

DER HEXENHAMMER

by Mervyn Boyd - jack@ktana.freeserve.co.uk
178 Dickson Drive, Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland, KA12 9HB

Foreword

It should be mentioned that this is not a CoC scenario in any real sense. There are no monsters to fight; there are no spells to cast; there are no cults seeking to summon something or other. There's no ancient dusty tomes. There's no combat, and there's no horror to speak of, save that of one immortal madman on the loose. In fact there's no real investigation to speak of either. Although the scenario can be played as a stand alone, it's probably best if it is added into an ongoing campaign as a side track event.

If played as a stand alone it would be best if the players create Homicide Detectives, Forensic Pathologists, Crime Scene Technicians, and the like, because they're so easy to fit in and it's only natural for them to be involved. Incorporating established and other character types is left individual keeper.

Since I am not a great creative writer there will probably be many entries that are vague in content and description - or even missing - thus causing the adventure to appear disjointed. Don't be put off by this. Originally I wanted to shift the emphasis from the usual investigative methodology and utilise other ways in which to solve crimes. For example: Blood spatters, foot or tyre prints, drag marks, fingerprints, clothing fibres, pollen grains, hair strands, etc. You know, real intensive forensic clues but that scenario died a death. It got way too complex, so here's a radically different knock off instead. While provision have hopefully been made for everything the players are likely to look into, it is up to the keeper to improvise, and flesh out all other areas - as well as NPC personalities and reaction.

No time frame is used so events, if any, move along according to the pace of the players. Weeks, months or even years can pass before police make any progress, and then it's only because the criminal made a mistake, or some stupid overlooked clue is seen in a new light. Some serial killers go for years without being caught, and the killer in this scenario has racked up an impressive 319 years spree. The scenario is intended to be set in Little Rock, Arkansas in the modern day (2000), though this can be changed as the keeper desires.

Keeper Information

For the last two years or so, the city of Little Rock has been beset with a number of reported disappearances. Nothing out of the ordinary there you might say. Every city has that problem. True, but many of these people have one thing in common. They are modern day witches, and all are being hunted by a Witch killer.

A matter of procedure & Lab Results

Conventional play means players do what they want when they want with relative impunity. Since this scenario assumes players are law officers, then certain rules and regulations should be adhered to. It is left to the keeper to include things like obtaining arrest and search warrants, or whether it is assumed these things are automatically taken care of for the sake of simplicity.

Ballistics; toxicology; it all takes time, and as such results from lab analysis come back in **3d8 hours**. Pushing things through urgently requires a **CREDIT RATING** check. Success enables the impatient player to wait only **3d4 hours**. For an impale you can subtract another 2 hours from the time, but nothing takes less than 3 hours.

Ignatius Sprenger, Witch Killer

Sprenger was born in Dßseldorf, Germany on June 16, 1656 to strict parentage. His father was a distinguished and influential clergyman. Puritanical to boot. He was the eldest of five children, and it was by no mistake that he would follow in his father's footsteps. And nor was it by any mistake that he got involved with two reputed witches. The alarm of witchcraft was first raised in the family of a local nobleman, where two Negro maid-servants were charged with the supposed crime. It was likely they were practising voodoo or obeah, but, however this may be, the charges did not stop at them. The alarm spread rapidly, and in a brief space of time numerous persons in the city fell under the suspicion on the most frivolous of pretexts. Two noted examples being an old washer woman named Lieselotte Meier, who was employed by a local statesman to look after his children, who shortly afterwards displayed symptoms which Sprenger, on examination stated were those of diabolical possession. The poor washer woman was arrested, brought to trial, found guilty and hung. The second being that of Ute Schaudi, a simple farm girl who was accused of witchcraft because the cows weren't producing much milk that month. Similarly, she was arrested, tried and hung.

Being a man of observation and ingenious invention, Sprenger struck out a trade which brought him moderate returns which sufficed to maintain him, and at the same time gratified his ambition by making him a terror to many, and the object of admiration and gratitude to many more, who felt themselves indebted to him for ridding them of their enemies. After several successful cases, Sprenger left home and engaged in a regular tour of the surrounding counties. He found and employed two confederates, a man called Jurgen Hitler, and a woman whose name is long forgotten. They visited every town on their route that invited them, and secured to themselves the moderate payment of twenty pfennigs plus expenses, leaving what more than this to the spontaneous gratitude of those who should deem themselves indebted to the exhortations of Sprenger and his party. Soon Sprenger became known as Der Hexenhammer (The Hammer of Witches), for his exacting punishment of known and suspected witches.

In every town to which they came, they enquired for reputed witches, and having taken them into custody, they assailed the poor creatures with a multitude of questions constructed in the most artful manner. Confessions of whatever Sprenger wished were wrung from his victims under extreme and merciless torture. Rich and poor, learned and ignorant, all were gathered into his inquisition. They were stripped naked and shaved bare, in search for the Devil's Mark which they ascertained by pricking with needles, though the absence of such marks was not conclusive to prove innocence. Bound hand to foot, they swam their victims in rivers and ponds, it being undoubted fact that if the accused were a witch, the water, which was the symbol of admission into the Christian Church, would not receive them into its bosom (a witch would float). If the accused continued obstinate, they were seated in constrained and uneasy positions, occasionally being bound by cords, and compelled to remain so without food or sleep for as long as possible. Some they walked until their feet were blistered and they dropped from fatigue. Others they hung in heavy sacking and swung for days at a time without food or water until delirium set in. Some were hung by their ankles, or bound by their wrists and repeatedly dropped from a height. Many were beaten with rods and spikes, or crushed beneath great weights. The most insidious and ingenious tortures were held to last resort. For example: The Bowl. This torture method involved trapping mice in a bowl which was upturned onto the victim's exposed belly. On top of the bowl a fire was set. As the temperature inside the bowl rose the mice would panic and in their frenzy to escape they would burrow through the still alive victim.

By this expedient Sprenger, found favourable reception amongst many persons who would listen to his dictates as Greeks to the Oracle of, Delphi. Being three of them, they were sufficiently strong to overawe all timid and insecure opposition with a certain air of authority. The fanaticism and diabolical cruelty of this man has probably never been equalled in the history of human persecution. Relying implicitly upon the Scriptural injunction: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (EXODUS, 22:18). By now Sprenger's actions had naturally attracted the interested eye of Nyarlathotep.

The most plentiful inquisition of Sprenger and his consorts lasted ten years as he flourished across the length and breadth of Germany. Even at one time to preside over a raid at a suspected witch conclave within the Horselberg mountains wherein 1300 men and women, child and infant, young and old were eradicated. The number being so great that the names were never taken and written down, the prisoners being cited as Number 1, 2, 3, and so on. All deemed to be emissaries of the Evil One.

At length there were so many persons committed to prison, or had been put to death upon the suspicion of witchcraft, that the government was compelled to take hand in the affair. The magistrates for whom Sprenger and his confederates once worked were now obliged, willingly or unwillingly, to commit them for trial.

Prince Bishop Heinrich Fleischer von Freiburg was appointed by Parliament to lead the trial. At this time he was one of the most popular noblemen in Germany, and was much courted by the clergy. He was shrewd, penetrating and active, and exhibited a singular mixture of pious demeanour with a vein of facetiousness and jocularly. The trial began. Ignatius Sprenger, the man that at first they hailed as a public benefactor was labelled a cunning impostor. Blinded by his zeal, he cost the lives of many precious people, dealing in cold blood for monetary gain, and still more horrible, for the allure of fame. The trial concluded with the sentencing of Sprenger and his cohorts to death by public hanging in January 16, 1692.

It was their in the gallows as Sprenger's life was slipping away when he asked God to spare his life. Intrigued by this little man's crusade, Nyarlathotep granted him his wish - immortality to carry out his work, but he took Sprenger's soul in payment. The following morning Sprenger's body was found to be missing which caused a stir among the populace. The next we hear of Sprenger is in Salem, Massachusetts where he enjoyed a renewed, and fresh lease of life and freedom. But once more the hysteria subsided and public temperament changed, and Sprenger again found himself out of favour, and so to continue, he was forced to scale down his relentless effort and become more discreet.

Since then, Sprenger has moved from town to town slaying those whom he deems a witch, finding great success in Arkham, Kingsport, and Dunwich. It wasn't until the Government raid on Innsmouth in 1929 when he really felt useful again. But after which he was forced back to relatively meagre pickings. For over 300 years Sprenger has continued his trail of terror.

Sprenger's Immortality and Killing Him

Sprenger has been granted immortality, and this means he cannot die. If Sprenger is "killed", he will appear dead to all but the most thorough forensic examination. Sprenger remains biologically active at the cellular level and will slowly heal until he comes back. This is not to say that should he cut a finger off, that that finger will slowly regenerate into another fully living Ignatius Sprenger. That won't work, but Sprenger will eventually regrow another finger; or limb. You know, like a salamander will regrow a severed tail, but the tail won't regrow a salamander. Also, the severed part will not decompose. To utterly destroy Sprenger it is suggested that he be totally consumed by fire, and whatever remains should be pounded into fine dust, dissolved in acid and then scattered to the four winds and all points in between. Just burning the body is insufficient. The charred remains will slowly heal. Dismembering or decapitation is also an option, but should the body parts come into contact they will eventually knit together. Whatever method that stops Sprenger from regenerating is fine, so use your judgement.

To determine how long Sprenger has before rising from the dead, consider how he died. Reduce all applicable stats to zero to reflect the damage taken. He regenerates 1d2-1 points to each stat per six hours, and "awakes" only when he has a minimum of 1 point in each stat. For example: If Sprenger simply dies of gunshot wounds or is stabbed to death, he needs only to regenerate hit points. If specifically shot in the head and killed, reduce his INT and EDU to zero. If he is run over by a speeding car reduce his STR, DEX, APP (and if applicable INT & EDU if head trauma is sustained). If he's burnt to a cinder all stats should be reduced to zero. Use your judgement when determining the stat loss. Severed parts take months to regrow.

When he finally awakes, Sprenger will move on to a new location to begin again - even if he has to dig himself out from his grave. He doesn't hold grudges against the players, and won't seek revenge. Sprenger has probably been killed several times in the last 319 years.

Player Insertion

Campaign: Characters, particularly those with a relevant skill, can be brought in by LRPD to help in autopsies, bug identification or whatever when the main dig has begun. They will be paid their normal fee in compensation. Or, they learn of it from news reports and take an interest. Perhaps a name is released and it's similar to somebody they've met already - another reason to snoop around.. Use your discretion in how you bring your players into this.

Stand Alone: Players create Police Detectives and the like. Everything is going fine at the office. Day to day affairs. Nothing out of the ordinary. Then a call comes in. Time to head of to work. See Case One

Case Number One: I32-6382-7-A

The Date: 27 May 2000

Two park rangers, while checking the general state of things in a remote part of the Pinnacle Mountain State Park discover the partially exposed human skeleton. Excavation of the site recovers only the skeleton. No jewellery, identification, clothing, or other effects. Dental records identify the skeleton as 27 year old Melissa Blake, an exotic dancer who was reported missing almost two years ago by her partner Collin Harker. Analysis of the skeleton show a few stress fractures that did not heal. They were probably sustained just prior to death. Things that come to light: It's unlikely that all the clothing and shoes would rot into nothing in the intervening years. You would expect to find something, so she was probably buried naked. She was found buried, so suicide or death by misadventure is ruled out. She was probably murdered.

Re-opening the case.

Collin reported Melissa missing on 14 May 1999. The ensuing investigation was headed by Detectives Kevin Milligan and Andrew Wilson. A routine background check on Collin proved clean, with no suspicions. Interviews with her family and friends brought nothing to light. Melissa was well liked by all who knew her; she had no credit problems, no enemies, no problems with ex lovers, no extra relationship affairs. Nothing. Everything seemed to check out, so the case was left open and unsolved. The only interesting fact that can spring out at the players is that she had a keen interest in Wicca. She, apparently was a practising witch, although she was not part of a coven, or similar group.

Re-investigating the case, going over old case notes, and re-interviewing friends and family brings nothing else to the fore. Collin, and Melissa's family would be extremely relieved to be told of her discovery. Collin lives in the same home and has not been big on the dating scene since Mel's disappearance. Any life insurance she had is still uncollected. In this instance that's pretty much this case closed, with the exception of what actually happened to her.

Case Number Two: I26-6376-9-A

A month or so passes, when on 13 July, 2000 a group of ramblers discover another skeleton not more than 500 yards from the location of Melissa. They inform the park rangers. Investigation of the burial site is similar to the first. Victim was buried. Victim is naked. No personal effects. Dental records ID the victim as Audrey Harrison, a 25 year old dental technician, who was reported missing by her parents almost two years ago. With the location of this body in relation to Melissa, it should immediately ring some alarm bells. Is it mere coincidence, or is there something more sinister at work.

Re-opening the case.

Audrey was reported missing on 03.April.1999. The ensuing investigation headed by Detectives Donald Rumsfield and Ryan B. Dennehy failed in the light of lack of suspects or evidence. The case remained open and unsolved. A same kind of profile can be created. Audrey was well liked by all who knew her; no credit problems, no enemies, no problems with ex lovers and the like. Nothing. Everything seemed to check out. Interviews with her family and friends brought nothing to light. Again, the only interesting fact that springs out to the players is that she was a had a keen interest in Wicca. She was a practising witch. Ah, a link. It does in deed seem something sinister is at hand. Also, Audrey and some of her Wiccan friends usually held some kind of renewal ceremony at a secret location in Burns park once a month. This is nothing more than a small meticulously cared for niche in amongst a dense part of the woodland, where Audrey and her friends prayed, chanted, sung (sometimes naked, but not always), and performed earth cleansing spells in honour of Mother Nature. Nothing perverse occurred here, no sacrifices, no smoking of marijuana.

Course of Investigation 1

If two bodies are found in close proximity, then maybe there'll be more - especially if both share an interest in Wicca. Two avenues of investigation open themselves to the players, a) Compiling a missing persons database, and b) Organising a dig - both of which are outlined below.

Compiling a missing persons database

If players do not think of this themselves, an **IDEA** check will. With the discovery of two missing persons in the same burial area, it would only be natural for police investigators to look into all the other reported disappearances since, and maybe before 1999. In total 1330 persons have been reported missing. 820 of them women (including both Melissa and Audrey). All from Little Rock. All potential victims. The latest being a mere three weeks ago (Kate Holmes, 06 May, 2000). Players might also want to express their wishes to be made immediately aware of any new abduction attempts, either successful or otherwise.

Reviewing each of the 820 cases takes time to sort through. NPCs can be hauled in to help out. Investing this time as well as **R/W ENGLISH**, and **IDEA** check for good measure collates a list of 21 individuals who are listed as having an interest in witchcraft or new age activities.

Audrey Harrison, 03 April 1999
Melissa Blake, 14 May 1999
Claire Simpson, 22 May, 1999
Rachel Smith, 29 May, 1999
Alyssa Coccotti, 15 June, 1999
Miriam Spence, 02 July, 1999
Jo Bakewell, 14 July, 1999
Bethany Giedroyc, 23 July, 1999
Hannah Keogh, 30 August, 1999
Holly McDowall, 03 September, 1999
Faye Davies, 23 September, 1999

Vivian Moore, 13 October, 1999
Stephanie Palmer, 27 October, 1999
Tamzin Ferguson, 07 January, 2000
Lisa Kipling, 18 January, 2000
Julianne Peake-Reynolds, 30 January, 2000
Shannon Ragsdale, 23 February, 2000
Fern Cooper, 06 March, 2000
Helen Malarky, 31 March, 2000
Dee Landry, 17 April, 2000
Kate Holmes, 06 May, 2000

Re-interviewing friends and families of these victims is an option, it takes time and is but ultimately fruitless. Of the 21 listed only four have turned up alive and well (Lisa Kipling, Faye Davies, Claire Simpson, Jo Bakewell), the rest are still unaccounted for. As for other information such as enemies, credit rating, places of work and leisure, while important it may be, they unfortunately offer no clues as to what happened to them. Since Kate Holmes is the latest victim, then it would be logical for the players to begin their investigation there.

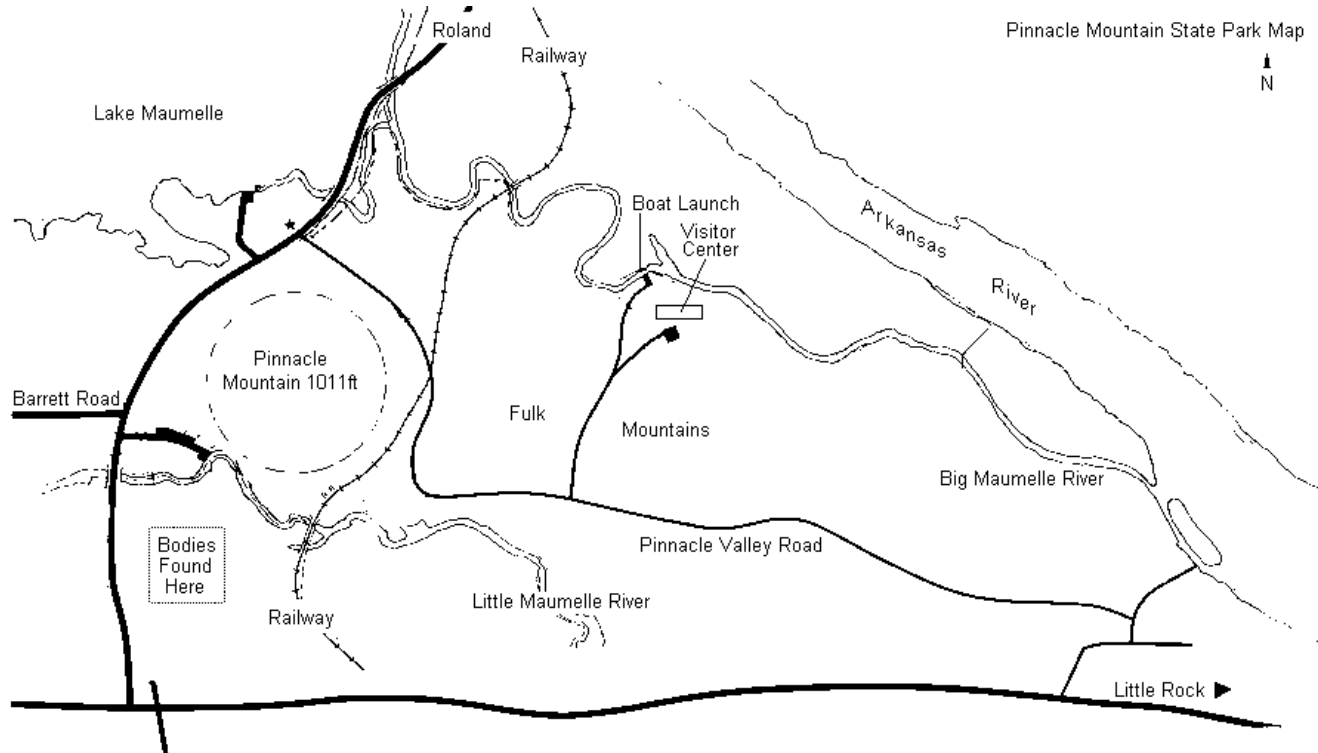
That said, diligent investigation can uncover a connection between six of the missing. Vivian Moore created aromatherapeutic oils, which she sold directly and through Holly McDowall's occult shop. Vivian and Holly were also conservationists and were involved in many a protest together. Both also run adverts through Julianne Peake-Reynolds' magazine (SpellBinder). Bethany Giedroyc occasionally bought Vivian's oils and other nik-naks from Holly's shop, as did Alyssa Coccotti, and Tamzin Ferguson.

Organising a dig

Seventeen women who share the belief are missing. Two of them are found in close proximity in Pinnacle State Park. More might be up there waiting to be found. Anybody who wishes to set up a small exploratory party and head off to the hills and start digging can do so once clearance has been granted. A task force of 30+ people can be assembled from assorted departments.

Pinnacle Mountain State Park

Located approximately 12 miles west of Little Rock, Pinnacle Mountain State Park comprises 1,800 acres of diverse natural habitat which provides seemingly limitless encounters with its varied wildlife and array of plant life. Surrounded by wooded hillsides, lush lowlands, and clear waterways the cone-shaped peak of Pinnacle Mountain towers 1011 feet above the valley below. The park also maintains a visitor's centre and museum which fulfils a three-fold purpose of preservation, recreation, and education. Guides and park rangers often hold interpretative and educational programs dealing with the geology, botany, archaeology, wildlife and ecology of the park. Each presentation helps the visitor to understand and appreciate their ecological relationship to earth's environment. Other activities include fishing, canoeing, and hiking along one of the many, many trails, and there's over 40 miles of trail to be explored.



The Dig

Digging around will be a hit and miss affair. The sheer size of the outdoors is enormous. It'll be long, slow and laborious. You could spend a week and not find anything, however surveying the scene while accompanied with assorted **GEOLOGY** and **NATURAL HISTORY** rolls should be made to determine logical places to dig. The players don't actually have to dig themselves or be here constantly for progress to be made. Reports come in daily. The best plan would be to take a good map of the area and plot the locations of the first two bodies, and to concentrate on their digs in the intervening 500 yards between them, and to a lesser extent out to 500 yards radiating out. An area of 1500 by 1000 yards would then be covered.

Digging should not be the only thing the players should be concentrating on. They should also be concerned with the bagging and tagging of any possible evidence that may be found laying round. These could be footprints, discarded cigarette ends, drinks cans, bags of rubbish, whatever... Since the location is out of the

way and not travelled much they'll not be much laying around. If they are lucky they can find 2d10 bits and pieces, 1d10 otherwise. Only on a **LUCK** roll can prints be lifted from some of the detritus, and for the moment they cannot trace who they came from.

To make the most use of evidence at a crime scene, an experienced and well trained forensic technician should be concerned with the following: Visual & close up photographic observation; Noting body position and where the body is in relation to the nearest roadway, path, pond, etc.; the collection of specimens from the body and surrounding area, including directly beneath the body. This includes soil samples, foliage matter, types and number of insects (egg, larval, pupal, adult, larval casts and husks). Climatological data of the location should also be noted. Once done, all samples, both live and dead (including the corpse) should be processed as fast as possible in the laboratory with careful observation. All this takes time to do, and when all the data is processed it is time to make some conclusions:

Those Recovered

Body 1

Kate Holmes is discovered relatively easily. A **LUCK** roll coupled with a **NATURAL HISTORY** check discovers her body a 2d8 hours after arrival, 4d8 hours otherwise. The vegetation at the location of her corpse appears to have been cut back in the last month or so and is now seen to be enjoying a spurt of growth compared to the surrounding foliage.

As the earth is carefully excavated from the shallow grave, the smell of rotting flesh becomes overwhelming. Everybody, old grizzled veterans and new guys alike, must succeed a **CONx3** check or be repulsed by the stench (SAN check with loss of 1/1d3). A fumbled roll results in the PC heaving their guts out. Best to breath through the mouth or use some kind of filter. The nude readily identifiable body of Kate is in an advanced state of putrefaction. Mottled green/black skin, blistered, hanging loose. Adipocere deposits are beginning to build up around the body. (This is a naturally occurring greyish cheesy substance which forms when bodies are left in cool wet areas.) Burrowing insect and worm infested. Greasy decomposition fluid and barely recognisable semi-fluid, semi-solid abdominal organs pool and gel in the pit having been forced out through the body's orifices. Seeing the body is horrific and causes 1d2/1d3+2 sanity loss to those unaccustomed to viewing bodies in this kind of state. Removing the corpse is tricky, the epidermis is loose and tears easily, like a skin on a custard. Without due care an arm might come away in hand, and what intestinal residue there is could spill out over a characters nice new shoes. Anybody who lingers around the body ends up being contaminated with the stench of death which isn't easily washed off. They could try lemons though.

Autopsy results for Kate

Time of death occurred approximately on May 20, give or take a day or two - roughly two weeks after her reported disappearance. Kate appears to have been tortured to death. Her corpse bears extensive bruises and abrasions. Marks of ligatures or other restraining devices are apparent on her wrists, ankles and throat. She does not appear to have been sexually abused. No apparent clues as to the attacker is found. No latent prints. No hair samples. No fingernail scrapings. A toxicology report comes back clean. She was not drugged.

Kate has burn marks on face, neck and torso. They seem consistent with high voltage electrocution. Her eyes were taped open, with the tape going under eyelids and stretched up to forehead. An intermittent circular scorch mark six inches in diameter on the her belly indicates an application of heat, but ultimately she died from massive haemorrhaging from the abdomen and internal organs. From the surviving flesh, evidence that it was gnawed by mice when the victim was alive is just detectable and no more. Several mice hairs were collected from inside the cavity, as were droppings. It seems the mice burrowed down through her belly, into her abdomen, through her torso, to emerged just under the left rib cage. *Kate was subjected to "the bowl"*.

Body 2

1d3+2 days later they unearth Vivian Moore. Putrefaction gave way to decomposition a long time ago, and what remains is a dirty blackened largely skeletonised corpse covered in the greasy cheesy Adipocere substance. There is no sanity loss. Identification can only be accomplished by dental records or DNA sampling.

Autopsy results for Vivian

Several of Vivian's ribs are broken on both sides of the cage. The breaks and fractures occur far back as though they were subjected to great deal of pressure or weight. Time of death occurred approximately on October/November 1999, give or take a week. The exact cause of death is indeterminate. From the emaciated corpse it appears that Vivian too has been restrained by ligature marks on her wrists, ankles, and throat. The state of the epidermis shows some kind of bruising trauma before death. Both of Vivian's arms are dislocated and shoulder ligaments are torn. These wounds seem consistent with the fact that Vivian may have been tethered by her wrists to some kind of pulley mechanism, then hoisted and dropped several times. No clues as to the attacker is found. No latent prints. No hair samples. No fingernail scrapings. A toxicology report comes back clean.

Body 3

1d4 days later somebody finds Bethany Giedroyc. She resembles Vivian's corpse only with three months head start, which means there's even less biological matter to deal with - so no sanity is lost. Several of her fingers (1d3+2) have been snipped off at the knuckle, but they can be easily found in the grave. That same day (1d12 hours later) a **SPOT HIDDEN** recovers a partial skull fragment consisting of the cranium, eye socket and cheek bone. Nothing more. The rest of the body cannot be found. The use of **BIOLOGY** or **FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY** identifies the bone to be female with an 80% certainty. Looking at the bone, an **IDEA** check suggests that the bone has been gnawed, possibly by a bear. Unfortunately no useable DNA can be extracted, and no other bits of this corpse can be found.

Autopsy results for Bethany

Time of death occurred approximately on July/August, give or take a week or two. ID by DNA sampling or dental records only. The cause of death is indeterminate. There is too little surviving matter remaining to make any kind of judgement, and no clues as to the attacker is found. A toxicology report comes back clean.

Body 4

1D3+1 days later the skeletonised corpse of Miriama Spence is found. Again ID is only done by dental records or DNA sampling. In with the body, the investigators recover a carelessly disposed of white plastic bin bag filled with trash (empty food cans, crushed Marlboro lights cigarette packs, cigarette ends, cigarette ash, chocolate wrappers, a crumpled receipt and a few squat sturdy cardboard tubes). An **IDEA** roll identifies the cardboard tubes as the type you get gaffer tape on. Those with the presence of mind might want to turn the rubbish over for forensic analysis. Who knows, with a little luck maybe our killer has left us a little clue.

If the players want to analyse this stuff themselves, then they should make the appropriate **FORENSIC** check. A failed roll means the player was unable to recover any clues, though somebody else could try. A fumbled roll results precious evidence being destroyed or cross-contaminated. Use your judgement in this matter.

After a thorough testing the results come back: The white plastic bag itself is a common household pedal-bin variety and can be bought from any stockist. Its contents were very well preserved. Numerous finger prints and differing kinds were recovered from everything. The brand of cigarette is far too common to make any kind of trace. Saliva samples were extracted from the cigarette ends. All cigarettes were smoked by the same person. A male suspect with a blood typing of O negative. The receipt imparts the following information: Store Name, Phone Number & Address: Wal-mart (North Little Rock); Date: Friday 16 July, 1999; Time:

14:23; Items Bought: Gaffer Tape, Canned Foods; Cash Tendered: \$16.36; Till Operator Name: Joyce Sutherland.

Autopsy results for Miriama

Time of death occurred approximately on July 1999, give or take a week or two. ID by DNA sampling or dental records only. The cause of death is indeterminate. There is too little surviving matter remaining to make any kind of judgement. No clues as to the attacker is found save for what's in the bin bag. A toxicology report comes back clean.

Body 5

Three days later Julianne Peake-Reynolds is found. Skeletonisation of the body has taken hold and the body is covered in thick adipocere deposits. With a **LUCK** roll there is just enough surviving tissue to make some kind of examination, otherwise nothing much can be said. Success, shows that Julianne was bound like the other bodies.

Autopsy results for Julianne

Time of death occurred some time in Late January/February 2000. ID by DNA sampling or dental records only. The cause of death is indeterminate. No clues as to the attacker is found. A toxicology report comes back clean. On another sad note it seems Julianne was one month pregnant at the time of her death.

Body 6

The body of Claire Simpson can be found whenever the keeper wants. Maybe two corpses can be found on the same day. The skeletonisation process is complete. There is nothing but bone and tendons left, with the exception of matted clumps of hair still adhering to the skull. ID through DNA sampling or dental records.

Autopsy results for Claire

Time of death occurred some time in June 1999. The cause of death is indeterminate. There is too little surviving matter remaining to make any kind of judgement. No clues as to the attacker is found. A toxicology report comes back clean.

After this time the prospect of finding more bodies become increasingly more difficult. Sprenger didn't bury all his victims in the one spot. After 14 days of digging nobody else is found, and the order comes from department heads to cease digging. If players believe there are more to be found, then they can attempt to extend the dig by only one week by successfully making **ONE PERSUADE** roll, after which the search will terminate if nothing else is found. Only with dogged determination and a **POWx1** check will another, and this time final, corpse be uncovered. The keeper is free to choose somebody at random. After this nobody else is found. Period.

Course of Investigation 2

Running the prints and DNA through AFIS and CODIS (Automatic Fingerprint Identification System and Combined DNA Index System) databases is met with success. Matches are found in both instances. They are associated with a suspect wanted in connection with the abduction, torture and murder of women. Only one city, Illinois, has a photo-fit posted of the suspects likeness, **see Wanted Bulletin**. A reward of 35,000 dollars is on offer for the capture of Sprenger. Estelle DiMarco, if shown a range of pictures will positively identify Sprenger from the spread. The likeness was supplied by one of Spenger's more fortunate victims, Sabrina Wells, who was attacked three years ago. The players, if they want, can interview her by either visiting her personally or talking over the phone.

Sabrina remembers the night vividly. She's got a photographic memory, that's why the E-fit is so perfect a likeness. Anyway, Sabrina is the proprietor of an occult shop, and on the 2nd December 1997, she had just

locked up for the evening and was on her way home just a few blocks away. Sprenger came from a dark alleyway and grabbed her and tried to bundle her into his van. She managed to knee him in the groin and wrestle free and spray mace into his face before escaping.

An **Impaled LUCK** roll when accessing AFIS (NOT CODIS) might uncover more information that should've been removed from the system some time ago. The prints from the trash are apparently a 93% match to those from a man imprisoned in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1978 for the abduction, torture and murder of 13 so-called witches over a year and a half. The name given is Ignatius Sprenger. Following this up, and talking to local authorities, it may be a surprise to learn that Sprenger was executed by electrocution in 1988 and buried in an unmarked state grave. A photo can be faxed through, but it'll take time to dig through the archives. What else? Maybe an insight as to how he was caught and where Sprenger was operating from. Well, an elaborate surveillance operation was put into place and he was followed to a disused warehouse. Oh, his supposed grave is empty for those who can get it exhumed.

Course of Investigation 3

Due to the location of the dig site, it would be an idea to spread their search to include the local towns of Pinnacle and Natural Steps (both of which have roughly 1000 inhabitants), and talk to the local authorities. In the course of the ensuing investigation it emerges that nothing untoward has occurred in either of the towns, and there has been no reports of anybody acting suspiciously over the last six months. However, Sheriff Ross of Natural Steps does remember seeing a black Toyota van pull away from a fire hydrant three days ago. He remembers this because he was going to speak to the driver about being illegally parked. If shown a picture of Sprenger, Sheriff Ross can positively ID him. He can also supply details of the van's licence plate. If the players want to know where he was parked, in what direction, what held his interest and what he was doing, then Ross can take them to the hydrant in question. It was in the centre of town, facing east towards the church. He wasn't doing much. Just sitting there. Other than this, both Sheriffs say they will watch out for this guy should he return.

Course of Investigation 4

As bodies mount, players may want to check out known local rapists, kidnappers, and serial killers. A local and state wide search will be lengthy and time consuming - even more so if surrounding states are checked. Either way what suspects there are can all account for their whereabouts at the time of incident. Most are serving their time in prison. Using whatever contacts they have out on the streets to see if anyone has seen or heard anything similarly comes back blank. No one knows anything about who might be the murderer.

To aid in their investigation it would be prudent to check other states for similar occult-based or ritual crimes in which involved the slaying of female new-agers or self-proclaimed witches. A **LIBRARY USE** or **COMPUTER USE** check obtains files for a slew of murders ranging across the length and breadth of America - particularly over the last decade or so. Following the trail for the last 10 years we find 26 dead in Columbus, Georgia; 10 in Rapid City, South Dakota; 7 in Minot & Fargo, North Dakota; 14 in Seattle & Tacoma, Oregon; 16 in Worcester, Massachusetts, 10 in Chicago, Illinois; and now 17 in Little Rock, Arkansas. All are pretty much similar with women disappearing then being discovered later in grave sites in remote locations. All police departments, including the FBI have wanted bulletins posted for information relating to these murders, but no names or faces are given for their suspect, except for Illinois who has the only E-fit available.

Specifically taking the search back further, the players find assorted ritualistic murder reports reaching as far back as the early 1900s, but why would they check this far back? An extremely broad-based search dredges up the odd ritualistic murder case from when the first police forces were created in New York City way back in 1845. Witch killing obviously goes as far back as merry old Salem in Massachusetts, a hotbed of witch activity in the 1690s. Unceasing research and an impaled roll might uncover an account dating as far back as the first European colony settled in Continental America - Jamestown, Virginia, 1607, when Agnes Boathy was burnt at the stake. Her crime: sneezing three times in church. Despite these many, many killings not all

were done by Sprenger. Looking at witch killers of the time, the players find amongst the most notable those being Cotton Mather and Increase Mather (a father and son team of 1660s Boston), and Ignatius Sprenger (German Immigrant to America in the 1690s who went by the name Der Hexenhammer). Sprenger's history is readily documented in any good occult volume until the time when his corpse disappears from the gallows.

News & Media

As the dig progresses and more bodies are recovered the media are sure to get wind of it from whatever source, including departmental leaks. TV crews and journalists, hungry for news, flock to LRPD HQ for reports and statements. If the characters are involved in the dig they'll be targeted for questioning. Similarly journalists and TV crews will eventually descend on the dig itself for on-the-spot reporting - grabbing who they can for comment.

An **IDEA** check suggests to investigating players that it would probably be in their best interests to keep reporting to a minimum. To control speculation and media creativity whoever is in charge of the investigation should hold daily meetings. They should also appeal to the media to keep any reporting discreet to prevent hysteria and out-of-context reporting. Another reason is that we don't want to scare the killer away, or force his/her hand unnecessarily. A **PERSUADE** roll is all that is required to keep the media in check, otherwise banner headlines like: "MODERN-DAY WITCH KILLER ON THE LOOSE" or "17 WITCHES SLAIN BY KILLER - ARE YOU NEXT?" to the more melodramatic: "10 WAYS TO SPOT IF YOUR NEIGHBOR IS A WITCH" are plastered on the front page.

Failing to keep the media in line results in Sprenger's face being featured prominently on the TV and front pages. Who knows how they got his image. Dozens of calls come in from people, all saying they've seen Sprenger. All incidents must be investigated and will take a great many man-hours to complete. Essentially all are dead ends or mistaken identities, maybe one or two ring true where Sprenger was spotted in a car park, store or wherever.

With media saturation, it's only a matter of time before Sprenger becomes alerted. Should he become alerted he follows what has become his standard operating procedure. Return to where he operates from if possible, collect his things, burn the rest then move on to pastures anew. Should this happen the scenario can be deemed a failure. It'll be up to the individual keeper to decide where Sprenger goes and what he does once he gets there, and whether the players can go after him.

Reading up on witchcraft

To learn more about what motivates witch-killers the players can either bring in an occult specialist or do their own research. Since we all have our own preconceptions on the topic of Witchcraft, Wicca, Mojo, call it what you want, the players will probably go on their own assumptions. Research uncovers two main ideologies.

- 1) Traditional doctrine states a witch is the cult of persons, who by means of Satanic worship are enabled to practice black magic, generally to the detriment of others. In return, Satan has complete dominion over them. They often are found in league with evil spirits or familiars who act as spies, or lend assistance when conversing with Lucifer. Sacrifices of animals and even humans are prevalent with this form of practice, as is the burning of black candles. As a result of their belief, many people were imprisoned or executed during the Inquisition.
- 2) Today, the term witchcraft has fallen into disuse and is more popularly referred to as Wicca (said to be an early Anglo-Saxon word for witchcraft). It encompasses not only spell use but also reflects upon the sensual earthiness of nature and is based on books such as Charles Leland's *Aradia: The Gospel of the Witches* (1899), Dr. Margaret Murray's *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921), Robert Graves's *The White Goddess* (1948), and Gerald Gardner's *Witchcraft Today* (1954) since such books gave inspiration

to some people seeking spiritual alternatives. With the coming of the 1960s and its counter-cultural mood these alternative practises grew rapidly during that decade and soon incorporated aromatherapy, kitchen pharmacology, crystal use, spoken mantras or incantations and a whole host of other things. From this, new age alternative medicines was born. Modern witchcraft is entirely different from Satanism of the diabolical witchcraft imagined by the persecutors of past centuries. Major Wiccan themes include love of nature, equality of male and female, appreciation of the ceremonial, a sense of wonder and belief in magic. It can be argued that nearly every single person performs at least one magical rite every year when they blow the candles out on their birthday cake and make a wish. As research nears completion characters can make the discovery that black candles, while associated with evil actually stands for banishing, deflecting negativity or life changes. Even the common white candle (a moon symbol) when burnt in a ceremony signifies purification, transformation, divinity, blessings and peace. Would it therefore be so wrong to burn a black candle in church?

Of all the volumes looked at in their research, one book seems to stick out for some reason. This large volume entitled the **Hammer of Witches** was initially published in Germany (under the title *Malleus Maleficarum*) at the end of the fifteenth century (1486). It was written by two inquisitors (Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer) under the papal bull (*Summis Desiderantes*) of Pope Innocent VIII against witchcraft. The book can be broken down in two parts, the first debating the much-disputed question of the nature of witchcraft and demons. Sprenger and Kramer set forth the causes which lead demons to seduce men, and show why women are most prone to listening to their proposals. They also investigate not only the methods employed to effect various kinds of mischief, but also counter charms and exorcisms that may be used against demons. Sprenger and Kramer also give accounts of their own experience when faced with witchcraft. The second part details minute directions for the mode in which to identify witches, their capture, treatment, and the means to be used to force confessions. The book sent an estimated 9 million people to their death. **Sanity Loss: None. Occult +3%. Spells: None.** Is it by mere coincidence that our killer is called Sprenger? Yeah, probably.

Witch-finders & The Inquisition

The Inquisition was established by a series of papal decrees between 1227 and 1235. Pope Innocent IV authorised the use of torture in 1252, and Pope Alexander IV gave the Inquisition authority over all cases of sorcery involving heresy. Inquisitors were charged with stamping out witchcraft - however inquisitional procedure demanded a confession as proof. Confessions were often exacted by torturing the defendant. Torture, however, was euphemistically called "the question", and according to inquisitional doctrine it was applied only once. Since this was a loophole, the idea was to have a never ending question put to the presumed witch. In other words, the torture never ended until the witch confessed or had died from the ordeal. Torture methods were many and varied. Examples being:

The ones previously mentioned at the beginning of the scenario, thumbscrews, the Iron Maiden, the rack, stoning, the Heretic's Fork; an iron rod with several points at each which were rammed deep into the flesh under the chin and into the bone of the sternum, the fork prevented all movement of the head and allowed the victim only to murmur. The Spider, a multi-clawed gripper which was heated until the iron was red and used to mutilate and tear a woman's breasts off. Knotting, wherein a stick was tied to a woman's hair and twisted tighter and tighter. Not only would the hair be ripped out, but the scalp would often be torn open, exposing the skull-cap. Blooding, it was commonly believed that a witch's power could be nullified by blooding. Convicted witches were slashed over the nose and mouth and allowed to bleed. Sometimes witches blooded this way bled to death. Burning at the stake was by far the most well-known punishment for witches. Sometimes uncooperative witches were burned with green wood, which took longer to kill them. Others were inverted, their legs spread apart and sawed down the middle. Owing to his inverted position, which assured ample oxygenation of the brain and impeded the general loss of blood, the victim did not lose consciousness until the saw reached the navel, or sternum. Sprenger has used tall these and others at some point during his career.

Pervert in the Bushes

This event can be thrown in at any time of day. If the keeper decides to use it a relevant investigative character receives a phone call from a concerned neighbour, who explains that there is a man across the road acting suspicious. The caller (Estelle DiMarco), she says he's lurking in the bushes watching the house next door, and has been there several hours now, and what should she do. This is Sprenger... waiting, watching his next victim, calculating Oh, one more thing. Estelle's address: 1228 Lancaster Road.

By the time any character arrives, or if a squad car is simply dispatched, Sprenger will be long gone - having been scared off by Estelle who disturbed her curtains for a better look.

Interviewing Estelle

The white-haired and elderly Estelle peeks out from the curtains when the players knock on her door. She lives alone and is quite weak and feeble and easily scared. She asks who it is before opening the door; demanding to see ID. Gaining her confidence, she opens the door gingerly and invites them in. The first thing she does is to point to the spot where she saw Sprenger in amongst the dense foliage. Whoever takes the lead in questioning her receives a $\frac{1}{2}$ **LUCK** check. Failure results in confusion and no real description save for he was white. She didn't get a good look due to the bushes obscuring her vision. Success on the other hand nets the following description: "White, Average Height, Stocky or Well built, Balding with a full beard and moustache. He was also wearing a shabby rain coat." If the players request an artists rendering of Sprenger, they get a general likeness of him, otherwise they'll just have to go on her description. If Estelle is shown the image from Illinois then she gives a positive ID.

The neighbouring household which held Sprenger's interest is unaware of his activities, and once told will anger Peter Armstrong (husband), worry the shit out Susanna (wife), and concern Sarah (daughter, who by the way, follows the Wiccan way). Diligent investigation discovers Sarah's bedroom faces the bushes. Anyone wishing to stake the place out this night is in for a long night. Sprenger has been chased off - he won't be back. For now Sarah is safe thanks to a grey-haired old lady.

Investigation of the spot where Sprenger stood gains a couple of clues. 1d3+2 cigarette ends are easily found. No matches though. Must've used a lighter. Eagle eyed investigators see with a **SPOT HIDDEN** check a partial boot print. Size 11s by the looks of it. Tracks are easily lost in the bushes. Taking a plaster cast of the imprint is difficult so a **DEXx4** check must be succeeded.

Lab tests on these reveal the brand of cigarette is the same as those found in Miriama Spence's grave. Saliva and DNA samples extracted from the cigarette ends also match. Patience and persistence coupled with a **LIBRARY USE** check reveals the partial boot print to belong to a common domestic hiking boot.

1d3+1 days later

To get involved with this, a relevant investigating character really needs to be working late one evening. A failed **POWx1** roll ensures this when Captain Dreyfuss orders the character to catch up on paperwork. Or, due to the circumstance of the case the relevant player gets a phone call at home from the late shift. It's about 11.45pm when a woman and two men enter LRPD HQ and ask for assistance. Role play the interrogation for effect. Note: Bruce and Moses will hold information back, particularly that of firing a gun when they account for their actions. **PSYCHOLOGY** checks enable detectives to sense the deception. Laura-Lee, will, however openly say Moses fired a gun. Oops, sorry Moses.

All in all, this is what can be learnt: This is Laura-Lee Wilkinson, owner of a local occult shop. She had just locked up and was on her way to her car in a nearby car park when Sprenger rushed her from behind and pulled her, kicking and screaming, into an alleyway. The two men were near by, and witnessed the event. They hurried to the scene and saw Sprenger struggling with Laura-Lee. Moses shouted a warning and pulled a .38 auto and fired into a dumpster, while Bruce picked up a broken chair leg before running to her aid. By this time Sprenger had nearly bundled her into his black toyota van, then WHACK, Bruce smacks Sprenger in the head with his chair leg. Moses then began to run up too. That's when Sprenger dropped Laura-Lee

and jumped into his van, closing the door before pulling away bleeding from a gash in his temple. Moses then fired again at the fleeing van puncturing the rear door. That's when they brought her here.

Other Info.

- Another physical description of Sprenger is given. White, Late 30s early 40s, 5' 10", Well built, Receding brown hair, Full beard and moustache. He was also wearing a shabby rain coat, and spoke with an accent -possibly German. The lead investigator has his **LUCK** chance to learn that the attacker has a scar bridging his nose. If the characters have a photo of Sprenger, then he will be positively identified.
- Fortunately, Bruce had the presence of mind to take note of the licence plate number as he sped away. 9WBC212. Following this up, it appears that the van is registered to Anthony R. Williams of 214 East Street, Maumelle (a few miles north-west of Little Rock). Paying Anthony a visit, he will deny owning the van, but will confirm selling it about two years ago to some guy for 300 bucks cash. Digging out the record of sale we find the name that Sprenger gave is Heinrich Kepler who lives at a location which turns out to be a tenement building in Little Rock run by a coke dealing slum lord. Checking it out is a dead end. Nobody remembers anything. It's really doubtful that Sprenger was really ever here anyway. If the players don't come to the conclusion, a **half IDEA** check suggests that the probability of the name being false is high. Running Kepler through FBI / Police databases is fruitless. A phone book search comes back with zero Keplers in Little Rock. A wider search can uncover 1d4+1 Keplers outside Little Rock - all of whom check out. None of them are the guy we're looking for. An All Points Bulletin can be put out on the van. See later.
- Firing guns in the street is pretty much illegal without good reason, and Moses can be cautioned on this event. Confiscating his weapon and forensically checking it has these results. The gun is clean. It is not listed as having been used in any prior robberies or murders. It is registered to Moses Wolfe, and he does have a licence for it. Both men also are free from police records, as is Laura-lee.

Going to the crime scene, the players can find assorted clues to help in their investigation. In the alleyway they can find the first bullet (in the dumpster) and both casings from Wolfe's gun. Further up the alley they find a blood stained chair leg. (DNA and blood typing prove the assailant to be our killer.) Thorough investigation of the scene turns up some black paint scrapings on a wall. Could be from a black van. Checking all the CCTV footage from Laura-Lee's shop to the alleyway takes time and shows Laura-Lee as she makes her way to her car. In pursuit of her is our man, Sprenger, although only a **LUCK** roll will have him showing his face, otherwise it's always be obscured in some way. Checking her car is fruitless. It has nothing to provide, and nor will her place of work and residence, although her shop does get set fire too later in the week. I wonder who?

Sooner or later

Within a day or two of his failed attempt at abducting Laura-Lee, Sprenger is at it again. This time with success on his side. Prowling around town late one night he spots a potential victim What's she doing? It's not natural to be lurking in a graveyard at close to midnight. Sprenger stops and watches, finally coming to the conclusion that she's either communing with the dead, or trying to raise them. With relative ease, his latest victim is overpowered and bundled into his van and secured.

37 hours later she is reported missing by her parent. Lara lives with her mother. Again, for reasons of the plot the call is put though to a relevant investigating character. This victim is Lara Crosby, a 17 year old female. She was last seen about 10 pm 37 hours ago by her mother (Carol) as Lara was heading out. She often "haunted" grave yards at night, especially the old one at Saint Andrew's Church, because there's plenty of nooks and crannies and it's creepy at night. Investigating the new abduction, investigators learn that Lara was a very strange and unusual person. Interestingly, she was not a witch or had any real interest in the occult.

Speaking to Carol, investigators find that Lara is a single child, has no real friends, and has been into death ever since she was five when she brought a dead cat home and hid it until it began to stink out the house. A battery of child psychologists couldn't help. A search of her room is largely unsurprising. It's painted solidly black, with a black carpet, and has black lace draped in imitation of spider webs. The air is musty and the room is tidy. A few sickly wilting plants sit on shelves, and are meticulously cared for so that they are permanently on this side of death. A collection of books and photo albums and VHS tapes are stacked on other shelves between two animal skulls; their content dealing with death. Books of medical procedures, photos of road-kill, gravestones, funerals. Hand-written prose is inserted into the albums - all dark, twisted, morbid and lurid. There are also hand-drawn charcoal sketches of emaciated corpses, the Grim Reaper, body part cross-sections, and the like.

Sitting on a desk is a computer with audio/video software installed. Booting it up, the players see the wallpaper is of a graveyard scene at night. Obviously manipulated to give it a misty appearance with a full reddish moon. **IDEA** rolls can identify the cemetery as St. Andrew's - about a mile away. On the hard drive players find assorted MPEG files of graveyards at night in varying states of manipulation; and WAV files of Lara reciting her poetry. The computer also has internet access and some of her favourite places include sites that contain pictures of death, decay, and accident victims. There's no email to read. The recycle bin is full and has flies buzzing round it - unwanted edited footage. In the desktop tray players find with a **SPOT HIDDEN** check a little downloaded application called Death Clock. The timer is running. 120 hours, 43 minutes and dropping. A search through her belongings uncovers a couple of syringes and bottles of insulin. There's nothing more of interest, except that there is no camcorder to be found. Carol can confirm Lara took the camera when she last saw her.

A search of the St. Andrew's cemetery requires **SPOT HIDDEN** and **TRACK** rolls. The first enables sharp eyed characters to find, glinting at the base of a tombstone, a dolphin shaped hair clasp with a few strands of black hair. Carol can identify it as a present she gave a year or so ago. DNA testing and comparison with hair taken from a brush in Lara's bedroom match. There are also scuff and drag marks where it appears an assault took place. Boot imprints can be taken and they similarly match the one taken earlier. They head towards the main gate, then stop. Another **SPOT HIDDEN** check finds a tyre tread imprint in some mud which can be lifted. No camera can be found.

An APB on Sprenger's Van

Once the players put out the description of Sprenger's van, their wait is not long. Three days later a patrol car spots it in Sweet Home (just outside Little Rock to the South East). It's parked in a Wal-Mart car park. Don't worry, Sprenger hasn't abandoned it. He's off doing something or other and won't be back for some time - time enough to tow the van away and have it impounded for a forensic search, although it'll probably be a better idea to set up an observation post and wait for Sprenger, he'll be a no show for at least four hours. Sitting it out the players can then follow him to his hide out or arrest him there and then.

A cursory search of the van right now requires a **PICKLOCK** check to get inside. On the exterior, players find scratches as though it was scraped along a wall. One of the rear doors has a puncture - could be a bullet hole. The driver compartment is littered with trash, and placed on the floor is a bag containing duct tape, canned food, Marlboro lights cigarettes, and other stuff. The ashtray is full with cigarette stubs. The storage compartment is grimy, and has been modified so that a person could be securely manacled as the handcuffs attest. Dumped in a pile in the corner, the players find lengths of rope, cable ties, some duct tape rolls that are nearly finished, some oily rags, and a few small cloth sacks. An **IDEA** roll suggests that they could fit over the head. Assorted hair strands can be found inside. A tool box and also be found. A more extensive search recovers a bullet that has lodged in the foam padding of the drivers seat. The use of luminol or some other reactant shows blood smears. Sprenger's fingerprints can be found everywhere, as can the prints from his victims.

Interviewing Staff in the store, one of the checkout ladies can ID Sprenger from a picture, or description and can confirm that he bought a carton of 300 cigarettes, a couple of rolls of duct tape, a can of lighter fluid,

some canned food, and some other stuff but she can't be sure what it was. He paid with cash. That was about half an hour ago. CCTV shows Sprenger clearly.

Towing his van

Eventually Sprenger comes back. He'll obviously notice his van missing. As he decides what to do, he conveniently overhears two people talking: "Yeah, the cops were here and took it away". Now Sprenger knows they're on to him for sure. Time to pack up and leave. He attacks a victim of opportunity and forces her to drive out of Sweet Home, onto highway 65, out to mile marker six, before kicking her out to thumb a lift home. He then makes his way to his base of operations - a disused steel works, to burn any evidence there, including Lara. May God have mercy on her soul. He then heads to wherever.

A detailed forensics sweep of Sprenger's van recovers blood smears, prints (from Sprenger and his victims), and the bullet. Analysis of dirt and mud collected from the van comes back indeterminate. An unusually high concentration of steel particulates and shavings are embedded within the tyre tread, which suggests that the van has passed through a place, probably on more than one occasion, which sees a lot of steel usage. An entomologist can identify dead bugs collected from the windshield air intake, and other places. After a while he can identify the locality that they came from. The best he can say with certainty is the country side, most probably to the south. So where in the countryside sees a lot of steel usage? Up-to-date trade directories offer no clue. A good map of the area might, if it's old enough (**LUCK** roll) show the location of the old Macfarlane steel works. Failing this an **INTx2** check might allow local characters to remember it, if they've lived here long enough.

The car-jacking victim manages to flag down a lift and is taken back to Sweet Home to report the robbery. As the investigation takes shape there, she describes Sprenger. The lead player of the investigating team has his/her **LUCK** chance to be informed of what she has to say if APBs are posted on Sprenger. The fact that she was forced to drive in a particular direction and kicked out should tell the players something. Why drive that way? Why kick her out at that point? Why let her live?? Concentrating on that location and looking at maps the players can notice that it's pretty desolate out there. Not much there except for the old Macfarlane steelworks that shut down almost 15 years ago.

Following Sprenger

In the hopes of discovering where Sprenger is operating from, the players may opt to trail him. In order to remain unnoticed the driver requires an **INTx3** check. Failure results in Sprenger having a 50% chance in spotting his pursuers. He receives a +25 bonus if they are in a standard police car or similarly marked vehicle. Remaining oblivious, Sprenger leads the players southbound on highway 65 to mile marker 7 before turning off towards the old Macfarlane Steel works.

Spotting his tail, Sprenger checks his speed and slows down regardless, while keeping an eye on the wing mirror. He'll attempt to wave the players past. This is his test, if the players don't pass by, he'll rightly suspect that they are tailing him. To further this assumption he'll indicate and pull to the side of the road and stop. If the players similarly pull to a stop behind Sprenger, he'll know for sure they're on to him. Time to make a decision: Give up or gun the engine. With an open road in front of him, Sprenger chooses to flee. He floors the accelerator and screeches away, but not before the players get out to talk to him. For reasons known only to him, he heads for the Macfarlane Steel works. Wouldn't it be best to zip on by and head for the next town? Maybe he feels safe there. Maybe he's got a plan...

The chase scene

Sprenger does his best to evade capture, but if the players are able to keep pace, he'll try to disable their vehicle by forcing them into a ditch, telephone pole or whatever. It's up to the players whether they try similar tactics or just open fire. If for any reason Sprenger is cornered and there's no way out for him - he'll

simply surrender. He's not stupid. He won't fight to the death even though he'll begin to regenerate after death.

The effects of what happens in the chase is left to the keeper. **DRIVE** rolls with **MODIFICATIONS** must surely be had. Depending on the desired effect, damage can vary from dents and scrapes, to broken tail lights, or ripped-off bumpers. Anybody who fails their drive roll begins to lose control of their vehicle (a fumbled roll involves an automatic crash or effect). A secondary drive check at half chance (due to the speed involved) recovers control, otherwise something like this occurs: Stalling the engine, Skidding off the road, Spinning out of control, a tyre bursting. Use your judgement. Damage to players is also left to the keeper. If the chase is still on going after 15 minutes, Sprenger heads for the Macfarlane Steel works. He speeds through the derelict buildings, heading for the main plant, where he hopes to take Lara hostage.

Successfully tailing Sprenger without being noticed, he leads the players directly to the steel works. He drives into the main foundry, wheels his van round, gets out, then heads through some doors, down some stairs to a sub-level of storage rooms to the torture chamber to continue extracting a confession from Lara. Sprenger should have a **LISTEN** check to hear the characters approach, if applicable.

It has to end somewhere

However the characters come to be here, they soon make their way to the torture room where Sprenger is rousing Lara from unconsciousness or frantically unshackling the last manacle to use her as a shield. She is dirty, extensively bruised and mindless. She stares blankly at him, barely aware that she has visitors. She drools.

The players should notice with a **SPOT HIDDEN** check that the door to the makeshift prison is a thick security door, with a heavy duty padlock attached. The padlock is a key turn type, not a snap lock. The padlock is in Sprenger's possession. Beyond is a dank windowless storeroom measuring roughly 20 feet by 20 feet. Ample light is radiated from a single light bulb, powered by a car battery.

They see a tray containing an array of surgical looking implements; a couple of wooden chairs, complete with restraining straps. A couple of car batteries lie about and are attached to probes which Sprenger uses for electrocution purposes. Hanging from the high ceiling pipes are a couple of chains and handcuffs, and heavy duty canvas sacks large enough to hold a body. In the corner is a large tank of grimy water. Tool boxes of assorted rusty tools sit on shelves, as do rolls of tape, and wire. A small wire cage contains some mice and a bowl of dog food. Boxes of other odds and ends, which may or may not be of use to Sprenger are also at hand.

Sprenger will make sure he keeps the players at bay by threatening the life of Lara. Players should lose sanity if Sprenger kills Lara. 1d4+1 sounds good. (Anybody who loses 5 and goes insane for a while should pick up a psychosis of the event. For the rest of his/her life he/she will wonder if something else could've been done to prevent Lara's death. Psychotherapy may also be needed). Sprenger jabs a rusty spike to her throat angled upwards to penetrate the head. He orders the players to remove the clips from their guns and eject any remaining shells, and to throw their guns over there, and to move deeper into the room, to some pipes and handcuff themselves together. If they say they don't have cuffs, he'll motion to some handy plastic cable ties. Sprenger receives a **PSYCHOLOGY** check to realise if the players are lying or holding something back. You might want to give him a **SPOT HIDDEN** also to see those other concealed weapons.

Once Sprenger is sure the situation is in his favour he'll drag Lara to the door, drops her then darts out the door, which he closes and padlocks shut. By the time the players free themselves and from the room Sprenger'll be long gone. But before he goes he has just enough time to slash the tyres of the other vehicles.

Ignatius Sprenger

STR	CON	SIZ	INT	POW	DEX	MOVE	HITS
16	11	13	17	14	14	8	12

WEAPON	ATTK %	DAMAGE	Skills: Drive 70%, First Aid 80%, Library Use 80%, Occult 90%, R/W English 100%, R/W Latin 100%, Psychology 75%
Fist	70	1d3+1d6db	
Grapple	85	<i>varies</i>	

Equipment: Watch, Gospel, Crucifix, \$43.87, Black Toyota van (keys), Extensive witch Torture Kit (some store bought, some home-made)

Arresting Sprenger / Interrogation

Approaching Sprenger in the Wal-mart car park with the intent of arresting him is easy. When faced with a guy holding a gun, he simply gives up. Why give the players the satisfaction of a chase or a shooting. Players should remember Sprenger has a victim holed up somewhere, and only remarkable detective work will find her. Sprenger does not have a lawyer so one must be appointed by the court. I hope somebody remembered to read him his Rights, otherwise he's free to walk; and once free he skips town as soon as possible. If the opportunity for Sprenger to escape presents itself he'll take it, whether its jumping out a window when he's left momentarily alone, or removing the hinges from the door.

Whenever Sprenger is brought in for questioning the process will be long. Throughout the interview, he remains stoic. Cold. Silent. Focused. He speaks only when he wants to, and then it'll be to give his name and to verify his victims; those being the ones found at Pinnacle Mountain State Park. He'll assert the fact that he's "brought salvation" (killed) to those witches - while staying silent about the others and Lara Crosby. After 1d3+6 hours of intense interrogation he'll confess to where the others are; there's a couple in Burns Park, and Rebsamen Park, the rest are at Lake Maumelle somewhere.

Sprenger does not rant or rave, or brag about why he's doing it, if asked, but he does explain that he's a servant of God, dispensing justice to those who have strayed. Those witches who blaspheme and consort with Evil must be punished in accordance with EXODUS, 22:18 of the Holy Bible (Thou shall not suffer a witch to live). As players listen to him they receive a **PSYCHOLOGY** check. Success allows characters to believe what he's saying, and to know that he derived no sexual pleasure from his actions, and nor did he gain any real satisfaction from it other than the satisfaction in knowing that Devil worshipers had been brought to justice in the eyes of God, and for that he believes himself to be innocent - no matter what others say. The law of man is not greater than the word of God.

When questioned about Lara, Sprenger remains silent, save for: "The Inquisition is upon her. She is being questioned" Just what he means by that, Sprenger does not say, although he does look at his watch. Does Sprenger want to know what time it is or does Lara have 20 minutes to live? He still won't say where she is.

If alternate ways of persuading Sprenger are used (extended beatings and torture of the calibre he inflicts), Sprenger will eventually break and will answer anything put to him, even to the location of Lara. Pushing him further, Sprenger may even say that he is immortal and was born in 1656 and has been blessed by God to carry out his mission to eradicate the world of witches. However the interrogation plays out is left to the keeper to decide upon.

Forensically testing Sprenger's clothing and shoes enables the players to find some clues. The boot prints match any plaster casts taken at other crime scenes. In the boot soles are fragments of steel shavings. Metallurgical analysis match the fragments from the van's tread. Sprenger has a pack of Marlboro lights cigarettes in his pocket. DNA samples match samples taken from elsewhere. A few stray hairs adhering to Sprenger's clothing matches Lara's hair.

The Scenario's Conclusion

Completion of this scenario really comes about with the rescue of Lara Crosby. Whether Sprenger is killed, imprisoned for life with no chance of parole, is executed after 14 years on death row, or is committed to a psychiatric hospital for the criminally insane is academic. He'll eventually escape or come back to life to carry on with his quest. As for the players; well that's another case solved. Time for the next one.... Any sanity rewards are left to the keeper.

Wanted Bulletin



SPECIAL BULLETIN ILLINIOS STATE POLICE DEPARTMENT



\$35,000 REWARD

Case Number: I45-2574-9-A

Description

Name:	Unknown
Sex:	Male
Age:	Early to mid 40s.
Race:	Caucasian
Height:	5' 10"
Weight:	250lbs
Eyes:	Brown, dull & lifeless
Hair:	Receding brown hair with grey flecks Full beard and moustache
Distinguishing Features:	Scar bridging ridge of nose between eyes. Strong German Accent

Wanted For

The Illinois Bureau of Crime are looking for this man in connection with the abduction, brutal torture, and murder of several women. The murders stopped shortly after his image was displayed on the TV and newspapers. It is believed that he may have moved on.

Contact information

For further information, or if you have information, contact M/Sgt Benjamin Harris at **312-555-3543 (office)**, or after hours at **312-555-2695 (mobile)**, or **E-Mail: info@isp.state.il.us**