



THE MEDICINE SHOW

Written by Troy Wilhelmson and Jonathan Meadows
Converted to 7th Edition Call of Cthulhu by Jonathan Meadows

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Story So Far	3
The Investigators	3
San Rafael, TX	3
The Adventure Begins	3
An Average Morning	3
The Show Begins	4
The Presentation	5
Looking for the Glass Man	5
Confronting Doctor Albert	5
After Sunset	5
The Alton House.....	6
The Garrett House.....	6
The San Rafael Hotel.....	6
The San Rafael Church of Christ.....	6
Blood Soaked Polly	7
Doctor Collins	7
Trouble at the Garrett House	7
What to do Next?.....	8
The Horror at the Alton House	9
The San Rafael Hotel (Again)	8
Mr. Fransworth and the Truth About Dr. Albert	8
Leaving Town	9
The Cave Hideout	9
Outside the Cave.....	9
Inside the Cave	9
Little Polly Garrett.....	10
A Race Against Time	10
Back in San Rafael	10
Conclusion	10
Stats	10
Doctor Albert as the Polly Monster	10
The Strong Man	11
The Dancing Girls.....	11
The Wild Man	11
The Drawf	11

SPECIAL NOTE:

This scenario originally appeared in the fantastic *Devil's Gulch: Basic Roleplaying Adventures in the Weird West* supplement. It was written by Troy Wilhelmson and published by Chaosium. Permission to update this scenario to Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition and move the setting from Devil's Gulch to San Rafael was sought from and agreed to by Troy Wilhelmson and Chaosium.

Some names, locations, and events have been altered from the original text to better fit with the San Rafael, TX setting presented in *Down Darker Trails: Terrors of the Myths in the Old West*.

THE STORY SO FAR

Several years ago, Michael Albert arrived in San Rafael, TX to lead the flock of the faithful at The San Rafael Church of Christ. The new preacher was well liked, and the town went out of their way to make him feel at home. Albert was also interested in native and local remedies, and when he wasn't ministering to his flock, he could often be found talking with natives and searching for local plants and herbs to be used in the concoctions he would distribute to his flock.

After a few years, one of his parishioners had a daughter named **Polly** who was prone to fits and seizures. Many of the townsfolk assumed the girl was possessed and begged Reverend Albert to perform an exorcism on her. At first, Albert attempted to convince his parishioners that Polly was suffering from a natural sickness called epilepsy, but when that failed, he devised a plan to perform a fake exorcism on her and quietly slip her a dose of an elixir he developed.

Albert believed that the elixir would cure the girl's sickness, and it did for a short while. Unfortunately, after just a few short days, the effects of the elixir wore off and Polly's fits came back worse than ever. Polly's parents were furious and declared the Reverend to be a charlatan. When he tried to explain that the elixir had made the girl better and that the native people used the same remedy with no problems, he was accused of consorting with the Devil and with savages! It wasn't long before a mob came for him and, after being tarred and feathered, Albert was driven from San Rafael.

Enraged and hungry for revenge, Michael Albert traveled the west searching for a way to make the town pay. He continued to make elixirs, and soon went into the snake oil business. Over a period of three years, Albert assembled an entire traveling medicine show consisting of two beautiful dancing girls, a strong man, a wild-man, and a dwarf.

Recently, while in San Francisco, Albert happened across an ancient book of black magic and, after learning its secrets, decided he would finally take his revenge. Not long after that, Doctor Albert's Astounding Medicine Show was back on the road, and headed straight for the town of San Rafael.

THE INVESTIGATORS

Investigators in this scenario take on the role of deputies in San Rafael, TX. They are employed by Marshall Ricardo Mateo, and their job is generally to patrol the town and help keep the peace. A typical day for one of Marshall Mateo's deputies might include breaking up a fight at the Longhorn Saloon or Black Rose Cantina and acting as an arbiter in a dispute amongst local ranchers.

Deputies aren't required to use their weapons often, and discharging a firearm without cause would likely end with their badge being taken.

SAN RAFAEL, TX

You can learn more the town of San Rafael, TX and most of the cast of characters in this scenario by reading the San Rafael chapter of the Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition, Down Darker Trails. A map of San Rafael, TX is available in that book on page 198, and while it is useful to have, it is not required to run this scenario.

THE BEGINNING

AN AVERAGE MORNING

Read or paraphrase the following:

"It is an average Friday morning in San Rafael, TX, the little town on the American side of the Rio Grande River. Around 60% of the population in San Rafael is Hispanic while the rest is mostly white with a few American Indians and African Americans sprinkled in as well. Most of the local businesses are owned by Mexicans, but white Americans are slowly overtaking them in population.

You are all out at the town square and market. Vendors are everywhere selling produce, small game, tortillas, beans, fish, cornmeal, hats, clothing, and other necessities. You spot several prominent townsfolk as you go about your business including Doctor Alan Collins and Jimena Méndez, a local medicine woman. You know that some folk call Jimena a healer while others call bruja or witch.

The market is a little livelier today than usual due to the recent announcement that Dr. Albert's Astounding Medicine Show is coming into town tomorrow. When you woke up this morning, posters were plastered everywhere advertising his arrival and promising music, dancing girls, feats of strength, and a real wild-man, but the real attraction is Dr. Albert's Astounding Restorative Elixir that promises to cure anything from gout to small pox in 17 days or less."

This is a good time to insert a few scenes of roleplaying. It is important early on to establish a sense of routine and the mundane. After a few minutes, allow everyone to attempt a **Listen** roll with one bonus die. If an investigator is successful, roll a D4 and consult the rumors chart below to determine what they overhear.

1D4	Rumor
1	You overhear Mrs. Allie Garrett say that she plans to buy a crate of the elixir for her daughter who is prone to fits.
2	You hear Victorio Diaz, the tall, thin, green-eyed owner of the Diaz Funderal Home comment that he senses a bad energy in the air.
3	You hear Bill Foster, the owner of Bill's Barbershop telling the owner of Peel's Hardware that he plans to be in the front row tomorrow and volunteer for any of the doctor's tasks.
4	You hear the Dalton Boyd (ages 9 and 7) say they are going to try to sneak a peek inside the medicine wagon during the show and see what kind of strange things are in there.

The rest of the day passes quietly and Investigators should be allowed to announce how they spend the day.

STRANGERS IN TOWN

The next morning, Investigators hear excited voices coming from the center of town, and anyone venturing outside notices a crowd beginning to gather around a vacant lot near the Black Rose Cantina. If the characters mosey on down to the lot, they find a large black horse hitched to a wagon with a sign on it that reads "Dr. Albert's Astounding Medicine Show!" Hammered into the ground next to the wagon is a post with a sign reading "The show will begin at 3 pm." There is no one around the wagon and no noise can be heard from within. There are doors in the front and back, but both have large padlocks. A successful **Tracking** roll shows that there are no wagon tracks leading into the lot and that it looks as if the wagon just appeared on the spot. A Hard success on the **Tracking** roll confirms the complete absence of tracks.

Excitement builds through the day, and around noon, old Judd Luckey can be spotted carrying a crowbar and heading towards the wagon. A successful **Psychology** roll reveals that Luckey is extremely drunk. Felipe Valenzuela, a fellow deputy, cuts Luckey off before he can reach the wagon. Anyone standing close by, or making a **Listen** roll can hear Judd say the following:

"I ain't feeling right! I jus' want some of that medicine to make the pain go away! Why should we haveta wait any longer? Can't Doc Albert see we're ready to hand over our greenbacks?"

If the investigators get involved, a successful **Persuade** roll will calm Judd down enough to hand over his crowbar and head into the Black Rose Cantina for a drink. Otherwise, Felipe will attempt to calm Luckey down on his own (40% chance). If he fails, Judd will take a swing at him with the crow bar.

After the incident, the crowd disperses for a bit, but thirty minutes before the show begins, it forms again thicker than before.

Judd Luckey

STR 70 CON 70 SIZ 65 DEX 65 INT 45
 APP 50 POW 50 EDU 40 HP 13 DB: +2D6

Attacks per round: 1

Crow Bar 35% (17/7), damage 1D6+DB
 Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3

Armor: none.

Skills: Fighting (Brawl) 35%, Dodge: 32%, Listen: 30%, Spot Hidden: 45%, Sleight of Hand: 40%

THE SHOW BEGINS

At exactly 3 PM the side of the wagon falls open with a sudden THUD and a puff of smoke. Standing there is a magnificently dressed man in a black coat and top hat, a dwarf with a huge mustache, and two exotic looking dancing girls.

The music begins and the traveling medicine show launches into a rendition of A Wise Old Owl. The crowd begins to sing along and the excitement is palpable.

*"A wise old owl lived in an oak,
 The more he saw, the less he spoke
 The less he spoke, the more he heard,
 Now, wasn't he a wise old bird"*

As the song comes to an end, Doctor Albert begins to shout:

"Thank you one and all, and a glorious good afternoon to you, good people of San Rafael! Why it's so nice here, I'd have thought I'd died and gone to heaven! Hallelujah! My name is Doctor Gabriel Michael Albert, and I have come to heal all wounds! And in the process, we hope to entertain you for a bit, maybe bring a smile to that sour face over there.

Yes sir, I'm here to tell you about the most miraculous thing to ever be sold to the masses. I can only be talking about Doctor Albert's Astounding Restorative Elixir! The tonic that cures bunions, boils, burping, back pain, corns, creaks, croaks and diphtheria. Not only that but it sure does a number on gout, vapors, fits, shakes, rheumatism, flat feet, headaches, heartaches, hot flashes, and goiters of all shapes. Now before we talk anymore about this amazing elixir I'd like to give you some bad news. It seems that Little John, our strong man, pulled a muscle while setting this here wagon in place and won't be able to join us. But don't you worry, he's on a strict prescription of Doctor Albert's Astounding Restorative Elixir and should be up and running in no time! So, without further ado, let's start the show!"

THE PRESENTATION

The music begins to play again and the dancing girls come out. Investigators should make a Hard **POW** roll. Anyone who succeeds gets a strange feeling in their head, while those that fail just want to buy a bottle of tonic. Investigators should also be allowed to attempt a Hard **History** roll, with a success giving them the vague feeling that they know the man on stage from somewhere. If Albert is later confronted by Investigators about looking familiar, he insists that he has traveled all around Texas and California, and that other people have suggested that he has a familiar face from time to time. A Hard **Psychology** check reveals that he is hiding something.

As the show progresses, everyone is treated to more music, a singing and dancing dwarf, and the Wild-man! Albert comes out after every act to make his pitch. Several of the town folk are brought up on stage and allowed to sample the tonic, and all of them state that they feel amazing after. During one of the pitches, call for a **Spot Hidden** roll, and with a success, investigators spot an odd form moving between two buildings. If pressed to describe it further, it looks is as if a man made of glass is walking in the darkness.

Finally, the show ends and Doctor Albert begins to sell his elixir. folks rush to the front to get a bottle but Albert announces joyfully that he has plenty in stock, and that everyone who wants to buy a bottle will be able to. IT takes several hours for everyone to make it through the line and buy a bottle.

LOOKING FOR THE GLASS MAN

If the Investigators decide to check out the alley where they saw the glass man, a successful **Spot Hidden** roll will reveal footprint belonging to a rather large man which can easily be followed.

The footprints lead to the back door of the Alton house (a residential home off the main street) where Investigators will find a strange mark on the corner of the house written in grease pencil. With a successful **Occult** roll, the symbol is recognized as the alchemical symbol for mercury. If the characters try to find any more symbols drawn on various homes, a successful **Luck** roll will reveal two more: one on the Garrett house and the other on the San Rafael Hotel.

CONFRONTING DR. ALBERT

If investigators confront Dr. Albert about seeing the glass man, or about the symbols on the buildings, he will deny any knowledge or connection. A successful **Psychology** roll will confirm any suspicion that Albert is not telling the whole truth. If he is further pressed about the matter, one of the dancing girls will come to his side, look deeply into the eyes of the characters, and attempt to cast another Control spell (Hard POW to resist) to cause the PCs to lose interest and go about their business. If the spell does not work, Dr. Albert will go on packing up the wagon and ignoring the PCs. If the PCs push him, he will send someone for Ricardo Mateo and ask him to deal with his deputies.

AFTER SUNSET

After the medicine wagon leaves town, the citizens of San Rafael are in high spirits. People are drinking and laughing and talking about the show and the wonders of Dr. Albert's tonic.

The Investigators may wish to speak with the townsfolk and find out if anyone else recognized Dr. Albert. If so, they learn that others recognized him as well but most seem unable to place where they know him from. With a successful **Charm** roll, a few people might recall overhearing Bill Foster say that he recognized Albert over at the Black Rose Cantina. If Investigators follow up on this, Bill claims to have a hazy memory of Albert singing Amazing Grace in a church. He doesn't know why, but that's all he can come up with.

If investigators fail to follow up on leads, call for a **Listen** check and allow them to overhear folks (or Bill himself if Investigators are at the Black Rose Cantina) talking about recognizing Doctor Albert from somewhere.

Investigators may also want to talk to with the residents of the Alton and Garrett homes, and Charles Farnsworth at the San Rafael Hotel.

THE ALTON HOUSE

As the investigators approach the Alton house, they spot Lester and Julia Alton sitting on the front porch enjoying the weather. The pair seems very happy and, if asked if they bought any of the tonic, they reply that they did and that since drinking it, they already feel in tiptop shape. If asked what was wrong before, Julia will say that she just felt worn down and Lester will talk of joint pain.

If the Altons are asked if they recognized Albert, Lester replies, “Now that I think about it, yeah. But the image is all hazy. All I can remember is a pump organ and feathers.” If pressed further, he can remember nothing else, but a successful **Hard Idea** roll reveals that the San Rafael Church of Christ contains a pump organ.

Before the Investigators leave, Julia asks if they heard what the elixir did for the Garrett girl and explains that since Polly tried it, she hasn’t had a single fit. She says that Polly has even been outside playing like a normal child, something that seemed inconceivable just the day before.

THE GARRETT HOUSE

The Garrett House is a small one-story Spanish Colonial style house painted dull yellow. It has a flat roof with a low pitch and thick brick walls coated with fine plaster. It should immediately be obvious that the Garrett’s are one of the wealthier families in town. The house has two entrances, but the back entrance is inaccessible without first climbing over a tall wooden fence.

If Investigators knock on the door, it will be answered by Mrs. Allie Garret, who greets them enthusiastically. She is then joined at the door by Mr. Kirk Garret, her husband. The two of them invite the characters inside for coffee, or even a drink of whiskey. They seem very happy, and proclaim it to be a day of celebration because little Polly is as fit as a fiddle. If asked, they say that their daughter generally falls to the ground in fits several times a day. However, nothing of the sort has happened since she drank some of Dr. Albert’s elixir.

If the Garretts are asked if they have ever seen Dr. Albert before, Kirk will say, “You know, as I watched the medicine show, that was gnawing at the back of my brain. I could have sworn I had seen the Doc before, but the only thing I could envision was Albert reciting the Lord’s Prayer. In fact, during the show as he was talking about the wonders of the elixir, he proclaimed, ‘Halleluiah’ and I could have sworn I’d heard him say that before. Either way, his medicine works and we couldn’t be happier.” That is all they know, but before the Investigators leave, the Garretts show them Polly and her little brother Matthew playing in the back yard.

THE SAN RAFAEL HOTEL

The San Rafael Hotel is one of the largest buildings in San Rafael and it is freshly painted white and blue. A large sign hangs over the boardwalk in front and the windows on the front of the building all feature colored and leaded glass. The interior of the building features a hotel, restaurant, and saloon. Prices are high, but the clientele is a step above most of the other establishments in town.

Mr. Charles Farnsworth owns the establishment and can usually be found behind the front desk. Farnsworth is the heir of a wealthy noble family in England and speaks with a thick English accent. A strange pin can be spotted pinned to his suit, and a successful **Hard History** roll reveals that the pin identifies Farnsworth as a former Captain in the English Royal Navy. Anyone asking Farnsworth how he ended up in San Rafael must make a successful **Charm** roll, and with a success, he explains that he traveled to the American West to bring civilization to an uncivilized land. He says that he established The San Rafael Hotel to be a true gem amid the dusty plains. Farnsworth abhors the thugs and dregs scattered about town, and rarely allows them inside his hotel.

Farnsworth is easily distracted, and a successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals a beautiful girl dancing on a stage in the saloon to be the source of the distraction. If asked about this, Farnsworth admits he is in love with girl, who he calls “Beauty,” and says that he hopes to marry her someday.

A successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals an empty bottle of Dr. Albert’s elixir on the counter, and another full bottle just behind the bar. If asked about it, Farnsworth comments that it is the best medicine he has ever had and says that it really helps his aching back.

If Farnsworth is asked whether he recalls ever seeing Dr. Albert before he arrived in town earlier today, he responds saying, “Yeah, you know, it’s strange...he reminded me of a preacher I knew at the San Rafael Church of Christ...I can’t quite recall what happened to the man; I think he just left town one day. It was just...the way Dr. Albert spoke, you know...I bet Reverend Anderson had the same feeling, he knew that old preacher man too and after he left, Anderson took his place.”

THE SAN RAFAEL CHURCH OF CHRIST

The San Rafael Church of Christ is a large three-story building on the northeast edge of town. By the time Investigators arrive, it’s likely to be closed for the night. Entering by honest means will require visiting the preacher, Reverend Joshua Anderson at his nearby home and asking him to unlock the church. If Investigators go this route and ask Reverend Anderson about Doctor Albert, he seems to have had an odd feeling that he knew the man, but can’t remember much more.

Investigators wishing to enter the church by other means can attempt to make a successful **Locksmith** roll or they simply break the door down. Inside there really isn't much to see; just a church filled with pews, a potbelly stove, a pump organ, and a small stage with a pulpit. A set of stairs lead up to a second and third floor that is mostly used for storage. With a successful **Spot Hidden** roll, Investigators can find the church Bible in the dark at the pulpit. A successful **Idea** roll will remind them that important church events are often recorded in the back of these books. With an hour of reading, the PCs can find a relevant entry:

"May 24th, 1864

The town has acted. Reverend Albert has been run out of town. It was Lester's idea to tar and feather him. Many wanted to kill him for what he did to Polly, but we concluded it would bring bad luck on our town to kill the preacher. His last words were "I have done nothing wrong! You will pay for this blasphemy! Curse you all! I will get my revenge on all of you!"

He's gone now and maybe Polly's fits will stop.

C. Farnsworth

Deacon"

BLOOD SOAKED POLLY

As Investigators head home for the night, call for a **Spot Hidden** Roll, and with a success, the silhouette of a young girl shuffling slowly down the center of the road can be seen. As the girl moves closer, it becomes obvious that she is Polly Garrett, and she is wearing a white night gown covered with blood. If Investigators run up and ask Polly what happened, she stares at them with glassy eyes. A successful **Psychology** roll snaps her out of the trance just long enough to say, "There is something wrong at my house!" After that, she just stares off into the distance.

At this point, Investigators need to decide what they want to do with Polly, and they'll also likely want to check out the Garrett house. If they seem unsure of what to do, call for an **Idea** roll. A success indicates that they should take her to Doctor Alan Collins.

If investigators fail to spot Polly, late at night, Doctor Collins knocks on the door of one of the Investigators' homes and explains that he was outside smoking a cigar when he noticed Polly Garrett soaked in blood. He will say that Polly keeps rambling on about something bad happening at her house and he asks the Investigator to check it out.

Playtest Note

*In my playtests of this scenario, Investigators usually decided to split the party with half of them investigating the Garrett house and the other half taking Polly to see Doctor Collins. One group of Investigators were suspicious of Doctor Collins and decided to take Polly to see Jimena Méndez (see *Down Darker Trails* page 197) instead. This did not significantly change any events described herein. Should this happen to you, simply change how you describe the scene (Jimena lives alone in an old shack on the northwest edge of town) and replace Doctor Collins with Jimena.*

DOCTOR COLLINS

If the investigators decide to take Polly to Doctor Collins, he pulls himself out of bed and immediately takes Polly into his office and starts examining her. Collins asks investigators what happened, and how they found her. As he looks her over, Investigators can attempt a **Spot Hidden** roll; with a regular success, they notice that Polly's tongue is a greenish-black color, but with a **Hard** success, they notice bruising on her fingertips and gums.

Doctor Collins will say (and a successful **Medicine** roll will confirm) that Polly is unharmed and has no visible injuries. If Investigators wish to speak with Polly, they need to make a successful **Hard Persuade** or **Charm** roll; with a success, Polly says only that she only remembers saying prayers with her mommy, having two big spoonfuls of her medicine, and going to sleep. She says that when she woke up, she was in her bed, and outside her room there was blood everywhere. After that her eyes glaze over, and she doesn't talk anymore.

Regardless of whether Investigators convince Polly to talk, Collins suggests that they get over to the Garrett house and find Allie and Kirk Garrett while he continues to examine Polly.

TROUBLE AT THE GARRETT HOUSE

As the Investigators approach the house, they can see that the door is wide open and most of the shutters are shattered. With a successful combined **Spot Hidden** and **Idea** roll, they notice that the wood is on the ground outside, suggesting that the shutters were broken from inside the house.

The inside of the house is a scene out of a nightmare. Gore covers the floor, walls, and ceiling, as if someone sprayed blood and meat everywhere. This horrible scene will force all who witness it to make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4+1). There are no remains large enough to positively identify. With a successful **Spot Hidden** roll, Investigators notice a large, clawed handprint, four feet above the floor. A successful **Idea** roll indicates that the owner of the hand was probably hunched over or short. Looking through the rest of the house, only Polly's bed is untouched and free of gore. There is a bottle of Dr. Albert's Elixir on Polly's nightstand.

If the characters search the back of the house, with a successful **Spot Hidden** roll, they can find footprints like those of a small bear with large claws near the back door. A successful **Tracking** roll (with one Bonus die) can be used to follow the tracks toward the center of town, to the back door of the Alton house.

WHAT TO DO NEXT?

At this point, Investigators have several options: If they haven't already, they can go back to speak with Polly about what happened at the house, they can follow the tracks, or they can speak with Lester Alton or Mr. Charles Farnsworth and see if the elixir had any effect on them. If they seem unsure of what to do, or haven't uncovered enough clues to know how to proceed, have Marshall Ricardo Mateo or Deputy Felipe Valenzuela stumble upon the horror at the Alton House after hearing a disturbance and contact the Investigators with what they found.

THE HORROR AT THE ALTON HOUSE

The tracks lead to the back door of the Alton house but they can be seen to also leave and head off towards the San Rafael Hotel (just a few buildings down).

Inside the house, everything initially seems fine, but it is strangely quiet. With a successful **Listen** roll, a distinct buzzing noise coming from what is probably the Alton bedroom. The door to the bedroom is unlocked; when it is opened the characters are faced with another gory scene that will require a **Sanity roll** (0/1D4+1). The mangled corpses of the Altons lie in their bed as if sleeping, their faces torn from their heads and thrown against the walls. Flies fill the air and maggots crawl in the cooling flesh.

A **Spot Hidden** roll reveals a bloody handprint on the wall. It is small, and there are obvious claws on the ends of the fingers. Searching the house reveals nothing else of interest except for a half-full bottle of Dr. Albert's Wondrous Elixir.

THE SAN RAFAEL HOTEL

The San Rafael Hotel has been torn apart. Broken bottles and bits of furniture are scattered everywhere, but there doesn't seem to be any blood. Searching the hotel reveals that the few guests at the hotel are scared, but otherwise okay. They all claim to have heard a loud disturbance downstairs but claim that when they tried to leave their rooms to check it out, the doors to their rooms seemed to be stuck and wouldn't open.

A **Spot Hidden** roll in the hotel lobby reveals one of the wooden shutters is open and has a bloody handprint on it that looks human. Outside the window, a set of bloody tracks can be spotted that lead off towards an old warehouse.

MR. FARNSWORTH AND THE TRUTH ABOUT DOCTOR ALBERT

The bloody tracks outside The San Rafael Hotel lead to an old warehouse with bloody fingerprints on the door. Anyone opening the door hears the shaking voice of Mr. Farnsworth call out, "If you've come to kill me, just get it over with quick!"

Farnsworth is injured badly, but is otherwise stable. He is pale and it should be immediately clear that he has lost a lot of blood. If Farnsworth is asked about what happened at the Hotel, he responds:

"I was sitting behind my desk, just thinking about Beauty and thanking the good lord for bringing Dr. Albert to San Rafael. I think I must have dozed off, even, but something startled me and when I opened my eyes, I saw this horrible creature that looked like a blasphemous mix of human and bear burst in through the front door! The creature it...looked sort of like little Polly Garrett, but she had the devil in her eyes! I heard the creature speak. It had the voice of Dr. Albert, and he was saying that he was back to fulfill the curse that he put on this miserable town. That was when I finally remembered...Doctor Albert was Reverend Albert from The San Rafael Church of Christ. We ran him out of town a few years ago for causing Polly's fits. Oh, we hurt that man. We beat him, tarred and feathered him, and made him suffer all kinds of humiliations. Even after he was gone, Polly still had them fits though. It wasn't his fault at all! He wants revenge on this whole damn town! You have to stop him before it's too late, otherwise the streets will be filled with blood."

If Farnsworth is asked what Albert did to Polly, he claims that he tried to perform an exorcism on the girl, and it worked for a while, but then the fits came back worse than ever. He says that the town folk accused Albert of being an agent of the devil. If asked why nobody seems to remember this, Farnsworth says that when he heard the voice of Albert coming out of the monster, it was as if a veil was pulled back from his eyes. He goes on to say, "I remember now seeing Reverend Albert on one other occasion after we ran him off. I was awake early one morning last week, drinking coffee on the balcony of my room at the Hotel. I looked up the street and I saw Albert holding open an old book and reading aloud some strange words. He looked up at me and stared right into my eyes with this terrible anger. After that, it was as if he was erased from my mind."

Farnsworth begs the Investigators to track Albert down, adding that the tracks left by his wagon can probably be followed back to his camp. He insinuates that, whatever is wrong with Polly, Albert is likely the only person that can put her back to normal.

LEAVING TOWN

By this point, the Investigators likely to want to track Albert down and get to the bottom of what's going on. If so, they need to get their horses ready and head out of town in the direction the wagon went. A successful **Idea** roll will allow reveal the general direction the medicine wagon went and a successful **Track** roll is needed to pick up and follow the trail. As the Investigators ride, they can attempt to make a **Spot Hidden** roll and if successful, they notice a small doll by the side of the road. If examined, Investigators see the letters "P.G." embroidered into the doll's dress.

Several miles and six hours pass by. Eventually the wagon tracks veer off the main road and head into the badlands toward a low rise. With a successful **Listen** roll, Investigators can hear people talking on the other side of the ridge. If the players wish to sneak up on the speakers, they will need to dismount and make a successful **Stealth** roll.

THE CAVE HIDEOUT

On the other side of the rise, Investigators see the medicine wagon parked in front of a cave. A campfire burning, and the Wildman from the show is cooking stew over it. All

around the camp the performers are busy. The dancing girls are washing clothes, the dwarf is counting the money and applying labels to the bottles of elixir, and the strong man is repairing the wagon and making sure the wheels are greased. There is no sign of Dr. Albert. After a few, minutes the wild-man ladles some of the stew into a bowl and hands it to one of the dancing girls. With a successful Listen roll, he can be heard to say, "Take this to our guest, and make sure she eats all of it." and the dancing girl can be seen walking into the cave.

If Investigators keep watch long enough, they see the dwarf and the other dancing girl go into the cave (presumably to sleep), while the strong man and the wild-man sit at the fire outside, each with a Winchester rifle within reach.

OUTSIDE THE CAVE

The wild-man and the strong man are sitting at the fire, drinking coffee, and acting as sentries. If the characters want to sneak past or try to get the drop on them, they can attempt a **Stealth** roll contested by the sentries **Listen** skill. If Investigators are successful, the two guards will not notice them moving, but if the sentries hear them, the two men will grab their rifles and demand that the Investigators show themselves. They will fight to the death if they need to. If the two men are searched, a set of keys can be found in the satchel of the wild-man (these will unlock Polly's shackles in the cave).

INSIDE THE CAVE

Inside the cave, several bedrolls are laid out. Crates of supplies are laid out along the right wall and a large alchemy lab hugs the wall on the left. Unless awakened by gunfire, the dancing girls and the dwarf are sleeping here. If they have been awoken by gunfire, each of them will have imbibed an Elixir of Camouflage, causing all attacks against them to be made with one penalty die.

If anyone rolls a fumble on an attack near the lab table, they will break a random beaker, sending strange vapors into the air. Anyone within 10 feet of the table must make a Hard **POW** roll or be affected randomly from the chart below (roll 1D6). The effects will last for 1D20 minutes.

Roll	Effect
1	The vapors burn your eyes, causing blindness.
2	The vapors turn your skin bright red.
3	The vapors cause your skin to glow brightly granting enemies one Bonus die on all attacks
4	The vapors cause you to start coughing violently. One penalty die is imposed on all skill rolls.
5	The vapors heighten your reactions. You receive one Bonus die on all rolls.
6	The vapors have no effect.

After the fight is over, the Investigators can search the area. With a successful Spot Hidden roll, they discover the journal of Dr. Albert on the laboratory table. The last entry in the journal reads:

"I have perfected my plan and managed to create an elixir that will allow me to take on the form of another. This is unlike anything I have ever done before; a combination of Alchemy and Black Magic. This concoction will allow me to take on the form of an innocent and yet be able to produce the necessary features to bring terror down upon the town that inflicted such humiliation upon me. I will get my revenge, and what better way than to become the very child I originally tried to help. I will have two nights before it really sets in. As with the earlier experiments, on the second night the real show will begin, when the effects double in scale and I become a living nightmare!"

Also on the table is a large ancient book. A successful **Hard Language (Latin)** roll enables Investigators to read a few pages, enough to figure out that this is a medieval occult text that holds several black magic rituals, including one to veil a memory from an entire city or town.

LITTLE POLLY GARRETT

A young girl in a tattered gingham dress is chained to the wall of the cave. On closer inspection, she can be recognized as Polly Garrett! If Investigators don't immediately pick up on it, a successful **Idea** roll will confirm that this can only mean that the little girl in town is an imposter. A successful **Lock picking** roll is required to open the lock on the shackles unless the key was acquired from the wild-man.

A RACE AGAINST TIME

The Investigators need to get back to San Rafael as soon as possible to stop the monster that Dr. Albert will become, however, it is at least a six-hour ride back into town and they also likely tired and sleep deprived. Past this point, one penalty die should be imposed on all rolls unless a stimulant (like caffeine) is taken or they are able to get at least a few hours of rest.

The excitement and tension should build as Investigators ride back to town at breakneck speed. Call for a few random **Ride** rolls just to heighten the tension. If any of the rolls fumble, perhaps the horse rears up because of a snake, or it stumbles and breaks its leg. Try not to make the event overly long; these are simply plot devices to add tension to an already tense situation.

Playtest Note

In one of my playtests, the clever Investigators at my table decided to hitch a couple of their horses to the Medicine Show wagon and use the wagon on their return trip to San Rafael so that they could get some sleep on the way back.

BACK IN SAN RAFAEL

As the Investigators arrive back in town, they realize the streets are empty. The entire town looks like a ghost town with one exception – The San Rafael Church of Christ has a light shining from within it.

Anyone approaching the church spots Polly Garrett coming from around the other side of building. She is once again covered in blood, and if asked about where the rest of the townsfolk are, she will smile and reply that they, “are all inside the church.” A successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals that the church doors are chained shut from the outside and that most of the townsfolk are trapped by Dr. Albert.

If Investigators confront Polly as Doctor Albert, she simply smiles and replies, “You're too late. The sun has gone down.” Polly/Albert begins to convulse as she triples in size. Her fingers transform into talons and her teeth become monstrous fangs.

Massive boils cover her skin and pip open with a revolting spray of pus only to reveal eyes beneath them. Anyone witnessing this needs to make a **Sanity** roll (1D4/1D10).

Once the transformation is complete, the Polly Monster will attack! If the creature feels that it is going to be destroyed, it will leap through a window on the second floor of the church and attempt to kill as many of the trapped townsfolk as possible.

CONCLUSION

Once the creature is destroyed, it reverts into its original form, Dr. Albert. The townsfolk all begin to remember what happened with Polly and the old Reverend Albert. A great remorse falls over the town as funerals are prepared for the Garretts, the Altons, and anyone else who died. In the end, there is a sense that revenge is not always the best answer.

STATS

Doctor Albert as the Polly-Monster

STR 105 CON 65 SIZ 105 DEX 55 INT 85
APP 15 POW 70 EDU 70 HP 17
DB: +2D6 Build: 2

Attacks per round: 4

Bite 25% (12/5), 1D10+DB
Claw 40% (20/8), 1D6+DB
Tentacle 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+DB

Armor: 3-point tough skin

Skills: Fast Talk: 80%, Animal Handling: 25%, Dodge: 60%, Fighting (Brawl) 40%, Spot Hidden 50%

The Polly-Monster can attack up to four different targets simultaneously with its tentacles, its claws, and its bite. The first tentacle successfully striking a target will hold onto it, and when a second connects, the two constrict the target until the target can escape or cut free (each tentacle has 4 HP). Each tentacle remaining around a target will do normal damage each combat round. To escape from a tentacle, a player must make a successful contested maneuver using **Fighting (brawl)**. Attacks made against the monster while being held by a tentacle must be made with one Penalty die.

The Strong Man

STR 95 CON 65 SIZ 85 DEX 60 INT 45
 APP 80 POW 50 EDU 35 HP 15
 DB: +1D6 Build: 1

Attacks per round: 1

Winchester Rifle 40% (20/8), 2D6+4
 Bayonet 35% (17/7), 1D8+DB
 Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+DB

Armor: None

Skills: Animal Handling: 25%, Dodge: 40%, Fighting (Brawl)
 35%, Firearms (Rifle): 40%, Listen: 25%, Ride: 40%, Sleight of
 Hand: 30%, Spot Hidden 35%, Throw: 25%, Track: 15%

The Dwarf

STR 80 CON 65 SIZ 35 DEX 70 INT 55
 APP 60 POW 40 EDU 60 HP 10
 DB: +0 Build: 0

Attacks per round: 1

Derringer 45% (22/9), 1D6
 Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3+DB

Armor: None

Skills: Dodge: 50%, Fighting (Brawl): 45%, Firearms (Pistol):
 45%, Listen: 55%, Spot Hidden: 40%

The Dancing Girls (2)

STR 60 CON 55 SIZ 55 DEX 70 INT 60
 APP 80 POW 80 EDU 40 HP 11
 DB: +0 Build: 0

Attacks per round: 1

Knife 25% (12/5), 1D3+1+DB
 Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+DB

Armor: None

Skills: Animal Handling: 40%, Dodge: 50%, Fighting (Brawl)
 25%, Listen: 40%, Ride: 40%, Sleight of Hand: 50%, Spot
 Hidden: 45%

Magic Spells

Control: 75%

Dancing girls can take control of any single character but using
 a control spell and spending their turn acting through their
 target. The spell ends if the dancing girl is incapacitated.

The Wild Man

STR 65 CON 65 SIZ 60 DEX 75 INT 60
 APP 35 POW 50 EDU 20 HP 13
 DB: +1D4 Build: 0

Attacks per round: 1

Winchester Rifle 40% (20/8), 2D6+4
 Bayonet 35% (17/7), 1D8+DB
 Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+DB

Armor: None

Skills: Animal Handling: 60%, Dodge: 50%, Fighting (Brawl):
 40%, Firearms (Rifle): 40%, Listen: 55%, Ride: 60%, Spot
 Hidden 60%, Throw: 50%, Track: 60%