have several hosts, including would-be assassin Jesse Hill, and a well-placed leader in the California National Guard. They also have a useful charismatic sheepdog named Charles Manson.



## **Alcatraz**

The swarm hive in this world is in the dungeons of Alcatraz, a deserted prison island about a mile north of San Francisco. Alcatraz was a federal fort converted into a federal prison, but abandoned in 1963. The above-ground fort was destroyed to build the prison, but the dungeons from the original fort remain.

The dungeons are down a stairway at the front of cell block A in the prison barracks, behind a large steel door. The stone corridors of the dungeons are cold and damp, and pitiful ghosts wail in the distance. The dungeons are known for their maniacal suicides: an inmate who hacked his own hand off, another who slashed his throat with his eyeglasses, one who killed himself with a pencil sharpener.

Within the dungeons are the sounds of dripping water, rats, and footsteps high above. Unintelligible voices whisper in the damp air. A woman’s voice cries in the stone.

The cells of Alcatraz are four by eight feet. They contain stained toilets and a sink. The prison yard is a concrete area sunk into the hill and surrounded by concrete walls.

The two industries buildings are where prisoners worked to earn money. The model industries building is five stories. There are several caves beneath the model industries building, carved into the sandstone by wave action.

A tall smokestack rises from the power plant. The power plant’s roof says “Alcatraz” in large letters, visible by air. The island is covered in plant life imported by its various occupiers, including roses and lilies once part of gardens maintained by military officers.

The water around Alcatraz is cold, making it very difficult to swim without dying from loss of heat.

From an organizational standpoint, the swarm hosts within the Alcatraz dungeons are interchangeable. They all know the same thing, because whenever they come near each other their knowledge is merged. Even when a host is not near the other hosts, their death and its immediate circumstances will be felt by other hosts nearby.

## Jesse Hill

Jesse Hill lived at 1139 Grant Avenue (between Pacific Avenue and Broadway Street) in the Sunset district when he first came to San Francisco. This number is in the phone book, along with his telephone number 673-1123. The number is disconnected. “Your call cannot be completed as dialed. The number has been disconnected.”

“Mr. Hill” moved out several months ago and the current residents (William and Ellen Browning) don’t know where he went. They know he was a Vietnam veteran, so maybe the army knows where he is. They can provide a description, which can lead to the north docks or to Hill’s Steuart Street apartment. His current apartment at 77 Steuart Street (the Rose Field Apartments) Apartment 409 is south of Market looking towards the piers.

The military has his Steuart Street address. However, they’ll need to be tricked into giving it out. If they go to the army base at the Presidio, an easy Charisma roll will get his current address.

Jesse was found by Charles Manson and recruited for Charly’s friends on Alcatraz. Once he joined Manson’s family, Jesse moved. He gets a check once a month from the army, mailed to his current address. He has become a swarm host, but only part time. The bug will not be controlling him when he performs the assassination.

Jesse was a sniper in the army. He has an M16 semi-automatic rifle with a military scope that negates three range penalties. He’ll be using this to assassinate August Wey. His run-down apartment has a near-perfect birds-eye view of the park at the end of Market Street.

Jesse’s apartment has newspaper clippings about August Wey scattered about the walls, with bulls-eyes drawn on his face. He also still has his army uniform, which he’ll be wearing during the assassination. There is a green beret in his closet, which is not part of his uniform but is there (like the uniform) to tie his action to the military, in this case special forces (which he was never a part of). He also has a matchbook from the Paradise Island Lounge.

His apartment does not have a phone; he uses a communal phone at the end of the hallway. Other residents will sometimes answer the phone when the swarm from Alcatraz call him to tell him they’re on Market Street and need to talk to him (and mesh their knowledge). This is a rundown hotel and the other residents are not talkative to anyone who remotely resembles law enforcement, but will be perfectly happy to chat with someone who gains their trust (or buys them a drink). Some of the things they’ll be able to pass on are that:

1. The guy or guys calling Jesse had a strange, raspy voice.
2. Jesse has a throat problem – sometimes he speaks in a diseased, high-pitched, maybe raspy too, voice. Sometimes he doesn't.
3. Jesse never made calls, he only received them.
4. He once mentioned that he's still in the military, then told them to forget he said it.
5. Usually they meet at a coffeeshop on Market Street, the 49 Café, but a week ago he said back to them something about going to the island.
6. They always ask for Private Hill.
7. Jesse sometimes went for a ride in a black Cadillac sedan that would come pick him up after he got a phone call. Sweet vehicle. New or almost new deVille.
8. He was a quiet man. Kept to himself mostly. Never drank or smoked.
9. The apartment next to him goes through a lot of people, and a lot of them are women.

Some good names for other residents of his hall are Dan Westof, Ignacio Delgado, Franklin Gallia, and Sergio Morales. Lots of Blacks and Mexicans, and everyone is poor.

If they manage to capture Jesse alive (and without an insect inside him), he doesn't know much. If they ask him about Charles Manson, he'll claim to have known lots of Charlies in Vietnam (Viet Cong). In the aftermath of the bug leaving him, though, intimidating him into talking will be a very easy task. Jesse knows that:

1. Charly brought him to Alcatraz to meet the bugs.
2. Some of the bugs walk around as bugs, others live inside humans.
3. The bugs use the doors beneath the Palace of Fine Arts to reach Paradise City.
4. The symbol is the crossroads, and the crossroads are the meeting of Highway 49 and 61 on the way to Paradise City.

Jesse's swarm scar is on his lower back.

## The Zodiac

The Zodiac sent an encoded message in a three-part cryptogram to three San Francisco-area newspapers: the San Francisco Chronicle, the San Francisco Examiner, and the Vallejo Times-Herald. Decoded, it reads:

"i like killing people because it is so much fun it is more fun than killing wild  
game in the forrest because man is the most dangerous anamal of all to kill something  
gives me the most thrilling experence it is even better than getting your rocks off  
with a girl the best part of it is that when i die i will be reborn in paradise and

all the i have killed will become my slaves i will not give you my name because you  
will try to sloi down or stop my collecting of slaves for my afterlife ebeorie temeth  
hpiti"

Deciphering this message is a *difficult* intelligence roll; it takes one day to try. Note that the words are all run together in the code. Without knowledge of the language, they'll probably see this as *ebeorie temethhpiti*. Without knowledge of the demon's name, they'll see it as *ebeorietemethhpiti*.

Ebeorie temet hpiti means Ebeorie, Lord of Discord in the language of the underground. Depending on how well they translate it, it might come out as lord or king of unrest, chaos, or conflagration.

The letter that corresponds to the crossroads symbol is the letter "d". D is for Discord.

The Zodiac is one of Manson's disciples. He was provided to the swarm by Manson so that they could provide him to Red Jack. They did this in return for Red Jack's cooperation using the doors. The Zodiac enjoys killing and leaving strange messages to the world about his killings. He wants to cause discord and chaos.

The Zodiac lives in a run-down apartment in west San Francisco. Red Jack often rides along with the Zodiac and pushes him to murder.

*Zodiac: (Human: 1; Survival: 5)*

His name is David Stoley. He has short hair and glasses and is five feet eight inches tall.

## Charles Manson

*"I am the devil, and I have come to do the devil's work. I have no mercy for you."*

*"Death is the greatest form of love."*

*"We have crossed ourselves out of this world."*

There were many prophets during the sixties and seventies. At this very moment, the Reverend Jim Jones is moving his congregation to Mendocino County several miles north, so that they can survive the coming nuclear war. Northern California is a nice place for that sort of thing, and he'll be a big hit among the local politicians.

Charles Milles Manson (born November 12, 1934, as Charles Milles Maddox) was leader of what came to be known as the Manson Family, a hippie cult that began to form around him in San Francisco in 1967. Manson believed that a Final War between Black and White in the summer of 1969 would destroy America. He and his

Family would wait out the war in a secret city underneath Death Valley that they could reach through a hole in the ground. In this secret city they would live in splendor while the world above was drenched in blood.

When the Blacks didn't seem to cooperate with his prophecy, he decided to trigger the war himself by committing murders and blaming them on black activist groups such as the Panthers and Muslim groups.

<b>Possible Manson Family Victim</b>	<b>Approximate Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
Nancy Warren, Clida Delaney	October 13, 1968 (found)	Ukiah, California
Marina Habe	December 30, 1968	West Hollywood, California
Darwin Scott	May 27, 1969	Ashland, Kentucky
Mark Walts	July 17, 1969	Topanga Canyon, California
Susan Scott	July 1969	Castaic, California
Gary Hinman	July 27, 1969	Topanga Canyon, California

His Manson Family is an echo of the True Family.

It's a bit of a stretch to put Charles Manson in San Francisco but there are reports that he was in Northern California in the summer of 1969. In the context of this adventure, Manson is a swarm recruit, a charismatic leader drawing in an army for the Autumnal Swarm, and creating a hit list for that army to kill. If the hit list is even half successful, there will be chaos. Manson is also influencing the Zodiac killer, a protégé of his if you will.

He doesn't know about the Autumnal Swarm, only that the people he's hooked up with have power.

Manson is 34 years old in August of 1969. It is likely that he has already killed several times. He uses a High-Standard 22 pistol. If they try to capture or kill Manson, his family will fight for him while he fires from the rear – or more likely runs away. If he runs, he'll try to get to Alcatraz.

In 1970, Manson was convicted of conspiracy to commit murder for instructing certain members of the group to carry out the August 1969 Tate-LaBianca killings in Los Angeles. During the trial, Manson and his followers courted media attention. Manson appeared at the trial with an 'X' he had carved into his forehead with a knife. This was copied by his followers the next day. The pattern was modified several times and copied by his followers each time. Eventually the pattern became a swastika, most likely for the publicity it would bring.

This is one of the places where you'll need to be careful not to send the players off on a wild goose chase. If the player characters choose to go to Los Angeles, you're pretty much on your own. Do a search on "Spahn's Movie Ranch" to find out about the semi-abandoned Cielo Drive "hole in the earth" where the Manson family lived. If they do this after the Tate/LaBianca murders, remember that Hollywood was in a panic. Two nights, two brutal

murders, and “pig” in blood on the front door of the Tate house. Some stars left town; others sent their children away. They had no idea who did it or why, until November when Susan Atkins confessed.

## Death Angels

A black supremacist group, the Death Angels believe that white men are a created race inferior in all ways to true humans. They were created by grafting snakes to humans thousands of years ago by a wizard named Ya’akov. Already murderous, the Death Angels are destined to burst into San Francisco news in 1973 when they go on a killing frenzy starting with a machete killing.

In 1969, the Death Angels are one side in the True Family’s attempt to foment racial tension. They will probably not figure in this adventure unless Wey dies. If Wey dies, the Death Angels will be one of the groups the swarm uses to stoke racial violence.

If the player characters choose to find and question some Death Angels, they will find them polite and well-dressed, with short hair or shaved heads. They can be found at the Self-Help Moving and Storage warehouse on Market Street at Twelfth Avenue.

Convincing one to talk will be difficult. They will claim that they’re members of the Nation of Islam, but will refuse to talk about “Death Angels”. The following information is available from the Death Angels if they do talk:

1. The grafted snakes are going to kill a prominent black man. When they do, it’s our time to act.
2. They’re going to kill police officers, as many as they can. They know they’ll eventually get caught, but they need to inspire others to fight the snakes.
3. They’ve been in contact with a black wizard named Mark. He can make time itself slow. He drives a late-model black Cadillac.
4. Mark meets them in their warehouse or sometimes at the park by the Palace of Fine Arts. There is a door in the park that wizards can use, and the door leads to the magical crossroads, from which all crossroads and choices echo.
5. Mark has taught them rituals that he performs at the Palace.

## The Weathermen

"You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows."

On the white side of the racial divide, the swarm are priming a splinter group of the Students for a Democratic Society. The weathermen will, when they happen, speak approvingly of the Manson murders and set a deadly

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bomb at a San Francisco police station. The Weathermen prefer explosives to direct confrontation, however. If the August Wey assassination goes as planned, the Weathermen will begin bombing shopping areas, police stations, and municipal buildings.

The Weathermen have a couple of old houseboats in Sausalito, about a mile northeast of the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge. They consist, currently, of a stable group of about five white men and women, and usually around ten to twenty more people who move in and out of the group. The unofficial leader of this cell is Bernardine Dohrn, a veteran of the 1968 Chicago riots outside of the Democratic national convention.

## August Wey

August Wey is an amalgamation of many black revolutionaries of the late sixties. Many of these quotes are inspired by or taken almost straight from Eldridge Cleaver, for example. His story is influenced by the story of Bobby Seale and local community organizers.

Some possible quotes from August if they meet him personally:

*"Sheathe your sword, brother. This is not yet that kind of war."*

*(In response to "what can we do for you?") "Can you feed these children?"*

*"We are pagans: all Americans today are pagans. We have killed all our gods excepting Ares, to whom we daily sacrifice."*

*"We are a god-fearing nation. The god we fear is Ares, to whom we sacrifice daily. All our other gods are dead."*

*August Wey: (Human: 1; Survival: 3; Defense: 0)*

## The Unknown Soldiers

*"All right baby. Let's hold ourselves. Let's—your angry, your mad, man, let's hold it now, and see if whitey's gonna come up with it."—Sammy Davis, Jr.*

Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis, Jr.'s Summit (the core of the Rat Pack) have been working behind the scenes against the swarm, but in 1969 it doesn't look like they're being successful. Kennedy refused their assistance and the swarm killed him. He had been forewarned enough that his death did not end in a coup, but the swarm had more waiting for America a few years later.

Davis's friend Martin Luther King, Jr. died despite their attempts to save him. The Summit knew that his message of non-violence and racial harmony was in direct conflict with the swarm's plans for racial violence and the undermining of the world.

The Summit's representative in this adventure is twenty-two year old Deanna Carmen, a sharp-witted, gutsy broad who rose from the ashes of the Moulin Rouge and is the Summit's most effective agent.

Assuming that the player characters follow the plan, they'll be seeing Deanna as an adult before they see her as a child. This is a little tricky because there's no guarantee the player characters will actually go through the Vegas door. You'll have to work that out for yourself and with your players.

Deanna has read science fiction and knows that too much foreknowledge could damage the world, so there will be hints, but no outright references or specifics from her about what the characters did/will do in 1955.

Remember that there's no need for the two adventures to be played sequentially. They can have other adventures in between each door. They may come back to Red Jack's later, or they may find the door in a different place entirely. There are many doors beneath the Paradise Island Lounge.

## The Palace of Fine Arts

The area near the door under the Palace is a Chaotic Good level 1 place of power.

## The Paradise Island Lounge

"The great things in this universe are things that we never see."—Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Paradise Island Lounge burned down decades ago. The swarm no longer use it as their headquarters.

*"One of our first successes," says Deanna. "No one even went to jail for it. The Chairman still had some power then."*

Someone still answers the phone number on the matchbook, however, if they call the operator and ask for Las Vegas 3-1416. If they call the Paradise, a carefully-modulated female voice will answer (if you remember the old AT&T recordings, try to emulate it). Because the swarm mind-meld doesn't work over long distances, they might be able to fool the operator into giving them information about the assassination or the swarm in San Francisco.

# Las Vegas

"So now, less than five years later, you can go up on a steep hill in Las Vegas and look West, and with the right kind of eyes you can almost see the high-water mark—that place where the wave finally broke and rolled back."—Hunter S. Thompson



In 1955, Las Vegas is at the crossroads.

The Autumnal Swarm is inserting itself into world politics. It is ensuring that the tools it needs will be available in the seventies to destroy the world. From the ashes of alcohol prohibition, a new prohibition is born to ensure that acolytes such as Charles Manson will be able to infiltrate to levels of power they otherwise would have no hope of reaching.

Racial tension was tightened. The cold war was heightened. The Korean war continued and the seeds were being planted for world war in Vietnam.

This is meant to be a short adventure: a running fight through the Moulin Rouge and then an attempt to get back into the Paradise Island Lounge.

## The Moulin Rouge

"Somebody was always across the railroad tracks."

The Moulin Rouge is one of the most famous hotels of the fifties. It is on the cover of Life magazine. It is a first-class hotel with first-class food, first-class entertainment, and state-of-the-art equipment. It advertises itself as "the first truly cosmopolitan hotel in this famous city". Its doctrine of racial integration among its employees, clientele, and entertainment threatens the Autumnal Swarm's plans for Vegas. For the first time in Vegas, whites and blacks can place their bets together.

It will exist for less than six months. Whether the Moulin Rouge's creation or closing will have any effect on the future of this world is in the hands of the player characters.

The Moulin Rouge is at the edge of Westside, the black side of Vegas. Vegas was fully segregated, and the Westside contained the black casinos, businesses, and people. Black entertainers weren't allowed to stay in the Strip hotels they played in; they weren't allowed to roam the Strip casinos when their shows closed. They had to retreat to the Westside.

When the Moulin Rouge opened at 900 West Bonanza Road on Tuesday, May 24, 1955, it provided black entertainers with a place to stay and a place to go in the early hours after shows. White entertainers followed. The show-girls came, and the gamblers followed.

If you want to mingle with the cool crowd in 1955, the Moulin Rouge is the place to be. William Bailey, one of the producers at the Moulin Rouge, described it this way:

The African-American stars that worked on the Strip could not entertain and work with their white contemporaries in those establishments, so everybody came to the Moulin Rouge to do it. And after the working hours of the last show on the Strip, everyone gathered at the Moulin Rouge to have a ball. And it went on till seven, eight, nine o'clock in the morning. It was just something out of a storybook. You would have to have been there to really be able to properly articulate the kind of atmosphere, the kind of electricity that was generated at this hotel.

I stumble over myself verbally when I start thinking about the wonderful times that we used to have and the thrill I used to get when I'd walk out on the stage for a third show. They started at, I think, two o'clock in the morning. It would be nothing to walk out and see Gregory Peck, Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra. You name it and they were there. And it was so exciting to be able to entertain people at this level that had come over to the Westside to enjoy themselves and have a good time, let their hair down and just be people.

It was a glorious six months.

The Moulin Rouge appeared to be a great success. It attracted standing-room only crowds, opening a third show where Strip hotels had only two. But on Wednesday, October 19, 1955, employees came to work to discover the doors chained shut. Within a week, one of the partners moved to the mob-run Desert Inn casino. In the bankruptcy proceedings, it was alleged that the other hotels pressured financiers into bringing short-term notes due when they otherwise would have let the notes ride. And other money was simply disappearing. "Somebody was milking the pig."

There was odd trouble in the Moulin Rouge from the start. On April 7, 1955, while still under construction, one wing was destroyed, supposedly when a construction worker's torch started a fire which went out of control and took out the entire wing. Another fire is destined to destroy the abandoned Moulin Rouge in 2003.

## **Employees**

Almost everyone who works at the Moulin Rouge is black. The security staff is interracial. The chorus line is black. The dealers are white: there were no experienced black dealers in Vegas. But this all made the casino floor that much more exotic. Most are dressed in some sort of costume. The doormen, waiters, dealers, and guards, for example, dress in the "gaudy colors" of the French Foreign Legion. The greeter replacing Joe Louis is dressed in a Foreign Legion uniform. Louis himself wears an ordinary suit when he greets visitors.

## **The Watusi Dancers**

The floor show dance is billed as the Tropi Can Can; one of the dances they do is "the Watusi" in which the dancers come out "in feather tails to writhe through a violent sequence of jumps and contortions. At the climax of the dance a medicine man [comes] bounding out brandishing two live squawking chickens."

Their signature number, of course, is the Can-Can.

There are 23 floor show dancers. In real life, some of the dancers' names were Dee Dee Jasmine, Anna Bailey, Oberia Coleman, and Mary Louise Williams. The captain of the chorus line is Carrie Adams Pollard. The floor show is produced by Clarence Robinson, from New York, who also directed shows at the Paris Moulin Rouge.

## **Music**

Backing up the special guests who stream into the Moulin Rouge is Benny Parson and his band, with Bob Bailey as master of ceremonies and stage manager Wally Ogle.

## **A feast of friends**

Everyone shows up at the Moulin Rouge, so whoever you want your characters to meet or see can be here: Ella Fitzgerald, Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope, Harry Belafonte, Gregory Peck, Cary Grant, Sammy Davis Jr., and Tallulah Bankhead. Even a twelve-year-old Maurice and nine-year-old Gregory Hines will be there as one of the opening acts along with the Platters.

## The partners

There are several partners behind the scenes, but the most visible partners in the day-to-day operation of this fictional Moulin Rouge are Joe Louis, Hadrian “Haddy” Reuben, and Phillippe “Biz the Boss” Bismieux.

Haddy Reuben is a Harlem restaurateur who wants to expand his empire, and sees the integrated clientele of the Moulin Rouge as the future of entertainment. Reuben is a tough man, who started as a chef before becoming a restaurant owner and nightclub mogul. He’s basically honest, but is not above getting into a brawl when his future is at stake or he knows he’s right. Growing up black in the thirties, however, he also recognizes the need for discretion and the usefulness of appearing to back down in order to regroup and come back stronger. Reuben and Louis have hit it off very well and have become good friends.

Bismieux has a checkered past, having come out of construction in New Orleans. If that sounds like he’s got mafia connections, there’s a reason: he does. He doesn’t know about the mafia’s connection with the Autumnal Swarm (and wouldn’t believe it even if he found out) but he does assist them in little ways. He creates bad shares of ownership in the Moulin Rouge, and sells them according to the mob’s instructions. He’ll move to the Desert Inn after the Moulin Rouge fails. Bismieux is a great talker and con artist, the kind of man who can happily shake your hand and slip off your watch in the process.

## Joe Louis

The Brown Bomber was 41 in 1955. He had retired from boxing, but by this time he had run into trouble with the IRS and had returned to boxing despite being out of shape. Harry Reuben offered him part ownership in the Moulin Rouge in return for his being a greeter at the hotel.

After the Moulin Rouge closes, and continually hounded by the IRS, Louis will go on to become a professional wrestler. He will remain friends, however, with Frank Sinatra.

That’s in our “real” world. During this period in 1955 in the game, Louis is aware that there are problems in the Moulin Rouge financial structure, although he doesn’t know exactly what they are. He knows that money is disappearing, and he knows that there’s a mafia connection with Bismieux (although he’s also pragmatic enough to realize that just about every successful casino has some sort of mafia connection). He’s making contact with Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis, Jr. to see if they would like to take part ownership and use their influence to clean the place up.

If the player characters block the swarm murder run and save Louis, Sinatra, and Davis from the swarm, the trio will form a far more important organization. Their “Summit” will try, and often fail, to oppose the swarm in this world. And hopefully they’ll learn enough from the player characters for Deanna to know where to be in 1969.

## Frank Sinatra

"The highest aspiration of man should be individual freedom and the development of the individual. Weigh everything that is proposed to you, everything in the line of government and law and economic theory, on this one scale: that it should at all times not offer you sanctuary or security in exchange for your right to fly as high and as far as your own strength and ability will take you. Plenty of room for a floor underneath so that no one should live in degradation, but reserve the right for yourself to be free."

The Summit grew from the ruins of the Moulin Rouge. Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis, assuming things go well in this adventure, will form a counterforce to the True Family and the Autumnal Swarm. They will work behind the scenes to end racism as well as alleviate the nuclear tensions of the cold war.

They will be more successful at the former than the latter. They will first support John F. Kennedy, but Kennedy will sever ties with the Summit once he takes office. He will escalate the cold war in South America and in Asia. He will also encourage Congressional harassment of Sinatra.

The Summit will then support Richard Nixon, who will campaign to end the Vietnam war. Nixon will maintain relations but will also extend the war into Cambodia at the same time as he tries to defuse tension between the United States, Russia, and China. Nixon eventually will end the Vietnam war in a manner that ensures at least another decade of cold war tension.

After Vietnam, the Summit’s behind-the-scenes power will wane along with their entertainment draw, and they will retire from fighting the Autumnal Swarm. In the end, however, Summit support in the sixties for Ronald Reagan in California will have paved the way to his successful White House bid in 1980 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The Summit will be more successful in its support for integration. Sinatra and Davis will refuse to stay at hotels and perform at clubs that don’t accept black patrons. They will encourage their friends in the wider rat pack to do the same. Their activism will lead clubs and casinos throughout the United States to end their racist policies and usher in the integrated United States of the seventies.

Sinatra, while volatile, is loyal to his friends. He will remain friends with Joe Louis, paying Louis's medical bills several times, and will similarly help Spiro Agnew after the Vice President's disgrace.

While some of his best movies and his greatest performances involve people at odds with the mafia, Sinatra will be hounded by rumors of mafia connections throughout his life. Most of these rumors will be created by the mafia itself.

## **Sammy Davis, Jr.**

"Being a star has made it possible for me to get insulted in places where the average Negro could never hope to get insulted."

Of the Summit members who met at the Moulin Rouge, the crucial members will be Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis, Jr. With the Moulin Rouge experience behind him, Davis will campaign against segregation, and be the first black actor to star in episodic television—a show which the Autumnal Swarm will fight to keep off the air. He will also marry a white actress in the sixties.

Following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968, Davis will help defuse the race riots that sweep the nation. In 1969 he will be on the Manson Family's hit list of blacks who need to be killed to usher in a new America.

When things become informal, he enjoys getting up on stage and taking over the drums for a bit.

## **Deanna Carmen**

Deanna Carmen is eight years old in 1955, and is one of the opening acts at the Moulin Rouge along with tap dancers Maurice and Gregory Hines.

## The Paradise Island Lounge



In Las Vegas, Red Jack's Gambling House enters in the basement of the Paradise Island Lounge and Casino. The Paradise is located across the tracks from the Moulin Rouge at 111 North Main Street.

The Paradise Island Lounge is a Pacific Island-themed casino and nightclub. New York mobster Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel founded the Paradise in 1946 backed by Meyer Lansky. Siegel opened the Paradise on December 26, 1946, closed it again, and re-opened it in March 1947. During the building of the casino, Siegel was prone to outbursts; after one tirade, noticing that his construction foreman was nervous about making a known mobster (and one of the founders of Murder, Inc) angry, Siegel said, "don't worry, we only kill each other." He should have listened to himself: Siegel was murdered by the mob in June 1947.

Siegel's death, and the publicity around it, glamorized Las Vegas as a place of risk and ruthlessness.

The mafia continued running the Paradise through True Family managers throughout the fifties and up to at least 1967 (assuming it survives the player characters).

## Backdoors

The basement of the Paradise Island Lounge is filled with doors, to anywhere you'd like. Doors to anywhere important will be locked, but since the swarm don't have magic, they'll be locked normally and easily bypassed using an "open" spell or a thief's skill. The basement is an Ordered Evil place of power.

## Other Places

These casinos and other places may play a part if the characters spend time in Vegas. More likely, they'll be part of the background. Vegas in 1955 is not as bright and neon-covered as it is today, but it is pretty amazing compared to Highland.

## Eldorado

The Eldorado (City of Gold) Club is just down the street from the Paradise, at 128 East Fremont Street. The owner, Benny Binion, is currently in jail for federal tax evasion. Eldorado is known as the first downtown club to install carpeting in the gambling hall. The restaurant serves a Texas chili recipe that Binion acquired in a Texas prison. The Eldorado serves free alcohol to gamblers and will accept any bet a player can put on the table.

"If you want to get rich, son, make little people feel like big people. Good food cheap, good whiskey cheap, and a good gamble. That's all there is to it."

Binion is ruthless. Vegas legend has it that he hires hit men to kill anyone caught cheating at his casino.

## Disneyland

In Anaheim, Disneyland opened on July 17, 1955. It probably won't be a part of the adventure, but giant talking mice might be on the news. Ronald Reagan was there, but the current governor of California is Goodwin J. Knight. Sinatra, Davis, and much of the rest of the rat pack were also at the opening.

## El Cortez

Bugsy Siegel's first casino was at 600 Fremont Street. He sold it to finance his purchase of the Paradise.

## The Riviera

The Riviera, a nine-story high rise, opened on April 20, 1955 on the south side of the strip. It was the first, but far from the last, Vegas high-rise. It will stand out, despite its distance from the Paradise and Moulin Rouge.

## Hour for magic

What's real? What's fantasy? There really was a Moulin Rouge in Las Vegas in 1955. Scraps of it remain, though it's been through several starry-eyed owners and a massive fire. It really was the cool place to be after hours. And employees really did arrive on an October morning to find the doors chained shut. The people in this fantasy Moulin Rouge, however, are not the people who worked in the real one. With the exception of Joe Louis they're composites and outright new characters. Even Louis did not really become a secret warrior against an extra-dimensional insect hive. At least, as far as I know. When it comes to the Moulin Rouge, myth and reality mesh.

# Probable Scenes

"I know in my heart that man is good. That what is right will always eventually triumph. And there's purpose and worth to each and every life."-Ronald Reagan

Remember that this is a fantasy game. Play up the fantastic elements of San Francisco and Las Vegas, not the technology. Describe the sun rising over a strange land, the colored lights, the alien dress. Anchor it all on the people of those times, who were, each in their own way a bit fantastic.

You can also play with time travel, but be careful. The more definite things you lay out that haven't happened yet, the more things there are to not happen as they should. Let the players bring the temporal anomalies, such as a photograph from 1969 to 1955. Photographs from 1955 might exist in 1969, but don't tie them to a specific action or place, at least not immediately. Leave it ambiguous, and wait until the players establish what the action was or the place was.

This is not a dystopian game. The actions of the player characters, when done in good faith, should lead to a better world in the long run. So if they stop the Manson family and come back to this world later, they may be able to watch such movies as "Tess" and "Chinatown" with Sharon Tate-Polanski.

# Rød Jack's Gambling House

## Rød Jack

*You open the door into a sparse, unpainted room. There is a simple wooden table in the center of the room. Above it a wheel hangs spinning from a post in the table, its jackpots muddled into a bloody grey. On the table lies a deck of cards on a rusted mirror. You hear a flutter from the butterflies behind you, but the noise is drowned out by boisterous singing.*

*"Away out here they got a name for rain and wind and fire. The rain is Tess, the fire Jo. They call the wind Maria."*

*"Hello. I wasn't expecting you just yet."*

*A man steps out, wearing a prince's gaudy red suit and white stockings, an épée at his side and a long hat with a white feather upon the long curly ringlets of hair streaked white and black. He doffs his hat and bows towards you.*

*"Welcome to my home," he says.*

Red Jack is Ordered Evil. He is also known as *Ebeorie*, the Lord of Discord. He is an emotional demon and draws power from riot and conflict. Within the constraints of the wheel and the deck he is trustworthy: the riddle gives him power, and he is bound by the riddle. Beyond the wheel and the deck, he enjoys suffering. He gains power through discord and heated arguments. He is the inspiration and the cause of many of the worst serial killers throughout the world tree.

Red Jack is virtually indestructible in his home. He has magic resistance 8, which means that any magic cast will fail on a roll of 8 or less on d20. Further, within the gambling halls magic costs an additional spell level verve to cast (if Red Jack is nearby, this cost is only paid if the spell gets past Jack's magic resistance).

*Red Jack: (Demon: 8; Evil; Survival: 42; Move: 14; Attacks: Special; Defense: +6; Special Attacks: Send to other world; Special Defenses: immune to normal weapons, regeneration; Magic Resistance: 8)*

*Demonic specialties: ride-along, words of power, influence, delusions, open doors, emotional high, invisibility.*

*Demonic power points: 23 (can store up to 24 points and have up to 32 points in play at any one time)*

*Intelligence 15, Charisma 14, Wisdom 11*

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Red Jack begins play with 23 demonic power points. He’s been soaking in a lot of discord by way of his ride-alongs. Jack currently has six points in play from the ride-alongs he maintains.

Power	Cost	Running total
Zodiac ride-along	1 point	1 point
A Vegas ride-along	1 point	2 points
Jack the Ripper ride-along	1 point	3 points
The Fork murderer ride-along	1 point	4 points
A Hamokera murderer ride-along	1 point	5 points
A Roman crossroads murderer ride-along	1 point	6 points

If Red Jack becomes a recurring villain, later demonic specialties might include teleport or dominate, to make his ride-alongs even more deadly and mysterious.

**Open doors:** This specialty allows Red Jack to send any one target per round to a world that his doors open onto. There is no saving roll against this specialty. He will not send multiple victims to the same door unless he knows there’s an ambush waiting for them.

**Regeneration:** As the custodian, Red Jack regenerates 8 survival per round while within the Gambling House.

## Drawing Cards

Red Jack will shuffle the deck and cut it into two piles: one for fortune and one for fate. If you’ve got sleight-of-hand skill with cards, it would be even cooler to have one deck, and ensure that each player draws one fortune and one fate. If, like me, you can’t pull something like that off, just separate the deck into standard cards for fortune and the major arcana for fate, and offer them a pull from each deck.

Suit	Modern Suit	Moral Code
Loaves	Hearts	Chaos
Sword	Clubs	Order
Stakes	Spades	Good
Dishes	Diamonds	Evil

Tarot decks are easy to find nowadays. I used the *Kalevala deck* from Kalervo Aaltonen and Taina Pailos. The “forgotten gods” on the deck are the Finnish epic heroes.

## Jack's patter

As he shuffles the deck, Jack recites a bit of patter. However you handle the shuffling, when you're done the “fortune” pile should be “normal” cards, and the “fate” pile should be the major arcane.

*Step right up folks.*

*They call 'em playing cards, not watching cards. Watch the shuffle, it ain't that hard.*

*The magician today is the devil tomorrow, fortune's luck and fate's your sorrow.*

*Draw the sun or the moon or the star, the deck's bright fortunes take you far.*

*If you have nerve you may have more if fortune smiles upon your door.*

*Find the queen or fear the king, or face the anchorite in the ring.*

*Maybe you win, maybe you lose, it all depends on the cards you choose.*

*Cut it once or draw it high, only a fool lets the cards go by.*

*The mirror's hot, don't hesitate: draw once for fortune, once for fate.*

At “once for fate”, he lays the cards down, the fortune deck on one mirror, the fate deck on the other. They can draw from the top, or cut once and draw from the new top. They may do this in any order (but remember that characters without a moral code can't pull from the fortune deck). The player characters may try to discover the location of one or more cards, for example by watching the mirror to see the bottom card. The deck's draw is random. If a character successfully “sees” some card's location, roll randomly for what card they see. This is the characters' only chance to draw the cards. While they may visit Jack again, he will only offer them the cards once.

## Fortune cards

Any character with a moral code may draw from the fortune deck. If a character without a moral code draws a card, that card will be blank. The fortune deck consists of the numbered cards and the face cards of the normal deck.

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Numbered cards (2-10) provide bonuses or penalties when in a critical situation. The card will provide a penalty if the character has the opposite moral code, or a bonus otherwise. Bonuses may be played at any time by the player. The player may keep the card that they draw, and play it in a critical situation. Penalties have a 50% chance, until invoked, of being invoked the next time the player chooses to use mojo on a roll involving at least one opponent. They will be unable to spend mojo, causing their action to fail. The next action by their opponent is at a bonus of the number on their card. The bonus or penalty applies for that entire scene, once the card is played. It will apply to all rolls by the player (for bonuses) or against the character (for penalties).

The face cards grant a lasting bonus or penalty of two. This modifier will last until the character increases their level. The character will know, each time the modifier makes a difference, that their loss or win came from their draw.

Princess	Wisdom	The modifier applies to any roll to understand a situation or know the right path, both physical and moral.
Prince	Wealth	The modifier applies to any rolls regarding money.
Queen	Love	The modifier applies to any rolls regarding friendship, love, influence, or charisma.
King	Health	The modifier applies to any rolls regarding healing or health.

Aces provide an automatic success on the character’s next saving roll against death. If the ace is a penalty, the next saving roll against death is an automatic failure.

### Fate cards

Any character may draw one card from the fate deck. The fate deck consists of the major arcana from a tarot deck. There are twenty-two cards in the fate deck. Four of them are speaking cards: the world, the hanged man, the chariot, and the falling tower. The other cards make something happen to the character who draws it. There are six each of boon cards, bane cards, and conflict cards. The character may not keep their fate card, but they may elect to save its effect for later if it is a boon. Cards can only directly affect one character, though in some cases, such as a wish, it doesn’t have to be the character who drew the card.

Characters will not always know the effect of the card when they draw it, but once the effect takes place, they will realize that it was the card that did it. Each card has a suggested phrase for Red Jack. He will always say something like “You draw well”, “a good card”, “very good”, “lucky”, or “Good, good”, regardless of whether the card is good or bad.

### Boon cards

**Empress:** “The gifts the Queen bestows from her basket.” A special magic item devoted to the character’s archetype will appear in this or the next adventure. The character will know that something special is in store for them, and when near the item they will understand how to get to it.

**Force/Strength:** “In the heart of your enemy, that is where the truth lies.” The character gains 1 to their archetypal ability.

**Justice:** “Neither scales nor children can be fooled by artifice. Trust to the sword when the scales fall.” The character can, once, choose to understand the truth about someone or some situation. They will penetrate disguises, see hidden or invisible creatures, and know the veracity of any statement. The effects are instantaneous, but the knowledge is generally permanent: that invisibility spell or illusion no longer affects the character.

**Magician:** “In the flames of the craftsman are born all manner of wonder.” The player may choose one spell or field (at +1, with one skill) for their character, as if they had already known it.

**Pope/Hierophant:** “The pope comes out of the east. Never take the stage after children or animals. The character can, once, choose to undo or rewind an action or set of related actions (such as a scene) that the character took part in.

**Sun:** “And a little child shall lead them... down the proverbial primrose path.” The character can, once, convince any creature or group to follow them or to let them pass.

### Bane cards

**Devil:** “Beware the man who goes masked and naked... watch the cards, there—” “You feel a sharp stinging in your fingers as you lift the card. A thin cut smears blood down the edge of the card. The blood beads up, rolls down, and disappears.” The character now has a blood puddle stalking them. The puddle is the same level as they are, and will follow the character and attack their friends when their friends are alone. Further, the puddle is tied to the character: any survival points lost by the puddle are also lost by the character (such points lost count as archetypal) and any injury points gained by the puddle are gained by the character. The puddle will act as intelligently as blood puddles normally do.

**Emperor:** “He will take your daughters, your fields, and the tenth of your seed, and you shall cry out because the king you chose over god has betrayed you. A noble card, and regal, for the scepter and the orb are at hand.” The

## 40 – Red Jack’s Gambling House

character is ruined. The character’s reputation has been destroyed, and the legal system wants them imprisoned. No one, outside of the player characters, will trust the character if they have heard of the character. This bane may be overcome, but it will be a difficult adventure. The character will only discover clues leading to this adventure after they reach their next level. Even after restoring their honor legally, there will remain some element of distrust among people who have heard of the dishonor but not of the restoration.

**Fool:** “Pack up your troubles and smile, for the world opens up before you.” The character loses 1 from their archetypal ability.

**Lovers:** “What god has joined, let no man rent asunder.” A person close to the character will betray them or has betrayed them, most likely to an important enemy.

**Moon:** “When the hound bays, the master follows.” The character has been or will be unwittingly subverted by an enemy. At one point in the future, the enemy will command the character to do something, and the character must obey that command; the command might also be triggered by an event or phrase. There is no resistance to the command, but once carried out the character is free from further influence. The command shouldn’t take more than a few minutes of playing time to complete.

**Popeess/High Priestess:** “Hard work and perseverance bring revelation, and the fields of the gods are ever brimming with boons for the faithful.” A cursed magic item will appear in this or the next adventure. The character will know that something special is in store for them, and when near the item they will understand how to get to it. Once acquired, the character will initially believe that it is beneficial, and it will be difficult to convince them otherwise.

### Conflict cards

Conflict cards put the character at risk, but if they pass their trials, they will gain a boon.

**Death:** “The reaper marks passage, not an end, and his scythe is sweeter for the cut.” History has changed: the character’s last battle left them seriously injured: they have four injury points that will not heal, with all the penalties that entails. For each life saved or each life taken, the character heals one injury point. If they survive this test and heal all of their injuries, they gain one point of endurance.

**Hermit:** “Inner sight sees farther than the eye.” The character is blinded. However, if they can survive to their next level, they gain an additional level on top of it. From that point on their character is always one level higher than their experience total indicates. The blindness is incurable until the next level, at which point it remains but is curable through divine means.

**Judgment:** “If all of your dead were to rise up, what would your greeting be?” The player and guide must list one action of their character that was wrong or that wronged someone. They must right that wrong before they reach their next level, or they will lose all experience gained over their current level.

**Temperance:** “Sunlight or sunset? Hard to tell, but this card presages change and shakeup.” The character is made aware of the eternal struggle between good and evil, order and chaos. They gain a glimpse of the world tree and the insects in its bark, of the city at the crossroads and the winding roads that lead to it. Characters that do not have a moral code may choose a moral code. The character must in some way prove their moral code. If they do, they will gain, three times during each level, a bonus of five to a roll in furtherance of their moral code. But while proving their code, they have a penalty of one to all rolls not made in furtherance of their moral code.

**Star:** “One foot in water, the other on land. Destiny lies in the margins.” The character will not regain survival (but will regain verve) until all survival is gone and they take at least one injury. When they take that injury, their survival is restored to their maximum.

**Wheel of Fortune:** Red Jack calls out your bet for the wheel: “Ten shillings minimum, play your bets before the wheel stops spinning.” And the wheel slows as Jack hands you ten strangely-colored coins. That’s your stake, and you cannot leave until you’ve bet it all. (The character must bet each of the chips, until each chip has been bet; they can bet all at once or dole them out over several spins. They can also bet their winnings, but they don’t have to. If the character ends up with chips, they gain a bonus of their chip count on all archetypal rolls for the next three game sessions. Every original chip lost means a penalty of one on all rolls for the duration of this adventure. Those two can combine. Use a real wheel, not ability rolls, for this. Use red chips for the original allotment, and white chips for the character’s winnings.)

## Speaking cards

One of Jack’s duties is to provide a voice for the world tree and the road. Should one of these cards force him to speak, that will end the characters’ time with him.

*Jack gathers the cards clumsily, hurriedly. He turns away and leaves the room, closing the door behind him.*

If they ask him to stay, or somehow ask him to tell them more:

*He speaks quickly and without looking at you.*

*“The cards no longer make your life. That is up to you now. Please leave.”*

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The wheel will slowly stop spinning. When Jack closes the door, it locks. He will not return in this guise for them, though he can return if they go through one of the doors and come back – but he’ll return in the guise appropriate for that door. They will not get another chance at the cards, however.

They will remember the voice and the words in their dreams. Their dreams will contain variations on what the speaking card described.

### The World

If they draw the world, the road speaks through Red Jack.

*Red Jack stiffens. His eyes roll back and he stares at you with empty orbs. Then he speaks, in a voice hard and rough, the voice of a man who has seen many troubles and many days.*

*“On the road to wisdom are many doors. The numbers of the roads are 49 and 61. They stand between life and death, wisdom and folly, the unknown and the known. I am the road. I am life. First the crossroads. Then paradise. Follow the signs. Should you find the road, do not lose it; once you lose the way, it is difficult to walk the same path again.”*

### The Hanged Man

If they draw the hanged man, the world tree speaks through Red Jack.

*Red Jack stiffens. His eyes roll back and he stares at you with empty orbs. Then he speaks, and his voice is strong and clean, like a starry night or a green and lush wood.*

*“The roots of the world grow weak. Insects nip at the branches and gnaw at the trunk. The branches of the tree are the paths of the world: the road and the tree are one.”*

### The Chariot

If they draw the chariot, the eternal city speaks through Red Jack.

*Red Jack stiffens. His eyes roll back and he stares at you with empty orbs. Then he speaks, and his voice is a harmony of many voices, off-tune but beautiful, the soul of humanity.*

*"At the end of the road, the spires of the city still shine but their light grows weak. The vandals are at the gates, and the sword of time is raised above its alleys and towers. The sword of Arthur and of Ellesan and of Roland, and the ancient grail stand as the axle of the crossroads. Wear your sword well on the road, for the road is filled with danger. The roads to the city teem with enemies, yet you will still find those who welcome pilgrims on the crossroads. Watch carefully for the 7 and the 13, the hidden numbers which mark the path to the city."*

### The Falling Tower

If they draw the falling tower, the Insect Queen speaks through Red Jack.

*Red Jack stiffens. His eyes roll back and he stares at you with empty orbs. Then he speaks, and his voice is pain, a high-pitched whine cold and inhuman, wavering with hate.*

*"There is no road for you, only death. If you look for the road, you will die before you find it. If you find the road you will die in the traveling. The doors of the road are not for your species, who cannot withstand emptiness nor cold nor the fullness of the hive."*

### **Wheel of Life:**

If they ask to wager on the wheel, Jack will pull the betting surface out of his voluminous clothing and lay it on the table.

*He pulls a scroll of cloth from his coat, unrolls it, and lays it upon the table. The cloth is covered in red and black squares, with numbers in each square. "What shall you wager on the wheel?" he asks. "Dreams? Hopes? Loves or Life? Trade your aspirations for a chip and lay down your bets. Bet on red or black, even or odd, high or low, or lay your chip on your lucky number. The sky's the limit when the wheel turns for you.*

Characters can wager up to three important parts of their life, dreams, or aspirations. Each will give them a different color chip. When they win with a chip, they get that color of chips back for it. Their winnings, if they have any, can be exchanged for answers to questions, fortunes told, and fortunes made.

Characters can wager on red or black, on numbers, on high or low, and on even or odd. Low bets are the numbers one through 18; high bets are the numbers 19 through 36. If you're familiar with roulette you can let them bet any legal roulette combination. Red, black, high, low, even, and odd pay one to one: for every chip bet, they get their bet plus another chip. Numbers pay 35 to 1: for every chip bet, they get their bet plus 35 more chips. Bets on low third, middle third, and high third pay two to one: for every chip they bet, they get two more chips.

If you can get a real roulette wheel, I recommend it. Small portable ones are easily found on-line by looking for “roulette paperweight”.

## Questions

Red Jack will gamble for answers, should they ask him anything important. He’ll wager the answer, and they must wager something of importance for them. They can wager anything, even pieces of their past or future.

*“My dear boy, this is not a fortune-teller’s hut. The cards do not see the future, the cards are the future.”*

***“Why is our friend appearing and disappearing?”***

*“The vine that holds your world is beginning to sing; it will soon snap.”*

***“Why?”***

*“The man in the dugout canoe.”*

***“How can we stop it?”***

*“The branches of the world are strained because your friend is dead and not dead at the same time. If you can ensure that he is always dead, sometime when the world isn’t looking, you will remove the strain on the branches.”*

***“What happens when the vines snap?”***

*“The world breaks.”*

***“Where does it go?”***

*“You didn’t look very closely at the darkness at the edge of the crossroads. That was smart.”*

*“When you look into the abyss, the abyss looks back.”*

*“Joe Lakono works for the abyss.”*

*“I am on nobody’s side. I have certain duties to fulfill, and I fulfill them.”*



## Palace of Fine Arts

"Anyone who disappears is said to be seen in San Francisco. It must be a delightful city, and possess all the attractions of the next world."—Oscar Wilde

The characters arrive underneath the Palace of Fine Arts up by the Marina district and the Presidio. The palace was built for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, a world's fair to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal.

A few blocks north is the bay. To the west the Golden Gate Bridge will be visible spanning more than a mile across the bay with its red iron and cables. It is 30 yards wide and 70 yards above the water. At night it is a bridge of lights, with the lights of Oakland twinkling across the bay.

It's a cold August. Temperatures in San Francisco normally range from 55 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit, but this month temperatures are hitting 50 to 65; August 14 will have a record low for that day, at 48 degrees. There is no rain in August this year, which is normal for

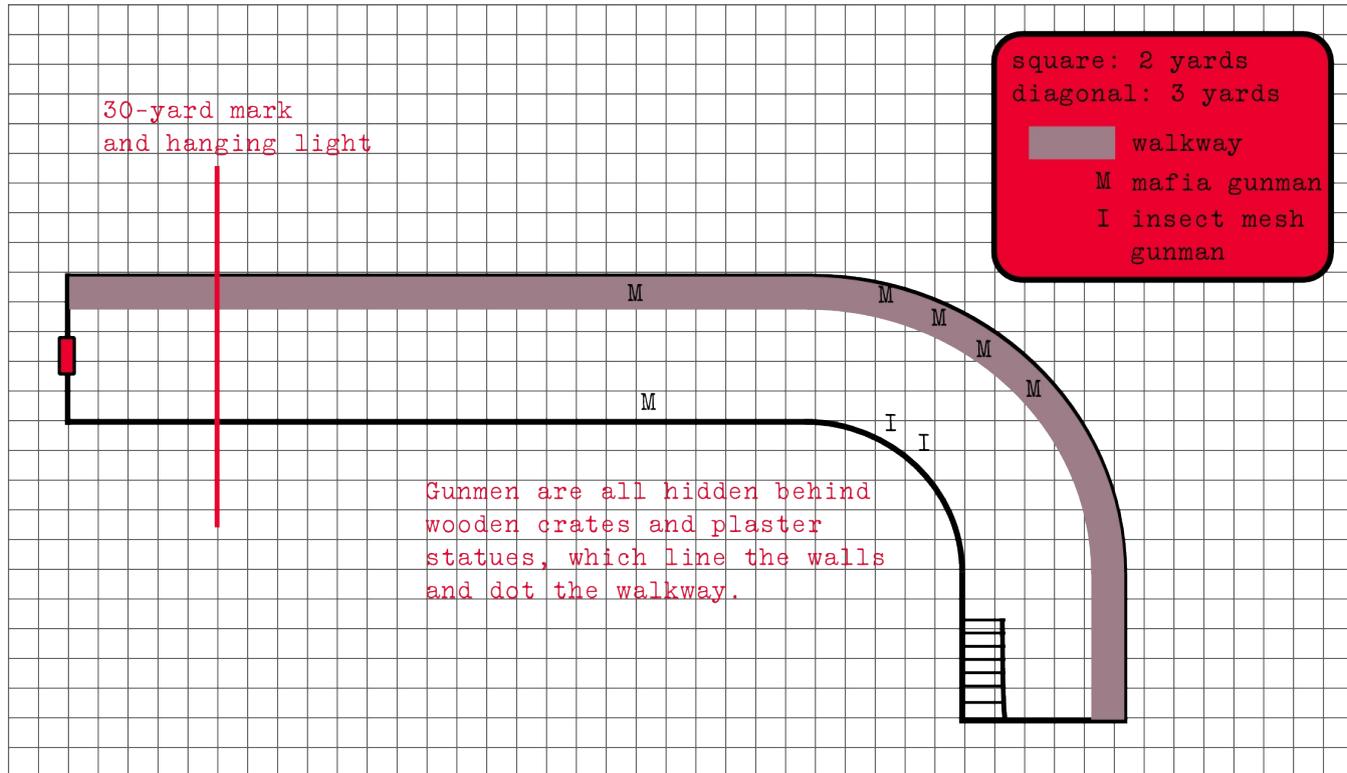
the area. The moon is quarter full, and waning.

The characters arrive at about 8:30 or 9:00 on Tuesday, August 5, 1969. They'll have some assistance from the Summit. Deanna Carmen, who made a Summit-inspired music video in 1968 about a dead San Francisco brought back to life by a magical Dean Martin, will bring them apple blossoms for their hair, and a band of mercenaries to help them at the end of the gauntlet.

But first, they'll need to get past the trap laid by the swarm, possibly also by Joe Lakono. The player characters will probably have a short-term goal of tracking down Joe Lakono, assuming that Joe has made himself an enemy of the characters. Once the characters discover what's happening, they should accept the goal of stopping the assassination of August Wey.

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They can discover the assassination plot (and possibly clues to the whereabouts of Joe or his waxen double) by interrogating mafia gunmen, calling the phone number in the Paradise matchbook, finding the address and date on an Autumnal Swarm gunman, or finding Manson's hit list (which includes Sinatra and Sammy Davis, Jr.).



## The door

*The door opens to a watery, organic smell. It's a small tunnel, and a stream in the tunnel is filled with waste. Murky water flows slowly down a thin tunnel into darkness, to your right. A metal stairway on the other side of the stream leads upwards to a landing of some sort. A tiny ledge separates the doorway from the stream.*

On the San Francisco side, the door is a huge, circular, iron grate, secured with bolts. It normally takes about two minutes with a heavy wrench to open the door, and the door will close on its own given any opportunity. Once closed, it can only be opened by undoing the bolts. The door is pressed with the words “Key 7 Ironworks”.

*The door clangs shut. Where there was a simple wooden door, there is now a huge iron circle in a stone wall. The iron is rusted an even red, and the wall is dotted with moss around it. Four small hexagonal protrusions form a square within the iron circle.*

There are recent scratches around the bolts, indicating that they’ve been turned within the last several months, but not within the last several days. Anyone examining them can see this with an easy perception roll. If Joe Lakono (or his waxen double) came through recently, he’s still here.

The stream leads out to a man-made lake.

## Break on through

If they climb up the stairs and into the main basement, they’ll see a long hallway filled with boxes.

*A magical light hanging from a rope on the ceiling about ten yards up throws a dim yellowish glow onto this wide hallway. Huge wooden boxes as tall as you line both sides of the hallway, arranged haphazardly. Those on your left are partially hidden in the shadow of a high shelf, which itself is lined with smaller boxes. Thirty or so yards down the hallway, the light fades into darkness, but you might see a slight curve in the hallway where the light fades.*

Now is a good time to start the soundtrack if you’re going to use it. Remember, magic is difficult to use here!

There are six mafia gunmen and two Autumnal Swarm gunmen lying in wait in the basement of the Palace of Fine Arts. The mafia gunmen each have a six-shot .357 revolver. The two nearest the secret door also each have a 20-round M16 automatic rifle with one extra 20-round magazine each. When firing with revolvers, they’ll usually take the penalty of 1 to do 2d6 (and use two shots). When firing with the automatic rifles, they’ll usually do an unfocussed cone attack to do 1d8 damage to anyone in the field of fire (and using ten rounds). However, they may adjust their tactics if necessary.

*Revolver gunmen: (Human: 1; Survival: 4, 6, 6, 8; Move: 10; Attack: revolver; Damage: d6/2d6; Range: 18; Defense: 0)*

*Assault riflemen: (Warrior: 2; Survival: 12, 16; Move: 10; Attack: auto rifle or dagger; Damage: d8 or d4; Cone: 1 yard every ten yards; Range: 30; Defense: 0)*

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The Autumnal Swarm hosts look human but have been infected with the Autumnal Swarm. They each carry a 13-shot 9mm Browning High-Power handgun.

*Swarm gunmen: (Autumnal Swarm: 5. Human: 1; Survival: 16+1, 25+7; Move: 11; Attack: 9mm handgun; Damage: d6/2d6; Range: 18; Defense: +2; Special defense: slo-time)*

*Swarm insect form (Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 16, 25; Move: 16; Attack: mandible; Damage: d8; Defense: +5; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

One of the swarm gunmen is marked with a crossroads scar on their temple. The other is marked on their lower back.

Once fire commences, some shots will hit the boxes and the plaster sculptures inside.

*You hear a noise like strange thunder, quick and harsh. Insects whiz past you so quickly you can't see them, some leaving blood in their wake. Holes appear in the wooden boxes around you, and clouds of white dust exude from the holes.*

The ambush strategy is to wait until the player characters enter the basement and get about 26 yards from the riflemen, and use automatic fire on them. The only light left on is a hanging bulb with a green shade right about at the 30-yard mark. Having the light there means that the gunmen fire as normal, but any attempts by the player characters to fight back (or perceive what is beyond the light) are at a penalty of two.

If the characters destroy the light bulb, everyone will be in darkness and have the standard penalties for not being able to see. Note, though, that destroying an electric light with a metal weapon runs the risk of electric shock: the player must make an Evasion roll or take 1d6 damage from electricity and act as surprised for the next round.

The gunmen are supposed to be careful, but if they think they're dealing with unarmed opponents they'll be careless, for example, stepping fully into the open to use their automatic weapons. Otherwise, when initially firing they'll have the advantage of full cover. If the characters are within ten yards of them, the boxes will only provide medium cover.

*"What the hell was that?"*

*"We told you to stay out of sight," says a high-pitched voice.*

*"I thought they were unarmed."*

*"You were wrong."*

The mafia gunmen will back up the riflemen as necessary. The gunmen will not move from their position before the player characters arrive, but if the player characters retreat the swarm gunmen will send the mafia gunmen after them, and then follow themselves.

The gunmen arrived in two sedans. If any of them choose to flee, they'll flee to one of those cars and drive away.

*He runs to a very small, oddly-shaped white house covered in windows. He flings the door open and rushes inside; the house is so small that he has to sit inside of it. Suddenly you hear a roaring noise. The house emits a puff of black smoke low from one of its ends, and then zips quickly away with the man still inside. [If they can see the license plate: There are some letters and numbers you don't understand on the lower back of the house.]*

## Taken prisoner

If the ambush succeeds, any survivors will be taken to the dungeons of Alcatraz, where the swarm will try to convince each of them to give in and host a swarm insect.

## Taking Prisoners

If they take any of the mafia gunmen prisoner and interrogate them, the mafia gunmen are tough but not heavily committed to the strange men leading them. A successful (but very difficult) Charisma roll or appropriate role-playing will give them the following information about the ambush.

*"There was a hooded man talking to these things, they talked back in a high-pitched noise like a telephone line in the rain. The hooded man asked if there was a road nearby, and something about flowering trees. He asked about digging up the roots and sapping the roads."*

If any of the swarm hosts remain alive, the characters may be able to acquire information from them, although no form of intimidation or cajoling will succeed against an infected host. If the swarm possession can be thrown off, such tactics may succeed, *A Demonic Clarity* spell would work, for example. The host's knowledge will be limited to what they've seen and some vague impressions of the swarm's knowledge as a whole. Such a victim will, if they realize that their respite is only temporary, beg to be killed before the spell's effects fade.

Deanna has never seen a swarm victim's possession reversed. She'll be very interested in the process.

One of the mafia gunmen will have a Paradise Island Lounge matchbook. If they gain identification information for one of the hosts, they can impersonate that host over the phone (it is impossible to impersonate a swarm host

in person to another member of the swarm, because there will be no meshing). The phone number in the matchbook can direct a swarm host to an appropriate location to assist in the assassination of August Wey.

Swarm host Andy Cochino has his driver's license, with an address in Sausalito which will turn out to be a dock, and a mailbox used by the Weathermen. Note that the bug will try to take this identifying information with him if it flees.

One of the gunmen has a key to their black 1968 Cadillac Sedan deVille. (The key to the white 1960 Chevrolet Impala sedan is in the car.) The cars are distinctive enough that if someone gets away in one, characters will recognize it if they see it again. Their license plate numbers are KRD-061 and UWN-916, respectively. Successfully asking around will bring the information that the cars have been seen at the north docks. The Impala also has information about the swarm hive in the glove box, scrawled inside a Paradise Lounge matchbook: "block a the rock".

The Cadillac's plate is registered to Andy Cochino (one of the swarm taking part in the ambush) and it has the Sausalito address. The Impala's plate is registered to Jesse Hill at 1139 Grant Avenue.

Among them, the mafia gunmen know that:

1. They were set up here several hours (or a day or two, depending on how long after Joe/the assassin realized they were coming and when they actually came) ago to ambush anybody who came up from the sewers.
2. The ambush was requested by a hooded man who promised a quid pro quo – that is, to help the two whiners – if they provided the ambush.
3. The whiners are called whiners because their voice is so strange.
4. The hooded man wanted to know about a nearby road, and if there were any flowering trees in the path. No idea what that means. The hooded man wants to "sap the roads" and "dig up the roots". He's a crazy man.
5. They work for the whiners because the whiners quid pro quo; that is, the whiners help the higher ups. They don't know what the help entails, only that the higher-ups are appreciative of the services provided.
6. They met the two whiners at the docks north of the park and followed their Cadillac here.
7. The whiners are working some deal with the blacks. Some Angel of Death cult.
8. The whiners been working with the military on some secret project.
9. The hooded man asked them about the silver city and how to get to Highway 61.

# San Francisco

"If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair."—John Phillips

*A chill fog wafts along the ground through arches in a circle around you. There is a salt-like tang [that can only be that of the sea] in the morning air. You hear a long, low moan in the distance, and amidst it the occasional sharp chirping of some alien bird or insect. The deep and booming groan far to the north fades into the night. There are flowers of red and yellow blooming by the side of walking paths and wider roads.*

The deep and booming groan are the foghorns on Alcatraz.

Once they step out of the arches, they can see the rotunda of the Palace of Fine Arts.

*Behind you, a huge dome rises above the arches you just stepped through. Behind it a small lake or pond sits still in the mist, and a colonnade leads off to the right. White bas-reliefs circling the dome depict people engaged in sculpting, painting, pottery, and music. A pair of columns separate each arch, and above each pair a woman in high relief gazes sadly into the world.*

Now (or as soon as they realize where they are) is a good time to let them know that the soundtrack is part of the adventure.

*This adventure has a soundtrack for about three hours. If you want to comment on part of the soundtrack, feel free to assume that your characters are hearing it or have heard it. You can ask non-player characters questions regarding the songs you hear, and you can make guesses about the culture based on these songs if you wish.*

## Deanna

Deanna will arrive about ten minutes after they come through the door. She brings four team members who will fade out of the narrative after the characters enter it.

*Summit Soldier: (Warrior: 2; Survival: 6, 11, 14, 14; Move: 10; Attack: pistol; Damage: d6/2d6; Range: 18; Defense: +2)*

The summit soldiers each have ballistic shirts and a 7-shot pistol. Usually they'll take the penalty of 1 to attack in order to do 2d6 damage (and use two shots).

When they meet (and the fight's over), Deanna will reach out her fingers to touch one of them on the chest, in an "are you really here" gesture. Expect the player characters to be suspicious of anyone at this point, so be careful.

*A woman in brightly-colored clothing and a low-slung round burgundy cap waves at you as an old friend might, a wide smile on her face. She walks up to you with her hands flat in front of her, a long wand like the one that your attackers had hangs, unheld, on her back. "Hi," she says. "Um... Do you mind?" She reaches out tentatively with her fingers to touch [character] on the chest, as if checking to see if they're real. Then she pulls her hand back.*

*"I'm Deanna... Welcome to San Francisco. Sorry we're late. The directions were a little confusing."*

She'll help them clean up after the battle, and ask them to move quickly so that they can leave before the police arrive.

Deanna is the only person among her soldiers that knows the characters and what they look like. She has told her soldiers that the characters are likely to be confused and disoriented from a trip beyond time. If something happens to Deanna, the soldiers will reasonably give the characters the benefit of the doubt, but if it looks like the characters are attacking or have attacked her, they will defend her and try to get her to safety, and they'll use their weapons against the characters to the best of their ability.

## Memorabilia

Deanna will, at some point, light a cigarette. The matchbook she's using is from the Moulin Rouge.

*"Hold on a second," she says. She takes out a piece of paper and tears something from it, and a small flame leaps from her hand. She holds it in front of her face and lights a small stick on fire, breathes in, and the end of the stick glows dull red in the morning twilight.*

She may also ask one of her team members to take their picture using her Land Camera. She'll ask them if they'd like a picture of to remember this. If they agree:

*Deanna hands a box of some sort to one of the men she's with. She steps towards your side and turns to face back where she came. The man with the device lifts it to his face; it appears as if he has one big eye. The device opens, and its front extends like an accordion. There is a bright light. You hear the device whir as your sight returns, and the thing slowly spits a piece of glossy paper from its mouth.*

*"Here you go," he says.*

The photo is theirs to keep. While instant cameras won't work in Highland, the photograph will last.

## Revolution

Deanna will drive them downtown in her green 1965 F100 Ranger longbed pickup. They'll have to sit in the back. She'll park nine blocks away down Market Street, and then they'll walk the rest of the way.

*Deanna introduces you to her "truck", a long, green building-like structure with wheels as if it were a huge cart. There are flowers and stripes painted on the sides in many colors. The front of the structure has a fine glass on all four sides, like some magical crow's nest. The back of the structure is open and flat, with short walls on three sides. Deanna folds the back wall down.*

*She leads you onto the back of the "truck" and pushes aside some wooden boxes and a pail of apple blossoms, and spreads out a wide blanket on the floor of the thing's back room. She asks you to sit on the blanket or the boxes. You're joined by two of the men who accompanied her.*

*There is a short, cyclic whine that vibrates the entire frame of this thing. A dull roar leaps from the front nose of this "truck". It jerks forward, and you can see Deanna turning a wheel inside. The truck turns according to how she moves the wheel as the truck glides forward upon the smooth roadway.*

*You exit the trees and meadows and enter an area dense with houses. Magical lights shine through the windows of many of the houses. You hear snippets of strange melodies, and people in strange costumes walking along the sides of the road. Some wave at you.*

*The kinds of buildings change from houses to flat, square buildings, and there are lights hanging regularly from large poles on the sides of the streets. Here and there brightly-colored lights hang from the buildings, some spelling out words such as "Beer and Wine", "Breakfast All Day", and some you don't understand: "Mandarin" and "Sushi". Soon these signs hang from every building, and larger ones loom above the buildings. There are huge crowds of people by the side of the roads, and many on the roads. Deanna turns her wheel and the truck glides through them.*

On Market Street, they'll go through a relatively minor demonstration. Marching, yelling, cursing, chanting slogans in unison, voices augmented by some magic bullhorns. Opposed by men in blue with shields and clubs.

*"Ah, shit. We're gonna have to get rid of these weapons. The pigs'll freak if they see your big-ass swords."*

*"Pigs. Fuzz. Cops. Police? Law enforcement?"*

*"You wearing anything underneath there? No, the armor. The rest of you fit right in. Here, put some flowers in your hair."*

## Magic boxes

*The people on the sidewalks and in the storefronts are dressed in clothing as strange as Deanna's. Like Highland, you see many colors of hair and skin, but there are some body types you don't recognize. You even see a few people whose faces remind you of Joe Lakono.*

The San Francisco Chronicle currently contains the crossroads symbol, with a news story about the Zodiac.

*There's a box on the side of the roadway, and inside of it is some sort of broadsheet with the scrawled crossroads symbol on it. Amidst news about water bills, broken taxes, and Wey in Washington large text reads "This is the Zodiac speaking".*

If they ask about it, Deanna can tell them about the cipher from August 2. The cipher's solution will be printed on the morning of Saturday August 9. (If they develop contacts in the San Francisco Chronicle or police department, they can get the solution after noon on Friday.)

*"It looks a lot like the scars that the insects leave on their hosts," says Deanna.*

The headline "Wey in Washington" leads an article about black activist August Wey, in Washington to "fight for" funding for schools in "slums" and laws to "end discrimination". Mr. Wey will return to San Francisco on Saturday and speak about his efforts "to the people".

If you have any sixties dimes or nickels, you can use them as props by having Deanna show them how to use the newspaper box, or a telephone booth, and she'll then give them some coins so that they'll be able to read the news and call her loft. Or have her toss them a handful of change to grab a cup of coffee and some donuts. There's a coffeehouse across the street from her pad, the People's Lounge.

Newspapers cost 10 cents. Telephone calls on a public telephone also cost 10 cents for the first three minutes (and usually have separate slots for nickels, dimes, and quarters). Being down to your last dime is a pretty important thing in 1969. Other magic boxes include refrigerated soda machines (cola and various flavored sodas for fifteen cents a bottle) and cigarette machines (for a quarter a pack).

## Deanna's pad

Deanna lives five miles from the Palace of Fine Arts, in a large industrial loft near the Tenderloin district, just south of Mission on Third. They'll ride an industrial elevator from the first floor to the second floor. There are pipes everywhere along the walls and across the ceilings, and hard concrete floors.

Her loft is decorated with sixties-era posters: a poster of Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band (The Beatles), Dean Martin in The Wrecking Crew, The Grateful Dead, Happy Trails (Quicksilver Messenger Service), After Bathing at Baxter’s (Jefferson Airplane), the hurdy gurdy man (Donovan), and Boots (Nancy Sinatra), for example.

From her loft, the neon lights they saw when they came down Market Street blink incessantly. She’s used to it, they will likely find it annoying.

## Party line

If you want to draw this adventure out, they can be invited to a party by someone while walking through the march.

One of the things people do at parties is take drugs. This party will have alcohol, cigars, cigarettes, LSD, cocaine, heroine, marijuana, and probably a few others. If they ask Deanna about all the things people are smoking, drinking, and otherwise imbibing in the way of drugs, she’ll say:

*“When it comes to drugs, you can get whatever you want in San Francisco. My rule of thumb is, if you have to inject it, snort it, or draw it from a mirror then it’s probably more danger than it’s worth.”*

## The world on fire

If you’re using the suggested soundtrack, you might bring this encounter up when Manson’s songs and dialogue comes on. You may want to adjust the location of Manson’s tracks according to how fast your games usually go; we have a lot of talking in our games, so I moved it towards the middle, since it was going to take an hour to go from the ambush to downtown San Francisco. If your game usually moves more quickly, you’ll want to move those tracks up, or queue them separately and play them manually when appropriate.

*You see a young man playing the guitar, accompanied by several young women on vocals and tambourine. One of the young women stops you; “thou art god”, she says, giggles, and returns to her friends.*

If they’re from Highland, they’ll notice something odd about Manson’s entourage. On a perception roll, they’ll realize that all of his entourage are white. On the other hand, these folks are more normal to characters from a semi-medieval world like Highland compared to Deanna. Deanna is clean—scrubbed clean. Charly and his girls are much more medieval in their hygiene (as are many other hippies on the street).

Manson is in San Francisco to receive more instructions on how to bring about the race wars that he thinks will leave him in power. He may be in the park when they arrive, or near Deanna's pad later. If you're using the soundtrack, then when his music comes on you should mention that a guy nearby is playing the guitar, surrounded by girls, etc. He can (if they track him, interrogate him, fool him, or use telepathy or other extra-normal means at their disposal) lead them to the swarm hive in Alcatraz. One of the girls might also be able to provide similar clues to August Wey's assassin and to the headquarters of the Autumnal Swarm. Manson understands that his new friends are trying to start a massive, violent race war, and he believes that they'll be successful. He also believes that if he builds up enough of a following he'll be able to come out on top.

He will be driven back to Spahn Movie Ranch on August 7, where, on August 8, he will order his followers to go to Roman Polanski's house and murder everyone there. They will kill Sharon Tate and her friends that night (or early the next morning) and leave markings (such as "pig") that they think will implicate the Black Panthers. Manson will, the next night (August 9) take part in the LaBianca murders in the same area.

Manson has a "hit list" of people who should be killed. Besides Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis, Jr., it includes the note "Hollywood whites... blame on Panthers." It also includes "August Wey – Jesse", referring to assassin Jesse Hill. The note is titled *rain harsh sin*. (An anagram, or perhaps the solution, of Sirhan Sirhan.)

Some of the Manson family taking part in the August 9 and 10 killings are Susan Atkins, Charles "Tex" Watson, Patricia Krenwinkel, and Leslie Van Houten. You might choose one of those names to be with Manson in San Francisco. Former song-and-dance girl Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme is likely to be with him too.

If the players decide to track down Manson (whether they know his name or just remember his songs) it won't be hard to find one of the girls who hangs out with him. She'll know his name (Charly), know his philosophy (that he's preparing for the final conflagration between blacks and whites, during which they'll live in an underground city), and that he lives in the desert near Los Angeles and hangs out with the Beach Boys (not true at this point). He's also chauffeured occasionally by important-looking men in a new black Cadillac.

## At the Red Mill

A music gig for Deanna. An optional scene. A murder in the night? A sense of Red Jack? Ebeorie on the walls? The Red Mill can (sans Zodiac) also be used at the end of the adventure to provide a nice party for the characters.

## The word on the street

The word on the street is unreliable, but there is a grain of truth to it:

1. The revolution is coming, between the straights and the hippies. (Which side are you on?)
2. The revolution is coming between blacks and whites. (Which side are you on?)
3. The Zodiac is a government counter-insurgency project to make people hate the people's movement.
4. The Zodiac is a secret project by the Navy. He comes in at night from the ocean, and leaves again from the docks.
5. The military is trying to incite violence between blacks and whites, as a pretense for martial law.
6. Governor Reagan is trying to incite violence between hippies and straights, as a pretense for martial law.
7. If we don't kill ourselves with nuclear weapons, we'll die from over-population.
8. The Death Angels are planning something big. They've been calling in all their members.
9. August Wey is going to announce a run for office on Saturday.
10. The Death Angels have been seen talking to a man in a Cadillac at the north docks.
11. The Death Angels have a warehouse on Market Street, the Self-Help Moving and Storage.
12. "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows." Some "students" have been recruiting for a war against the United States government, and want to create a white fighting force to ally with a black liberation movement. They're getting nicknamed "the weathermen" and hang out on a houseboat north of the bridge.
13. "The SDS folks? Yeah, the weathermen. You can't miss them. Look for a boat called the Rainy Day Woman."

## Rumors from the Zodiac

If they manage to capture the Zodiac, he knows a few things about both Manson and the swarm.

1. The silver city that Manson talks about is also called Paradise City.
2. When you kill people, they become your slaves in paradise.
3. We do this because the world needs it. The world needs chaos.
4. Charly knows magic. Killing is part of the magic. When he (Zodiac) kills, it's a magical high.
5. We do this because we will be the rulers in the next world – the one that Charly and his friends will bring about.
6. Charly's friends are powerful people.
7. Charly's people will show them how to survive when the revolution comes.

8. Charly learns from his people over the water north of San Francisco.
9. The symbol he uses is not a crosshairs. It's a symbol of power for Charly's friends. It helps chaos.

## A dark and lonely crowd

"Those days are closing fast."

Another option is to see a movie. Chances are pretty good the characters have never seen anything like a movie. But they might sense a bit of déjà vu when they see the slow-motion effects of *The Wild Bunch*, because it will remind them of fighting the swarm beneath the Palace. If they've seen a swarm insect, the opening scene of children playing a game of watching scorpions on an ant hill may also be disconcerting.

This is one hell of a movie, and you should make sure all of your players have seen it before reading the second paragraph.

*A play of light is projected from high above and behind onto a great white wall. Words on the wall describe the actors in the play. Men on horses, with those strange weapons you've already seen, ride into a town, but they pass smiling children poking at an ant hill, and watching pale scorpions attacked by hundreds of large ants. You get the impression that the children have placed the scorpions on the ant hill as a game.*

*As the play progresses it becomes clear that these men are thieves; they're swindled out of their first robbery after half of them die; they flee into another country chased by one of their own and sell more of those strange weapons for gold. One of those weapons sounds like the thunderous ones that attacked you in the long hallway beyond the door, but it's bigger, and the thieves use it to kill an entire army before the thieves themselves are killed. Only the one who chased them survived, though he abandons his own friends to join another army. The play ends in laughter.*

## Earthquake

At 6:29 PM Thursday, August 7, if the characters have not made any headway stopping the swarm plot, there will be a minor earthquake in San Francisco, centered in the bay near Alcatraz Island. It will be felt throughout San Francisco, and the news of its location (sans the mention of Alcatraz) will be on the radio by around 7 PM.

If the characters are going to go see a movie on Thursday or if that's the night that you've chosen for Deanna's Red Mill gig, put the earthquake halfway through the show.

## The hive strikes back

Before he leaves, Manson will order an attack on Deanna and the summit. Manson himself will not take part. He will send seven women (two of them swarm hosts): Lin, Abbie, Karen, JC, Dana, Dinah, and Mary. The latter two are swarm hosts.

Three of the women (Lin, Abbie, and Karen) will pound on the door several hours before the attack, asking for assistance (if they can run up to the group while the group is outside, even better). They're being chased by a crazy man, maybe the Zodiac himself, they'll say. They'll want to stay with their protectors all night. (If your players have realized Charly's identity, they can say that Charly himself is the Zodiac, and they're scared of him.)

*You hear a terrified scream, a woman in fear. A mousy girl, scared, comes running to the door and pounds on it. She is accompanied by two friends, both of them looking over their shoulders behind them in fright. "Hurry!" one of them cries. "Open the door!"*

They'll signal the best windows to break into at about 2 AM, opening them if possible, and their compatriots will arrive armed to the teeth; if possible, their compatriots will give the three scouts a handgun each. They use 1911 pistols with 7 round magazines.

Except for the two swarm hosts, the attackers do not know about Alcatraz, only about Manson. They won't know where to find him. They will know some clue that leads to Alcatraz.

*Distressed women (Lin, Abbie, Karen): (Human: 1, Survival: 5, 5, 3; Move: 10; Charisma: Low Average; Attack: knives; Damage: d4; Defense: 0)*

*Attacking women (Joline, Dana): (Human: 1, Survival: 4, 5; Move: 10; Charisma: High Average; Attack: 1911 pistols; Damage: d6/2d6; Range: 18; Defense: 0)*

*Swarm hosts (Dinah, Mary): (Autumnal Swarm: 5, Human: 1; Survival: 26+1, 21+3; Move: 11; Attack: 1911 pistols; Damage: d6/2d6; range: 18; Defense: +2; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

*Swarm insect form (Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 26, 21; Move: 16; Attack: mandible; Damage: d8; Defense: +5; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

The waxen assassin will also take part in the attack if it is still around. It doesn't care about Deanna and will focus on the player characters. If it can take the shape of a woman, it will take the form of "JC" and replace Abbie as part of the initial distressed women. The waxen assassin can also use illusions to enhance the dangers that the women are claiming to face, perhaps even making an illusion of Charly chasing them stereotypically with a knife.

*Waxen Assassin: (Demon: 6; Chaotic Evil; Survival: 43; Move: 12; Attacks: 1; Damage: d6; Defense: +8; Special attack: 6-yard illusions; Special defenses: immune to weapons, cold; resistant to elements; Magic Resistance: 6)*

After the ambush, Deanna will move them all (and herself) into a nearby hotel, starting with the Franklin Arms. She will not stay in any hotel more than a day.

## Rumors

The five “normal” members of the Manson family are easy enough to interrogate. Lin, Abbie, and Karen will be easily intimidated; Joline and Dana are proud of their “creepy crawly” night missions and brag about them.

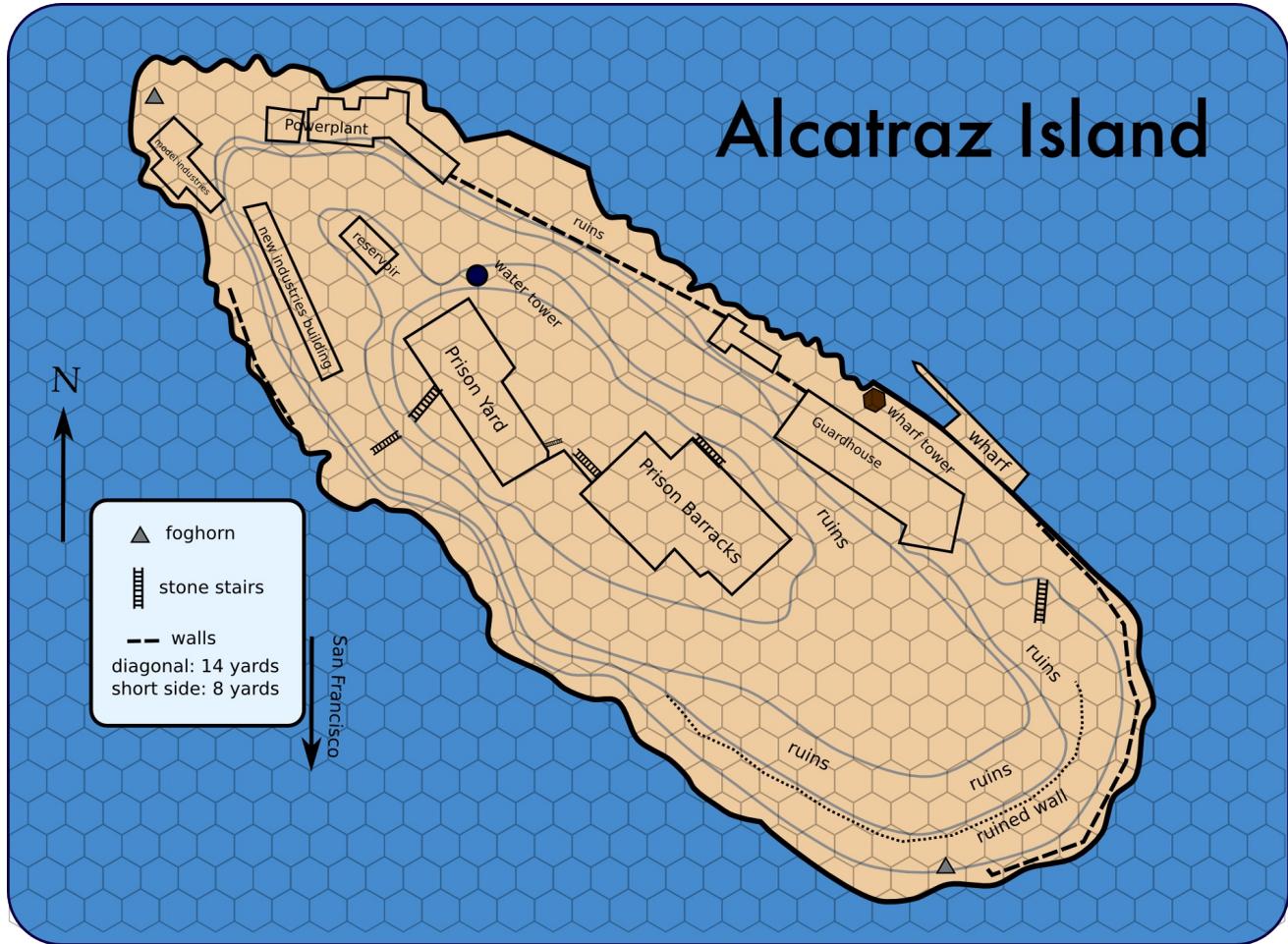
Among the three of them, Lin, Abbie, and Karen know that:

1. JC (the waxen assassin) showed up just this morning offering to help Charly if Charly would help JC bluff her way into someone’s house. (Lin, Abbie, Karen).
2. Dinah joined Charly’s group just a few days ago after they all arrived in San Francisco. (Lin, Abbie, Karen)
3. They were helping the others get in because the others were more experienced creepy-crawlers. They hope to be better creepy crawlers for Charly later. (Lin, Abbie, Karen)
4. They do their creepy-crawlies to steal things from people. (Lin, Abbie, Karen)
5. Mary joined along with Karen several weeks ago in Los Angeles, but since they got to San Francisco she’s been acting very strange. She doesn’t talk to her friends the way she used to. She talks to Charly and Dinah almost like an equal. (Karen, Lin)
6. Charly came up here to talk to some people. (Lin)
7. Charly came up here to talk to some people about why it’s taking so long for the war to start. The war between blacks and whites. (Abbie)
8. Charly knows people. He’s going to make a record. I saw him chauffeured around in a white Cadillac, I know it was a record producer. (Karen)
9. Charly will be returning to Los Angeles soon (be careful that this doesn’t cause your players to send their characters down to LA) where he can hang out with rock stars and sell his record. (Lin, Abbie, Karen)
10. JC (the waxen assassin) did a light show to make it look like Charly was chasing them (if that’s how they got in) and to make it look like they were still in bed when they were opening the window. (Lin, Abbie, Karen)

Among the two of them, Joline and Dana know that:

1. They will likely berate Deanna for blacks not killing whitey. “You got to start the revolution, and then we can find the paradise city.” (Joline, Dana)
2. Charly has new plans to jumpstart the race war between blacks and whites, since coming to San Francisco. Once they get back to him he’ll tell them, and they will need to move further into the desert to find the secret underground city. (Joline)
3. They do the creepy-crawls to steal things from people and to kill them. (Joline, Dana)
4. After they arrived in San Francisco, Charly left them at the docks north of the park. They don’t know where he went after that. He returned on Monday driven by someone in a shiny new Cadillac sedan. (Joline, Dana)
5. There’s a big killing planned for San Francisco. Charly needs to hurry back to Los Angeles to be ready to start riots there when the riots start in San Francisco. (Dana)
6. Charly says his friends know where the silver city is. They’re gonna help us find it. (Joline)
7. Charly’s friends are men of wealth and class. (Dana, Joline)
8. Charly is jealous of a guy named Jesse Hill. No idea why, Charly is a fucking god, man. But Jesse gets to do some fun creeping here. (Dana)

# The hive



Use the flavor text in brackets if they come to the island at night.

*Its rocky crags outlined sharply against the sky [stars], the island resembles a deranged castle, [one eye blinking steadily from the left/pier]. A huge blocky structure dominates the high part of the island; stone walls towards the shoreline crumble like jagged teeth in the mouth of a monster.*

## Monsters in the deep

The bay is up to 350 feet deep at points around the Golden Gate. If the characters travel to Alcatraz by boat, it'll probably be a small one, most likely a rowboat, and there are things in the vast ocean much bigger than them.

Every once in a while humpback whales will enter the bay, 12-yard-long creatures with great slowly-blinking eyes and perpetual, gigantic frowns. They can surface to blow water ten feet into the air, their huge bodies undulating above water and then descending again, their wide tail flapping upwards once behind them. They can also jump high in the air, bringing two-thirds of their body above water and landing again on their backs. An impressive site for someone who's never been on the ocean before!

There are also ships traveling into San Francisco Bay from the ocean (or heading back into the ocean). Oil tankers, typically 180 yards long, ply the Bay day and night. Supertankers and container ships 300 yards long and 40 yards wide regularly travel through the bay, the latter loaded with towers of 20-foot boxes of many colors. These ships can make whales look like guppies, and when you're near one in a rowboat your main concern will be to not be near one in a rowboat.

## Ghosts and the restless dead

There are evils buried on Alcatraz. If the characters are carrying the broken sword of Ellesan these will rise as skeletons in the night. There can be up to twenty skeletons, though only one to six will likely appear at any one time.

*Skeletons (Undead: 1; Move: 10; Attack: hands or weapon; Damage: d4 or weapon; Defense: +3; Special Defense: slashing weapons do half damage, pointed weapons do 1 pt)*

Skeletons appear on a 40% roll every thirty minutes at night; roll 1d6 for number.

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## The defenders of Alcatraz

There are eight swarm insects in San Francisco. Six of them have hosts: two of the ambushers (one named Andy Cochino), two of Manson's women, the leader Mark Wilford, and the assassin Jesse Hill. Unless he's been called back specially, Jesse Hill will not be here, he'll be at his apartment. Mark Wilford is black; the other swarm are white.

*Mark Wilford: (Autumnal Swarm: 5, Human: 1; Survival: 26+6; Move: 12; Attack: 1911 pistols; Damage: d6/2d6; range: 18; Defense: +4; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

*Mark Wilford swarm insect form (Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 26; Move: 16; Attack: mandible; Damage: d8; Defense: +5; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

*Free swarm insects: (Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 23, 24; Move: 16; Attack: mandible; Damage: d8; Defense: +5; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

If any of the other swarm hosts are here, copy their stats on the appropriate line:

*Ambushers:*

*Manson's women:*

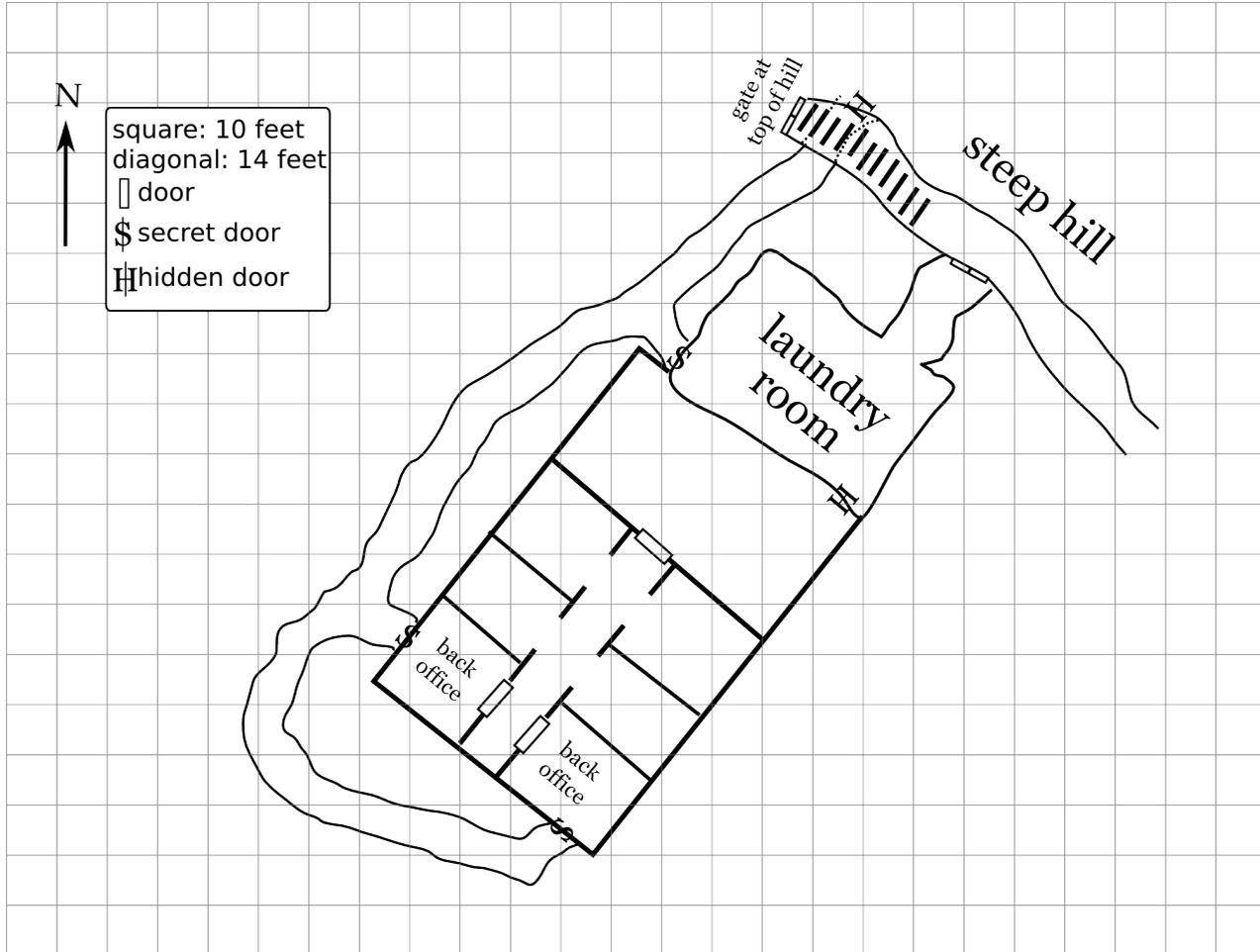
*Jesse Hill:*

If they're chasing Joe Lakono (or his waxen assassin), he may be there as well, working with the swarm to bring about the order of Tawhiri.

The Zodiac might also be here.

The defenders have two motorboats on the docks on the north side of the island. They can use these to escape if they need to.

# The dungeons of Alcatraz



*You push upon the simple metal gate, and it squeaks loudly as it opens. Thin stone stairs lead down to a ledge. There is nothing to your left but a steeply-dropping hill and the sea.*

The map of the dungeons shows a secret passage that can be used by swarm hosts (and other medium-sized creatures). There are cracks everywhere, however, that can only be used by the swarm in their insect form. Free bugs can pretty much get anywhere within the dungeons, showing up in the walls or from the ceiling.

*Moisture collects on the rock walls, and old lumber stands in the corners. There are shallow cisterns, damp but empty, near the northwest wall of the room. Cracks cross the ceiling and spread down the walls like dark lightning. The wind outside echoes eerily within this large, roughly-cut space.*

The laundry room is ostensibly the only part of this area, but there is one secret exit (to the secret passage) and one hidden exit (to the dungeon cells).

Inside the dungeon area, moisture drips steadily in the corners. Iron rings are embedded into the walls and ceilings. There are cracks in the walls and ceilings big enough to put your fist into. Inside the cells there are initials etched in the walls, a rough calendar dated a hundred years ago. A gust of cold wind; a moan beyond the walls; a flash of a uniformed corpse hanging from the rough damp ceiling.

## The List

If they enter the back office of the dungeons of Alcatraz and defeat or bypass the swarm, they will find a list of people's names in a simple desk, very similar to the list that Charles Manson has. These are people who the swarm wants to kill. The top of the list is:

*one: trigger on August Wey... give to Jesse Hill; follow with death angels, weathermen*

That's the important line, because it will let the characters know about the assassination about to trigger race riots in San Francisco. **There's also a matchbook from the 49 Café**, with an address on Market Street. By this time they should recognize a matchbook when they see one.

The list contains many politicians, activists, and movie stars. Ronald Reagan and Charlton Heston are on the list. Sinatra and Davis are on the list as well. Others include Bobby Seal, Howard Thurman, Elizabeth Burton, Muhammad Ali, Richard Burton, Tom Jones, Huey Newton, John Lennon, and Steve McQueen.

Towards the bottom of the list, if you aren't worried about sending the player characters on a wild goose chase, is "stars... blame on panthers... choose appropriately." These are instructions for their human minions. If the

characters recognize the list as a hit list, Deanna will know that killing them all would mean massive race riots. Most of the names are prominent blacks.

## Weathermen

Deanna is not aware of who the weathermen (or the death angels) are; the player characters will need to get the “word on the street” to find out. If they ask Deanna, she’ll talk about newscasters:

*“Weathermen? There’s nothing special about them. They forecast the weather. Why, what did you hear about weathermen?”*

If it’s 6 PM or 10 PM or a little later, she can show them.

*“Here, I’ll show you.”*

*She walks over to an opaque glass that’s sitting in the corner of the room. She turns a knob on it to the right. A tiny eye flashes in the center of the glass. It expands outward almost faster than you can follow. Suddenly there’s a man in the glass sitting at a desk – and talking.*

*“Those are the headlines for San Francisco today. We now turn to Drew Borden for the weather. How’s the weekend going to treat us, Drew?”*

*“Still gonna be cold, Alex. There’s a good chance of rain tonight, but it should clear up on Saturday.”*

Once the players realize that the weathermen are a terrorist group, the weathermen are not hard to track down. They are easier to get talking than the Death Angels. They’ll be happy to share a toke with anyone who looks like a freak or who appears ready to join them.

1. Any reason for revolution is a good reason. There is no time to create an ideological movement like those assholes at the SDS.
2. They have been chosen as the core of a white fighting force that will ally with the black liberation movement.
3. Our job is to lead white kids into armed revolution. Black kids have been fighting alone for years.
4. The blacks are going to rise up any day now; when they do, we’ll follow.
5. No price is too high to demolish the capitalist system. The United States government will fall, and with it every corrupt nation that joined it at the trough.

## 68 – The hive

6. Protests and marches won't do it. Revolutionary violence is the only way. We're ready to go now. We're just waiting for the sign.
7. The war and the racism in this society are too fucked up. We will never live peaceably under this system.
8. We do not fight alone. Army deserters are coming to us. They're going to help us tear up this system from outside and inside.
9. There are Weathermen all over the United States, living in small cells and readying themselves to fight the revolution.

The Weathermen consider their swarm contact – Andy Cochino – to be a member, and are proud of his ability to make things happen. They know that he's going to give them the sign sometime at the end of this week. It's going to be big, it's going to be bloody, and it's going to rock the corrupt house down. Sometimes Andy comes to meet them up the bridge in his Cadillac. Sometimes he comes in from the bay in a motor boat.

They have some crude explosives ready to go. They use pipe bombs packed with nails. The designs were brought from Chicago by Bernardine Dohrn. The designer is her weatherman co-founder, Billy Ayers. Their nail bombs do 4d6 damage in a two-yard radius, 3d6 in a four-yard radius, 2d6 in an eight-yard radius, and 1d6 in a sixteen-yard radius. Victims can make an evasion roll for half damage.

# Jesse Hill

## The 49 Cafe

The 49 Café is on Market near the intersection with Steuart. The swarm (Mark Wilford and one other swarm host, depending) met Jesse Hill regularly here so that the insect in Jesse could meld for a moment and share information with the Alcatraz swarm. Jesse sometimes wears an old army shirt or jacket. The others wear dark business suits.

The waitresses at the café do not know the name Jesse Hill, but they definitely remember Jesse and his “friends”, both their faces and their voices and simply the fact that they were very strange. They call them the zodiac men, because if anyone could be the zodiac, they could. If they connect Jesse to what the player characters ask about, they’ll say something like:

*Handwritten letters are painted on a wide window: “49 CAFÉ”. In the doorway, colored strings, red, white, and blue hang down so that you have to push them aside to walk through. Inside, you can smell frying meat, bacon, sausages, and eggs, and an acrid smell of something burnt.*

There are forty of the strings (shoestrings) hanging in the doorway, a reference to Dylan’s Highway 61 Revisited. They can get breakfasts here, mostly eggs and ham or bacon or sausages, pancakes with syrup. The syrup bottles have a picture of a log cabin on them. The café is open from 6 AM to 4 PM. It’s a small café with a bar (for eating) in front of the kitchen and booths around the walls. There are two restrooms around the side (marked “bobs” and “joans”). The kitchen can be entered behind the bar or through a door near the restrooms.

If you want to try to imitate the swarm host’s voice, try lifting your tongue to the top of your month, and then pulling it backwards (arching it towards the back of your mouth). You’ll sound sort of like Alvin and the Chipmunks.

The waitress who talks to them about it (if anyone does) is Julia. The waitress that saw Jesse walk down Steuart is Sharon.

*“Oh, my god. The zodiac men. They come in here in a black Cadillac, like tin soldiers or something. They don’t talk much, just order a coffee in that crazy voice, sit down, “Hot enough for you?” “Sure is, not even laughing at the joke [note: it’s an exceptionally cold August], then they just stare at each other, stare out the window, at each other, out the window, drink their coffee, just a few minutes, not even as if they wanted it, stand up and leave.”*

*“They don’t even say anything when they leave. Just walk out the door.”*

*“Black suits and army clothes. They’re either murderers or CIA.”*

*“The one, the soldier, he walks up the street, right, the others – the black guy and the white guy – they go any which way, or if they parked right out front get in their Cadillac and drive away.”*

*“Creepy as hell.”*

*“Like they haven’t had practice being human.”*

*“Two of them leave in that Cadillac. The other walks away.”*

*“I seen one of them go into that apartment building on Steuart.”*

Why is it called the 49 Café? “Well, you know, it’s the gold rush. But we like to think of Highway 49 as the unknown crossroads, everyone knows about Highway 61, but nobody knows about 49. So we hung up the shoestrings. You want anything else?”

## **The menu**

The 49 Café menus are stained glossy typewritten two-pagers. The cover has the name of the café and a bearded old man carrying a pickaxe through large yellow rocks. Inside are strangely-named foods: sourdough biscuits, golden nuggets (“golden brown home fries”), “sourdough waffles with golden syrup”, 49-spice chili. The “mother lode” is a breakfast of three eggs “any style”, sausage, bacon, biscuits, golden nuggets, and gravy.

## **The last meeting of Jesse Hill**

Hill, Mark Wilford, and Andy Cochino (all of them swarm hosts) last met on Monday, August 4, in the late morning. At least one will meet again on Friday, August 8, at 10 AM, if any remain. Their meeting will last five minutes; then the two other swarm will leave by Cadillac and Jesse Hill will walk back to his apartment.

If the Cadillac has been destroyed or they decide its too recognizable, they will arrive in a white Volkswagen Beetle.

## A ‘Murder Code’ Broken

The morning papers on Saturday, August 9, will carry the news that Donald Harden, a Salinas high school teacher, has solved the Zodiac cipher. They will print the solved version of the text in their newspapers.

Other news on the page is “Black Nationalist March Today”, about August Wey’s march to the end of Market Street, where he’ll give a speech today about his experiences in Washington.

## Steuart Street

If they know that Jesse lives on Steuart but not where, there are two apartment complexes in the block north of Market, and three in the block south of Market. Depending on how they ask, they might be able to get the apartment manager to tell them that Jesse does (or does not, depending on the building) live her without any roll. On average, though, this is a very easy Charisma roll.

## North of Market

The apartments north of Market are Steuart Bay Condominiums and St. Anne’s Court. Steuart Bay is closest to the corner. Steuart Bay is a new experiment called a “condominium”, where the residents share ownership in the building and the land it’s built on. It’s a bit more upscale than the other apartment complex north of Market. Eddie Jackson, the concierge, is a garrulous man who takes his job seriously. If they give him a reason to be suspicious, he will no longer be friendly (and will possibly offer to call the police). Otherwise, he’ll be happy to talk and help.

Eddie has noticed the black Cadillac drive by occasionally in the last two or three months. It seems to be stopping south of Market, just a bit down past the corner. SOMA doesn’t often get that kind of service. The Caddy probably comes by every week or two, but he hasn’t noticed any regularity about it.

## South of Market

The apartments south of Market are a bit more rundown than the apartments north of Market. They are the Linda Vista Apartments, the Sunset Apartments, and the Rose Field Apartments. Rose Field apartments where Jesse

lives are the middle apartments in the south block. There is no concierge at Rose Field; they'll need to buzz for the front desk half the time. She'll do whatever she can to make them go away, including tell them where Jesse lives, but if they act like cops she'll clam up. "I know you have to have a warrant or a write or something."

The apartments here are fairly small.

## Confronting Jesse Hill

If they manage to track down Jesse Hill, they will likely decide to confront him in his Rose Field apartment before the assassination. This apartment is a big drop from his working class house in on Grand.

*You walk to the end of Market Street. Steuart Street runs left and right. Ahead of you is a small park, and beyond it are warehouses, and beyond them ships in the bay. Large buildings line this side of Steuart Street north and south.*

Jesse has a corner apartment. The swarm have rented the apartment next to Jesse's apartment on the side facing the street. They occasionally let allies use it. Note that Jesse pretends that he doesn't know the people in that apartment. The apartment manager knows that the same people have been renting it for a long time while letting others stay there; as long as they don't cause trouble she doesn't care. She doesn't know that Jesse is connected with them.

## The assassination

August Wey flies in from Washington, DC on Friday night. He will be surrounded by his people, giving commands and listening to reports until the speech. He and his followers will march up Market Street, where he will deliver a rousing speech on race, reform, and his time in DC from the open park at the end of Market with the bay behind him.

His speech is on Saturday afternoon, August 9. He will begin speaking at about 2:15 PM. A swarm-controlled (white) Jesse Hill will perform the hit, and will be released from the swarm after confessing – and implicating the U.S. government. Jesse is a Vietnam veteran who was been caught up in the Manson cult. The swarm has ensured that he's been photographed near FBI offices in Los Angeles and San Francisco. These photographs will be released after the assassination.

Jesse Hill will shoot Wey from his fourth-floor apartment at the end of Market. He'll be 190 yards away firing at an unaware target. He'll fire one double shot from his semi-automatic scoped M16 rifle for 2d8 damage. Bonuses:

+1 high ground, +4 unaware target, +2 careful attempt, +5 skill. Penalties: -3 range (six range penalties, but the scope negates three of them), double shot -1. The total bonus is +8, which means that a roll of 19 or less will hit.

*Jesse Hill: (Human: 1; Survival: 6; Move: 12; Attack: knife; Damage: 1d4+1; Defense: +1; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

*Free Insect: (Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 20; Move: 16; Attack: mandible; Damage: d8; Defense: +5; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

If Wey doesn't drop, Hill will fire one more single shot for 1d8. By then, Wey will either crouch down or will be pulled down by his bodyguards if he's somehow still survived.

Remember that if Wey is not surprised by the first shots, the second shot will not get the unaware bonus, and Hill won't get the careful attempt bonus or scope bonus in any case, so a second shot will be either at +4 or +0, meaning that a roll of 15 or less (Wey is surprised) or 11 or less (Wey is not surprised) will hit. Remember that in conflict, Jesse's skill bonus of +5 with the rifle won't apply.

## August Wey's speech

August Wey will talk about his experience in Washington, DC, and the need for deep change within the system.

*He speaks of a far-away place called Washington, and an inflexible system of government that is at war with its own people as well as with foreigners across a far ocean. He speaks of changing the system, but, he says,*

*"The system does not want to change. Here in our own California there are thousands upon thousands of people who draw their living from the prison system. They need prisons and prisoners. More and more of them every day. All the clerks, all the guards, all the bailiffs, all the merchants who sell to the prisons. They regard inmates as a natural resource from which they all draw their livelihood, and the crop they exploit the best are the black inmates."*

*"When society's institutions no longer serve the needs of the people, the institutions must be changed. We must change them. That is the American tradition: when we are tyrannized and our government answers cries for justice with more tyranny, it is our right and duty to abolish that government, to create a government that will extend justice impartially and humanely to all its citizens."*

*“Stand up for liberty. Stand up for justice. Stand against death. We are set against a dying culture. Our change need not require bloodshed nor our revolution war, for the system is weak in the face of our conviction. We are life. We are the breath of the world. Our strength is strength that can change the course of history, a strength that can make a new society of cooperation, true freedom, and justice for all.”*

*He continues in that vein, exhorting the crowd to force the city to change, to force the state to change, and to force the nation to change. Apparently all of them can vote, and many of them are even eligible to become rulers.*

If Jesse Hill is free to shoot, he'll do so after “Stand against death”.

## Riots

If August Wey is assassinated, a small portion of the crowd — several hundred peoples — will immediately riot back down Market Street. The police will try to bring things under control. That night, the weathermen will use a nail bomb at a police headquarters. This will trigger more riots on the part of whites, and will also cause the police to act more brutally against black rioters, which will in turn trigger more rioting. When the death angels begin hacking people with machetes in the night, all hell will break loose.

There will be minor rioting in Los Angeles until the Tate/La Bianca killings are discovered and assumed to be a retaliation for the Wey assassination. Rioting will spread across color boundaries here as well.

When Governor Reagan sends in the National Guard to both San Francisco and Los Angeles, any mistake on their part will be used to spread the riots to Fresno (California's capital). Without assistance from the federal government, a lot of public officials will be killed, and it is very likely that the rioters will set up a new revolutionary government. The National Guard will then have to march back from San Francisco and Los Angeles to retake the capitol, leaving other riots behind them.

Rioting will also spread to New York City and Chicago pretty quickly, and to other major cities if those riots are not quickly put down. The weathermen and other groups primed by the swarm will commit racial crimes and try to instigate police crackdowns.

The federal government will be tied up in Washington, DC, where rioting will begin the night of the assassination. The weathermen will set more nail bombs in military facilities and state buildings, causing the federal government to declare martial law within the U.S. capitol. If the United States shows any weakness or likelihood of contracting inwards, revolutionary movements throughout the world will do their best to take advantage of it.

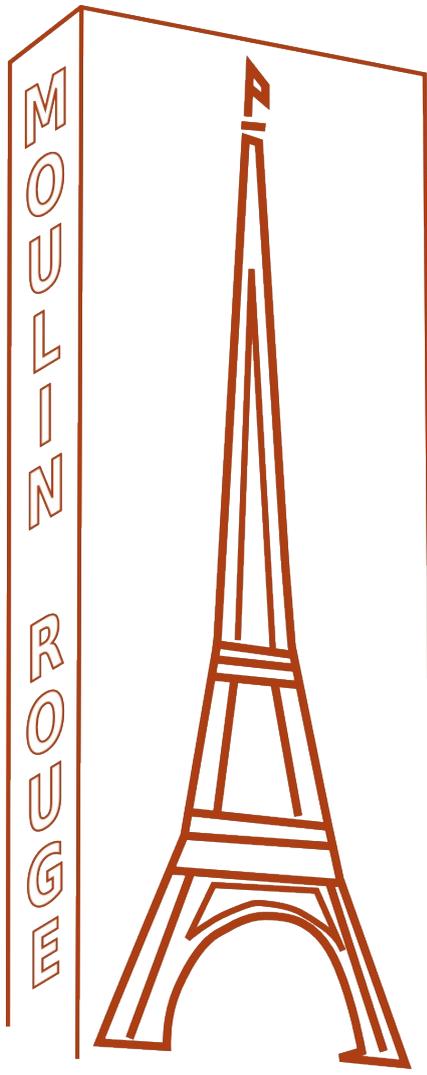
Some of this may be ameliorated if the player characters have removed some of the swarm's chess pieces from the board. If Charles Manson is unavailable, for example, his followers will try to handle their part without him, but will likely bungle it. If the weathermen have been taken out of commission, or their bombs destroyed, San Francisco's police won't be quite as trigger-happy.

## **No riots**

If August Wey is not assassinated, some of these groups will still perform their duties, but without a triggering event the bombings and killings will be spread across several years. The weathermen won't bomb a police station until February. They'll commit several other bombings and other killings or attempted killings through the years. They'll show solidarity with Charles Manson once that case breaks, suspecting that his actions were part of the fizzled revolution. They'll go underground after one particularly horrendous plan to bomb a dance and a crowded downtown area backfires on them. While underground they'll write a book about violent revolution dedicated to, among others, Sirhan Sirhan, and eventually start filtering back into the mainstream.

The death angels will go on their murder spree in 1973. Manson's killings, meant to coincide with an assassination that didn't happen, will confuse more than incite. A few Manson family members will continue Manson's work after he's captured, the most public event being their attempted assassination of President Gerald Ford in 1975.

The zodiac killer will fade from public view, eventually becoming fodder for crime movies and conspiracy theorists.



# The Moulin Rouge

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

Any swarm that the player characters leave alive in San Francisco will, if possible, be in Las Vegas, in the Paradise Island Lounge. Depending on what they know of the characters, the extra swarm may or may not be waiting in the basement along with the swarm host and free swarm that are trying to convince Joe Louis to let the free swarm insect enter him.

A good time to arrive is in August, three months after they've opened and two months before they close. August 15 is a good date. It is 1 AM when they arrive. Things are just about to get hopping at the Moulin Rouge.

## The Door

*You see what must be a wide room or hallway extending far to your right and left. Boxes are piled everywhere; metal pipes run left and right haphazardly along the ceiling. There is some light coming from your left, from around a corner about ten or fifteen yards away.*

*Water drips from metal to metal before reaching the floor or the boxes; the drip-drip-drip echoes down the hall.*

*The wall you came in on is covered in doors. There are a dozen or so doors next to you on your left. To your right, the doors go on forever, each of them marked with an arcane symbol.*

*The door you've just opened is marked with an odd, stylized butterfly-like symbol, two misshapen ovals composed of concentric lines all converging on the butterfly's missing body.*

They arrive through one of many doors. Their door is marked with the sigil of an extremely stylized butterfly-like pair of concentric circles (a Lorenz attractor). There are many other doors with stranger symbols, including one

with a highway symbol and “49” written in it. These open onto the two roads that lead to the crossroads. The doors appear to go on forever, although if they try to follow them to the right, they’ll find that it’s an optical illusion. The hallway and the doors shrink as they move down, ending two hundred yards to the right. There are still a couple hundred or so doors, though.

The basement is an “L” shape. The corner is fourteen yards to the left (as they walk out the door). The basement is about six yards wide, and filled with junk.

## Meet Joe Louis

Depending on when they look around the corner, you may have to adjust the order of these paragraphs.

*You hear a voice coming from around the corner.*

*“You’re a rug-thrower, Joe,” you hear in a high-pitched whine, like metal wire drawn suddenly taut in winter. “A high-priced monkey in a red suit. Nothing will ever come of it. You know that. Your “partners” know it. They’re gonna dodge and shimmy and leave you alone in the ring again.”*

*A big man, a warrior, is tied tightly to a small chair about twenty yards ahead of you. Two men, one wearing a dark green plaid jacket, the other wearing a gold jacket with orange lines, are pacing in front of and behind him, talking to him. One leans over to whisper to him, while the other berates him.*

*“Look at your world,” says the man in the dark green jacket. “Diseased. Cancerous is the perfect metaphor for your world, Joe. It is at war with itself. It is dying from within; and your people will be the first to go, Joe. Understand that; then understand that we offer a solution. We offer a cure. There is a disease here; we provide the antibodies.”*

*“And you can choose to help, “ says the other man. “Choose unity. Let this be the moment that hope begins. Join us. Let us help you. All you need to do is invite us.”*

*His head lolls backwards, and you can see blood and bruises on his face.*

*“No.”*

Around the corner, it is 20 yards to the chairs where Joe Louis, the Moulin Rouge’s doorman and partner, is bound and gagged. The swarm are trying to convince the boxer to accept them, so that they can use him to commit the Moulin Rouge massacre.

## 78 – The Moulin Rouge

Joe Louis's interrogators are swarm hosts trying to convince him to let them in. Remember that while the two of them are together, their magic resistance is 4, and in an eight-yard radius.

### **The casino manager (John Ryder)**

John is the man in green. He is the spokesperson for the swarm here, and coordinates with the mob. His pistol has seven shots.

*Swarm host: (Human: 1, Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 5+24; Move: 12; Attack: knife or pistol; Damage: 1d4+1 or 1d6; Defense: +2; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

*Swarm form: (Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 24; Move: 16; Attack: mandible; Damage: d8; Defense: +5; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

### **The aging singer (Austin Ellison)**

Austin is the man in gold. He plans to take part in the massacre later. His pistol has six shots.

*Swarm Host: (Human: 1, Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 1+26; Move: 12; Attack: knife or pistol; Damage: 1d4+1 or 1d6; Defense: +2; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

*Swarm form: (Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 26; Move: 16; Attack: mandible; Damage: d8; Defense: +5; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

### **After the fight**

*"They're going to attack my casino. I'm going to stop them."*

*"Some people don't need a reason. I don't know why."*

The swarm's plan is to kill high-profile targets in America's first high-profile inter-racial casino. If the player characters defeat the insects here, but one or more of the bugs escape, and the insects know that the player characters are out to stop them, they will accelerate the plan.

## Leaving Paradise

*There are only two doors in this part of the halls, bare metal things with a single square of glass in them crisscrossed with tiny filaments. Joe leads you to one of the doors, and leads up metal stairs painted green. Up several flights of stairs which clang as you step upon them and echo loudly on all sides, you come to a solid blank door which Joe pushes open.*

*People mill about a long hallway; masks hang on walls, and green, grass-like barriers or short walls line the sides of the hall. Some women are dressed in grass-like skirts. Men look at you confusedly as Joe leads you through two tall, wide, glass doors lined in metal; the doors slide forward with a simple hush and you are in the cool, natural night of this strange world.*

After 20 yards of stairs (ten yards straight up) they come through a side door into the entrance of the Paradise Island Lounge. This side door can only be opened from the basement side. Among the birds of paradise are tiki masks, fake grass barriers, and waitresses in fake grass skirts. The exit is a pair of wide glass doors guarded, on the other side, by a pair of bouncers. The bouncers will probably be a bit confused about the strange group exiting their casino, but they will make no attempt to stop people from exiting, only entering again. They are normal humans.

The door, on the hallway side, is a secret door, shaped to appear as nothing more than a panel in the tiki-themed wall. It has no handle and normally cannot be opened from topside. Forcing it open is extremely difficult; finding it is a normal perception roll, but since they likely will know that it's there they'll get a bonus of 4 to see it when and if they return.

When they exit the Paradise Island Lounge, the neon lights of the Moulin Rouge are visible across the tracks.

*That symbol on your matchbook hangs in the air in the night. He leads you towards that light in the sky. As you move towards it, the crowds begin to thin, as do the lights. You pass through what appears to be a border crossing of some kind, with pairs of metal lines protruding from the gravel. When you cross the border, you notice that most of the skin colors are darker, and except for the oases you're moving towards the lights are dimmer and fewer in number.*

They'll need to go down a moderately busy street, passing lots of people, and across some railroad tracks, to get to the Moulin Rouge. As they move towards the tracks, the crowd thins.

## Entering the Moulin Rouge

*A gigantic sign across the roof sheds light across the lot, a wide expanse filled with bulbous wheeled contrivances. The sign reads "Moulin Rouge". A little lower and to its left more writing says "Casino Dining Theatre". A smaller sign above the lot by the road reads "Moulin Rouge presents Tropi Can Can. A dazzling revue with cast of over 50 by Clarence Robinson. Your host Joe Louis."*

There is a ringer at the front door, Wally Sagor, keeping track of possible targets. He's a swarm host, and he won't be happy to see Joe coming back with help.

*At the entrance, a man in red and black, with yellow lines, stands welcoming visitors.*

*"Joe, entertainers use the side entrance."*

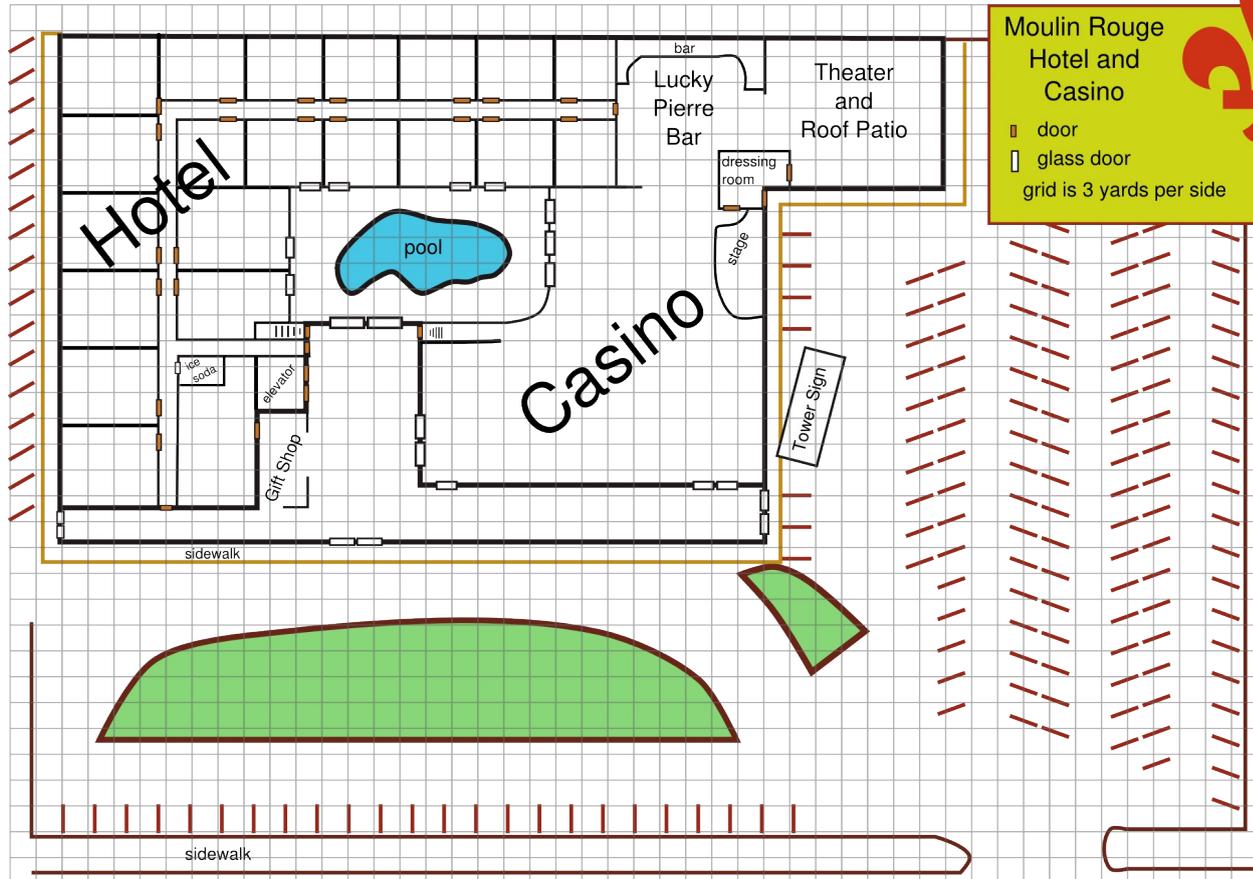
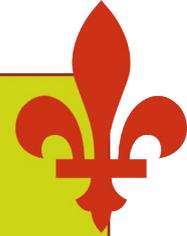
*"I can use the front door in this joint. Who are you?"*

If the player characters are all dressed up in armor, though, he'll have a comeback:

*"What about them, Joe? Whoever they are, talent uses the side entrance."*

*"Yeah, okay, you got a point."*

Louis will rush them through, and will then split up with them to go upstairs and talk to management about emptying out the casino. They should see him again in the scene, "Baby in the Corner".



## Inside the Moulin Rouge

*Massive clusters of crystals hang down from the ceilings emitting a bright light over the hallway. The ceilings are lavender, covered in row after row of stylized yellow blades or flowers resembling ornate spear-heads.*

*You step through an arch down wide stairs into a room filled with people and gambling tables. Wheels spin; dice roll; men in black and red yellow-lined suits deal cards. The room is filled with tobacco smoke; everyone is laying down brightly-colored coins to place and collect their bets.*

There is a café here (the Café Rouge), a stage, a bar, and a theater, as well as the casino area. In the west end is the hotel area, and between the hotel side and the casino side is a large pool.

*There's a stage, and people sit at tables around the stage drinking and talking. The walls are covered with drawings of ladies dancing, and windmills, and tightly-packed streets with tall buildings.*

*There is a little girl on stage, wearing a shimmering gown with a long plume on her head. She's singing a song about the follies of youth, and how she's glad she's not young any more. Only a few people at the tables are paying attention, but those who are, are laughing hysterically. Two boys only a little older dance around her, and their feet hitting the stage make a loud staccato noise like gunfire. You've come in just at the end of their act; they bow and are replaced by a strong, lithe man with a chicken, surrounded by twenty or more dancing women; all of them wearing very little.*

They should have just enough time to see the sights before the crowd panics. "He's got a gun!"

## The Massacre

The massacre is likely to be a running battle inside the Moulin Rouge, around the gambling tables, stars, women, food, kitchen, garden? The Moulin Rouge is *packed* between 10 PM and 2 AM, to the point where you can barely get through the casino area.

The swarm want to wait until 2 AM to start the massacre, because that's when the white stars show up. Any swarm in insect form can use the air conditioning to get to anywhere in the Moulin Rouge very quickly, as if it were a direct line.

There are two swarm hosts performing the massacre, plus Austin Ellis if he's available. One of them is Joe's replacement at the door. The doorman (Wally Sagor) will kill as many high-profile people as he can. Austin Ellis

and Miss Emma Willis will try to find Deanna. If there are any swarm from San Francisco, they may or may not take part. They'll be on the lookout for the player characters and for Deanna.

### **The doorman (Wally Sagor)**

*Swarm Doorman: (Human: 1, Autumnal Swarm: 1; Survival: 3+24; Move: 12; Attack: pistol; Damage: 1d6; Defense: +2; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

*Swarm form: (Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 24; Move: 16; Attack: mandible; Damage: d8; Defense: +5; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

### **The sultry dancer (Miss Emma Willis)**

*Swarm Host: (Human: 1, Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 1+20; Move: 12; Attack: knife; Damage: 1d4+1; Defense: +3; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

*Swarm form: (Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 20; Move: 16; Attack: mandible; Damage: d8; Defense: +5; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

### **Other swarm hosts**

If there are other swarm hosts taking part, you may want to list them here. Remember that their slo-time fields are additive, and that magic resistance increases as well. Don't forget to note two of them for the "Baby in the Corner" scene.

## Baby in the corner

This is a chance for the player characters to rescue Deanna Carmen – as an eight year old girl. Hopefully some of the Autumnal Swarm in bug form are available for this scene. You'll want two or three of them. Eight-year-old Deanna is protected by Joe Louis with Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. providing backup. Her guardian, Gerald Gardner, is already dead. They outnumber their attackers three to two, but they're moving very slowly (or if the characters are in the slo-time zone, their attackers are moving very quickly). Only Joe Louis can really fight, and he's already injured. Sammy Davis, Jr. is even wearing an eye patch over his left eye – he lost it in an accident almost a year ago.

Given the opportunity after the fight, Deanna will touch them to see if they're real (try not to do this in a manner that triggers an attack from the player characters). Preferably, Deanna will do this to the same character she did/ will do this to in San Francisco.

*The little girl reaches out her hand and touches you on the chest with her fingers, as if to make sure you're real. "I'm Deanna," she says in a quiet voice.*

## The Summit

Because of his "interview" with the Autumnal Swarm, Joe Louis knows a little about their presence in the Paradise Island Lounge.

1. He was caught because, when they first tried to kidnap him, he called the police. The police turned him over to Paradise casino manager John Ryder.
2. They wanted him to start the killings.
3. The Paradise is some sort of hive of bugs. It's a headquarters of sorts for them.
4. The mafia is in on it, and the bugs were talking to some mafia figures while they were holding him.
5. They use some doors in the basement to travel all over the place. Places he's never heard of, like Hanoker, and some places they just called "the frozen city" and "the road".
6. There doesn't seem to be a swarm of them – he saw or heard referenced maybe four or five others (you may want to adjust this depending on how many bugs escaped from San Francisco to here, and whether they would have been mentioned in Louis's presence).

## What to do with the bodies?

*Louis: "These are the folks I was telling you about, Sam."*

*Frank: "I dunno about the police. Joe, you feel good about telling the police you killed a man who looked like a bug?"*

*Louis: "No, sir. I already called the cops this morning. That's why I ended up in the Paradise chair."*

*Sam: "You got a better plan?"*

*Louis: "Sometimes the best story is no story at all. Take the bugs in the basement and burn them."*

Depending on what happened during the fight, they may be able to treat the whole thing as a very realistic show, a War of the Worlds gone awry. There's an incinerator in the basement that they can use for bug remains and dead swarm hosts. If the swarm succeed in killing or seriously injuring anybody, however, they may have to come up with some other story, such as that the killer ran away, or that there was more than one killer and they turned on each other, or some variation on a crazy lover.

Remember that Joe Louis does not trust the police. He knows that some of them work for the mafia. That can work in their favor, as any police officer on the take is less likely to make trouble for the Moulin Rouge: they'll leave the trouble-making to the mafia.

## Other possible quotes

*Sinatra or Davis: "1969, huh? How many ex-wives do I have by then?"*

*Sinatra: "Yeah, I can do it. I know the town. Besides, your mick accent will bug the hell out of the clerks."*

*Sinatra or Davis: "What the hell? I mean, what the hell is this? Some sort of deranged Disney World? These aren't dames dressed up as pests, these are pests dressed up as dames?"*

## The Irish Band

This encounter is specific to our group. You won't find it useful to use exactly, but it's an example of how the roads turn in on each other. In our game, one of the characters is a descendant of the Clanricarde, and has gone on a quest for Clanricarde's stone (unsuccessful at the time of this adventure). So, I introduced a version of the Clanricarde legend heavily modified for this campaign. An Irish band is extremely unlikely in the Moulin Rouge,

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but one unlikely thing in service of the adventure is worthwhile. As one of the regulars will say about the folk group, “that’s what comes from letting Harry sing that folk music here.”

*“Sure as Christ, you sound it.” (About them being related to the Clanricarde.)*

*“I thought I recognized the Connaught in you! Joey, a drink for my brother here.”*

*“Don’t worry, it’s on the house for the band. If they keep inviting Irish singers they’ll go broke.”*

*“The Clanricarde disappeared hundreds of years ago. No one knows where they went.”*

*“Castle? No, they disappeared, son. The Burkes, the castle, and the grave are gone. Where they went and when they return, no one knows. Across the western seas or down the faerie road, one legend is that they’ll return when the West needs them, but it’s ever a hard road for the Irish and they haven’t returned yet.”*

*“The Clanricardes drove the Fir Bolg out of Connaught, with the aid of St. Grellan. When the Fir Bolg broke their treaty and the Irish went to war, St. Bridget prayed to God and opened the earth to swallow the Fir Bolg army. The Clanricardes established the ancient castle at Ard Rathain, dedicated to Christ and St. Bridget; they worshipped at the temple of St. Bridget in Comharba.”*

*“The Clanricarde and his men fought with St. Ruth at Aughrim, and died defending the village of Aughrim on the Irish side of the Shannon river. His wife, son, and mother were spirited away from Ardrahan under the noses of the British, but what happened to them no one knows. The earldom was forbidden by the British and has never been restored.”*

The band’s accent is familiar to Highland characters. The Irishmen will call Highland characters “Celts” for their accent.

## Leaving Las Vegas

They will probably want to break back into the Paradise to get home, and might also choose to try crippling the swarm here in Vegas. Assuming that Louis, Davis, and/or Sinatra survive, the newly-formed Summit will support destroying the Paradise. Louis knows from his “conversation” with the swarm that the Paradise is a virtual train station for bugs. They’ll want to make sure that any innocents leave. They know about fire alarms and the best time to avoid crowds (anytime in the late morning would be best – people have awoken to go about their business but have not yet started to crowd the casinos and clubs).

The door they used to exit the Paradise basement is a secret door that doesn't open from this side. Magic might well be used to open it; or they can use the same door that Joe Louis was taken into when he was captured: the side entrance, metal stairs astride the building and open to the night lead into the casino's second-floor offices. There is a small hallway; one door at the end five yards down; one door on the left; and two doors on the right. The immediate door on the right is the office of John Ryder and Jane Lyon. The door on the left is a records room, with file cabinets. The far door leads down to the casino. The far door on the right leads to the stairwell, which goes down four flights of stairs (27 yards) to the basement. Of course, this will mean getting past John (if he's still around), Jane, and possibly armed mafia hoods as well as any surviving swarm insects and swarm hosts. There may be more insects involved in the Paradise than were involved in the adventure, depending on how long they wait and what they've done. Joe can give them a crude map if they want to take this more dangerous route.

## Bouncers

The two bouncers (Jim Reid and Harry Stubbins) at the front door are not privy to the Autumnal Swarm or even to the mafia. The player characters really ought to be nice to them, but you know how player characters are. The bouncers will forbid any attempts to force the basement door open, but they can also be more easily threatened than the mafia or the swarm.

*Bouncers: (Warrior: 1; Survival: 5, 7; Move: 10; Attack: fists; Damage: d3; Defense: 0)*

## The mafia liaison and his bodyguards

Tony Fanel is a cold bastard, but even he is chilled by what John Ryder and Jane Lyon are willing to do. He calls them the Ice King and the Ice Queen respectively. Tony helps maintain order outside the Paradise, and helps advance the mob's interest inside the Paradise. He'll be in the Paradise for at least an hour most nights, and sometimes (20% of the time) during the day. He is always accompanied by at least one bodyguard and usually two (80% of the time).

*Tony Fanel: (Warrior: 3; Survival: 21; Move: 12; Attack: pistol or dagger; Damage: d6/2d6 or d4; Range: 18; Defense: 2)*

*Emilio Silva: (Warrior: 2; Survival: 7; Move: 11; Attack: pistol or dagger; Damage: d6/2d6 or d4; Range: 18; Defense: 1)*

*George Fabian: (Warrior: 2; Survival: 14; Move: 11; Attack: pistol or dagger; Damage: d6/2d6 or d4; Range: 18; Defense: 1)*

Standard practice if they get into a fight is for the bodyguard(s) to push Tony behind cover; if they can get under cover, too, they will. Then start firing and let God sort it out.

## The insect secretary

I guess you could say that secretary Jane Lyon holds a pivotal position with the company. She accepted the swarm last April, and is now for all practical political purposes second in command at the Paradise. Tony Fanel and his men make jokes about her, but never where she can hear. She's here every day, and is not here at night.

*Swarm host: (Human: 1, Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 5+27; Move: 12; Attack: knife or pistol; Damage: 1d4+1 or 1d6; Defense: +2; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

*Swarm form: (Autumnal Swarm: 5; Survival: 27; Move: 16; Attack: mandible; Damage: d8; Defense: +5; Special Defense: slo-time; Magic Resistance: 3)*

## The hall of doors

The characters can leave through the same door they came in, and thus return home. They can also choose another door for another adventure. It's up to you. There are many doors in the sub-basement of the Paradise

The hall of doors is two hundred and sixteen yards long, and about one foot high at the far end: the doors and hallway shrinks more and more as they walk down to the far end, giving the illusion of being much further than it is.

There are three doors to the left of the Fork (Lorenz) door, and 172 doors to the right.

Suggested door symbols: a bloody handprint, five circles equidistant from each other forming a star-like shape, a whisk broom, the Lorenz (Fork) door, a flame rising from a series of seven perfect concentric circles, a pyramid with a shining eye in the middle.

The 101st door has a symbol that looks oddly like a highway symbol, with a multicolored cross-in-a-circle inside it, and "49" written above the circle inside the symbol. This door leads to one of the roads that leads to the crossroads. On either side of this door is a door with three fanning arcs around a central dot (a nuclear symbol) and a castle on a forbidding cliff.

You can of course make up any other doors you wish. Other doors before the 101st might include a bug that looks like a stylized swarm insect, an olive tree on an island, three deep scratches on a diagonal like a claw mark, red lips dripping blood, a bugle, a candle and an apple, a mushroom, a snake weaving itself around a female shape, three quarter-moon arcs set against a central circle (a biohazard symbol). Door after the 101st might include a

circle woven of thorns, a skull missing its jawbone, two alien bipedal shapes simply drawn against a circle and a five-pointed star, a lute, and a long row of ants.

## The butterfly ransom

If you have a non-player character you want to get rid of temporarily in order to make room for Joe Louis and Deanna Carmen, have Jack ask for a marker.

When they return, they'll need to rescue the marker. Jack is not a man of his word. He'll have sent the marker into another world, or sold them into slavery in one of the other worlds. Or he'll pin their soul into his butterfly collection.

## Destroying Red Jack

This adventure isn't really about Red Jack; it's about the kind of world where Red Jack exists. By the time the characters get through San Francisco and Las Vegas they may be ready to head out the door to Fork and never come back.

But, and this is especially true if the adventure started as a murder mystery, they might also want to stop Red Jack's murders. Killing Red Jack in his lair will be difficult at best. They might, however, be able to destroy the doors. On the "real world" sides of the doors, a good fireball or pile of dynamite would take out the doors and any hope of rebuilding them; Jack would have to go through the time-consuming process of relocating that door. He will eventually, however. One way or another Red Jack is always with us.

# Resources

The resources file for this adventure (see <http://godsmonsters.com/Guide/Skelter/>) contains the following items:

1. The front cover fractured Palace of Fine Arts as a PNG and as a GIMP document.
2. The Scribus Gambling House Riddle and PDF.
3. The Inkscape Zodiac crossroads symbol and PDF.
4. The Inkscape Bird of Paradise symbol. and PDF.
5. An Inkscape and PDF of the Butterfly Hall door sigils.
6. An Inkscape Paradise Island Lounge matchbook and PDF.
7. An Inkscape Moulin Rouge tower and PDF.
8. An Inkscape Moulin Rouge matchbook and PDF
9. An Inkscape and PDF of Ebeorie temet hpiti (Ebeorie, Lord of Discord) as written in the underground script.
10. A GIMP and PNG newspaper page for August 5 and August 9 with articles about August Wey inserted (see later).
11. The Scribus character sheet and PDF for Joe Lakono, Deanna Carmen, and Joe Louis.
12. The Inkscape Red Jack image used in the riddle and this document. It is available under the GNU Lesser General Public License, version 2.1 or any later version, not the GNU Free Documentation License. It is based on the David Bellot cards from Wikimedia at [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Jack\\_of\\_diamonds\\_fr.svg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Jack_of_diamonds_fr.svg).
13. An Inkscape and PDF roulette betting table.
14. A PNG of the Las Vegas welcome photo. The original came from <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:WelcomeToVegasNite.JPG> at Wikimedia Commons.
15. A JPG of the Golden Gate bridge looking north.
16. A PNG of Alcatraz as seen from the ocean, and another PNG of an abandoned building marked by Lilies.
17. An Inkscape map and PDF of Alcatraz island and the dungeons below Alcatraz.

The software used to create these resources are all freely available and open source:

1. GIMP: <http://www.gimp.org/>
2. Scribus: <http://www.scribus.net/>
3. Inkscape: <http://www.inkscape.org/>

You should be able to download and install any of these software packages for Mac OS X, Windows, and Linux. For editing the newspaper, I've found that using the Noise filter "Pick" at 4% or 5% does a good job of making text match old text. I used Verdana for the caption, Futura for headlines, and Times New Roman for body copy.

# Inspiration

You may wish to read Hunter Thompson's *Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas* (from which come the quotes at the beginning of the San Francisco and Las Vegas chapters) and Moore & Campbell's *From Hell*. For more about Vegas in this time period, I recommend Steve Fischer's *When the Mob Ran Vegas: Stories of Money, Mayhem and Murder*.

Other inspirational stories can include *Ocean's 11*, the *Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas* movie, *The Cooler*, and *Moulin Rouge*. Albums of interest should include Billy Holiday's *Ella in Berlin*, Frank Sinatra's *Live in Australia with the Red Norvo Quartet*, and Sammy Davis Jr.'s *Starring Sammy Davis Jr.*

The swarm are inspired by Grant Morrison's writings, *The Matrix*, and icky insects in general. They are a primordial evil, an ant-colony horror. They are utterly alien.

The Las Vegas Moulin Rouge is real. After searching for interesting events in "Las Vegas 1955" and discovering the story of the Moulin Rouge, it quickly took over that half of the adventure like some science fiction infestation.

## We have no mercy for you

This is a fiction based around real events, some of them horrific. There is evil in the world we do not understand. We may never know who Jack the ripper was, or who the zodiac was, but we do know that they were real, and that they needed no fantasy demon to goad them into killing. The death angels didn't need an Autumnal Swarm to tell them to hack apart a man until "his skin hung in bloody strips from his skull". The weathermen killed and severely wounded police officers using a nail-lined pipe bomb without any help from the supernatural. No interdimensional bugs created the Manson family, nor motivated weathermen leaders to "dig" the Manson victims' treatment and dedicate their manual on revolution to, among others, Sirhan Sirhan.

That was real. That was our world. It may still be.

## San Francisco timeline

Depending on how you want to handle this adventure, there are several useful insertion points in 1969. I chose August 5 so that the headlines will read "This is the Zodiac speaking" and the deciphered message will appear a

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few days later. There are other important events that could be moderately related to the adventure but aren't specifically tied to it, however.

Italicized items are fictional parts of this adventure.

March 20	Chicago 8 indicted.
March 21	San Francisco State University student strike ends with the institution of a School of Ethnic Studies.
May 15	National Guard called out in Berkeley to put down the Bloody Thursday People's Park student riots.
May 26-June 2	John Lennon and Yoko Ono's "bed-in-peace" demonstration in Montreal; record "Give Peace a Chance".
June 18-22	At the Students for a Democratic Society's Chicago national convention, the Weathermen split from the SDS.
June 28	Stonewall Riots, New York City.
July 4	Vallejo Zodiac killing.
July 20	Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, land on moon. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"
August 1	San Francisco newspapers receive letters from Zodiac with cipher.
August 2	Zodiac letters appear in San Francisco Chronicle.
August 4	San Francisco Examiner receives a letter: "This is the Zodiac speaking".
<i>August 5</i>	<i>The characters arrive; waning moon; new moon will be August 13, full moon August 27.</i>
<i>August 6</i>	<i>Manson returns to southern California.</i>
August 8	Zodiac cipher cracked.
<i>August 8</i>	<i>August Wey returns from Washington DC.</i>
August 9	Decoded cipher printed.
<i>August 9</i>	<i>August Wey's Market Street speech.</i>
August 9-10	Tate-LaBianca Manson family murders (Los Angeles; not known as a Manson murder until November).
August 15-17	Woodstock: more than 450,000 people in Bethel, New York.
August 17-19	Hurricane Camille, worst U.S. hurricane since 1935, hits Mississippi, continues killing all the way to Virginia.
August 16	Manson and Family arrested at Spahn Ranch on suspicion of auto theft, and released a few days later.
August 22-24	The Grateful Dead, Wild West Festival.
September 27	Lake Berryessa Zodiac killing.
September 30	Lake Berryessa killing printed in Chronicle.
October 1	5.6 earthquake in Santa Rosa at 9:56 PM and 11:19 PM felt in San Francisco.
October 8	Days of Rage, Chicago Weathermen riots.
October 11	Presidio Heights, San Francisco, Zodiac killing.
October 10-12	Manson family arrested at Barker Ranch (Death Valley) on arson charges, leading to murder rap.
October 15	Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam, national walk-out and demonstrations across the United States.
November 9	78 Indians seize Alcatraz Island and offer to buy it for \$24 worth of beads; occupation lasts a year.
November 12	"I've killed seven" Zodiac letter printed.
November 12	My Lai massacre story breaks.
November 15	Second Moratorium to End the War draws 200,000 people in San Francisco.
December 3	Manson story breaks.
December 4	Black Panther Fred Hampton assassinated by police in Chicago.
December 6	Rolling Stones at Altamont; Hell's Angel kills black man.

# Modern arms

The firearms of Vegas and San Francisco are much higher quality than the fantasy firearms in the standard rules.

Weapon	Damage	Fire Actions	Range	Hands	Bulk	Shots	Usage
Handgun	d6	1	18	1	4	4-15	Simple
Rifle	d8	1	30	2	8	1-6	Basic
Shotgun	d10	1	18	2	8	1-10	Simple

If the firearm automatically replaces a bullet under the hammer (such as does a semi-automatic or a double-action revolver) warriors may fire twice on the same action and against the same target. Only one attack roll is required. It has an attack penalty of one, and damage dice are doubled. Shotguns may also fire two shots if they are appropriately-designed double barreled shotguns. Double shots cannot be performed in close combat.

It takes one action to load a single bullet or (if a semi-automatic) a fresh clip into a firearm. It takes two actions to fill a normal firearm with bullets or to refill a clip. Depending on the circumstances, an Evasion roll may be required to successfully add bullets to a firearm or a clip during combat.

Firearms can also have scopes. Depending on their quality and power, a scope can negate one to ten range penalties. However, they also require one extra fire action to use.

## Fully automatic firearms

Some firearms can be fully automatic. Although this is illegal in both 1955 and 1969, criminals will sometimes carry these firearms. Fully automatic firearms will usually have 10 to 30 bullets (handguns) or 30 to 100 bullets (rifle), and 50% more bulk than a normal semi-automatic. When fired in fully-automatic mode, the firearm will use ten bullets for each attack. Warriors can take the skill automatic firearms and can then choose one of three options when firing a fully automatic weapon:

1. Maximize damage: the attack does three dice of damage, and the attack is at a penalty of one.
2. Maximize success: the attack does one die of damage as normal, and the attack is at a bonus of four.
3. An unfocussed cone attack: the attack does one die of damage to anyone in the field of fire. Targets make an Evasion roll to take half damage. The field of fire is a cone one yard in diameter for every 6 yards (handgun) or 10 yards (rifle). Defense bonuses, such as from armor, aid the Evasion roll. Range penalties

and any other penalties on the attacker also aid the Evasion roll. If multiplying their roll by five would still have been a success, they take no damage.

In each case, the warrior can fire two bursts to add a damage die. “Double bursts” add an attack penalty (or Evasion bonus) of 2.

Non-warriors, warriors without the automatic firearms skill, and warriors in close combat can only fire an automatic weapon unfocussed. Many automatic firearms can be switched to semi-automatic mode, acting as normal for semi-automatic firearms.

Rifles can also sometimes be fed from a belt, which may hold a hundred, two hundred, or more bullets. When belt-fed, rifles are not generally hand-carried but rather mounted in some way.

## Armor

There are two types of armor in use during this time period, and both are fairly rare. Ballistic vests and ballistic shirts are both available to the military and to law enforcement in large cities.

Armor	Defense Bonus	Bulk	Warrior Level	Other Level	Skill Penalty
Ballistic shirt	2	2	1	2	0
Ballistic vest	4	5	1	2	1

Ballistic vests and shirts will continue to work in Highland. However, they cannot be maintained and will eventually fall apart. Reduce their defense bonus by one for every six months of use.

## Technology in the tree

Gunpowder, batteries, computers, and other such things only work well in worlds that are not unstable. Highland, on the edge of the abyss, will not support such things. Some will simply not work. Others may smoke slowly and fail.

# The Autumnal Swarm

"The Creator, if He exists, has a special preference for beetles, and so we might be more likely to meet them than any other type of animal on a planet that would support life."

<b>Very Rare:</b> The Road
<b>Class:</b> Fantastic
<b>Organization:</b> Hive
<b>Moral Code:</b> Ordered Evil
<b>Activity Cycle:</b> Any
<b>Diet:</b> consciousness
<b>Number:</b> -12
<b>Level:</b> +host
<b>Intelligence:</b> High
<b>Charisma:</b> Average
<b>Movement:</b> Host+1 or 16
<b>Attacks:</b> Host or mandibles
<b>Damage:</b> Host+1 or 1d8+1
<b>Defense:</b> Host+2, or 5
<b>Special Attacks:</b> Slo-time field
<b>Special Defenses:</b> Slo-time field, immunity to sleep and telepathy
<b>Magic Resistance:</b> 3
<b>Size:</b> Any/Medium

The Autumnal Swarm are a Burroughsian infestation of mental vermin. They wish to control the Eternal City and the Crossroads, and to destroy the World Tree. The swarm is always searching for doors that lead to the crossroads or that lead to places that can be used to weaken the tree. Thus, swarm hosts are often found near doorways to other worlds and waystations to doors.

The natural form of a swarm insect is of a strange combination of human-sized ant, beetle, and centipede. A swarm insect may take control of any living, intelligent creature who consents. Their insect form "enters" the host and leaves a crossroads-shaped scar somewhere on the body. This sphincterous scar opens to let them enter or leave as they please. Note, though, that the insect is not physically inside the host: means of looking inside the host body will not reveal the insect, unless somehow it looks inside their spirit. Further, damage to a host does not damage the insect(s) inside.

An insect adds its survival to that of its host; when an insect leaves its host, it regains all of the survival it had when it entered. When an insect's host dies, the insect will usually leave the host with full survival. Several minutes after an insect form dies, it ripples away across the dimensions, devolving into a gooey yellowish puddle.

Treat the host and the insect as separate opponents for experience purposes. If the characters defeat a host, but the insect leaves and they don't defeat it (or it defeats them), they'll get experience for the 5+ level host, but not (yet) for the 5th level insect form.

Hosts must have originally had at least a five wisdom to be a host; a host can have up to one insect inside them for every five points of wisdom. Having multiple insects in the same host will increase the slo-time field (see below) as normal for multiple insects, but will not increase the level of the host or its survival—however, at any point before the host is killed, the insect in control can cede control to another insect, restoring the insect portion of the host's survival. The insects in this case are considered separate opponents for experience purposes.

## The Slo-Time Field

Each insect of the swarm generates a slo-time field four yards in radius. Within this field, time moves half as fast for everyone except the insect. If more than one insect intersect each other's field, the radius is additive. If two insects come together, the field is eight yards radius; if three come together, the field is twelve yards radius, and so on. Each doubling of the insects inside the field also increases the magic resistance in the field by 1. So two insects have magic resistance of 4; four have magic resistance of 5, eight have magic resistance of 6, and so on.

The effect of the slo-time field is that, compared to others within the field, the insects move very fast. Movement rates are all doubled. When acting against an opponent affected by the slo-time field, the insect gains a +5 to one of attack (which warriors can convert to combat bonuses), defense, or any agility or evasion roll.

Firearms, which rely almost exclusively on high speed to cause harm, are half as effective against a swarm insect or host because of the slo-time field. Firearms damage is halved.

## The Mind of the Autumnal Swarm

The Autumnal Swarm are a fractal mind. Within each insect is the seed of the whole. Whenever an insect is within the slo-time field of another insect, they share their memories fractally. Because of this, they each generally know anything that another swarm insect knows. When a swarm insect dies, its last senses are sent in a burst to any other swarm insects within five hundred yards.

Because their mind is so alien, they are immune to telepathic powers and spells. They are also immune to *sleep*. They are even partially immune to spirit charms such as *fear*, *command*, *spiritual hold*, and *spiritual torpor* unless the

manifestation affects all insects within the current insect meld. For example, if there are three Autumnal Swarm hosts or insects within the same slo-time field, a *spiritual hold* must affect all three of them to affect any of them.

The mind of the swarm is completely alien. I was recently at a teleconferencing demonstration, where the demo was life-size, live video over the Internet. The quality was amazing, until the bandwidth dropped. Their algorithm – which I’m guessing was fractal because of its behavior – tried to compensate. The result looked life-like with human movements, but took on the appearance of rotting flesh, exposed bone, and life-like eyes within a charred, face-like oval as the algorithm tried to take what it had and rebuild the whole. This is what the memories of the Autumnal Swarm are like. They work; they allow the swarm to learn from past events. But they are utterly alien.

The swarm keep no written record; they know everything that any swarm mind they’ve come in contact with knew at the time. The only writing around a swarm hive will be instructions or notes to be given to their human minions, and will be in that language.

## The Goal of the Autumnal Swarm

"We will make the whole universe a noise in the end."-C.S. Lewis's demon Screwtape

The Autumnal Swarm eats souls, sucking intelligence and memory into its own alien consciousness. When it does so, it takes over the body of its victim. This is a voluntary process: the victim must accept the swarm. An insect can be bonded with more than one host at a time, but can only be within one at a time, and must physically leave one to enter another.

A soul can attempt to maintain its individuality within the swarm, but it will eventually fail.

The swarm’s goal is chaos, not in the moral code sense but in the entropic sense, the de-evolution of order. They spread throughout the worlds by way of doors and liminal roads, and are the termites of the World Tree.

# Props

## The matchbooks

The matchbooks in the resource file are very cool if you have access to a color printer and can find some matte (non-glossy) white cardstock to put in it. There's a matchbook for both the Moulin Rouge and for the Paradise Island Lounge. You can easily make a realistic prop by taking the matches from a real matchbook and attaching them to the fake matchbook. I carefully pried open the staple that held the matches into the real book, and then used a pin to poke the holes needed for that staple in the fake.

For the Paradise Island Lounge matchbook that the characters found in Highland, I left them a fully-used matchbook (one without any matches, but with the roots of matches still there). This avoided any problems with explaining that the matches don't really work in Highland.

For the Moulin Rouge matchbook that Deanna carries in San Francisco, I also pasted a real striking strip across the printed strip so that I could have her really light a match from the Moulin Rouge book.

Obviously you're going to want to be careful lighting matches in the paper-heavy environment of most gaming tables.

## The Gambling House riddle

This riddle is also in the resources file at the Gods & Monsters web site, suitable for printing on a 4x6 card.



## The Gambling House in Fork

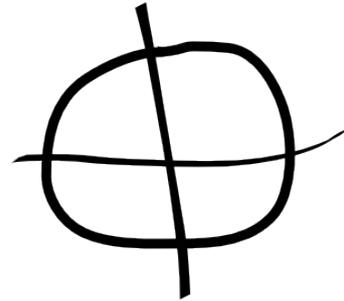
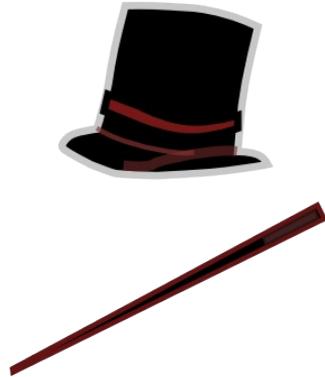
In the city of sin, in a lost alley, there is a door behind a door and within it a deck of cards and fortune's wheel. Upon the deck are forgotten gods; upon the wheel the world rests. The door is guarded by a riddle, and the riddle is this:

Come, Master Red-Jack, where are you creeping?  
"To the halls of the ivory pillars I'm leaping."

Oh, shall you return, noble red-cloak, again?  
"My bones may return, yet my flesh shall remain."

You may wish to take the source file and modify the introductory text or title to match your own world.

# Door sigils



## Newspaper articles

The GIMP file of newspaper clippings is designed for images from the San Francisco Chronicle (sfgate.com) article “The Zodiac Killer in print” from February 25, 2007. Save the PDFs for August 2 and August 9 at 300 dpi to fit into the “original” layer if you want to make changes. The Tuesday original should be 1512 by 994 pixels. The Saturday original should be 1440 by 887 pixels.

### Tuesday, August 5: Wey in Washington

Black activist August Wey met with Senator Alan Cranston in Washington today to fight for more school funding in slums and call for an end to racial discrimination.

Mr. Wey attempted to meet with President Nixon, but Nixon ignored the request on advice from Governor Reagan. Last year, Reagan pressured Berkeley against employing Wey as a guest lecturer. Wey called Reagan “the chief priest of the temple of Ares”, an allusion to the governor’s support of the war in Vietnam.

Wey returns on Saturday. A spokesperson for Wey said that he will speak “to the people” about his efforts when he returns.

### Saturday, August 9: Black Nationalist March Today

August Wey, the controversial San Francisco black nationalist, will lead a protest march up Market Street this morning. He returned from Washington Friday evening, where he met with Senator Alan Cranston and other Democratic congressmen.

The march begins at noon and will culminate in a demonstration at Market Street Park.

### The decoded Zodiac letter

ilikekillingpeoplebecauseitissomuchfunitismorefunthankingwildgameintheforrestbecauseamanisthemostdangerousanamalofalltokillsomethinggivesmethemostthrillingexperienceitisevenbetterthangettingyourrocksoffwithagirlthebestpartofitisthatwhenidieiwillbereborninparadiceandalltheihavekilledwillbecomemy slavesiwillnotgiveyou my namebecauseyouwilltrytosloidownorstopmycollectingofslavesformy afterlifebeorietemethhpiti

## Soundtracks

I don't normally use music during a game, but for both the San Francisco adventure and the Vegas adventure I wanted to use music to help evoke the spirit of the times. Because this adventure started our group looking for the Eternal City, I went for an *on the road* theme. You might choose a different theme to match your group's campaign. For both sets of music, tell the players that they can assume that their characters have heard this music at some point during the adventure. Let them learn from the lyrics, and let them ask questions about the songs to better understand the world they're in. More than just mood, they're also icebreakers.

### San Francisco, 1969

These tracks are basically in chronological order. I switched a few around to ensure variety, but I wanted the music to evolve through the adventure.

- Eight Miles High (The Byrds/Fifth Dimension)
- Sloop John B (The Beach Boys/Pet Sounds)
- Season Of The Witch (Donovan/Sunshine Superman)
- Highway 61 Revisited (Bob Dylan/Highway 61 Revisited)
- The Fat Angel (Donovan/Sunshine Superman)
- 7 O'Clock News/Silent Night (Simon & Garfunkel/Parsley, Sage, Rosemary & Thyme)
- I Know A Place (Sammy Davis Jr./The Sounds Of '66)
- Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds (The Beatles/Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band)
- Easy Rider (Big Brother & the Holding Company)
- Tales Of Brave Ulysses (Cream/Disraeli Gears)
- House Of Jansch (Donovan/Mellow Yellow)
- Break On Through (To The Other Side) (The Doors)
- The Golden Road (Grateful Dead/The Grateful Dead)
- The Wind Cries Mary (Jimi Hendrix/Are You Experienced?)
- Pride Of Man (Quicksilver Messenger Service/Classic Masters)
- The Weight (The Band/The Last Waltz)
- I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine (Bob Dylan/John Wesley Harding)
- Rainbows are Back in Style (Dean Martin/Gentle on My Mind)
- The Flesh Failures (Let the Sunshine In) (Gerome Ragni, James Rado, Galt MacDermot/Hair)
- Dark as a Dungeon (Johnny Cash/At Folsom Prison)
- The Times They Are a-Changin' (Bob Dylan/The Times They Are a-Changin')
- Mechanical Man (Charles Manson/Lie)
- Interview (Charles Manson/Lie)
- Sick City (Charles Manson/Lie)
- Safe in My Garden (The Mamas & the Papas/The Papas & the Mamas)
- Oh Gosh (Donovan/A Gift From A Flower To A Garden)
- All Along The Watchtower (Jimi Hendrix/Electric Ladyland)
- The Wall (Johnny Cash/At Folsom Prison)
- Midnight Voyage (The Mamas & the Papas/The Papas & the Mamas)
- A Hazy Shade of Winter (Simon & Garfunkel/Bookends)
- Wheel of Fortune (Arlo Guthrie/Running Down the Road)
- Carry That Weight (The Beatles/Abbey Road)
- Rockin' Chair (The Band)
- Graveyard Train (Creedence Clearwater Revival/Bayou Country)
- Western Ford Gateway (Elton John/Empty Sky)
- Bad Moon Rising (Creedence Clearwater Revival/Green River)
- Just Like Strange Rain (Elton John/Empty Sky)
- Peace in the Valley (Johnny Cash/Johnny Cash at San Quentin)
- The Circle Game (Joni Mitchell/Ladies of the Canyon)
- Viva Las Vegas (Elvis Presley/Can't Help Falling in Love)
- Friend Of The Devil (Grateful Dead/American Beauty)
- The Hitchhikers' Song (Joan Baez/Blessed Are...)
- New Speedway Boogie (Grateful Dead/Workingman's Dead)
- Old Devil Time (Pete Seeger/Tell Me That You Love Me, Junie Moon)
- All Along The Watchtower (Dylan & The Dead)

## Las Vegas, 1955

"Magnificent desolation"

C'est Si Bon (Eartha Kitt/Hear Them Again! The Big Entertainers)  
 Everyday I've the blues (B.B. King/B.B. King 20 Greatest Hits)  
 3 o'Clock blues (B.B. King/B.B. King 20 Greatest Hits)  
 My Heart Belongs to Daddy (Mary Martin/Hear Them Again!  
 Great Moments from Broadway Musicals)  
 Day in, Day out (Billie Holiday/All or Nothing at All)  
 Stars Fell on Alabama (Billie Holiday/All or Nothing at All)  
 One for My Baby (Billie Holiday/All or Nothing at All)  
 Let's Call the Whole Thing off (Billie Holiday/All or Nothing at  
 All)  
 The West's Awake (The Clancy Brothers & Tommy Makem/The  
 First Hurrah!)  
 Will Ye Go, Lassie, Go? (The Clancy Brothers & Tommy Makem/  
 The Boys Won't Leave the Girls Alone)  
 Preacher (Bing Crosby & Louis Armstrong/Bing & Satchmo)  
 'Way Down Yonder in New Orleans (Bing Crosby & Louis Arm-  
 strong/Bing & Satchmo)  
 Dream a Little Dream of Me (Bing Crosby/Bing With A Beat)  
 Down Among the Sheltering Palms (Bing Crosby/Bing With A  
 Beat)  
 Heat Wave (Bing Crosby & Buddy Bregman/Bing Sings Whilst  
 Bregman Swings)  
 You Came a Long Way from St. Louis (Bing Crosby & Rosemary  
 Clooney/fancy meeting you here)  
 Calcutta (Bing Crosby & Rosemary Clooney/fancy meeting you  
 here)  
 That Old Black Magic (Cab Calloway/Minnie The Moocher)  
 We The Cats Shall Help You (Cab Calloway/Minnie The  
 Moocher)  
 Clinging Vine (Dean Martin/The Door is Still Open to My Heart)  
 I'll Buy That Dream (Dean Martin/Dream with Dean)

These are not in any particular order, though I've tried to keep the same artist's songs together to provide the impression of "shows" (even though many of these artists would not have performed at the Moulin Rouge).

You might also use these songs for foreshadowing. Take note of what the players talk about, and see if those pieces can't be worked into a future adventure.

Hernando's Hideaway (Ella Fitzgerald/Ella Sings Broadway)  
 Whatever Lola Wants (Ella Fitzgerald/Ella Sings Broadway)  
 The Lady Is A Tramp (Ella Fitzgerald/Mack The Knife)  
 Love For Sale (Ella Fitzgerald/Mack The Knife)  
 Mack The Knife (Ella Fitzgerald/Mack The Knife)  
 One For My Baby (Frank Sinatra With The Red Norvo Quintet)  
 Let's Do It (Frank Sinatra & Shirley MacLaine/Cole Porter's Can-  
 Can)  
 On The Road To Mandalay (Frank Sinatra With The Red Norvo  
 Quintet)  
 When the Saints Go Marching In (Harry Belafonte/An Evening  
 With Belafonte)  
 Jamaica Farewell (Harry Belafonte/Calypso)  
 Wake Up Jacob (Harry Belafonte/My Lord What a Mornin')  
 Oh Freedom (Harry Belafonte/My Lord What a Mornin')  
 Paris is a Lonely Town (Judy Garland/Gay Purr-ee)  
 Get Happy (Judy Garland/The Golden Years at MGM)  
 St. Louis Blues (Lena Horne/Hear Them Again! The Unforget-  
 table Blues)  
 Stormy Weather (Lena Horne/Hear Them Again! The Big Popu-  
 lar Singers)  
 An Ace in the Hole (Lee Wiley, Billy Butterfield & his Orchestra/  
 Hear Them Again! The Great Rhythm Singers)  
 You'd Be Surprised (Marilyn Monroe/Hear Them Again! The  
 Movie Stars Sing Again)  
 La Vie en Rose (Tony Martin/Hear Them Again! They made such  
 beautiful music)  
 Hallelujah (Tony Martin, Vic Damone, Debbie Reynolds, Jane  
 Powell, Ann Miller, Kay Armen/That's Entertainment)  
 Lonesome Road (Sammy Davis Jr./Starring Sammy Davis Jr.)

# Extra Characters

Joe Louis and Deanna Carmen have both verve and mojo on their character sheets, so that it will be easy to use them as temporary player characters. If you're using them as non-player characters, you can either use verve for them as if they were player characters or just roll up the extra dice they need for survival and ignore their verve. Deanna needs one more d10 for survival (for second level) and Joe needs two more d10 for survival (for second and fourth level). Don't forget that each gets an Endurance bonus to survival.

Their mojo is in parentheses, because non-player characters never get mojo.

# Deanna Carmen

Deanna was born in 1947 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, while her family played the theater there. By the time she was eight she was warming up crowds in the Moulin Rouge. Here, she met Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis, Jr. When the entertainers discovered the *Autumnal Swarm* in 1955, she needed protection; they provided it. Fourteen years later she is one of the Summit's best agents. Deanna wears a *gold watch of the Summit*. It keeps perfect time and negates the slo-time field within a two-yard radius of the wearer. The watch is psychically empowered.

This character sheet is Deanna in 1969, with a black beret, rainbow slacks, and a rifle slung over her shoulder. As a non-player character she will not take the lead. Deanna will look up to the player characters as heroes, and follow their lead. She remembers them with a seven-year-old's eye, as the great heroes who came out of nowhere to save the day—even if that isn't exactly what did/will happen in 1955. You'll probably want the characters to see Deanna use her matchbook at least once.

*"It no longer exists. Chained and locked 14 years ago. But that's where the Summit began."*

*"The crossroads? You mean the symbol of the insects? It's how they get into a human."*

*"We don't want to keep the insects secret. But if we start talking about them, we'll get locked into the loony bin. Think about it—we're killing these people because they have bugs inside them, bugs as big as a human. How far do you think that'll get you in court?"*

*"The bodies melt. Yeah, they do photograph. We've leaked a few just to see the reaction. No one believes them. Those who do are treated as nut-jobs; mostly they are."*

## Deanna and youth politics

Deanna recognizes that the Summit has been more successful in the street than the back rooms. She's not sure Nixon is going to keep his promises about ending the war, and she's not sure it makes sense for the Summit to back Ronald Reagan (who is governor of California in 1969 and will be until 1975). He's an especially sore subject between Deanna and the Chairman after Reagan called out the National Guard to end rioting during a Berkeley anti-war protest on May 15. However, she doesn't see an alternative. In 1969 the Democrats are not a reasonable second choice for youth activists. Democrat Lyndon Johnson escalated in Vietnam. The last election alternatives were Democrat Hubert Humphrey with once-and-future-Democrat George Wallace making a strong showing.

While youth activists repudiated Wallace's platform, they could agree with him that "there's not a dime's worth of difference between the Democrat and Republican Parties." When Eugene McCarthy looked likely to turn the Democrats around in 1968, Robert Kennedy entered the race, a betrayal in the eyes of many youth activists. Kennedy might have been able to redeem himself in the eyes of anti-war activists, if he had not been assassinated. The Democratic Party wouldn't fully differentiate itself in the eyes of youth until George McGovern in 1972.

*Will Nixon make a difference? I don't know. The chairman thinks so. But the chairman thought Kennedy would make a difference, and Kennedy kicked us out and started the war. When he was killed LBJ escalated it. Nixon says he'll end it, but we'll see. I'm not sure the chairman chooses well. He thinks the governor will make a difference, and he speaks a good line overseas but here in California he instigates riots and then uses it as an excuse to call out the National Guard to cover Berkeley in barbed wire and tear gas. I can't understand that that's a difference we want.*

## Deanna and the Summit

While she disagrees with the Chairman and Father sometimes, she is extremely loyal and trusts them both implicitly. She has seen the swarm and she knows what it has in store for the world. The summit is a family, and Deanna is friends with Nancy Sinatra and other second generation rat packers. She helped write and produce Nancy Sinatra's 1967 *Movin' with Nancy*, specifically the music video of a San Francisco filled with mannequins, in which Dean Martin restored the mannequins to humanity with a magic wand. She's been in Vietnam, in 1966 and 1967, as part of Nancy's entourage, in order to undertake missions for the Summit.

## What does she know about the Swarm?

The Summit is certain that Wallace's near-successful bid to throw the election into the House was backed by the swarm. At first they thought it backfired, as it split the Democrats and threw the election to Nixon, but Nixon continued to escalate tensions in Southeast Asia despite campaign promises to end the war. Because the Kennedys distanced themselves from the Summit, no one in the Summit knows if the swarm killed RFK or if his death was a side benefit of swarm-inspired violence in the Middle East. Deanna suspects the former.

Her world is falling. She knows the swarm is responsible. They are outnumbered, outgunned, and confused. They win small battles, but lose the big ones. Failure seems inevitable. But if she doesn't try, who will?

*"It is as if an invisible rope were giving way; 'the blood-dimmed tide is loosed; the center cannot hold.' As if the rope of the world were snapping thread by thread. I don't even know what the rope is tied to, let alone how to keep it from breaking. All I can do is tie some strands back together while the rope continues to slip."*

# Deanna Carmen

## Abilities

Agility: 14 (+1)	Level: 3	Species: Human
Charisma: 14 (+1)	Experience: 5750	Height: 5' 9"
Endurance: 12 (+1)	Moral Code: Good	Weight: 149
Intelligence: 12 (+1)		Age: 22
Wisdom: 9	Archetype: Warrior	Home: Las
Strength: 9		

## Saving Rolls

Evasion: 6		Defense: +1
Fortitude: 7		Hand Attack: +3
Health: 6		Thrown Attack: +3
Reason: 6	Money: \$200	Propelled Attack: +3
Perception: 6	dimes: 20	
Willpower: 5		Verve: 9
		OOOO OOOO
		Survival: 12
		OOOO OOOOO
		OO

## Skills

Native Culture 2'  
English, Literacy, Entertainer etiquette

Fighting Art 3  
Unarmed combat, Unfamiliar weapons, handgun, rifle, knife, shuriken, shotgun, automatic weapons

Gambling Art 1  
Bluff, poker, pool

Performance Art: 1  
Singing, songwriting, fashion

## Specialties

Stout Heart  
Contacts

## Weapons

	damage	fire	range	bulk
Colt 1911	d6	1	18	4
Springfield 1903	d8	1	30	8
knife	d3	1	3	2
shuriken	d3	1	4	2
	OOOOO			

## Armor

	defense	agility	bulk
ballistic shirt	+2	0	2

## Equipment

Belt (Colt 1911 handgun, 7 round capacity, knife, shuriken (6), one extra Colt clip) Polaroid Automatic 210 Land Camera

Purse (4 extra Springfield stripper clips, Moulin Rouge matchbook, Gold Watch of the Summit) The gold watch keeps perfect time and negates the slo-time effects of the Insect Mesh. It is marked with the Moulin Rouge symbol on the inside.

Ballistic shirt  
Springfield 1903 bolt-action rifle, 5 round capacity

## Archetypal Abilities

Combat Bonus Use	Cost
+1 to damage	1
+1 to defense	1
+1 to throw off surprise	1
+1 to combat movement	1
+1 to quickdraw	1
1 additional attack	4

## Story

Deanna was almost a victim of the Insect Mesh in 1955 at the Moulin Rouge in Las Vegas. She was "adopted" by the Summit. She worked hard at marksmanship and at fifteen proved herself as a slo-time sniper on one of the Summit's missions. She is now one of their best agents.

the counter-culture club, the Red Mill.

Deanna only refers to the leaders of the Summit as "the Chairman" and "father".

Deanna is a close friend of Nancy Sinatra, and they occasionally sing together at clubs. While in San Francisco, Deanna sings at

## Goals & Quotes

"We don't want to keep the insects secret. But if we start talking about them, we'll get locked away. Think about it—we're killing these people because they have bugs inside them, bugs as big as a human. How far do you think that'll get you in court?"

"Will Nixon make a difference? I don't know. The chairman thinks he will. But the chairman thought Kennedy would make a difference, and Kennedy kicked us out and started this war. Then he was killed and LBJ escalated it. Nixon says he'll end it, but we'll see. I'm not sure the chairman chooses well. He thinks the governor will make a difference, and he speaks a good line overseas but here in California he instigates riots and then uses it as an excuse to call out the National Guard to cover Berkeley in barbed wire and tear gas. I can't see that that's a difference we want."

# Joe Louis

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Joe Louis</h2>		
<b>Abilities</b>		
Agility: 14 (+1) Charisma: 12 (+1) Endurance: 14 (+1) Intelligence: 11 Strength: 15 (+2/+1) Wisdom: 12 (+1)	Level: 4 Experience: 9800 Moral Code: Ordered Good Archetype: Warrior Movement: 11 Injuries: 3 Carry: 11 Mojo: (15)	Species: Human Height: 6' 1.5" Weight: 197 Age: 41 Home: Detroit  Defense: +1 Hand Attack: +6/+2 Thrown Attack: +5/+1 Propelled Attack: +5 Verve: 17 OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OO Survival: 27 OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OO
<b>Saving Rolls</b>		
Evasion: 7 Fortitude: 10 Health: 8 Reason: 6 Perception: 7 Willpower: 7	Money: \$50 quarters: 3 dimes: 5	
<b>Skills</b>		
Native Culture 2 English, Literacy, Entertainer etiquette, Street smarts Fighting Art 4 Unarmed combat, Unfamiliar weapons, handgun, rifle, knife, boxing, wrestling Gambling Art 1 Bluff, poker, pool War Art 1 Military rules, tactics		
<b>Specialties</b>		
Tough Upbringing Contacts		
<b>Weapons</b>		
damage fire range bulk		
<b>Armor</b>		
defense agility bulk		

<b>Equipment</b>
Moulin Rouge matchbook
<b>Archetypal Abilities</b>
<b>Combat Bonus Cost</b> +1 to damage 1 +1 to defense 1 +1 to surprise 1 +1 to movement 1 +1 to quickdraw 1 1 additional attack 4
<b>Story</b>
Sportswriter Jimmy Cannon called Louis "a credit to his race—the human race," and boxer Max Baer defined fear as "standing across the ring from Joe Louis and knowing he wants to go home early."  On June 22, 1938, Joe Louis met German boxer Max Schmeling in a pre-war rematch viewed worldwide as a symbolic battle between rival ideologies. Louis won by a knockout in the first round. Schmeling's defeat embarrassed the Nazis. Schmeling himself would later protect two Jewish
friends during Kristallnacht, and help smuggle them out of Germany. In 1954, Louis and Schmeling met again and remained friends for the rest of Louis's life.  The Moulin Rouge is Louis's chance at picking up his post-boxing life. But when the need for war appears again he'll take it, because it's the right thing to do.  Louis will never regain his fortune, but he will die with good friends and the knowledge of a life lived right.
<b>Quotes</b>
"Everyone has a plan until they've been hit." "Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die." "Once that bell rings, you're on your own." "You only live once. If you do it right, once is enough." "We will win, because we are on God's side." "Family is forever."

**Pvt. Joe Louis says...**



**"We're going to do our part ... and we'll win because we're on God's side"**

# Joe Lakono

Joe Lakono makes a very useful recurring villain. Among his aliases are Orlando Fontaine and the Hooded Traveler. He was the mysterious “goblin mage” from the goblin wars a hundred years ago.

Joe may use *Home Rule* to use matches in Highland.

*He takes a small packet from his pocket and bends it open to reveal many teeth. He breaks off a tooth, and cracks it against the packet's lower jaw. The tooth bursts into flame, and the whiff of sulfur slips past you.*

Joe comes in many guises and names. The only one that is truly a disguise is Orlando Fontaine. He dresses in noble clothes while in Fork, and wears thick-heeled shoes to make himself look taller. As Orlando, he has infiltrated the power structure of Fork.

Joe also carries red and white spray paint. They're pretty useful things to have. If he needs to delay someone following him, he may paint a symbol on the ground, and set up a *spirit attachment* either on the symbol, or on something in the symbol, such as a matchbook. *Spiritual Hold* is good at delaying pursuers for a few minutes.

Lakono gets money by counterfeiting Fork gambling chips in Vegas.

A seer, such as Red Jack, can provide some insight into Joe's character and goal:

*In the beginning there was Father Sky and Mother Earth. Sky lay upon Mother and from the Earth were all manner of creatures birthed. But Sky and Earth remained together, causing all who lived to crawl as snakes. Two children of Earth and Sky fought over this predicament. One fought to push their father away from their mother and give the people room to live. This was the dawn of Chaos. The other fought against their sibling to keep their Sky and Earth together as they had always been. This was the light of Order. The man in the dugout canoe worships the second god, and works to restore primal order to the worlds.*

If Joe needs to throw people off of his trail, he'll summon a waxen assassin while in the butterfly halls to take his place, and then high-tail it out of town. The assassin will likely come under the influence of Red Jack and be Jack's serial killer in Fork, possibly being someone the players can chase through the doors into the other worlds.



## Joe Lakono



### Abilities

Agility: 12 (+1)  
Charisma: 15 (+2/+1)  
Endurance: 11  
Intelligence: 10  
Wisdom: 16 (+2/+1)  
Strength: 15 (+2/+1)

Level: 10  
Experience: 50,500  
Moral Code: Ordered  
Evil  
Archetype: Prophet  
Movement: 12  
Injuries:  
Carry: 10  
Money: 1

Species: Human  
Height: 5' 7"  
Weight: 126 lbs  
Age: 380  
Home: Oceania

Defense: +1/+5  
Hand Attack: +5/+1  
Thrown Attack: +4/+1  
Propelled Attack: +4/+0

Survival: 26  
OOOOO OOOOO  
OOOOO OOOOO  
OOOOO O

### Reactions

Evasion: 10  
Fortitude: 11  
Health: 10  
Reason: 9  
Perception: 12  
Willpower: 17

### Skills

**Native Culture:** 2'  
Polynesian, island etiquette, canoes, navigation

**Language Science:** 1  
read/write, latin, english, elvish, angwat

**Gambling Art:** 2  
poker, craps, sic bo, mah jong

**Personality Art:** 4  
carousing, persuasion, contacts, demagoguery, Highland etiquette, Angwat etiquette

**Survival Craft:** 2  
hunting, tracking, fishing, ropes

**Fighting Art:** 5  
dagger, staff, spear, axe

### Weapons

	damage	fire	range	bulk
dagger:	d4	1	3	2
tiki-stick:	d6	1	1	8

4 daggers: OOOO

### Specialties

**Long Life**  
ten times normal, +1 vs. disease, death

**Familiar**  
**Micronesian Kingfisher**

**Familiar's Eyes**  
see through familiar, nudge familiar.  
One round to take effect.

**Spirit Attachment**  
level command words per spirit

**Spirit Channel**  
see what's happening around an  
attached spirit when it goes off.

### Armor

leather robe: defense agility bulk  
+2,+2 0 4



### Equipment

1. Tiki-stick staff holy symbol
2. magic robe: leather, 2 defense, +2 divine protection, bulk 4
3. spray paint: red can
4. spray paint: white can
5. drum holy symbol
6. dagger belt: four daggers
7. pouch with spirit foci and Bird of Paradise matchbooks
8. Mask of Hina

### Archetypal Abilities

Calling Points: 56

Symbols: tiki-stick bound in cord (staff), small drum of human skin

Spirits: Order, Death, Weather, Trickster, Prophet

### Micronesian Kingfisher Familiar

level: 6 survival: 19  
wisdom: 5 charisma: 5 intelligence: 7

may use from Joe's attack bonus and saving rolls when near or under Joe's control.

Joe may use its survival.

May pass the last days' knowledge to Joe

Joe may sense through the familiar's senses instead of his own after one round, and nudge the familiar.

each knows the general direction of the other

### The Mask of Hina

The Mask of Hina, whose pustulent womb births all things, is a small gnarled wooden mask carved with Polynesian lines and whorls. See item card. Joe has these forms set:

Orlando Fontaine

The grey goblin mage (3'6").

8 foot tall Saurian

### Information and Goals

Aliases: Orlando Fontaine, The Goblin Mage, The Hooded Traveler

Notes: His father is the crocodile. He eats raw fish, shellfish, and insects.

Goals: Joe serves Tawhiri, and wishes to preside over the destruction and rebirth of the universe, in a more ordered form with himself at the top. Maui retrieved the world by fishing it from the abyss. Tawhiri wants to throw it back; it's too small. It isn't ready yet, and mankind isn't ready for it. With his tools and magic and science mankind is destroying this wonderful world of the gods.



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# Høltør Skøltør

“In the city of sin is a gambling house that was when the world began. In a lost alley is a door behind a door and within it a deck of cards and fortune’s wheel. Upon the deck are forgotten gods; upon the wheel the world rests.”

