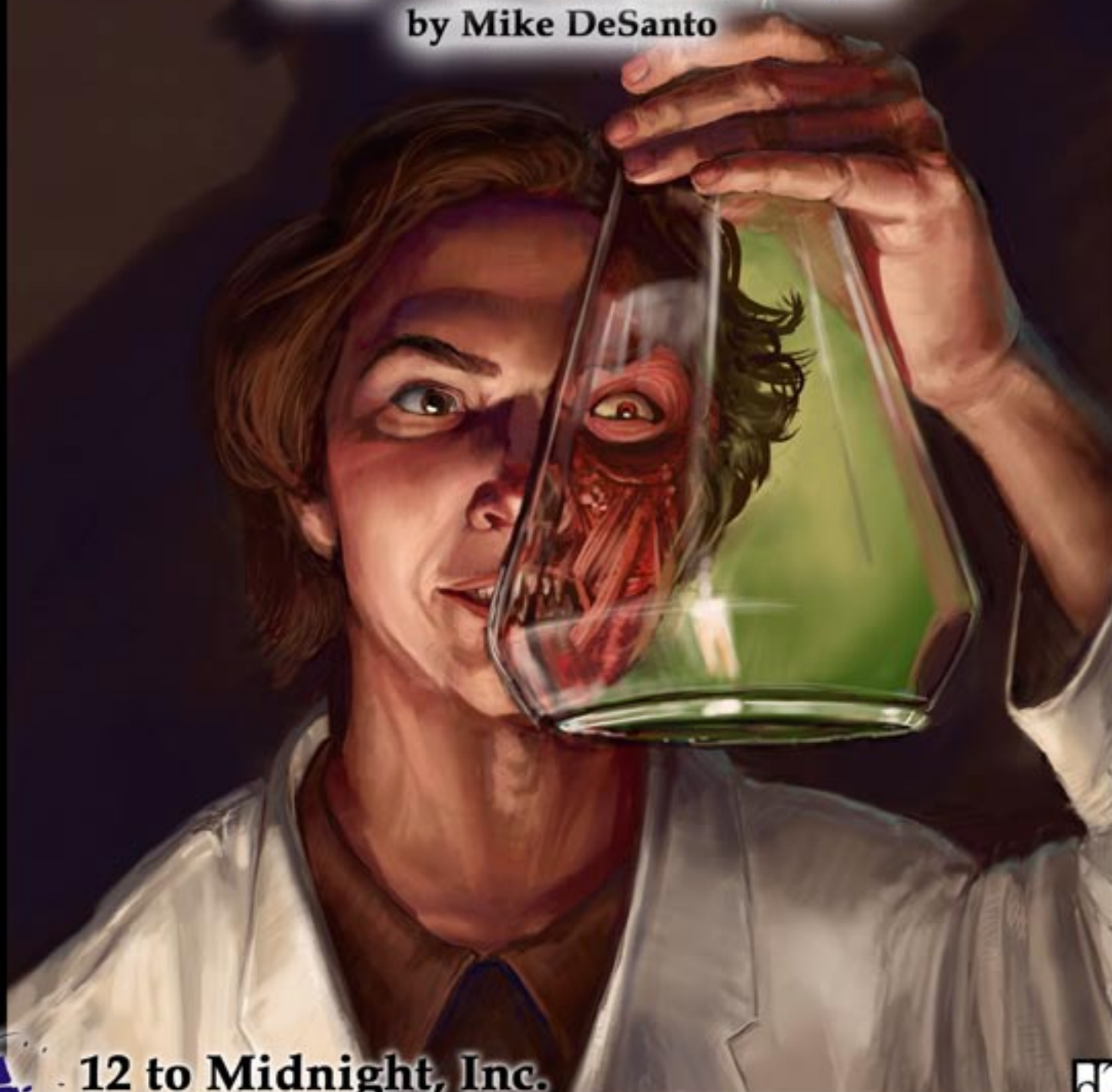


Requires the d20 Modern™ Roleplaying Game, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

# The Beast Within

by Mike DeSanto



**12 to Midnight, Inc.**

*tell yourself it's just a game*

# The Beast Within: A Pinebox Tale

By Mike DeSanto

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# Author Introduction

A long time ago, 12 to Midnight posted an open call for authors. I had a few modest writing credits, and I decided to submit a proposal for a horror adventure. The only question was: What should it be about?

I thought back to horror stories and adventures that I had enjoyed in the past. I wanted an adventure that was horror, not terror. Terror is fear of death and dismemberment at the hands of some terrible thing. Horror is the fear of a fate worse than death.

My most memorable experiences with horror games were at conventions while I was in college. In one memorable game, the heroes were all captured and their brains transplanted into flesh golems. The mad scientist promised to restore us to our own bodies if we defeated his rival. We knew he would betray us, and he did, but we had a blast playing monsters.

The golem adventure gave me the idea to capture and horribly mutate the heroes. The dynamic of monsters as heroes has always interested me, and being a monster gives low-level characters a refreshing power boost.

Pondering heroic monsters led me to think about Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*. I like the theme of an immoral scientist creating a moral creature, and mad scientists are always fun, but just what is the scientist doing that will create monsters from normal characters?

Like Mary Shelley, I looked to the bogeyman of the times. When Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*, science was expanding in new directions and was often confused with witchcraft and alchemy. Today, genetic engineering fills the roll of scientific bogeyman.

Putting all of those ideas together produced a plot: a mad scientist uses genetic engineer-

ing to turn the heroes into monsters, and they have to find some way to reverse the effect.

I hope your players enjoy being monsters for a day.

## A Note on the Psychological Illness Table

To add tension to the game, the mutated characters slowly go mad. The descriptions of these illnesses are extreme, and do not represent the effects of these illnesses in real life. Please treat them as fictional descriptions of real diseases, because that is all that they are.

### About the Author

Mike DeSanto was born in the wilds of Northwestern Pennsylvania, where he would have lived a life untroubled by roleplaying games if he had not been introduced to the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* *Dungeon Master's Guide* at a summer camp in 1981. That slippery slope led to an assortment of other roleplaying games, science fiction literature, computer programming, and a degree in electrical engineering.

Mike now lives in the suburbs of Philadelphia with his wife and son. He has written for Ronin Arts and Microtactix Games, and he has scribbled a column on *RPG.net*, titled "Campaigning at the Con." Most of his time today is spent writing games for his three-year-old son, who does not seem to mind playtesting.

### About the Interior Artist

Kim Feigenbaum enjoys drawing monsters, demons, and other equally scary things. In her spare time, she sleeps and occasionally ventures outside. She currently works as a freelance illustrator and fine artist.

# Section 0: GM Preparation

## 0.1: Introduction

An auto accident leads to a murder investigation. Follow the clues and watch your step, you are not the only hunters in Pinebox. Once you find the killer, will he also find you? Can you escape with both the evidence and your life?

## 0.2: Levels

*The Beast Within* is an adventure for four to six first-level characters. Combat is important, so make sure there are a few Strong or Tough heroes in the party.

## 0.3: Play Notes

This adventure takes place in Pinebox, Texas. You may use it as a stand-alone adventure or as part of a continuing Pinebox campaign. *The Beast Within* is a good way to introduce a party to the Pinebox setting.

*The Beast Within* is a horror adventure in the spirit of *Frankenstein*. The villain is a mad scientist who seeks to experiment on the heroes, turning them into monsters in the process. Some players may not respond well to having their characters horribly mutated, especially if they are not expecting a horror adventure. Know your players and give them fair warning.

This adventure presumes that the heroes are humans without magical or telepathic abilities. You may need to make modifications to accommodate characters with such abilities, or (ideally) avoid them altogether. Law-enforcement or military backgrounds are helpful but not required.

## 0.4: GM Background

### 0.4a: The History of Dr. Philip Perry (The Mad Scientist)

Dr. Philip Perry was a brilliant doctor and geneticist. He was one of many scientists with the desire to use genetic engineering to cure incurable diseases and save lives.

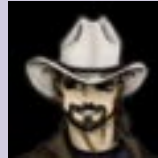
Dr. Perry, with venture capital from Sweet Heart Investments, started MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc. He placed his company a few miles north of

Pinebox, Texas, a quiet area with plenty of farmland and access to East Texas University (ETU). He used techniques that he considered elementary, but that other geneticists considered groundbreaking, to create soybeans that produced advanced drugs. He then licensed these strains (sterilizing the seeds before sale) to pharmaceutical companies.

Three years ago, Sweet Heart convinced Dr. Perry to take on an ambitious project: create a treatment to increase patients' odds of surviving dangerous medical treatments. He decided to identify the genes that make a person "tough" and modify them to make the patient more likely to survive any wound or illness.

In the interest of protecting their investment, Sweet Heart sent several specialists, including their own security chief, Jack Thorne, to help manage MasterGene. The company even arranged for construction crews to build new basement levels for secure research and testing—away from industrial

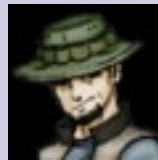
### Your 12 to Midnight Guide



#### Jackson Green

Jackson believes in the paranormal and has extensively investigated hauntings and ghostly activities.

*"Wait a sec, guys. I just want to check the recorder I left in Lance's room last night."*



#### Lance Carson

Lance is a skeptic, but open to the possibility of a world beyond the one we see.

*"We're facing murder charges, and you guys are worried about pizza?"*



#### Professor Glen Maclanahan

The professor is an expert researcher and investigator.

*"I carry a prism around with me for ten years, and the one time I need it it's in the truck!"*



## Antisocial Personality Disorder

Antisocial personality disorder is best described as a complete lack of conscience. Symptoms include habitual lying, lack of empathy, lack of remorse when harming others, and refusal to follow rules or recognize authority. In order for a patient to receive a diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder, these traits must appear before the age of 15 and must continue until after the age of 18.

Those with this disorder tend to destroy everything around them in order to achieve their own selfish goals. Because they lack empathy, the company of other people does not stimulate them. Consequently, they must find other sources of stimulation. Some seek physical stimulation, becoming murderers, rapists, and drug users. Others seek money, power, or fame.

Affected individuals often seem very nice, even charming. They lie without hesitation, however, and intentionally manipulate the emotions of others to achieve their goals.

Dr. Perry could not be diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder because of his age, but he shows all of the symptoms. He is charming, focused, and ruthless.

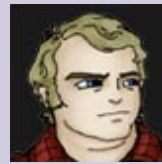
spies. MasterGene was already a growing company, so the extra construction blended right in. Some locals grumbled when they learned that all the workers were from out of state, but Dr. Perry smoothed things over by hiring Pinebox workers to clear dozens of acres of new land to build greenhouses and crop tents. (Crop tents are very large, airtight, plastic tents that prevent genetically engineered crops from cross-pollinating each other or regular crops.)

Dr. Perry's work went well. His first achievement was the most amazing: the rejuvenator virus, a virus that makes a specific genetic change in every cell of an animal's body. He then worked to find the specific genes that govern the physical potential of the average human. This also went well, but testing was difficult. Animal testing proved useless because of subtle differences between human and animal DNA. He could only conduct human tests using embryonic stem cells.

Time passed and progress ground to a halt. Sweet Heart expressed dissatisfaction and threatened to cut off funding for MasterGene. Stress and overwork made Dr. Perry careless and he broke a test tube, infecting himself with a test virus. The next day, he stayed home sick as the virus rewrote his genetic code. Over the next few weeks, he gained 30 pounds, all muscle. He tested his reflexes and found a reac-

tion speed increase of 45 percent. Unfortunately, his brain chemistry subtly changed as well, giving him a mental illness called antisocial personality disorder.

Dr. Perry presented his findings to Sweet Heart, who agreed to continue funding MasterGene. Soon he began illegally testing on other human subjects. At first he sent Thorne, the Sweet Heart security chief, to snatch homeless people from the streets of Houston, but Thorne soon found a better way. He contacted an immigrant-smuggling gang called the Sietes Rojos to provide healthy test subjects. Thorne told the Sietes Rojos that the immigrants would work in MasterGene's fields.



## The Sietes Rojos (Red Sevens)

The Sietes Rojos were originally a small gang of smugglers who transported drugs and illegal immigrants through the desert into Texas and New Mexico. They were just another gang lost among the hundreds of criminal gangs operating along the border between the United States and Mexico.

That all changed when a man named Felix Gonzales hired them to transport a fragment of stone with some ancient Mayan carvings. Gonzales was impressed by their professionalism and desert-survival skills, and they have worked exclusively for him ever since. The Sietes Rojos have transported animals, archaeological artifacts, rare books, and people.

Felix Gonzales is a thief and smuggler specializing in acquiring and transporting exotic items for wealthy clients. Sweet Heart Investments is just one of Gonzales's contacts. Others include occult researchers, private art collectors, and various cults. Gonzales is professional and ruthless. No one who works for him knows anything about him.

The leader of the Sietes Rojos is a man named Tico Santiago. Santiago is an American citizen, born in the United States to an illegal-immigrant mother. After finishing high school, he enlisted in the army. During his service he received training in desert warfare and learned to survive and evade detection in harsh environments.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) apprehended his mother when he was serving in the army. They quickly deported her, and Santiago deserted his unit to join her in Mexico. With no prospects for work, Santiago found five other unemployed young men and passed his training on to them.

These original six men form the core of the Sietes Rojos. The original members work exclusively for Gonzales now, using new members with less training for the work of transporting immigrants.

# The Beast Within

With the influx of test subjects, Dr. Perry hired a contractor to seal off the lower levels of the MasterGene headquarters, leaving only one hidden entrance. These levels he remodeled as a modern-day chamber of horrors, equipping them with scientific equipment, armed guards, and cells to hold test subjects.

Dr. Perry no longer wanted to help patients survive dangerous medical procedures; he wanted to make humans into something new and better. First he tested his original virus, but it unbalanced the subjects' brain chemistry, causing permanent insanity. Ironically, he failed to recognize this insanity in himself. He next experimented with combining human and animal DNA to give humans superior animal traits. Most of the test subjects died, though a few took on the desired characteristics. Those who survived went insane through either unbalanced brain chemistry or horror and isolation.

Finally, having isolated the genes for physical ability, he began trying to perfect them. He returned to performing calculated genetic changes to increase strength, speed, and endurance.

## 0.4b: Enter Joe Landis (The Intern)

As Dr. Perry's research entered its final phase, Joe Landis, an East Texas University student, started work as an intern in the IT department of MasterGene. Landis was bright, curious, and considered himself a hacker. When he discovered a private network in Dr. Perry's office, he could not resist hacking in.

It took Landis three weeks to gain access to the server and another six weeks to defeat the multiple layers of security. Once he accessed the data, he learned MasterGene's horrible secret: Dr. Perry was illegally experimenting on humans and coldly cataloging their horrible deaths.

Landis feared taking stolen information to the police. He needed something solid and legally obtained to implicate Perry. He searched Perry's e-mail and found an appointment at three o'clock the next Thursday morning. He decided to follow Perry and find out exactly what was going on.

## 0.4c: The Murder

Joe Landis hid outside the MasterGene complex, waiting for Dr. Perry to leave. Finally, two white vans left the complex at two o'clock in the morning. Landis disconnected the headlight on his motorcycle and followed them south through Pinebox to a logging road just north of the Golan County line.

Landis parked along US Highway 96, a hundred yards from the logging road. He snuck through the woods with his camera to a clearing where he found the MasterGene vehicles parked alongside a dirty, brown van. He watched as a scruffy-looking man turned about a dozen frightened-looking Hispanic people over to Dr. Perry and Security Chief Jack Thorne. Landis took several pictures of the transfer.

When all of the immigrants were packed into one of the MasterGene vans, Dr. Perry turned to speak to the coyote. Landis crept closer to take one last picture, giving himself away with the click of his shutter. Dr. Perry leapt to the second MasterGene van, threw the back doors open, pointed into the woods near Landis, and ordered, "Kill!"



# The Beast Within

Two creatures bolted from the van and into the foliage; beasts with human faces contorted by mutation and madness. They sped into the brush and caught Landis in seconds. His screams lasted for nearly a minute, punctuated by the thudding of massive fists and the crunching of bones in pointed teeth. The coyote, Gary Sheets, fled into the woods long before the screaming stopped. Fortunately for him, Dr. Perry and his creatures were too preoccupied to see him leave.

Eventually, the creatures dragged Landis's lifeless body back into the clearing. Thorne quickly devised a plan to cover up the murder. He called Sergeant Don Cavanaugh, a county sheriff's deputy on MasterGene's payroll, and told him he would find a crashed van on US Highway 96, south of Pinebox, and that the crash must be ruled an accident. He then placed Landis' body in the coyote's beat-up van, started the engine, pointed the vehicle down the logging road toward the highway, and dropped Landis' foot on the accelerator.

The van sped down the road, held on track by deep ruts. The creatures, attracted by the lights and movement, chased through the fog after the van. A few moments later, Thorne and Perry heard the screeching of tires on the highway and a loud crash. Against all probability, the van had struck another car.

Thorne quickly activated the electronic collars on the creatures to recall them. He loaded them into their van and both vehicles fled the scene. Passing the crash, they saw the passengers of the passing car were unhurt. Thorne called Cavanaugh

again and told him to get complete information on the party, and to hold them if possible. Thorne and Perry returned to MasterGene and went about their business.

Sheets ran north until he reached Indian Mound Road. The terrifying escape had given him time to decide that he should hide for a while to let things cool down. Sheets followed the railroad tracks to Pinebox and went to the trailer where his sister and her husband (Robin and Alex Potts) live. He arrived between five and six o'clock in the morning.

Robin Potts answered the door when he knocked. Sheets had barely started to explain what happened when his brother-in-law appeared and ordered him to leave. The argument was disruptive enough to wake neighborhood snoop Edna Nunn, who witnessed the scene but did not intervene.

After a few minutes, Robin calmed her husband down and convinced him to go inside while she talked to her brother. She gave Sheets directions to a hunting cabin near Kestrell Lake and slipped him the key. The nine miles made for a long walk.

Luckily for Sheets, an angler, Vern Justice, was headed to Lake Greystone for a relaxing morning fishing. At seven thirty that morning, he found Sheets walking along the road and offered him a ride. Sheets accepted, making up a story about checking out good hunting spots. By eight o'clock in the morning he arrived at the cabin, frightened and exhausted.

Justice spent the morning fishing and returned to town around lunchtime. Everyone in town was talking about Landis's death, and when Justice heard, he assumed

that the student was murdered and that Sheets, the man to whom he had given a lift, was the murderer.

## Immigrant Smuggling in the US



A coyote is a person who smuggles immigrants from Mexico into the United States. They use many different methods, but the procedures are always similar.

1) The immigrant comes to a border town and contacts the coyote. Finding a coyote is easy, if you are a prospective customer. Smuggling is a lucrative business. Some coyotes work for themselves, others work for criminal gangs who control the area where the coyotes operate. Some even advertise.

2) The prospective immigrant pays an exorbitant sum, generally thousands of dollars, to be taken across the border.

3) The immigrant meets the coyote at a given place and time, and the coyote and his customers attempt to cross. Some coyotes, like Gary Sheets, simply cram as many people as they can into the back of a van and take their chances driving across the border. Others use shipping containers. Others cross the border on foot or through tunnels and walk through the desert for days, meeting a contact on the US side.

Immigrants caught by the border patrol are deported. The coyote does *not* return their money. A prospective immigrant who wants to try again must pay again. A coyote caught by the border patrol faces federal charges of human trafficking and several years in prison. Human trafficking resulting in death carries a harsher sentence, up to and including the death penalty.

Once across the border, the immigrant must find a job in a country where it is illegal to hire him. The coyotes, or the gangs that back them, can often help with this, sending the immigrants to farms or businesses, some of which offer sweatshop conditions for very low pay. Such business owners could threaten to turn the immigrants in if they complain about the bad conditions.



## 0.5: Plot Synopsis

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This section is a walkthrough of one possible path through *The Beast Within*. It should give you a feel for the flow of the adventure, but it is not a script for what should happen and when it should happen. Your players will probably deviate from this path. Let the players drive the game.

### 0.5a: The Accident

The heroes, for one reason or another, are driving south on US Highway 96 between two and three o'clock in the morning. The night is foggy and the headlights do not help much. Suddenly the driver sees a flash of sparks to the left and a large, brown shape rising out of the fog.

The driver wrenches the wheel and hits the brakes. The car slides. A jarring impact, the world spins around, and suddenly the heroes' vehicle is in the ditch facing the other way. The van that hit them seems to have skidded sideways into a tree. The headlights show that the van came down a logging road before reaching the highway.

As the group gets out of the car to survey the damage, they hear something crashing through the woods. Two hulking, bipedal figures just barely come into view. Before the party can react, they hear a beeping noise. The two shadowy forms howl bestially and retreat into the fog and tangled underbrush.

A quick examination reveals that the heroes' car received only minor body damage; however, it is solidly stuck in the ditch. While examining the van, the group finds the driver lying on the ground 10 feet from the vehicle. He appears to have been thrown out in the crash, and he is not moving.

Taking a closer look at the body, someone deduces that the crash had nothing to do with the van driver's death. The back of his head is smashed, his right arm is horribly mangled, and he has deep, jagged cuts on his neck and shoulders. Other cuts on his face from the crash show no sign of bleeding.

While someone calls 911, two white vans come down the logging road, blinding everyone with their headlights. They turn to the north and speed off toward Pinebox.

While waiting for the authorities, the characters decide to check out the logging road. Following the road, they find a small clearing littered with plastic soda bottles and food wrappers with labels written

in Spanish. The muddy clearing has tire tracks from several vehicles, and footprints from a large number of people. Just off the clearing, they find a patch of flattened underbrush. The ground is saturated with blood, bits of torn flesh, and a smashed 35 mm camera with no film.

As the party returns to the highway, a police car arrives. Sheriff's Deputy Sean Richards gets out and checks the van. He confirms the driver's death and recognizes him as Joe Landis. Deputy Richards is visibly upset over Landis's death, explaining that Landis's father, Ben, is a friend of his. The deputy takes each character aside, getting names and a statement. He also gives each a card with his contact information. An ambulance and a police van pull up as he finishes. A large, angry-looking officer climbs out of the van.

---

***Fuller suggests that they spend the next three days finding evidence to clear themselves.***

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The paramedics begin getting Landis ready for transport, and the newly arrived officer, Sergeant Don Cavanaugh, makes sure Deputy Richards has taken everyone's statements. Cavanaugh then arrests the entire party for reckless driving, driving too fast for conditions, and vehicular manslaughter. He handcuffs them, piles them into the van, and drives to the sheriff's department in Pinebox. There, deputies confiscate all of the team's personal items (including their cell phones), fingerprint them, and take mug shots. They then put the characters in a single holding cell and do not immediately allow them to make telephone calls.

At about eight o'clock in the morning, the shift changes in the cellblock. The new officer on duty apologizes to the party, lets each have one telephone call, and offers to provide a lawyer for anyone who does not have one. The group requests a court-appointed lawyer, and about an hour later Steven Fuller arrives. He listens to the party's story and heads to court. He returns that morning at eleven o'clock with a subpoena for them to be in court on Monday morning and an order for their release until that time.

Fuller suggests that they spend the next three days finding evidence to clear themselves. Apparently Deputy Richards thinks they are innocent, because

he gave Fuller a copy of the original accident report with a note of some places to start looking.

### **0.5b: Phase One—Investigation**

The party breaks into three groups. One group tries to track down Gary Sheets's sister, one group searches for rumors, and one group tries to learn more about Joe Landis.

#### **Investigation—The Sister**

Deputy Richards's notes say that the owner of the van, Gary Sheets, lived with his parents and sister in Pinebox when he was arrested four years ago. A quick look in the phone book finds nobody named Sheets.

---

### ***Edna Nunn, a nosy, elderly neighbor, walks over and talks to the group.***

---

Guessing that the sister might be married, the heroes go to the county courthouse. They spend a few hours searching records and find a wedding license with the names Robin Sheets and Alex Potts. Another search of the phone book shows that Alex Potts lives in the Indian Summer Trailer Park. They also find death certificates for Richard and Helen Sheets, dated about the same time that Gary Sheets disappeared three years ago. The coroner attributed the death of Richard and Helen Sheets to smoke inhalation during a house fire.

The group goes to the Potts's trailer around noon on Friday. Robin answers the door with a baby in her arms. When they ask about her brother, she looks frightened and refuses to talk to them.

Edna Nunn, a nosy, elderly neighbor, walks over and talks to the group. She says that Potts woke her up early that morning shouting at his no-good brother-in-law. The group returns to the Potts's trailer and talks to Robin again. When they threaten to find her husband at work and talk to him, she breaks down and tells them about their hunting cabin on Kestrell Lake.

#### **Investigation—The Victim**

The group investigating Landis heads for the ETU campus, where he lived in the dormitories. They arrive in the morning and get no answer at the door. Some students suggest that they go to the office of

the head of the computer department, Dr. Steven Glass. He is available and happy to talk to the party. He explains that he does not know how Landis could have gotten into trouble, between his schoolwork and his internship. When the group presses, he explains that Landis works half days at MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc., a few miles north of campus.

The group checks Landis's room again before leaving campus. His roommate, Steve Church, is just leaving when they arrive. He is stunned when they tell him about Landis's death and he gives them permission to look around the room.

A search through Landis's desk reveals copies of his employment papers from MasterGene. In a desk drawer they find a notebook labeled "Hack Journal—MasterGene." The journal describes the steps he took to hack into the computer system and what he found there. It describes events leading up to the encounter where Landis met his end.

The characters look up MasterGene on the Internet and find that the company employs less than 100 people. They also find an interview with Dr. Philip Perry where he describes the rejuvenator virus and predicts it will be available within 10 years.

The group goes to visit MasterGene. The campus is only a few miles north of Pinebox, but it feels like the middle of nowhere. From US Highway 96, the only clue it exists is a sign and a white-gravel road. The winding road passes a series of what look like white circus tents in the rolling hills of East Texas. After about a mile, the road ends at the only permanent building, a one-storey, glass-and-steel structure about 150 to 200 feet long.

One of the investigators pretends to be searching for a job and spends nearly an hour shuffling papers with an employee in human resources. On the way out, they meet Dr. Perry in the hallway. He is a young, fit, energetic man. He gives the group a tour of the grounds then leads them to his office. He is very charming, but does not give any useful information about Landis. He recalls Landis and says that he did a good job. He says he has no idea what Landis could have been working on and he claims ignorance of any secret computers.

A glass wall splits Perry's office into two halves: an ordinary office and a laboratory filled with strange and unfamiliar equipment. The only entrance to the lab is through a small, ominous-looking chamber.

## The Beast Within

Perry explains that the other half of the room is his personal lab. The small room between is an ultra-violet decontamination chamber, to ensure that no outside bacteria or viruses infect his work. He offers to show the group the lab, if they are willing to go through decontamination. During decontamination Perry releases knockout gas into the chamber and the heroes lose consciousness.

### **Investigation—The Rumors**

The group that searches for rumors finds lots of them; most are plainly false. The Pinebox rumor mill is going full speed and Landis's death is a large percentage of the mix. The heroes do not find anything useful before noon, when they stop in Mom's Diner for lunch. While eating they overhear a man talking to the waitress. "Ol' Vern gave a guy a lift this morning out by Kestrell Lake. He figures it was whoever killed that kid."

The group asks the waitress who Vern is, and she says they can probably find Vern Justice in the park next to City Hall. They rush over and find a man in his sixties excitedly telling his chess partner about the scruffy, disreputable man to whom he gave a lift. Justice gladly repeats his story, and gives the group directions to where he dropped the man off.

### **Investigation—The Cabin**

The party had planned to meet at Mom's Diner at four o'clock, but the group investigating Landis never arrives. After waiting for an hour, the group at the diner decides to go to Kestrell Lake and find Gary Sheets to find out what is going on.

It is just beginning to get dark when they reach the cabin. They approach and knock on the door. There is no response and the door is locked. One of the investigators finds a key hidden in a fake stone near the door. When they enter, a man with a gun leaps out, orders them to raise their hands, and fires into the air. The investigators raise their hands and talk to Sheets.

After a long conversation, the group manages to calm Sheets down. They all stand around the cabin while he explains what happened the night before. Over 12 hours of isolation, nerves, and a terrible case of poison ivy have put Sheets completely on edge. He is convinced that security guards from MasterGene are trying to find him and kill him. (He is right, but the heroes have no way of knowing that.)

The party fails to convince Sheets to go with them. After a long and frustrating argument, the group heads back to ETU.

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## *When they awaken, they are horribly changed.*

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With still no sign of their friends, the group heads for the ETU campus, where most of them live. At a stoplight, a white van rear-ends them. The driver of the van, a tough-looking man in a jogging suit, runs to the driver-side door, apologizing all the way. At the door, he suddenly pulls a canister from his jacket pocket and sprays the contents into the car. The heroes try to get out of the car before breathing much of the antiseptic-smelling gas, but they all fall unconscious in a matter of seconds.

### **0.5c: Phase Two—Escaping MasterGene**

The heroes wake up strapped to beds in a large, white room that smells of antiseptic. All their clothing and equipment is gone, replaced with cheap, blue hospital scrubs. Dr. Philip Perry enters shortly after they wake up and attaches intravenous drips. While he tells the heroes his plans, he takes a blood sample from each character and injects a cloudy liquid. The drug makes them drowsy, and they quickly pass out.

When they awaken, they are horribly changed. Some are huge, muscle-bound hulks with awesome strength but with limited movement due to their size. Some are skeletally thin, with bulging blue cords all over their bodies where an expanded nervous system branches into new pathways, giving them lightning-fast reflexes. Others are bloated and corpselike, but with an extremely efficient metabolism and enhanced endurance.

Over the next few hours, the characters fight desperately for freedom. They easily break out of the holding room. Immediately the doors to the other rooms spring open and the other prisoners, driven mad from having their DNA combined with that of animals, attack the heroes and force them to defend themselves. As the heroes search for an exit, they encounter a variety of deadly traps, ending with an automated machine gun blocking the only stairway.

A squad of security guards attacks them on the next floor, but the desperate heroes use weapons improvised from traps to kill the guards. They take guns

from their attackers and release the illegal immigrants imprisoned on this level. The immigrants take one look at their rescuers and flee in terror.

The heroes find Jack Thorne's office and search it. A refrigerated briefcase contains several chemical samples and six canisters of "trauma ointment." According to a note in the briefcase, the ointment heals serious wounds in seconds. The party uses three canisters to heal their injured.

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### *The proof that Landis sacrificed his life for is useless.*

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From the prison floor, they take an elevator up past the deserted laboratory to the ground floor. The lobby security guard flees the second he sees them. The party considers leaving, but all of them feel the mutations slowly sapping their ability to think, and several are showing signs of serious mental illness. They head for Dr. Perry's office.

Dr. Perry waits in his lab with his head of security, Philip Thorne. Dr. Perry is ecstatic that the party has escaped. He congratulates them for being his greatest success and asks them to wait for him to pass through decontamination so he can examine them.

The party attacks, shattering the tempered glass walls and windows with a hail of gunfire. Thorne shoots back as Dr. Perry ducks behind some heavy lab equipment. Thorne shoots two party members before the party kills him. Dr. Perry attacks with a small handgun but quickly falls dead under fire from the party.

Searching the demolished lab, the party finds a canister of 35 mm film in Dr. Perry's desk and a case of vials in a refrigerator. Each vial has one of their names. A hero with some medical skill injects everyone with the correct antidote and the entire party drops unconscious.

### **0.5d: Conclusion**

The heroes awaken in hospital beds, their bodies returned to normal and any wounds healed. They wear hospital gowns, and their normal clothes sit next to their beds. All of the weapons they picked up at MasterGene are gone, but the film canister is with their clothes. A few moments after they wake up, a doctor enters the room. He quickly confirms that everyone is in good health and explains to the group that

thieves attacked them with a knockout drug that had hallucinogenic side effects. He tells them to disregard anything they remember since the attack.

The newspapers have two articles regarding the investigation. A small obituary for Gary Sheets states that he died of natural causes while in the custody of the Golan County Sheriff's Department. The police say he died of a heart attack. An editorial lists others who have died in the same cell and suggests that Sheets was another victim of the ghost of Hank Flowers. Flowers was a notorious gunman who hanged himself in that jail in 1894.

A second report details a fatal fire in a laboratory at MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc. The fire killed MasterGene's founder, Dr. Philip Perry, and several security guards. The fire damaged the building, but the company expects MasterGene's facility to reopen after the investigation of the fire is complete.

When they leave the hospital, the heroes tell Deputy Sean Richards what happened, and he explains to the Landis family the events surrounding their son Joe's death. Deputy Richards accepts the heroes' account, adding it to the assortment of strange happenings he has witnessed in Pinebox. Landis's parents, on the other hand, reject the heroes' version of events. The Landises accuse the group of making up stories at their son's expense, and they refuse to speak to them, or to Deputy Richards, ever again.

Hoping to salvage their only real evidence, the heroes have the film developed. The pictures show a group of people around several cars at night. The dark background and bright headlights wash out any details. The photos could have been taken at any tailgate party, teen keg party, or camping trip. The proof that Landis sacrificed his life for is useless.

MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc., repairs their main building. The elevator shaft is plugged with concrete, forever blocking access to the two lowest levels where Dr. Perry conducted his hellish experiments. Nobody ever heard from the immigrant prisoners or the armed security personnel again. Perhaps they escaped. Perhaps they were sealed in the basement levels to die of hunger.

## 0.6: Setting the Mood

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*The Beast Within* is an adventure made of equal parts of investigation and life-or-death action. Consider playing dramatic music in the background during scenes you want to underscore. Techno or soundtracks from action movies or games work well during the escape through MasterGene. When experimenting with these ideas, make sure to get input from your players—after all, they are your “audience.”

## 0.7: Recommended Plot Hook—

### A Bump in the Night

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The adventure begins with the party driving south on US Highway 96, sometime between 1:00 and 5:00 on a Friday morning, when they experience an accident with a van in the foggy, pre-dawn darkness. The reason for the trip depends on the characters, but some ideas include:

- The group is on a road trip to or from an event (a football game, concert, gaming convention, wedding, funeral, or hunting trip).
- The characters are applicants to ETU who stayed for a party and are now driving home.
- The characters were summoned to Pinebox from out of state for the reading of a will or an important estate auction.

Since this is a first-level adventure, you may be using it to kick off your campaign. If so, it is possible that the heroes have not yet met one another. In this instance, pick one member of the group to have the initial crash, then subsequent vehicles arrive on the scene, possibly colliding in the heavy fog.

## 0.8: Alternate Plot Hooks

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While the crash scenario is the recommended plot hook, it is not the only way to start the adventure. Perhaps the characters work for the Golan County Sheriff’s Department or the Pinebox Police Department and are investigating the crash. Perhaps Joe Landis’s family hires the party (or calls in a debt or favor) to investigate their son’s death. The crash is the preferred introduction because it allows the players to gather the information they need instead of just reading reports.

## 0.9: What’s in This One-Horse Town?

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In the last census, Pinebox, Texas, was home to 11,977 permanent residents. Records from nearby East Texas University (ETU) indicate an enrollment of an additional 10,051 students. Approximately one third of the student body commutes from the surrounding area.

Your heroes can find a dozen chain fast-food joints and an equal number of small locally owned restaurants. The cuisine ranges from steak to Cajun and from BBQ to Tex-Mex fare. The best of these include the Pizza Barn, Mom’s Diner, Hamburger City, and Suzie’s Catfish Emporium. Characters needing supplies can shop at one of two grocery stores, a small All-Mart, a hardware store, two lumber companies, a gun and hunting-supply store, and four pawnshops.

The town’s only movie theater closed after the establishment of a new, student-only theater in the ETU Student Union. Three bars along “the strip” cater to students, while two other drinking establishments in Pinebox serve mainly locals.

12 to Midnight has also published multiple side-trek style adventures, set in or around Pinebox, in the weekly e-magazine *Modern Dispatch*. For more information on *Modern Dispatch* and the Pinebox setting (including a free, detailed map) visit our website at [12tomidnight.com](http://12tomidnight.com).

# Section 1: The Crash

## 1.1: Close Call

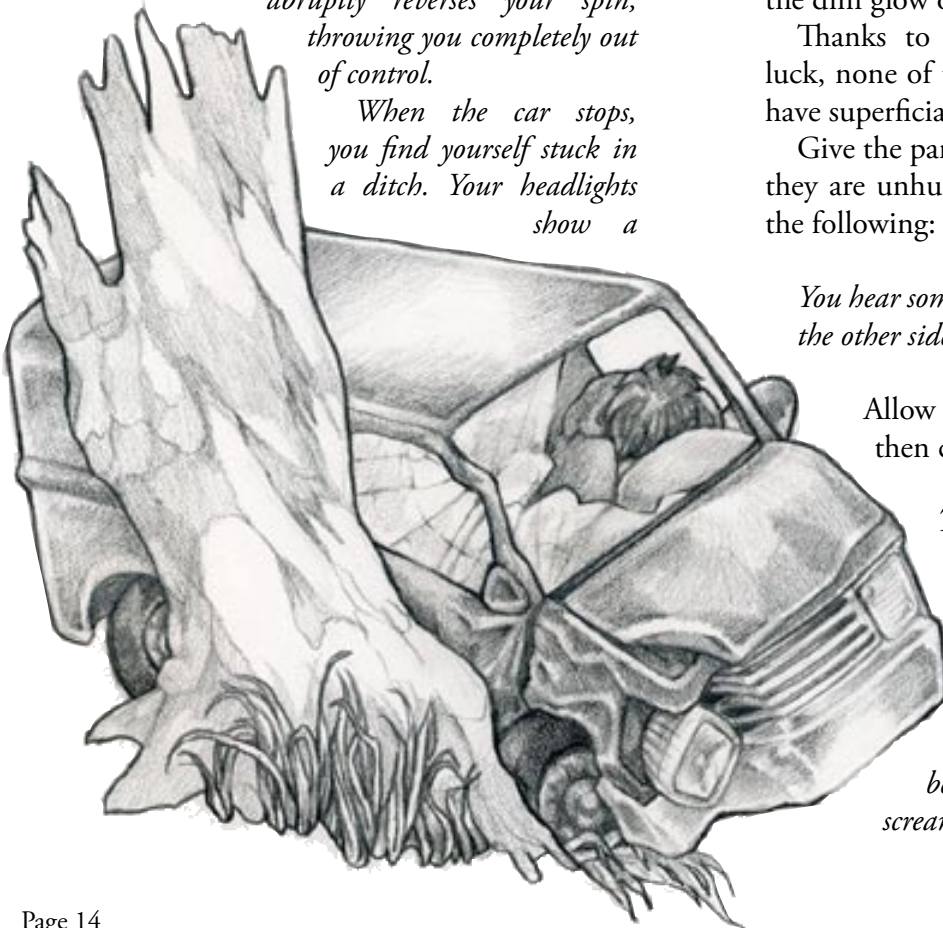
The adventure begins with the party driving south on US Highway 96 between 1:00 and 5:00 on a Friday morning. See sections 0.7 and 0.8 for plot-hook suggestions. When you are ready, read or summarize the following:

*The fog obscuring US Highway 96 is as thick as cotton balls as you drive down the lonely highway in the early-morning darkness. The headlights may be showing the road ahead, and they may be obscuring what little visibility there is with a great white blur. Suddenly there is a flash of sparks to the left and a huge brown shape lurches into your headlights.*

The driver of the car must make a *Drive* check (DC 12). If the check is successful, read or summarize this:

*You turn the nose of your car to pass behind whatever is crossing the road, but the rear end of your car loses traction and you spin. A jarring crash abruptly reverses your spin, throwing you completely out of control.*

*When the car stops, you find yourself stuck in a ditch. Your headlights show a*



*large, brown cargo van leaning against a tree on the other side of the road. Its bumper sits in the middle of the road and broken glass and plastic lie everywhere.*

If the driver failed the *Drive* check, read or summarize this:

*You slam on the brakes and the car skids out of control. You slam into the brown shape and air bags explode from your dashboard. The long explosion of sound and flying glass gives way to sudden darkness and shock.*

If using the *Fear Effect* rules, being in the accident is a *minor spook*.

### 1.1a: What Was That?

Allow the players to roleplay the moment. If the *Drive* check was successful, the car has only minor body damage, but it is solidly stuck in the ditch. If not, the car has extensive damage, requiring a *Wealth* check (DC 22) to repair. Either outcome results in shattered headlights. The only illumination comes from the dim glow of the moon through the fog.

Thanks to modern engineering and incredible luck, none of the party members is hurt, though all have superficial cuts and bruises.

Give the party just enough time to determine that they are unhurt but stuck, then read or summarize the following:

*You hear something crashing through the woods on the other side of the highway, moving fast.*

Allow the group to react to the noise, and then continue.

*Two figures rise up out of the gloom—silhouettes only—man-shaped but definitely not human. A faint, electronic beeping echoes through the fog, seeming to come from everywhere and nowhere. Suddenly the figures disappear, drowning out the beeping with cries of anger or pain—a screaming, growling sound that could not*

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*come from human throats. Just as suddenly, the voices fall silent, replaced by more crashing noises in the underbrush. Then you are again alone in the fog.*

The fog, darkness, and heavy underbrush make it impossible for any of the heroes to get a good look at the creatures making the noise.

## 1.1b: Searching the Area

The heroes have a few minutes to look around before anything else happens. No amount of pushing or revving can get their car out of the steep ditch. Luckily, cell phone coverage is strong here, despite the area's isolation.

If the group decides to look around the crash site, roll a *Search* check for each character looking around. Due to the thick fog, the characters make the check at a -5 penalty unless they have a light. Read the descriptions below for all *Search* results up to the best roll.

Table 1-1: Search Results

Roll	Result
Less than 10	The shape you hit was a large, brown cargo van. It apparently came down an old logging road and crossed in front of you. After the impact, it skidded sideways off the road and hit a tree. The crash seems to have ripped the front bumper off and smashed the headlights. Glass and bits of twisted metal lie all over the road. The van struck the tree sideways, taking the impact right in the middle of the driver's side. All of the windows shattered on that side and the door flew open. The driver lies motionless on his back about fifteen feet from the van.
10	The van hit a large pothole at the end of the logging road as it entered the highway. It hit so hard that it struck the concrete edge of the road, tearing the bumper off and breaking the front lights.
12	There are no skid marks crossing the highway. That means that the van did not apply the brakes between the time it entered the paved highway and the crash.
15	The driver's head is a bloody mess. Something smashed the back of his head, and he has deep lacerations on his neck and shoulders. His right arm is broken and mangled, as if something large has chewed on it. His clothes and the driver's seat of the van are bloodstained, but the floor of the van is clean. His face is badly cut and shards of glass pierce his cheek, but the cuts show little sign of bleeding. Empty plastic soda bottles and food wrappers litter the inside of the van. The labels are all in Spanish.
20+	A glint catches your eye down the road. Closer examination reveals a motorcycle hidden in a clump of bushes. Someone has disconnected the headlight. A small compartment under the seat contains the insurance information. These indicate that the motorcycle is insured to a Joe Landis.

## GM Checklist: Did you ...

- Require a *Drive* check and describe the resulting accident?
- Describe the noise in the brush?
- Allow the heroes a quick *Search* of the area?

## 1.2: Logging Road

Before the party can do a more serious search, or as soon as anyone starts walking up the logging road, read or summarize the following:

*You hear the faint sound of car engines approaching from the logging road. In just a few seconds you see the glow of headlights through the fog. The lights are blinding, keeping you from making out any details. Two large vehicles, probably vans, definitely white, come down the logging road at high speed.*

The vans do not slow down, even if a character shoots at a van or attempts to block the road. If a character attempts to block the vans' path, the vehicles' drivers try to swerve around the obstacle, but will run over a character rather than stop or risk a crash.

*The vans flash past, not even slowing down, and speed to the north.*

Have all characters in sight of the vans roll a *Spot* check, and then read the descriptions below for all results up to the best roll.

Table 1-2: Spotting the Van

Roll	Result
DC 16	Neither vehicle has working license-plate lights.
DC 20	Through the back window of the second van, you see the reflection of eyes, like those of a cat. For a split second, you can make out its face—a not-quite-human face with long fangs.

Anyone walking up the logging road finds a clearing after 200 yards. This is the actual crime scene. Roll a *Search* check to examine the area. Characters make this check at a penalty of -10 without a light, or -2 with only a flashlight.

**Table 1–3: Searching the Clearing**

Roll	Result
Less than 10	The clearing is small, about 15 or 20 yards across. The road passes through the center with room for two or three cars to park on either side. The road is firm, but the rest of the clearing is soft and muddy from recent rains. You cannot see the highway from here, and you feel very isolated.
10	The grass on either side of the road is trampled, and there are tire tracks in the mud.
15	Near one edge of the clearing, you find a path torn through the underbrush. A few steps off the path, the brush is beaten down flat. You see flecks of blood on the broken twigs, and a section of ground is sticky with blood. In a tuft of grass, you find a smashed 35 mm camera with no film.
18	A more careful examination of the ground shows that there were three cars here recently. There were many people, but too many to learn anything from their footprints.

**GM Checklist: Did you ...**

- Allow the characters to encounter the two vans?
- Give the characters a chance to locate and search the clearing?

## 1.3: Tin Stars

A police cruiser pulls up when the characters finish looking around. Sheriff’s Deputy Sean Richards, a Golan County Sheriff’s Deputy, climbs out. If the party called 911 or the local police, he comes in response to their call. If they did not alert the authorities, he is passing by on his patrol.

Heroes from the Pinebox area know the deputy on sight. Everyone around town knows Deputy Richards and nearly everyone likes him. He gives people the benefit of the doubt and gives warnings more often than tickets.

The deputy begins by asking if anyone is injured. He checks the crashed van’s driver for a pulse. He recognizes the accident victim, and anyone standing nearby can hear him say “Joe? What are *you* doing out here?” He finds no pulse and radios for an ambulance. Then he takes statements from each of the characters, one at a time. If anyone tries to leave the area, he orders them to stop. If they continue, he chases them and threatens to charge them with leaving the scene of a crime.

Deputy Richards is a friend of the victim’s father and has known Joe Landis since Landis was a toddler. Without thinking, he freely shares the name of the accident victim with the characters. The deputy feels very confused and upset, but he tries to sup-

press his feelings and do his job. If the characters ask questions, he answers without thinking, even if the answer is something he should not tell civilians.

Deputy Richards is only taking statements, so any questions he asks are intended to keep the character talking—things like, “What happened next?” and, “Tell me more about that?” If he senses that a character is hiding something (using his *Sense Motive* skill) he makes a note but does not press the subject.

When all of the interviews are complete, Deputy Richards searches the logging road, whether the characters suggest it or not. The locations of the vehicles make it obvious that the van came from there. Before walking up the logging road, Richards asks the party to accompany him. He cannot leave material witnesses to a death alone, but does not really want them disturbing what may be a crime scene. If any characters refuse to enter the woods (since this is where they heard the wild animals), Richards secures them in the back of his patrol car after promising to release them upon his return.

Deputy Richards, distracted by the characters, takes 10 searching the clearing for a total of 12 on Table 1–3: Searching the Clearing, but that is enough to prove that something happened here and to classify the clearing as part of the crime scene. He does not search more carefully because he expects a forensics team to search the scene.

After his investigation of the logging road, Deputy Richards returns to the accident scene. He asks the characters to stay near their vehicle(s), then takes photographs and writes his incident report.

As the deputy finishes his report, read or summarize the following:

*A police cruiser and an ambulance pull up as Deputy Richards finishes taking photographs. The county official and a paramedic get out of the ambulance and move to the van. You hear them talking, and the official declares that Joe is dead.*

*An officer with sergeant’s stripes and the name “Cavanaugh” on his badge gets out of the police car. He approaches Deputy Richards, ignoring you completely. They talk for a few moments, and then Sergeant Cavanaugh turns to you.*

*“All of you put your hands on your vehicle.” He growls. “You are all under arrest.”*



*Deputy Richards looks stunned. He stammers “What!”*

*“Driving too fast for conditions, reckless driving, either manslaughter or negligent homicide, probably disturbing the scene of an accident and whatever we find evidence for when this damn fog clears.”*

*Deputy Richards demands, “How do you explain Joe’s injuries?”*

*“The kid driving the van?” Cavanaugh replies.*

*“He was in a car crash. People die in car crashes all the time.”*

*Deputy Richards stands in front of Sergeant Cavanaugh, leaning right into his face. “A car crash smashed the back of his head? A car crash gave him claw marks on his neck?”*

*“Back down, Richards.” Cavanaugh growls, turning red. “I’m investigating this accident now. You will help me transport these suspects back to the jail, and you will DROP IT! Now get them cuffed and loaded.”*

Deputy Richards and Sergeant Don Cavanaugh search the characters, remove any weapons or cell phones, and drive them to the Golan County Sheriff’s Office (4B, F) in Pinebox. Cavanaugh sends Richards away and personally books, fingerprints, and photographs the characters. His response to any question is a gruff order to shut up.

After about an hour of processing, Cavanaugh leaves the party in a well-lit cell in the basement jail of the sheriff’s office. He does not offer them a lawyer and does not let them use a telephone.

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### **GM Checklist: Did you ...**

- Have Deputy Richards mention that he recognizes Joe Landis and is a friend of the Landis family?
- Have Deputy Richards question the characters, and allow the characters to question him?
- Introduce Sergeant Don Cavanaugh?

## Section 2: Investigation

### 2.1: The Investigation Begins

At nine o'clock in the morning, the shift changes in the jail. The officer coming on duty apologizes to the party for their treatment the previous night and offers them the use of a telephone. He also offers to get them an attorney if they do not already have one.

If nobody in the party has his own lawyer, the county appoints Steven Fuller to their case. He arrives in half an hour and listens to the characters' story. He tells the group that he has a meeting with the judge scheduled for ten o'clock and that he should have them out before eleven.

At ten thirty Fuller returns seeming only moderately pleased. He explains what happened at the meeting.

*"I spoke to the sheriff and requested that the charges be dropped and that you be released immediately. He agreed to release you on your own recognizance, but refused to drop the charges. You've been charged with reckless driving and manslaughter. The trial has been kicked to the top of the list, so your arraignment is scheduled for ten o'clock Monday morning.*

*"I'll start working up a case, but I'm going to need your help. Any information you can get about what really happened out there will be helpful. I spoke with Deputy Richards, and he gave me his original report. Apparently he wasn't allowed to file it because his superior officer had already filed a report for the incident.*

*"That report should give you something to work with. I hope you don't mind doing some detective work. I have to wring the report that was filed out of the police and get about a dozen long and complicated documents written up before Monday. Give me a call if you need anything."*

Fuller gives the party a business card and a manila folder with a handwritten police report, and then leaves. A few minutes later, the officer on duty returns all of the characters' possessions and lets them go, reminding them that they have to be in court at ten o'clock on Monday morning.

The characters' vehicle, which was involved in the crash, was towed to Pinebox and has been impound-

ed as evidence. The characters must arrange for other transportation—either another character's vehicle or a rental car from Raven Country Auto Ranch. (See sidebar on following page. If anyone asks, the police recommend Raven Country, which has a large advertisement in the telephone book.)

The police report contains the following information:

- The van belongs to Gary Sheets, of Houston, Texas. Police records show that Sheets was arrested four years ago in Pinebox for petty theft and drug possession. He paid a fine and was placed on probation. He lived in Pinebox with his parents and younger sister, Robin, at that time.
- The victim was Joe Landis. His permanent address is 604 Bowie Street, in Pinebox; but, at the time of his death, he lived in the Lester Hughes Men's Dormitory, room 215, on the East Texas University campus.
- According to Deputy Richards, the evidence suggests that Landis was dead before he was placed in the van. Thus, the crash had nothing to do with his death.
- A sticky note attached to the last page of the report recommends investigating Joe Landis to see if he had any enemies. It also recommends tracking down Gary Sheets's family to determine if he is in town.
- Another sticky note points out that this



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report was not filed and is not admissible as evidence. Only the report filed by Sergeant Cavanaugh is official.

- A bad photocopy of Sheets's police photo is stapled to the inside of the folder.

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### GM Checklist: Did You ...

- Introduce Steven Fuller and give the party his business card?
- Convince the party that they must find the real killer or be tried for manslaughter?
- Give the party the police report with investigation hints?

## 2.2: The Hunters are Being Hunted

Unbeknownst to the heroes, Sergeant Cavanaugh alerted Jack Thorne when the characters were released from prison. Dr. Perry puts several plans in place for tying up these loose ends.

### 2.2a: Thugs

At Dr. Perry's insistence, Jack Thorn sent two teams of thugs to find the group and capture them while Thorn searches for Gary Sheets.

Each hunting party consists of four local thugs. They wear street clothes and drive their own vehicles—a black SUV and an extended-cab pickup truck. They are armed with knockout gas, tear gas,

pepper spray, and hand-held tasers. They patrol the roads around Pinebox looking for the party. They have pictures of the heroes and a description of any vehicles they own or rent.

Whenever the party travels, each group of thugs makes a *Spot* check (DC 18) at +2. If successful, that group locates the party.

If they see the heroes, the thugs follow until there is nobody around, then attack. Their primary plan is to rear-end the group's car and stage an ambush while the characters are still rattled. If the party leaves the car unattended in a remote area, the thugs disable it by cutting the fuel line, if they have time, or, if they lack the time to cut the fuel line, by slashing the tires. They then attempt an ambush using the gas if the characters are in a room or an enclosed vehicle, or using pepper spray and tasers if the area is open.

### 2.2b: Sergeant Cavanaugh

Sergeant Don Cavanaugh is working for MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc., covering up the murder and keeping tabs on the investigators. If he gets any information, he will immediately contact Jack Thorne. If he gets any evidence, he will lose, contaminate, or destroy it.

If the investigators are somehow arrested again, Cavanaugh allows the thugs into the holding cells around midnight. They quickly gas the investigators, who wake up at MasterGene.



### Raven Country Auto Ranch

Raven Country Auto Ranch sits tucked in the woods at the end of a long drive just south of Pinebox, Texas. It does a small amount of business selling and renting cars, and much more business collecting junk cars and selling the useful parts. Between local motorheads and students looking for cheap transportation, the business is surprisingly successful.

The owner, Dennis Smith, lives on the 20-acre plot with his wife and three children. He is active in the local Chamber of Commerce and sponsors a Little League baseball team. He also bears a family secret.

Late one fall evening, 30 years ago, the ten-year-old Dennis Smith woke to the sound of a flute outside his window. He climbed out his window and followed the sound to a pile of boulders his father had collected from the fields on the family farm. What he found changed his life forever.

He found his father sitting on the top of the mound playing a wooden flute. All around him danced the translucent

spirits of long-dead Native American warriors with fierce, painted faces.

Dennis stood transfixed for hours while his father played and the warriors danced, until the sky in the east began to glow red and the spirits returned to their rest. On that morning he learned that he was a Native American, and that his family was responsible for protecting the burial ground of his ancestors.

Dennis helped his father convert the farm to a car dealership and rental agency when farming became unprofitable. To protect his ancestors, Dennis keeps good relations with the town, teaches his children about their heritage, and saves money for emergencies. To protect everyone else, he sits among the mounds on a certain night every year and plays a flute while the warriors dance. To miss this ritual would make his ancestors angry, and he does not know what would happen if they became angry.

## 2.3: Tracking Down Gary Sheets's Sister

Deputy Richards is correct in believing that some of Gary Sheets's family still live in Pinebox. Although Sheets's parents died three years ago, his sister, Robin, married her boyfriend, Alex Potts. She lives in the Indian Summer Trailer Park (see **GM Figure 1: GM's Location Map**) with her husband and infant son, Bobby. Alex Potts works at Durgeson Concrete and Gravel Company (4B, 33).

Unfortunately for the investigators, they only know to look for people with the last name of Sheets. Neither recent telephone books, 411 information, nor the phone company web page has a listing for anyone named Sheets.

Any telephone book over two years old lists Robin Sheets at her current address. These can be found at the library (where old telephone books are kept on file) and at any pay phone. Heroes can find pay phones at the Pines Hotel (4B, 13), Speedy Pete's Discount Gas and Convenience Store (4B, 14), Culverhouse Bus Station (4B, 16), Broomfield Plaza Shopping Center (4B, 19), Timber Ridge Motel (4B, 34), and on the ETU campus in the Student Center (1C, ET-1).

The Cecil Greystone Memorial Library (4B, D), in Pinebox, has archives of the local newspaper, which

includes obituaries for Richard and Helen Sheets and a wedding notice for Robin Sheets and Alex Potts. A *Research* check (DC 10) uncovers the obituaries, while a *Research* check (DC 13) reveals both the obituaries and the wedding notice. Searching the archives takes 1d6 hours. The librarian, Norma Wallis, will aid in the search if asked. Her assistance provides a +2 to the *Research* check and reduces the search time by one hour.

The Pinebox City Hall (4B, B) has all the records for the county, including marriage and death certificates. A successful *Research* check (DC 10) finds a marriage certificate for Robin and Alex Potts and death certificates for Richard and Helen Sheets. The clerk on duty retrieves any records the party requests and makes sure that they do not remove any documents, but does not directly aid the search. The research takes 1d4 hours.

Pinebox is a relatively small town. Simply asking around is a reasonable strategy. A successful *Gather Information* check (DC 15) in any bar, restaurant, or shopping location will obtain the information that Robin Sheets married a man named Alex Potts. Heroes gathering information may also learn any of the following:

- Alex Potts is a jerk and Robin could have done better.
- Alex is a "ditch digger" at Durgeson Concrete and Gravel.
- Robin recently had a baby.
- The Potts family lives in "that nasty Indian Summer Trailer Park."
- Robin's brother killed his parents and left town three years ago. (This rumor is not true.)
- None of the Sheets kids amounted to anything.

Any recent telephone book (including the phone company's Web site) has a current telephone number and address listed for Alex Potts.

### GM Checklist: Did you ...

- Let the investigators decide where and how to search?
- Have Norma Wallis offer to help if the heroes have trouble in the library?
- Point out pay phones as a source of old phone books, if the investigators looked in recent phone books?

### Finding Locations in Pinebox



Some map locations in this adventure are of secondary importance to the unfolding action. Such locations follow this format: "Durgeson Concrete and Gravel Company (4B, 33)."

We have not cluttered the enclosed maps with these minor locations, but you can still find them by using the full-color, interactive Pinebox PDF map, which you can download, free of charge, from our Web site at [12tomidnight.com/files/Pinebox\\_map.pdf](http://12tomidnight.com/files/Pinebox_map.pdf).

To find a location on the interactive PDF map:

1. Open the file `Pinebox_map.pdf`. By default, the large-scale grid map will appear first.
2. Click the large-scale grid map on the coordinates indicated—in this case, 4B. The PDF will take you to a more detailed map of that grid square.
3. On the detailed map, locate the building or area in question—in this case, 33.

Now you know the location of Durgeson Concrete and Gravel Company. You can use the same procedure to find any Pinebox location listed using this format. As an added convenience, several high-profile Pinebox locations are listed on the second page of the interactive PDF map.

## 2.4: Talking to the Pottses

The heroes may choose to track down Alex Potts at work, or try Gary Sheets's sister, Robin, at home.

### 2.4a: Alex Potts

Alex Potts works at Durgeson Concrete and Gravel (4B, 33) operating a bulldozer. He works from eight o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the evening on weekdays. Robin Potts spends this time at home taking care of the baby, Bobby, who is three months old.

If the characters approach Potts, he acts impatient and grumpy about being interrupted, but he gladly talks about his brother-in-law. If someone asks if he has seen Sheets lately, he answers:

*"Yeah, Robin's loser brother came to the trailer this morning. I ran him off. That idiot only comes around when he's in trouble."*

Potts did not see any unusual vehicles around. He did not notice any bloodstains or marks on his brother-in-law. Potts does not care what Sheets does or what happens to him, as long as he does not bother Robin.

### 2.4b: Robin Potts

The Indian Summer Trailer Park (see **GM Figure 1: GM's Location Map**) is sparsely populated during the day. A few scruffy children play, apparently unsupervised, along the dirt road. An old woman scratches at a withering garden next to the trailer on lot number 4.

If the heroes approach the Pottses' trailer, Robin answers the door with little Bobby in her arms. She does not invite the characters in. As soon as someone mentions Gary Sheets or asks if anyone came to the trailer in the morning, she tells them to leave and slams the door in their faces. If they try to get her to keep talking, she threatens to call the police. If they actually force their way into the trailer, Edna Nunn (the elderly woman next door) calls the police.

If Nunn did not call the police, she approaches the party when they leave the Pottses' trailer. She is eager to share the gossip from the morning.

*"You're looking for the man that was here this morning, aintcha? I saw him! I heard Alex yellin'."*

*Nothin' new about that, but usually not so early in the mornin'."*

Nunn is a treasure trove of information about the Potts family—and everyone else in the trailer park. If the investigators continue to talk to her, she gives the following information in no particular order. The old woman rambles and constantly goes off on tangents. Make the players wade through her drivel to get useful information.

- Robin's brother was at the trailer this morning.
- Alex shouted at Sheets, but Robin gave Sheets a key before he left.
- Alex works at Durgeson Concrete and Gravel.
- The kids playing in the street steal carrots from her garden.
- Alex is verbally abusive of Robin, but Nunn does not think that he hits her.
- Robin is very nice, but she keeps to herself and does not seem to trust anyone.
- Bobby is three months old, and is the cutest baby ever.
- Nunn's arthritis is acting up.
- Alex has calmed down a lot since Bobby was born, but he is still a jerk.
- Robin married Alex after her parents died and her brother left town. She had nowhere else to go.
- Robin has quit two jobs because Alex was always checking up on her.

### 2.4c: Robin's Story

The group can get more information from Robin Potts in two ways: Threaten to tell her husband that she gave something to her brother, or confront her husband directly about her giving something to Sheets.

If the heroes approach Alex Potts and explain that Edna Nunn saw his wife give something to Gary Sheets, he shouts to the foreman that he is taking a break and goes directly home. He orders Robin to tell him what she gave to her brother.

If the investigators threaten Robin with revealing what they know to her husband, she lets them in and tells them the whole story, but only if they agree not to tell her husband anything. Characters who enter the trailer have a chance to *Spot* (DC 16)

## The Beast Within

a wedding photo of Robin posing with her husband and brother.

If Robin tells her story, read the following:

*“Gary came to the door this morning, early, around six or so. He looked scared, and he said that he needed somewhere to stay for a while. Alex saw him and went off the handle. When he finished screaming, I slipped Gary the key to Alex’s hunting cabin on Kestrell Lake. I told him how to get there and he left. What sort of trouble is he in now?”*

If the characters claim that her brother is in danger and they want to help, or if they threaten to talk to her husband, Robin gives them directions to the cabin. As they leave, she asks them to tell her what happens to her brother.

---

### GM Checklist: Did you ...

- Roleplay Robin’s resistance to giving the investigators information?
- Portray Edna Nunn as a rambling busybody who has useful information for those patient enough to listen?
- Have Robin eventually give directions to the cabin on Kestrell Lake?

---

## 2.5: Asking Around Town

Simply asking around can sometimes be very effective. A successful *Gather Information* check (DC 15) after one o’clock in the afternoon, in any bar, restaurant, or other place where people socialize, uncovers a conversation about a local man named Vern Justice, who gave a ride to an odd young hitchhiker early this morning. According to the storyteller, Justice figures the strange man killed Joe Landis. If asked, anyone recounting this story will explain that Justice can usually be found “bothering people” at Mom’s Diner (4B, 17) or hanging around the chess tables on the lawn next to City Hall (4B, B).

If the investigators search in Mom’s Diner between one and two o’clock in the afternoon, or the lawn outside City Hall between two and five o’clock in the afternoon, they find Vern Justice. After five o’clock, Justice is at his home at 14 Old Railroad Street, near Crenshaw’s Woods (5B, 36). His address is readily available in any telephone book or Internet directory.

If the investigators approach him, he gladly tells his story.

*“I was headed up to Kestrell Lake this morning to do some fishin’. It was about six thirty this morning. I was headed up Kestrell Road, just before the road to the quarry, when I came across this young man walking toward the lake, miles from anything. He looked kind of scruffy and wasn’t dressed for hiking. I’m a friendly man, so I stop and offer him a ride. He looks around, kind of skittish, and hops into my truck.*

*“I tried to make small talk, and he gave me a story about looking for good hunting spots. I don’t think he was looking around, though. He had somewhere specific to go. All of a sudden he shouts, “Stop here, right here!” I stop and he jumps out, mumbles something I’m guessing was a thank you, and takes off down one of the little dirt roads up there.*

*“So, I go fish, not thinking anything about it. I get back into town for lunch and find out that Ben Landis’s son was killed this morning. Now, that boy getting killed and a stranger hiding in the woods can’t be a coincidence. I’m lucky to be walking around today! I went to the sheriff and told the officer investigating the murder, Cavanaugh I think, all about it. He seemed pretty excited. I expect I’ll be a local hero soon, the man who caught the guy that killed the Landis boy.”*

Justice can give directions to the spot where he left the hitchhiker, but he refuses to lead the party there. He believes that the man to whom he gave a lift is a murderer, and he does not want to go looking for him.

When Justice made his report, Sergeant Cavanaugh reported Sheets’s location to Jack Thorne, and then he threw the report away. There is no official record that Justice ever went to the police.

---

### GM Checklist: Did you ...

- Give the investigators a chance to hear a rumor about Vern Justice?
- Let the investigators find Justice, if they tried to do so?

## 2.6: Talking to Gary Sheets at the Cabin

The Pottses' hunting cabin is inaccessible by road. Anyone wanting to approach the cabin must find a place to park off Kestrell Road and hike along a path through the forest the remainder of the distance. When the party approaches the hunting cabin, read or summarize the following:

*Following the snaking track off Kestrell Road, you wind your way into the forest. After ten or fifteen minutes of walking, you see the cabin up ahead. It is more of a shack, really—corrugated tin sheets nailed to a wooden frame. The builder cut a door and window into the front with a welding torch, leaving the edges ragged and black. Still, it looks sturdy; the door hangs straight and the window has glass and curtains.*

*The area around the cabin looks well used. A small clearing in front has been worn to bare earth and holds a well-used fire circle. Several large logs serve as benches around the fire pit. A small, less-sturdy outhouse stands ten yards or so behind the cabin.*

What the investigators find at the hunting cabin depends on what time they arrive. If they arrive before ten o'clock on the evening after the accident, they find Sheets alive. After ten o'clock, they find him dead.

### 2.6a: Before Ten O'clock in the Evening

There is no sign of life around the cabin. If a character knocks at the door, there is no answer. The curtains block anyone from looking inside. The door is locked and requires a Strength check (DC 12) or a *Disable Device* check (DC 15) to break in. The window is also locked, but a *Disable Device* check (DC 12) allows the character to jimmy the flimsy lock. Breaking the window does not require a roll. Alternatively, heroes who *Search* (DC 14) find a spare key in a fake rock next to the door.

When the characters enter the cabin, they find Sheets standing in a corner covering the door with a snub-nosed revolver. He has a wild look in his eyes and his arms and face are blotchy with a bright-red rash. He shouts, "You won't catch me. Get out or I'll shoot!" Then he quite accidentally fires the gun. Roll an attack with a -9 penalty (at-

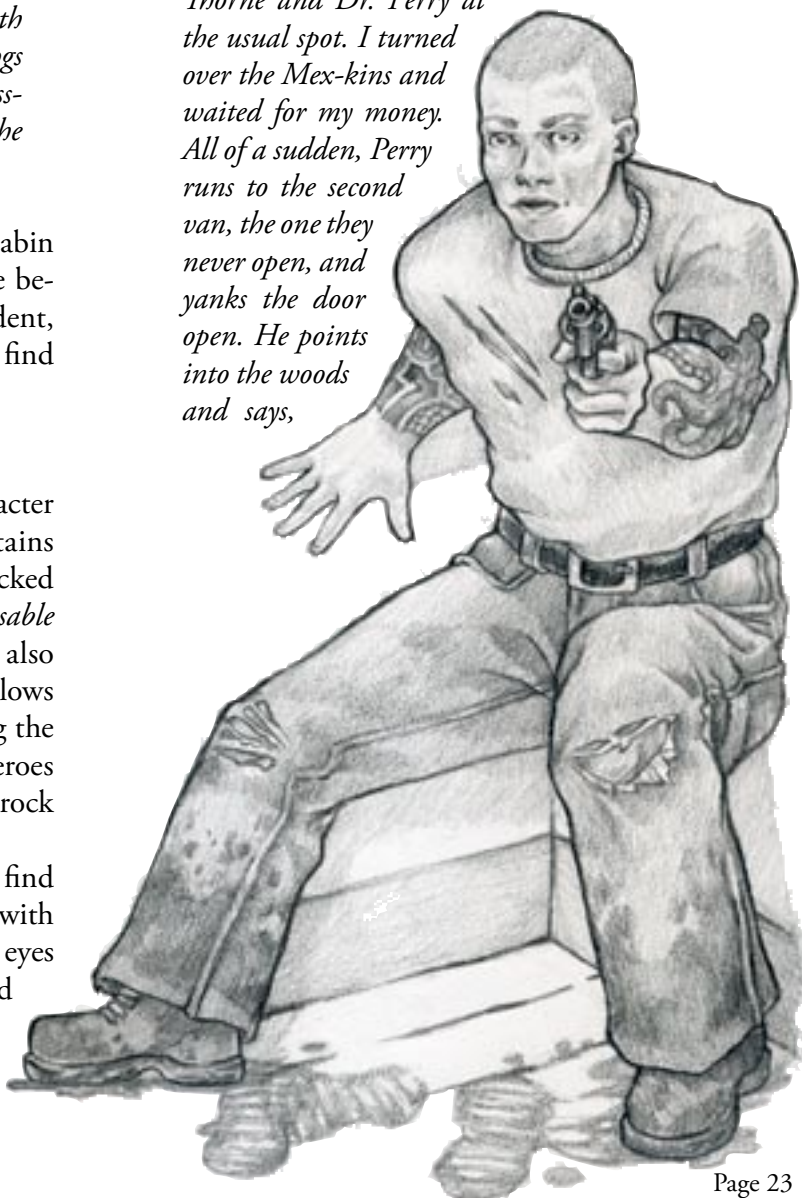
tack bonus 0, -4 for not having the *Personal Firearms Proficiency* feat, and -5 situation penalty) against a random character in the cabin.

If the heroes attack, Sheets attacks with the gun (at his usual -4) until all six rounds are used. He then fights with his fists until pinned, knocked out, or killed.

If the party does not attack, Sheets is willing to talk. When he realizes that the characters are not with MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc., he is eager to talk about the murder. He gives the following story:

*"I been delivering illegal Mex-kins to Mr. Thorne from MasterGene for six months now. You'd think they could find plenty of farm hands in Pinebox, but some people are just cheap. Why pay \$5.50 an hour when you can pay \$2.00?"*

*"Anyhow, last night I met Thorne and Dr. Perry at the usual spot. I turned over the Mex-kins and waited for my money. All of a sudden, Perry runs to the second van, the one they never open, and yanks the door open. He points into the woods and says,*



*“Kill!” Two ... things jump out of the van. They're like werewolves or Bigfoot or somethin'. They scream and growl and head for the woods.*

*“Just inside the brush, a kid jumps up and tries to run. Big mistake. Them creatures get excited when he takes off, and they're on him in a second. The smaller one grabs him, and he starts screaming. They go down, and I see the bigger one whalin' on him with these claws. He stops screaming, but the thing keeps pounding him.*

---

### ***The sheriff refuses Deputy Richards's request for a search warrant.***

---

*“I didn't hang around to see if they would let me go. Thorne was between me and my van, and I'd rather tangle with them monsters than Thorne, so I hit the woods. I don't think anyone even noticed me leaving. I knew I couldn't go back for my van, so I run 'til I hit the train tracks and followed 'em into town. I went to my sister's place and she gave me the key for this shack. An old guy gave me a lift on the way here. I been sitting here shaking and scratching poison ivy ever since. I must-a run through a patch in the woods. Small price to pay to be alive, I say.”*

If the heroes try to convince Sheets to leave, he goes with them. He realizes that if they found him, Mr. Thorne can find him. However, he does not go just anywhere. He decided hours ago to turn himself in to the police if he had the chance. He assumes that the cover up of Landis's murder (assuming the heroes tell him about it) is laziness on the part of the police. If the characters refuse to take him to the sheriff's office, he refuses to leave the cabin.

#### **A Full Confession**

At the sheriff's office, the authorities are not very helpful. The heroes find Deputy Sean Richards at the station, and Sheets tells him the whole story. Deputy Richards books Sheets for immigrant smuggling, puts him in a cell, and attempts to get a search warrant for MasterGene. Sergeant Don Cavanaugh convinces the sheriff that Richards is obsessed with this case and will say anything to try to take it over. The sheriff refuses Deputy Richards's request for a

search warrant. However, Sheets remains in jail while Sergeant Cavanaugh “investigates” the immigrant smuggling confession.

When Richards finally returns to the heroes (assuming they waited at the station), he has resigned his position and plans to raid the MasterGene building to find out what is going on. He knows this is illegal and that MasterGene has armed guards, but he feels that lives are at stake and he is morally obligated to investigate.

He asks the characters to come along, since it may be their best opportunity at clearing the charges against them. He offers weapons (9mm Glock 17 handguns) to anyone who helps.

Jack Thorne does not attack Sheets while the party is present. If they are in the cabin when he arrives at ten o'clock that evening, he waits for them to leave. If they take Sheets with them, he follows. After the party leaves Sheets at the police station, Thorne enters, dressed as a doctor. He asks for Sergeant Cavanaugh and explains that he is there to treat a prisoner with severe poison ivy. Cavanaugh and Thorne hold Sheets down and inject him with a drug that rewrites his genes to give him a rare and fatal heart defect. Sheets dies in agony before morning.

#### **2.6b: After Ten O'clock in the Evening**

Jack Thorne, informed of Gary Sheets's hiding place by Sergeant Don Cavanaugh, kills Sheets before the heroes arrive. He fills the cabin with knockout gas through a gap in the wall, and then injects Sheets with a drug that rewrites his genes to give him a rare and fatal heart defect. After Sheets dies, Thorne airs out the cabin and meticulously cleans every surface to eliminate all traces of his presence.

There is no sign of life around the cabin. If the party knocks at the door, there is no answer. The curtains prevent observers from looking inside. The door is locked, requiring a Strength check (DC 12) or a *Disable Device* check (DC 15) to break in. The window is also locked, requiring a *Disable Device* check (DC 12) to jimmy the lock. Breaking the window does not require a roll. Alternatively, heroes who *Search* (DC 14) find a spare key in a fake rock next to the door.

If the party enters the cabin, they find Sheets lying on the floor with an expression of agony on his face. A *Search* check in the cabin reveals the following:



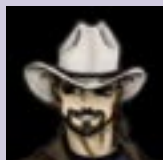
**Table 2—1: Searching the Cabin**

DC	Search Result
<10	Sheets lies on the floor with one hand reaching for the table and the other clutching his shirt over his chest. A .38 revolver lies on the table. There is no sign of a struggle and no sign of forced entry. He has not fired the revolver. Sheets's wallet holds his driver's license, \$300 in cash, some miscellaneous plastic cards (video rental card, ATM card, etc.), and a business card from Jack Thorne of MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc. Directions to the spot where Joe Landis was murdered are written on the back of the card.
10	The cabin is oddly clean. Sheets's clothes and shoes are muddy, but the cabin floor is clean, even underneath his body. The table and chair stand neatly a few feet from Sheets's body. You would expect some sort of disturbance, even if he had a simple heart attack.
15	There is no sign of serious illness or injury on Sheets's body, except for the fact that he is dead. He has superficial scratches and a severe rash from poison ivy or poison oak on his hands and arms. He has no bruises, deep cuts, broken bones, or signs of bleeding on his body or his clothing. The body is still warm.
18+	You find a small pinpoint on Sheets's upper right arm, underneath his shirtsleeve. It looks like the wound from an injection of some kind.

If the party does not call the police, Robin Potts finds the body one week later, when she sneaks out to check on Sheets. By that time there will be no way to determine the cause of death. A small obituary appears in the newspaper, and only a few people even notice.

### GM Checklist: Did you ...

- Let the party find their own way into the cabin?
- Give a hint pointing to MasterGene: Sheets's story or Thorne's business card?



### Investigating Joe Landis

From Deputy Sean Richards's unfiled report, all the party knows about Joe Landis is that his family lives at 604 Bowie Street in Pinebox, and that, at the time of his death, he was living in the Lester Hughes Men's Dormitory, room 215, on the East Texas University campus.

## 2.7: Visiting Joe Landis's Parents

At eight o'clock in the morning, Deputy Richards notifies Joe Landis' parents, Ben and Sharon, of their son's death. Ben Landis goes to the police station to identify his son's body and returns home by nine o'clock. The Landises spend the rest of the day at home notifying family, preparing for the funeral, and grieving.

Richards tells the couple that someone may come by to talk to them about Joe's death, but they assume he refers to more police officers. When the heroes arrive at their home (see **GM Figure 1: GM's Location Map**), the Landises are startled and confused. They try to be helpful, but neither is capable of serious thought.

Here is the information they have. The questions asked must be fairly specific, since the Landises are not in the mood to ramble on about topics the characters did not bring up.

- Joe lived in a dormitory on campus. They give the party his room number and phone number.
- Joe was majoring in computer science and chemistry. He hoped to get a job with a pharmaceutical company.
- Joe had not been stopping by much lately because he had some sort of job after school. They do not know where he was working. (Joe did not want them to know he was working for MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc., because his parents are morally opposed to biotechnology in general.)
- They do not know of anyone with a grudge against Joe, unless you count little Jimmy Stevens, whom Joe beat up in second grade.

### GM Checklist: Did you ...

- Reveal that Joe lived on campus?
- Reveal that Joe had an internship?

## 2.8: Talking to Joe Landis's Advisor

If the party attempts to form an idea of Joe Landis's life on campus, teachers and other students refer them to Dr. Steven Glass, the head of the Department of Computer Science at East Texas University (2D, ET-13). Landis and Glass were good friends.

Dr. Glass has classes from 8:00 a.m. until 11:50 p.m. He eats lunch in his office and then has office hours from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. At 4:00 he goes home. Dr. Glass's home address and phone number are not in the campus directory, but they are available in the Golan County telephone book and on the telephone company's Web site. His telephone number is also available through the phone company's Directory Assistance service by dialing 411. If the heroes

call and ask to speak to him, Glass agrees to meet them at his office on campus.

Glass has heard about his student's death. He does his best to be helpful, but he resists giving personal information about one of his students to a group who are not law enforcement officers. He has no qualms about discussing MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc., because he does not consider the details of Landis's internship to be personal information.

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### ***Church has not heard about his roommate's death, nor has he noticed that Landis is missing.***

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The professor worked with the human resources department at MasterGene to set up an internship program for ETU computer science students. Currently four ETU students (including Landis) hold 20-hour-per-week internships at MasterGene. The pay is low, but MasterGene schedules the interns' hours around their classes and provides valuable real-world experience. He has similar arrangements with several local companies.

Glass confirms that Landis worked at MasterGene and gives the party the phone number of his contact in the human resources department.

If the investigators contact MasterGene, the HR representative explains that the company does not have any open positions, but she can schedule a tour at 4:00 in the afternoon. If the party calls after four o'clock, she can schedule the tour at the same time on Monday.

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#### **GM Checklist: Did you ...**

- Reveal Landis's internship with MasterGene?

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### **2.9: Talking to Joe Landis's Roommate**

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Joe Landis lived in the Lester Hughes Men's Dormitory at East Texas University (1D, ET-20). Landis's roommate, Steve Church, is not his friend. Church considers the room a place to sleep and nothing more. The heroes can find him in three places: in class, in the library, and in the cafeteria. He stops by the room between classes to drop off and pick up books and notes. He comes in to sleep around eleven o'clock at night and leaves by eight o'clock every morning.

If the party goes to the room, they have 1d4 × 30 minutes before Landis's roommate comes back. The door is locked with a standard lock, which can be opened using the *Disable Device* skill (DC 22). Other students automatically notice a character who takes 20 to pick the lock, but the students are used to pranks and do not call the police unless the character picking the lock looks to be over 30 years old. If the party forces the door, Church's neighbors call security.

Church has not heard about his roommate's death, nor has he noticed that Landis is missing. He allows the group to look through Landis's things if they tell him they are investigating the student's death.

Church does not know much about Landis. They have only been living together for a few months, and Church did not like his roommate enough to find out much about him. He does know that

- Landis was a computer science major.
- He stayed up late on the computer a lot, but he never played games.
- Landis had an internship somewhere.
- He tended to be cocky about "geek stuff."
- Landis somehow got a parking pass for his motorcycle without paying for it.

In Landis's desk, heroes find several months of pay stubs from MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc. A locked drawer opens with a successful *Disable Device* roll (DC 15) or a Strength check (DC 12). Inside is a stack of notebooks detailing Landis's attempts to hack into various computers. Among the notebooks are "Hack Journal: ETU Administration," in which he describes assigning himself a parking pass; "Hack Journal: Pinebox Police," in which he details how he looked up a classmate's criminal record on a bet; and "Hack Journal: MasterGene Biotech."

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#### **GM Checklist: Did you ...**

- Introduce Steve Church?
- Let the party search Landis's possessions?
- Give the party a chance to find Landis's pay stubs?
- Give the party a chance to find Landis's journal?

## 2.10: Going to the Cops

If the heroes take the notebook (found in “2.9: Talking to Joe’s Roommate”) to the police, they are lucky and find Deputy Richards. He asks them to wait while he arranges for a search. About 30 minutes later he returns, looking furious. Sergeant Cavanaugh told his superiors that Richards has a conflict of interest and is obsessed with this case. The sheriff rejected his request for a search warrant or any other official response. Richards quits on the spot.

He plans to go to the offices of MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc., and find out what is going on there, even if he has to shoot his way in. He asks the heroes to come along. Since he is no longer a police officer, he will be breaking the law, but the journal indicates that people’s lives are at stake. He can provide a Glock 17 (9mm handgun) to anyone who does not own a weapon.

He goes alone if the heroes refuse to join him. If Richards goes to MasterGene alone, security kills him and stores his body in “Room 13: Walk-in Freezer” of the MasterGene complex.

## 2.11: Visiting MasterGene

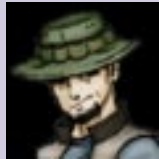
Anyone researching MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc., finds very little out of the ordinary. It is a small company with less than 100 employees. It is privately held and posts profits between 30% and 40%. A successful *Research* roll (DC 18) reveals one odd item. Dr. Perry is quoted as saying, at a biotechnology conference two years ago, “A virus to splice new sequences into the DNA of an adult mammal, which I call a rejuvenator virus, will be perfected within 10 years. The uses are endless: curing disease, healing birth defects, even thwarting old age.”

A map of the MasterGene campus stands at the entrance to the main parking lot. It shows 12 crop

tents separated by wide areas of forest. The complex covers several square miles.

Read or summarize the following to heroes who visit the MasterGene campus outside of Pinebox:

*The grounds of MasterGene are beautiful. A two-lane drive snakes through the woods for nearly a mile. Every so often a wide clearing opens up, mostly covered by a huge translucent plastic tent. The main building stands on a hilltop overlooking the woods. The area all around is covered with neatly clipped lawns. The building is small, only one storey, with reflective glass walls. The MasterGene logo stands out on one corner.*



### Real-World Uses of Genetic Engineering

All genetic production of pharmaceuticals is currently achieved using animals. The danger of drug-producing plants accidentally cross-pollinating species in the wild could have unexpected and ecologically damaging results.

If scientists use genetically modified plants to produce drugs, they must grow the plants under tightly controlled conditions. The crop tents used by MasterGene provide such conditions. Workers sterilize the seeds from this small crop so the plants can grow in open fields without cross-pollinating nearby crops.

Genetic engineering is used today to produce pharmaceuticals in two ways: using cultured bacteria or modified mammals

The first method developed used cultured bacteria to produce human insulin in e-coli bacteria. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved this procedure in 1982. Drug companies modify the bacteria to produce the desired protein, and then establish huge colonies of the microorganisms. They then kill the bacteria and extract the protein from the remains.

The second method adds the genetic code for a desired protein to a higher mammal to cause the animal to produce the protein in its milk. Companies have used this technique on mice, goats, and cows.

The investigators find Dr. Philip Perry to be quite accessible. If they request a meeting with him, he is available after 1:00 p.m. If the heroes scheduled a tour, Dr. Perry leads it personally. He knows that the characters are the same ones who were involved in the crash, courtesy of pictures from Sergeant Cavanaugh, and he plans to capture them during the tour.

### 2.11a: Questions

Anyone who attempts a *Sense Motive* check on Dr. Perry automatically discovers that he is completely deceptive. Any roll greater than 1 detects a lie. His antisocial personality disorder (see “Dr. Philip Perry” in “Appendix 1: Cast of Characters”) makes the concept of truth irrelevant to him. He says whatever he feels will have the desired effect. He does not care, or even understand, if it is true or

false. Otherwise, he is charming, personable, and witty.

If the party asks about Joe Landis, Dr. Perry seems surprised and remorseful. He says that he really did not know Landis, since he spends so much time in

# The Beast Within

his personal lab. If pressed, Perry quickly becomes angry and combative. He says he has no knowledge of what happened or why.

If a hero describes Landis's notebook, or shows it to Perry, the scientist claims that Landis must have had some sort of medical problem to make up such bizarre stories. He quickly asks the party to leave and calls two security guards to escort them out if they refuse. If they resist security, the guards draw their guns and, if necessary, shoot.

## 2.11b: Tour and Capture

Dr. Perry's tour begins with a walk to one of the crop tents. He explains that the tents keep modified crops from cross-pollinating normal plants. He refuses to let the characters inside, but the transparent tents obviously hold about an acre of soybean plants. He then returns to the main building and shows the charac-

---

*He offers to show the group around his lab, if they do not mind a few minutes of decontamination.*

---

ters the computer room (see room 43), the marketing department (see room 40), and his office (see room 52). He displays his personal lab through the glass wall separating it from his office. The whole time, he lectures the investigators about advances in biotechnology. He is certain that genetic manipulation will soon allow doctors to wipe out genetic diseases, such as multiple sclerosis, diabetes, and muscular dystrophy.

He offers to show the group around his lab, if they do not mind a few minutes of decontamination. He really pushes the party to enter the lab, claiming that he has an important discovery he wants to show them. If the party tries to go through decontamination in two groups, he explains that the decontamination procedure takes a rather long time, and it would be inefficient to split up.

The decontamination chamber is a small room with sealable doors on either end (see room 54). The chamber itself uses a combination of ultraviolet light and chemical decontamination mist. In his paranoia, Dr. Perry also fitted this chamber with a tank of custom-designed knockout gas. He hands out masks to

protect the heroes' eyes from the ultraviolet light. He also tells them to breathe normally, because the mist is harmless.

As the decontamination process begins, he flips a secret switch to release knockout gas into the chamber. The blindfolds prevent the characters from detecting the gas. Everyone in the room (except Perry, who holds his breath) must make a Fortitude check (DC 18) each turn or fall unconscious. Full decontamination takes five minutes (50 rounds!), but Perry waits until all of the heroes succumb to the gas and then cancels the decontamination. If any characters try to escape, Perry grapples them until they succumb. If Perry succumbs, Special Security revives him and gathers up the characters.

If any heroes escape, a squad of four Special Security guards, armed with stun guns, attempts to capture them. If the characters escape this group, a second squad of four chases them until they escape or enter a heavily populated area.

## 2.11c: MasterGene

If the characters anger Dr. Perry, or if, for any other reason, he never executes his plan to capture the heroes in the decontamination chamber, Jack Thorne's thugs make their move on the winding road leading out of the MasterGene complex. One of the Special Security guards stands in the road and stops the car. When the heroes stop, he approaches, says he needs to confirm their identity, and then tosses a gas grenade into the car. If the heroes do not stop, a group of four Special Security guards gives chase and tries to force them off the road before they reach a populated area.

---

### **GM Checklist: Did you ...**

- Give the heroes a tour?
- Explain what MasterGene does?
- Roleplay Dr. Perry becoming angry if the party presses him about Joe Landis?

## Section 3: Escaping MasterGene

This section assumes that the thugs successfully capture the party. If the heroes avoid the thugs and invade MasterGene with Deputy Richards, skip to “3.7: Raiding MasterGene” at the end of this section.

### 3.1: Mad Science

The characters wake up, bound and gagged, on narrow hospital beds in a clean, white room. Each character has an IV in his left arm connected to a bag of clear liquid. Other, more “personal” devices provide nourishment and collect waste. Several characters, those who will receive the Strength-boost virus, are attached to huge drums of nutrient liquid. In one corner, a small, black camera hangs from the ceiling inside a metal cage. It is strategically located in the corner of the room where it can observe all of the beds and the doorway.

Give the players a few minutes to roleplay, then read or summarize the following:

*A few minutes after the last of you awakens, the room’s single door opens. Dr. Perry enters, whistling tunelessly. “Welcome!” he says, grinning pleasantly. “Today we embark on a wonderful journey together.”*

If any characters managed to remove their gags (at the GM’s discretion), Dr. Perry brushes off their inevitable questions or demands, then continues with his monologue, below. If the characters persist in interrupting, use the text below as a guideline for answering their questions. As he speaks, Perry injects a syringe full of cloudy liquid into a port on the bag of each character’s IV. He leaves the empty syringes resting on small tables connected to each bed.

*“You see, I have been working for some time to improve the human race. My original goal was to make patients more resistant to the side effects of cancer drugs.*

*“But now I have a loftier goal. You see, the perfect human is still far from perfect. Now I plan to change humans into an entirely new creature that is perfect—physically, at any rate. Did you know that a baby gorilla is*

*three times stronger than a human with the same muscle mass? The great cats have 60 percent faster reaction to stimuli with the same nerve distance from stimulus to brain. Why? More importantly, why should humans not have the same efficiency? We have the best brains on the planet. I will give us the best bodies!*

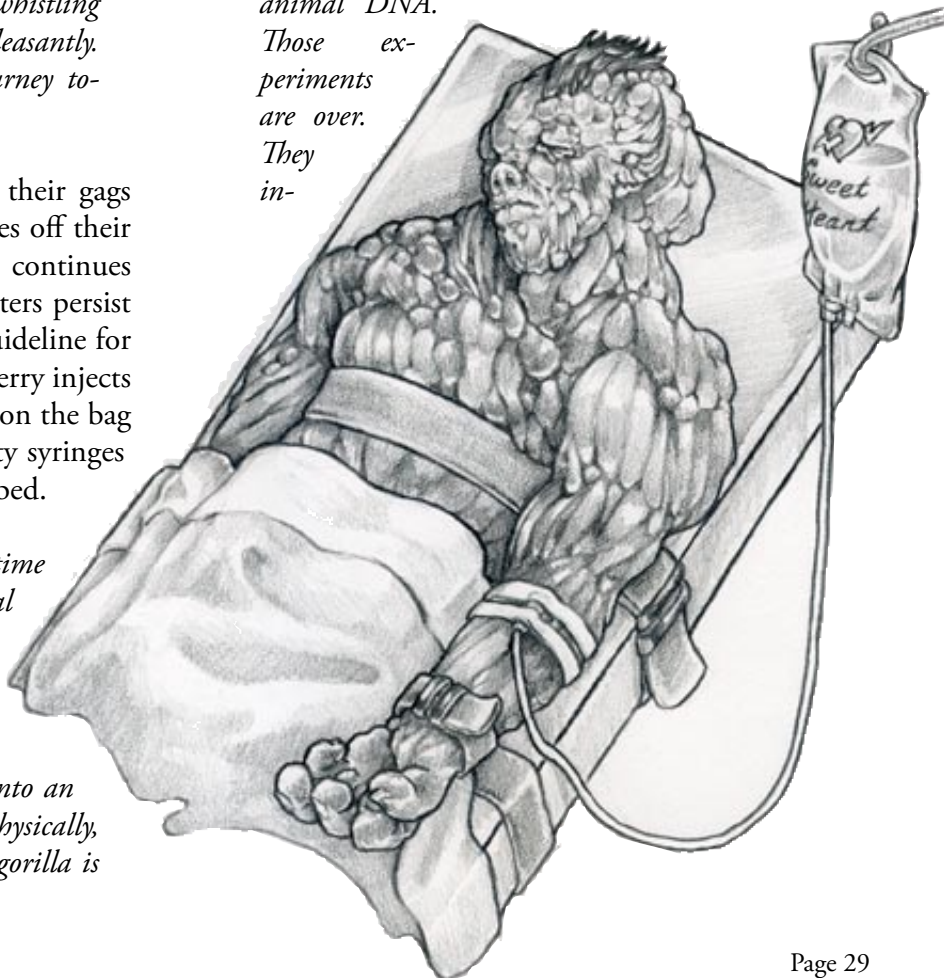
*“I cannot have you wandering about telling people that young Mr. Landis was murdered, and I need some diversity in my test subjects. Besides, since you’re to die anyway, you may as well make yourselves useful.*

*“I will inject you with these viruses, tailored to your own DNA. Each of you will fall asleep and awaken a new, superior being. Now, I do not expect the experiment to go perfectly on the first try. I have also tailored viruses with your current, fairly average DNA, which I will use to return you to your current form after each test. I will refine the treatment until you are all perfect beings with the strength of an elephant, the reflexes of a cheetah, and the hardiness of a rhinoceros.*

*“Don’t worry; I am not simply injecting you with animal DNA.*

*Those experiments are over.*

*They in-*



## The Beast Within

*variably reduced the subject to a vegetable or a grunting homicidal maniac. Nevertheless, those experiments gave me the knowledge to raise humanity to a new level of existence. You should be proud to be a part of the greatest leap forward the human race has ever enjoyed.”*

*Dr. Perry stands watching with an almost paternal pride as you succumb to the milky-white drug and lose consciousness.*

### 3.2: The Beast Within

The characters wake up in “Room 1 : Group Testing Room,” but they are very different. While they are unconscious, Dr. Perry injects each person with one of three viruses: Strength-boost, Dexterity-boost, or Constitution-boost. To maximize the effect, Dr. Perry matches the injections to each character’s highest physical attribute. For example, the strongest character gets the Strength-boost virus; the fastest, the Dexterity-boost virus; and so on. In any event, he tests all three viruses (duplicating some doses for larger groups), no matter the character’s statistics.

The Strength-boost virus adds 15 points to Strength while lowering Dexterity by 5 points. The character is now huge, between 100 and 200 pounds heavier, all muscle. Every muscle in the body is over-

developed. His arms are larger than a strong man’s thigh. His thighs are larger than a strong man’s torso. Veins bulge over grotesquely rippling muscles. Even his facial muscles bulge with strength. All this muscle mass severely limits movement, causing the loss in Dexterity.

The Dexterity-boost virus adds 15 points to Dexterity while lowering Constitution by 5 points. The character is now skeletally thin; all body fat is gone. The character’s skin stretches tight over knobby bones and rope-thin muscles. The nerve pathways stand out as bulging blue cords underneath the skin, tracing all over the body and creating grotesque patterns on the skull-like face. The heightened sensitivity to touch causes the character to be extremely sensitive to pain, reducing Constitution.

The Constitution-boost virus adds 15 points to Constitution while lowering Strength by 5 points. It increases the efficiency of all major organs, reducing the need for food and oxygen. It reduces body temperature to about 70 degrees and slows heart rate to fewer than ten beats per minute. By reducing muscle mass, the virus enlarges the internal organs, giving the character a barrel-shaped torso and spindly limbs. The skin becomes denser, taking on a rubbery sheen and a pallid, white color. Despite being incredibly healthy, the character looks like a bloated corpse.

### Why Genetic Engineering Will Not Turn You into a Monster



Before anyone panics and starts a campaign against genetic engineering based on this adventure, we want to explain why the sort of mutations shown in this module are impossible. An adult animal cannot be mutated into a completely different creature. There are two reasons:

First, there is no rejuvenator virus. Scientists use viruses to make changes to DNA, but the virus makes those changes as a by-product of trying, and failing, to reproduce. A normal virus attaches itself to host DNA and uses the mechanisms of the cell to reproduce. Viruses used in genetic engineering attach themselves to the host DNA, thus making the desired change, but are unable to reproduce.

These modified viruses must be used on a small number of cells, or in a localized region of a larger body, because they cannot multiply. The rejuvenator virus, if it existed, would need to multiply enough to infect every cell of a host, something no real disease does. Then it would have to suddenly stop multiplying, make the programmed genetic changes, and then spontaneously die. Viruses simply do not behave that way.

Second, changing the DNA of an adult (or “differentiated”) cell will not change the structure of the cell. An analogy is changing the blueprint for a building after construction is complete. If you build a three-bedroom house, and then add a new room to the blueprint, the room does not magically appear on the house.

Scientists can make *some* changes. If the cell produces a chemical based on its DNA, then changing the DNA can change the makeup of that chemical. Genetically modified e-coli bacteria have been producing human insulin using this method since 1982. The e-coli are still e-coli; they just produce a new chemical.

In order to mutate a creature, genetic engineers must modify the DNA when the creature is still an embryo. Because embryonic stem cells have not differentiated (assumed their final form) changing the DNA will affect the final creature. Think of it as changing the blueprint after the lumber arrives, but before building starts.

So, if you are not an embryo, you can rest easy. No mad scientist can turn you into a monster. The worst they can do is make you sweat gasoline.

# The Beast Within

If you are using the *Fear Effects* rules, experiencing these mutations is a *great fright*.

Furthermore, all these modifications damage the complex balance of proteins and hormones in the brain, causing the characters to become mentally unstable. Every hour of game time, or every time the investigators move up one level through the building (whichever comes first), each character loses one point of Intelligence and one point of Wisdom. At this point, make a Will save (DC 15) using the new Wisdom score. If the character fails the Will save, roll on the Psychological Illness Table in “Appendix 3: Psychological Illnesses.” If you are using 12 to Midnight’s *Fear Effects* rules, treat this experience as a *medium shock*.

## 3.3: Basement Level B3

(See GM Figure 3) Level B3 (the third basement level) of MasterGene was designed to be office and laboratory space for scientists working on various projects. Dr. Perry has since converted it to his own private torture chamber in which he now plays cat-and-mouse games with his prisoners. Booby traps throughout the level test the cognitive abilities of his subjects. All the fire doors are closed, and most are welded shut. Cameras in steel cages monitor the prisoner rooms and hallways so Perry can send security troops to stop anyone who gets too far. The cameras hang from the ceiling at a height of eight feet. The protective cages give the cameras a Defense of 17, but if the cage is breached it only takes 2 hit points of damage to break the camera.

The walls, which are made of cinderblocks filled with concrete and reinforced with steel rods, cannot be broken through. The doors to the rooms are sheet aluminum over a Styrofoam core. They cannot stop bullets, but give a +2 to Defense if used as a shield. The hinges are welded in place, so removing a door from its hinges requires a Strength check (DC 22).

The fire doors are made of reinforced sheet steel around a core of dense plastic foam. They are heat resistant and cannot be broken down by the characters. Under normal circumstances, the fire doors stand open in recessed spots in the wall, held in position by magnetic pads. Triggering the fire alarm releases the doors, which close to stop fire from spreading. Jack

Thorne disabled the fire alarms on this floor, and all but one of the fire doors are welded shut.

The elevator in the eastern hallway is not operational. The plate for the call button is empty and the door is jammed shut. A Strength check (DC 30 or, if using a crowbar, DC 25) opens the doors a few inches, showing that the shaft is full of concrete.

### I: Group Testing Room

*You awaken in the same white room, still bound and gagged. The only activity is a slowly blinking red light on the security camera mounted in the corner of the room. Your friends no longer occupy the other tables. In their place, hideous creatures lie bound by restraints and gagged. At the far end of the room, you see four beds that were not there earlier. Each holds a struggling person.*

The characters wake up strapped down and gagged (even if a character succeeded in removing the gag earlier). A successful Strength check (DC 25) or *Escape Artist* check (DC 25) allows a character to escape from the bonds. A character may take 20 for either of these rolls.

---

***After they calm down, the Rodriguez family will try to help the heroes escape.***

---

The room contains four more beds than before. Three men and one woman, all Hispanic and in their late teens or early twenties, struggle helplessly against their bonds in the new beds. They are Alicia, Jose, Eduardo, and Manuel Rodriguez, siblings who crossed the border from Mexico with Gary Sheets. Only Alicia speaks English.

The members of the Rodriguez family have only been in the room for a little while and have not been hooked up to any equipment. The mutations evident on the heroes terrify them, and they try frantically to escape when the heroes wake up.

After they calm down, the Rodriguez family will try to help the heroes escape. As first-level Ordinaries, they give the heroes someone to worry about beside themselves, and they give the GM a tool to steer the players toward helpful areas, or to discover traps

# The Beast Within

if the heroes have trouble. See “Appendix 1: Cast of Characters” for details about the Rodriguez family.

The only items available in the room are the beds, a small and flimsy aluminum table attached to each bed, and a syringe and needle on each table. The beds are of extremely cheap aluminum construction. Once free, a character with a Strength of 18 or better can tear the beds apart to get two metal bars that can be used as weapons to inflict 1d4 points of damage.

The door is locked and opens inward. The pins in the hinges are welded to the hinges so they cannot be removed. A Strength check (DC 18 or, if using a bar from the bed to pry, DC 15) breaks the door open. The lock may also be picked (DC 20) by anyone with the *Disable Device* skill, using the needles from the syringes. The characters may take 20 on either of these rolls.

Once outside the room, the characters find themselves in a wide hallway. Closed metal fire doors block the hallways leading east. The northern pair of doors is welded shut and reinforced with steel bars. The southern pair of doors is unlocked. Welded doors block the hallways leading farther east, as well as the north-south corridor.

A security guard in “Room 8: Experiment Observation Room” watches the characters using the camera in their room. As soon as they leave or destroy the camera, he remotely unlocks the doors to the rooms labeled 2. This releases a gorilla man and a tiger man. After releasing the mutants, the guard flees, avoiding the traps in “Room 14: Cubicles” and activating the machine-gun trap in the stairway.

The mutants attack the investigators immediately. The creatures are deranged from the horrors of their captivity and the changes in brain chemistry caused by the drugs. They scream gibberish throughout their attacks and fight until killed.

## 2: Mutant Testing Room

*This small room is stained with urine and feces. The smell is overpowering. The remains of paper plates or bowls lie piled in a sort of nest in one corner. A thick steel cage surrounds the camera suspended from the ceiling.*

These rooms held either gorilla men or tiger men. Twisted aluminum and bits of torn cloth lie all over the room.

## 3: Single Testing Room

*This room is clean and sterile, with a gurney like the ones to which you were strapped. A camera in a strong steel cage attached to the ceiling watches the door.*

These rooms contain only a single gurney identical to those in “Room 1: Group Testing Room.”

## 4: Office

*This room contains a spartan, metal-and-wood desk with several drawers. The desk is the only furniture.*

The desks in these rooms are large but flimsy and cannot be removed from the room without being broken or disassembled. The offices do not contain cameras.

## 5: Conference Room

*A single large table dominates this room. The table is wooden and looks quite sturdy. The table is the only furniture.*

The table has four legs that can be broken off and used as clubs, which can inflict 1d6 points of damage.

## 6: Training Room

*Four long, flimsy, narrow, metal tables face a large display screen, which dominates the south wall of the room. A plaque on the door next to the screen reads, “Projection Room.”*

This long room was intended for use as a training and videoconferencing facility. The tables are too flimsy to make useful weapons.



# The Beast Within

## 7: Projection Room

*This empty room gives access to the back of the projection screen.*

This room is designed to house the projector for the adjacent training room. The only portion of the projection system in place, however, is the screen—a large sheet of fragile, rigid plastic.

## 8: Experiment Observation Room

*Video monitors line the walls of this room. Each screen shows the interior of a room. Two of the rooms are the filth-smeared former prisons of the poor mutants you fought. Below the video monitors are strange devices with marked displays for heart rate, blood pressure, blood oxygen level, and brain activity. All of these are dark except one bank. These are labeled with your names, lights calmly showing zero for all vital signs.*

*A large white box with a red cross sits under the desk next to the rolling office chair.*

The white box is a medical kit.

## 9: Cafeteria

*This large room is empty. Doors stand in the approximate middle of the north and south walls. Two doors lead through the west wall. The northernmost of these has a wide window through which you can see a kitchen.*

## 10: Kitchen

*This room looks like a kitchen, but without appliances. Only a long counter furnishes the room. Two knives and a cleaver sit next to a large summer sausage.*

On the other end of the counter, out of sight from the window, is a strange device the size and shape of a bowling ball. “DANGER—Fire Suppressant” is written on the ball in large letters. A cable connects this ball to a small black box with a translucent dome that faces the cutlery.

The strange, round device is a “halon ball,” a portable fire suppressant often used in small spaces, such as wiring closets or small computer rooms. It is connected to a small box that anyone with ranks in *Knowledge (electronics)* recognizes as a motion sensor. In this case, the halon has been replaced with Paris green (Save Type: Inhaled; DC: 14; Initial Damage: 1d2 CON; Secondary Damage: 1d4 CON), an easy-to-make poison once used on rats in Europe.

Anyone approaching the counter sets off the motion sensor, causing the halon ball to release Paris green into the room. Any characters exposed to the gas must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) every round until they leave the room. When the ball initially goes off, a character may attempt to flee the room, avoiding damage on a successful Reflex save (DC 18).

## 11: Chemical Storage Room

*This large room contains row after row of shelves that hold every sort of chemical and medical supply imaginable. Doors stand near the western end of the north and south walls.*

This room contains dozens of different chemicals. The chemicals in this room (including rooms 12 and 13) can be used to make nearly any simple chemical effect: smoke, bright flashes, corrosives, oils, etc. A *Craft (chemical)* check (DC 12) enables a character to make up to six Molotov cocktails, six smoke grenades, and four flash grenades. Making any type of weapon takes 1d6 × 30 minutes per type.

When the characters approach the refrigerator and freezer, read the following:

*The east wall is made of steel, with two large steel doors labeled “Refrigerator” to the north and “Freezer” to the south. Near the floor, between the doors, you see light glinting off a small, red reflector.*

An electric eye midway between the doors to the refrigerator and freezer detects anyone moving between the two doors. The beam is a narrow, infrared light under the shelves shining on a small, red reflector between the doors. Heroes who detect the trap can easily step over the beam without having to roll for success.

## The Beast Within

If activated, the sensor sets off small explosives that shatter glass bottles of acid on the shelves and spray the marked area with acid. Any character in that area must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or take 1d3 points of damage. Anyone can easily disarm the trap by moving the bottles of acid off the shelf.

### 12: Walk-in Refrigerator

*This standard walk-in refrigerator contains various packets and bottles of chemicals.*

This refrigerator contains various chemicals that must be kept cold, but nothing useful for making weapons.

### 13: Walk-in Freezer

*This standard walk-in freezer contains chemicals on shelves along the walls. In the back of the freezer stands a pile of six long, black bags that appear to contain bodies.*

Each body bag contains the body of a mutated person. Three are tiger men, two are gorilla men, and the last is a normal-looking Latino woman. The woman died testing the virus used to kill Gary Sheets. The



virus modified her genetics to give her a rare and deadly heart defect.

If Deputy Sean Richards came to MasterGene by himself, his body is here. The corpse has about a dozen bullet wounds. His equipment (badge, gun, radio, handcuffs, etc.) is missing, but he still wears his uniform.

### 14: Cubicles

*This long, narrow room may have been some sort of call center or data-entry room. Cubicles 4 feet deep and 5 feet wide line the long sides of the room. Each cubicle has a narrow shelf against the wall, like a desk but without drawers. There are no computers, telephones, or chairs. You can see a door back into the hallway farther toward the east.*

Tripwires are strung between the cubicles in two places. Any character looking for traps automatically detects the thin wire. Otherwise, a successful Spot check (DC 15) is required to detect the wire. Each wire connects to a concussion grenade, sometimes called a stun grenade because it generally does not kill outright. If a character trips the wire, the grenade explodes, inflicting 2d6 points of damage to anyone in the corresponding shaded area on the map who fails a Reflex save (DC 18). If the Reflex save is successful, the character leaps out of the blast area and takes no damage. Characters can disable the grenade traps (no roll necessary) and use the grenades later.

### 15: Storage

*This room holds all sorts of rubbish and cleaning supplies.*

There is a barrel in the east wall full of filthy rags and plastic bags of feces—proof that someone cleans the mutants' rooms occasionally.

### 16: Stairway Up to Level B2

*This is the bottom of a stairway leading up. On your left is a bright red box containing a fire extinguisher. Above the fire extinguisher, the number "B3" is stenciled on the wall. A thick canvas pad bolted to the wall covers the wall to your right.*

## The Beast Within

*The ceiling above the doorway slopes upward from the far end of the room, suggesting that there is a landing and the stairs continue up. You cannot see the landing from the doorway.*

The fire extinguisher is a useful item. It can be used as a club, which inflicts 1d6 points of damage. If punctured (shot for 4 or more hit points of damage), it explodes, dealing 1d6 points of damage to everything within three feet. If fully discharged, it creates a cloud of dry chemical covering a 20' × 20' area (16 map squares) for 1d4 rounds. The cloud obscures vision, causing attackers to suffer a -4 penalty to hit for every five feet of dry chemical between the attacker and the target. Spraying the fire extinguisher into the stairway disables the machine-gun trap for two rounds.

The canvas-covered pad on the wall has several layers of Kevlar and a ½" plate of steel. It exists to keep shots fired by the machine-gun trap from damaging the walls. Bullets from the machine gun strike the steel plate and the Kevlar traps them, eliminating damage from ricocheting bullets.

Anyone walking on or in front of the stairs (the area marked on the map) activates the machine gun mounted on the first landing. The machine-gun trap is meant to stop the test subjects after Dr. Perry sees how they deal with the traps on this level. Its base is a large, black box (a three-foot cube) with the gun mounted on a post extending from the top. The gun is a modern Gatling gun known as a minigun. A small hole in the black box, about 1" across, lets the targeting camera see through the armored case.

This camera takes 100 images per second and compares them. It can only view a 45-degree arc in front of the gun. If the images change, the gun automatically discharges using autofire (see "Special Attacks" under "Chapter 5: Combat" in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*). This works like a character with the Advanced Firearms Proficiency feat, except the DC of the Reflex save is always 15 on the first round and 20 each subsequent round. Blocking the camera's view with paint, smoke, or darkness causes the minigun to fire a single burst and then shut down until its visibility changes..

Once triggered, the gun stays active (attacking with a DC of 20) for five minutes. It uses very small-caliber ammunition that only does 1d4 points of

damage. The base holds more than 10,000 rounds of ammunition. Consider the ammunition supply infinite.

Characters can easily remove the gun from its base. It is designed to be fired by a person, and anyone with the *Exotic Firearms Proficiency (heavy machine guns)* feat can use it with no penalty. Anyone else who fires it does so with a -4 penalty.

### M and W: Restrooms

*This is a standard restroom. A first-aid kit hangs next to the entrance.*

### 3.4. Basement Level B2 (See GM Figure 4)

This floor was originally designed as generic office space. The walls and doors are the same as on level B3, but the fire doors are open. The stairway up to level B1 is walled over and the space filled with concrete. The only way up is in the elevator.

---

***He chooses them not for skill  
but for willingness to do very  
unpleasant things for money.***

---

Jack Thorne and Dr. Perry's Special Security force uses this floor. The Special Security force consists of thugs hired by Thorne to do his dirty work. He chooses them not for skill but for willingness to do very unpleasant things for money. Thorne has his own motivations. (See his character description for details.)

This floor also houses the prisoners who have not yet been used as test subjects. The prisoner rooms are not locked, but brackets bolted to the doors hold strong metal bars. They cannot be opened from the inside, but no skills or keys are required to open them from the hallway.

The security forces lie in wait for the heroes in the north and south hallways. There is one guard for each character. All are armed with an HK MP5 9mm sub-machine gun and one tear gas grenade. The thugs have split their forces and are waiting next to each of the doors to the gymnasium. When they see the characters, the guards shout, "Hold it right there! Lie down on the ground with your arms behind your heads."

# The Beast Within

They shoot any character who lies down (though they shoot at characters attacking them first).

Every time a guard is killed, the rest must make a Will save (DC 12 + # of guards killed). If they fail, they flee and hide in one of the empty offices.

## 16: Stairway from B3

*At the top of the stairs you find another fire extinguisher with “B2” stenciled above it. A door opens to the west and the stairs lead back down. No stairs lead up from this level.*

The stairway between levels B2 and B1 has been filled with concrete to keep the legitimate employees from finding the lower two levels. The only way up is in the elevator.

## 17: Prison Room

*Aside from its lone inhabitant, this room is nearly empty. A thin pad lies on the floor next to a plastic camp toilet—a plastic jug with a seat. Another plastic jug and a wide bowl lie on the floor next to the door.*

The prisoners are all illegal immigrants from Mexico, and all of them speak only Spanish. They are terrified and, when they see any of the characters, they panic. They do not attack, and they flee at the earliest opportunity. If they reach the stairs and elevator, they choose one at random. No prisoner who leaves the floor will ever be seen again.

Any member of the Rodriguez family who makes it this far will be able to calm the prisoners down, but the prisoners have no useful information.

## 18: Empty Office

*This room is completely empty.*

## 19: Security Office

*This room makes the observation room downstairs look low tech. Thirty monitors show views from over a hundred cameras all over the complex. A round table in the center of the room contains,*

*spaced around the table, maps of the four interior floors and one of the entire complex. The maps are dotted with small, numbered, red buttons. One button on each map is glowing. In the center of the table are five video monitors, each one facing one of the maps. Each monitor shows the output of a video camera.*

*The outer wall is ringed with monitors, with a number in the lower right corner of each. There are chairs here for about a half dozen people to monitor the cameras.*

This is the center for the Special Security force. From here they monitor all the cameras in the building. Every occupied office has a camera. Every hallway and stairway has a camera. Every crop tent has two cameras. The center island is a tracking station. Using the buttons, the guards can track anyone moving through the building.

## 20: Armory

*Opening this door is like walking into a gun store, except the guns are all the same. Racks of submachine guns, ammunition magazines, and grenades stand in neat rows. Everything is organized and easily accessible.*

This room contains armaments for the security forces. There are plenty of the following: HK MP5 9mm submachine guns, tear gas grenades, concussion grenades (see “Room 14: Cubicles”), 9mm ammunition for the submachine guns, and .225 caliber ammunition for the minigun in the stairwell.

## 21: Jack Thorne’s Office

*This is a very plain office. A clean desk stands in the center of the room with only a laptop computer, a pad of paper, and a ballpoint pen cluttering its spotless surface. There are no pictures, no knickknacks, and no papers in the wastebasket.*

*A board with dozens of hooks hangs on the wall behind the desk. It holds several rows of keys labeled with floor and room numbers.*

*The computer is open and turned on. It displays only a logo: a heart beside the words “Sweet Heart Investments.” The computer is state of the art. It*

## The Beast Within

*even has a small device next to the keyboard that you recognize as a fingerprint reader.*

The board behind the desk holds a key for each door on levels B2 and B3. On the lowest row are two keys labeled “B2 Master” and “B3 Master.” B2 Master opens all doors on level B2, including the door to the stairway leading to level B3. B3 Master opens all doors on level B3. The heroes might need one of these keys if they raid MasterGene with Deputy Sean Ricards (see “Level B2” under “Section 3.7: Raiding MasterGene”).

The party cannot access the computer. Pressing any key, touching the touch pad, or lifting the computer off the desk brings up a window with the word “Authenticate.” If Jack Thorne’s living right-index finger does not pass over the fingerprint reader within 10 seconds, the screen goes blank and the computer gives off a small cloud of smoke as the hard drive melts.

Anyone doing even a cursory search finds a silver briefcase, closed but not locked, under the desk. It contains samples of Dr. Philip Perry’s work that Thorne plans to take back to Sweet Heart. The briefcase is refrigerated to keep the samples fresh, with enough power to last for two weeks. It contains 10 small vials marked “RV,” 10 vials marked “AV,” and six small jars of white ointment marked “TO.” A single sheet of paper describes the contents.

*RV—Rejuvenator Virus: Used to modify the genetic code of a living mammal. These samples have no modification defined.*

*AV—Assassin Virus: Uses the rejuvenator virus to give the victim a deadly genetic heart defect.*

*TO—Trauma Ointment: Ointment using a modified rejuvenator virus and human stem cells to reconnect and replace damaged flesh. This ointment heals traumatic injuries, like bullet wounds, lacerations, and burns, in seconds.*

*NOTE: Trauma ointment contains live viruses and live human cells. Keep refrigerated. Do not expose to ultraviolet light. The shelf life of these samples is unknown, but they probably will not last for more than a few days.*

To be effective, the trauma ointment must be applied using the *Treat Injury* skill. Successful applica-

tion heals 1d8+1 points of damage for each jar of ointment used.

## 22: Gym

*This is obviously a gymnasium. It has free weights, weight machines, treadmills, and some sort of large video game with several modified MP5 submachine guns. The guns have a large supply of ammunition, all blanks.*

The video game is a virtual-reality shooting range. Shooters use special laser guns to fire at target images on a screen. The submachine guns are fitted with special barrels that fire a laser whenever the weapon discharges a blank. They cannot be easily modified to use normal bullets.

The only useful weapons here are the metal bars for the free weights. These can be used as two-handed clubs, inflicting 1d8 points of damage and having a reach of 10 feet.

## M and W: Restrooms

*This restroom is equipped with lockers and shower facilities. A first-aid kit hangs next to the entrance.*

The lockers contain the personal clothing and property of the guards.

## E: Elevator

*This elevator contains a standard emergency telephone compartment and two buttons labeled “G” and “B1.”*

A successful *Search* check (DC 15) reveals the B2 button concealed in the emergency telephone compartment behind the telephone. Characters can open an emergency trapdoor in the ceiling and climb up rungs inside the elevator shaft. The elevator is not trapped, but it does have a camera that can be monitored from “Room 19: Security Office.”

## 3.5: Basement Level B1 (See GM Figure 5)

This is the working laboratory. The party escapes on a Saturday, so the lab is deserted. The heroes could use some of the chemical supplies they find here to make improvised weapons, but after defeating the guards, they should have plenty of conventional weapons.

All of the data and equipment on this floor are for legal experiments involving grain and medications. If the heroes have sufficient weapons, you may want to suggest that they move on to the next floor.

### 23: Stairway

*From this level the stairs go up. A fire extinguisher sits in a red box on the wall. A label above it reads “B1.”*

### 24: Hallway

*This short hallway gives access to the stairway, the elevator, doors to the north and south marked “Decontamination,” and two doors to the east marked “Men’s Lockers” and “Women’s Lockers.” Lights next to the decontamination entrances show green.*

The lights for the decontamination rooms show red when the decontamination procedure is in progress. During the five minutes of decontamination, only the door the character entered through will open. Opening the door automatically stops the decontamination procedure.

### 25: Locker Room

*This room is lined with steel lockers. About a quarter of the lockers are secured with padlocks. On the far end of the room is a door labeled “Decontamination Equipment—Keep Out!”*

These rooms contain lockers where the scientists can change clothes and store their personal items. The room to the north is for men, the one to the south is for women. All lockers in use have padlocks, which require a Strength check (DC 20) or a *Disable Device* check (DC 25) to open. They contain lab coats,

electronic timers, pens, pencils, notebooks, and other common items.

### 26: Decontamination Equipment

*A machine that looks to be straight out of a horror film fills this room. Several large, translucent, white tanks hold an unknown liquid. These tanks feed into an ominously humming machine with dozens of small tubes snaking through the wall. An eerie glow like that from a black light seeps through the holes and along the plastic tubes.*

These rooms contain all the equipment that runs the decontamination rooms. Nothing here is particularly useful to the characters.

### 27: Decontamination Room

*This room is rather ominous. Behind the glass walls you see hundreds of dark, black bulbs. Transparent tubes snake to dozens of tiny sprayers mounted evenly over the walls. Next to the door you see a large, red button, a rack with six blindfolds, and a plaque that reads, in large letters,*

*Decontamination Instructions:*

- 1) Place a blindfold over your eyes. Failure to wear eye protection could result in permanent vision damage or blindness. Closing your eyes or covering them with your hands will not protect them!*
- 2) Stand near the center of the room with your hands away from your sides and your feet at shoulder width. If processing a group, keep at least three feet between individuals.*
- 3) Press the start button. Breathe normally during decontamination; the chemical mist is harmless. A chime will sound when decontamination is complete. The process takes approximately five minutes.*

These rooms use ultraviolet light and a light chemical mist to kill any bacteria or viruses on the people within. Decontamination takes five minutes.

Pressure pads in the floor detect the number of people inside the room. When a person enters the room, the opposite door locks and cannot be unlocked until the decontamination is complete or the room is empty.

# The Beast Within

## 28: Chemical Storage

*This is another storage room full of chemicals and glassware.*

Together, the storerooms on this floor contain the same materials as “Room 11: Chemical Storage Room” on floor B3.

## 29: Senior Scientist Office

*This is a large, rather posh office with a dark wood desk, a leather chair, and a very sleek, modern-looking computer. Pads of paper covered with scribbled notes lie all over the desk, and several models of esoteric molecules sit on a shelf.*

These are the offices of the senior scientists. They contain general office supplies: desks, chairs, lots of paper and pencils, computers, telephones, and so forth. The computers are password protected. Anyone with ranks in *Computer Use* can attempt to hack in (DC 25). This takes 1d6 hours and provides only esoteric data about soybean genetics.

## 30: Junior Scientist Office

*This is an average-looking office. The desk is steel with wood panels, and the chair is covered with comfortable-looking fabric. Sheets of notes and computer printouts litter the desk, and the computer monitor has a dozen or so yellow sticky notes.*

This room is the same as “Room 29: Senior Scientist Offices,” but smaller.

## 31: Intern Cubicles

*These tiny cubicles have no space for personal effects. If they were prison cells, the Geneva Convention would outlaw them. Each cubicle has a computer, a shelf to put it on, a telephone, and a cheap office chair.*

These are small cubicles for interns. Each contains a desk, a chair, and a computer.

## 32: Janitor Closet

This small room contains janitorial supplies: two large garbage cans, garbage bags, rolls of paper towels, a mop, and a bucket. The cleaning supplies include some caustic or poisonous chemicals, but nothing useful for making weapons.

## 33: Telephone Closet

This room contains a large metal rack holding patch panels for the telephones and computer-network connections on this floor.

## 34: Laboratory

*This huge room is filled with strange and exotic machines. They are arranged in islands, apparently so several groups of people can work on similar machines at the same time. Many of the machines have fantastic robot arms with thick bundles of tubing or sheaves of wires running to dubious-looking instruments. Nearly all of them have some sort of warning: biohazard, poison, acid, even several radiation warnings.*

*Several large racks with bright lights stand in the center of the room. Hundreds of small pots with plants of various sizes stand on the shelves, growing happily under the bright sun lamps.*

This is where the legitimate scientists of MasterGene do their work.

## 35: Refrigerator

*The shelves of this walk-in refrigerator contain hundreds, perhaps thousands, of small, glass vials. The racks holding the vials are labeled with esoteric chemical or biological names. Some are marked with chemical symbols.*

This walk-in refrigerator contains hundreds of small vials of viruses and bacteria used to modify the soybeans. It does not contain the rejuvenator virus.

# The Beast Within

## M and W: Restrooms

*This is a standard restroom. A first-aid kit hangs next to the entrance.*

## E: Elevator

*This elevator contains a standard emergency telephone compartment and two buttons labeled “G” and “B1.”*

A successful *Search* check (DC 15) reveals the B2 button concealed in the emergency telephone compartment behind the telephone. Characters can open an emergency trapdoor in the ceiling and climb up rungs inside the elevator shaft. The elevator is not trapped, but it does have a camera that can be monitored from “Room 19: Security Office.”

## 3.6: Ground Floor Details

All of the nonscientific work done at MasterGene is done on the ground floor. It houses reception, human resources, sales, marketing, and Dr. Perry’s office.

The heroes may decide to leave the MasterGene building before taking the antidote. All of the cars in the parking lot are locked. Dr. Perry, Jack Thorne, and the guards all carry car keys. Perry drives a Porsche 911 coupe, Thorne drives a soft-top Jeep Wrangler, and the guards drive an assortment of cars, SUVs, and trucks.

As long as they do not approach town, the heroes do not attract attention. If they do enter town, the disfigured characters cause a panic. City and county police attempt to take them into custody. Once the heroes are in custody, the police take them directly to the Golan County Regional Health Center for treatment.

## 36: Stairway

*This landing is only slightly different from those on the lower levels. It contains the same kind of fire extinguisher with the floor number, “G” in this case, written above it. On the north wall, next to the entrance to the hallway, is another door. A lighted sign above the door reads “EXIT.”*

The exit leads to a short hallway that goes outside..

## 37: Exit Hall

*This short hallway leads to a red door with an orange push-bar. A sign above the door reads “EXIT.” “Emergency EXIT only, alarm will sound” is written on the push bar.*

Opening the outside door sets off the alarm unless a character uses *Disable Device* (DC 25) to bypass the alarm. Unlike level B3, the fire alarms on this floor work properly. Opening this door, breaking any external window, or pulling a fire alarm (located in every hallway) triggers a loud, annoying siren and alerts the police and fire department in Pinebox.

## 38: Janitor Closet

*This closet contains mops, brooms, plastic bags, and various cleaning products.*

## 39: Sales Office

*This room is someone’s office. The desk is covered with brochures, fact sheets, and lists of names of various pharmaceutical companies. Instead of a computer, there is a docking station for a laptop.*

These offices belong to sales representatives who travel the world selling MasterGene’s services.

## 40: Marketing Office

*This office contains dozens of different brochures, pictures, and advertisements. Advertising slogans and ad layouts cover the white board.*

These offices belong to the members of the marketing department.

## 41: Information-Technology Office

*This office is the messiest you have seen. Someone has scrawled strange symbols and flow charts all over the white board. Printouts of computer code cover the desk and fill the wastebasket.*



# The Beast Within

These offices belong to the members of the IT department. Programmers here work with the scientists to write modeling and visualization software.

## 42: IT Intern Cubicles

*These tightly packed cubicles overflow with computer printouts. Coding practices and handwritten notes are pinned to the walls. Even though the cubicles are tiny, it looks like a lot of work gets done here.*

These small cubicles belong to the IT interns. The cubicle farthest from the door bears a nameplate reading “Joe Landis.” The cubicle contains only a computer and a chair. Anything Joe may have left in the cubicle has been removed. The computer is password protected. A successful *Computer Use* roll (DC 18) allows a character to hack in and discover that all personal files and e-mail messages have been irretrievably erased.

## 43: Computer Room

*This large, aggressively air-conditioned room contains several rows of tall computer racks. Each rack holds dozens of strange devices with flashing lights and no obvious purpose.*

The servers in this room hold all of the data for MasterGene’s legitimate projects. Even so, the room is rather empty because the company does not have great computing needs.

## 44: Cafeteria

*This large room holds enough tables and chairs for about 20 people to sit and eat. A screened-off counter and a door open into the kitchen to the east and doors leave the room to the north and south.*

## 45: Kitchen

*This is a standard industrial kitchen. All of the ovens, griddles, and frying vats are turned off.*

A catering company runs the kitchen. The door is locked and a screen is pulled down over the serving counter. A Strength check (DC 15) breaks either the door or the screen. The kitchen is clean and neat.

## 46: Storage

*This room is primarily filled with bottled soda and canned food. A large, chrome, restaurant-style refrigerator stands in the southeast corner.*

## 47: Security Office

*This small office is rather cluttered. Two monitors cycle through views from several cameras. The computers on the two desks are turned off. Several sign-in sheets and ID-badge supplies lie on clearly marked shelves.*

This is the office for the security guard on duty. The monitors show views from the following cameras: two in the parking lot, one over each fire door, one at the entrance, and one with a wide-angle view of the lobby. On the weekends the guard sits at the reception desk, so this room is unoccupied.

## 48: Copy Room / Office Supplies

*A large industrial copier and stacks of paper and supplies take up this entire room.*

## 49: Reception Area

*The reception area is pleasant and open, with comfortable seats for twelve people. Paintings of growing plants and DNA double helices decorate the walls. A large MasterGene logo hangs behind the imposing reception desk. An overweight man in a security uniform sits at the desk holding a newspaper.*

During working hours, a receptionist sits at the reception desk and the security guards stay in the security office. After hours and on weekends, the security guard moves to the reception desk.

# The Beast Within

The guard is not aware of any illegal activity; he is just a man working for a paycheck. He has the same statistics as the guards on level B2, but he is not armed. If he sees any of the mutated characters, read the following:

*The guard looks toward you and his jaw drops. He sits like a statue for several seconds, and then very softly says, "Oh my God!" He scrambles away from you, knocking some papers and his cup of coffee on the floor. After a few seconds of confusion, he runs for the exit shouting, "Oh my God! Oh my God!" over and over.*

## **50: Sales/Marketing Interns**

*Logos, catchphrases, and advertisement layouts festoon these tiny cubicles.*

## **51: Human Resources Office**

*This office is neat and orderly, with brochures, application forms, and other paperwork within easy reach.*

## **52: Dr. Perry's Office**

*The door to this office reads, "Dr. P. Perry, MD." It is an imposing office with a large, mahogany desk, several leather chairs, and an excellent view of the MasterGene complex. The desk is very messy, covered with papers, dirty coffee cups, and even some empty food containers. A telephone and an intercom keep the mess from spilling onto the floor. The northern wall is glass and separates the office from a laboratory. Dr. Perry stands in the lab behind a steel counter.*

*The doctor seems to have been expecting you. When you enter, he begins speaking to you through the intercom.*

Allow the characters to go on initiative if they wish, or continue with the mad scientist's monologue.

*He says, "I simply cannot believe how well the virus worked for a first try. You are magnificent! Your physical abilities are above anything I dreamed of, and you have kept enough mental clarity to detect traps, use tools, and act collaboratively! Give me a minute for decon and I'll take some measurements, do some blood work, and we'll see if any side effects show up."*

*He then walks toward a small room in the corner of the lab. A door on your side of the room reads "Decontamination." A small panel next to the door has red and green lights. The green light is glowing.*

A wall of tempered glass separates Dr. Perry's office and his lab. A vertical seam connects the sheets of glass every five feet.

Each sheet stops the first attack directed through it and shatters into small, razor-sharp shards. Any-

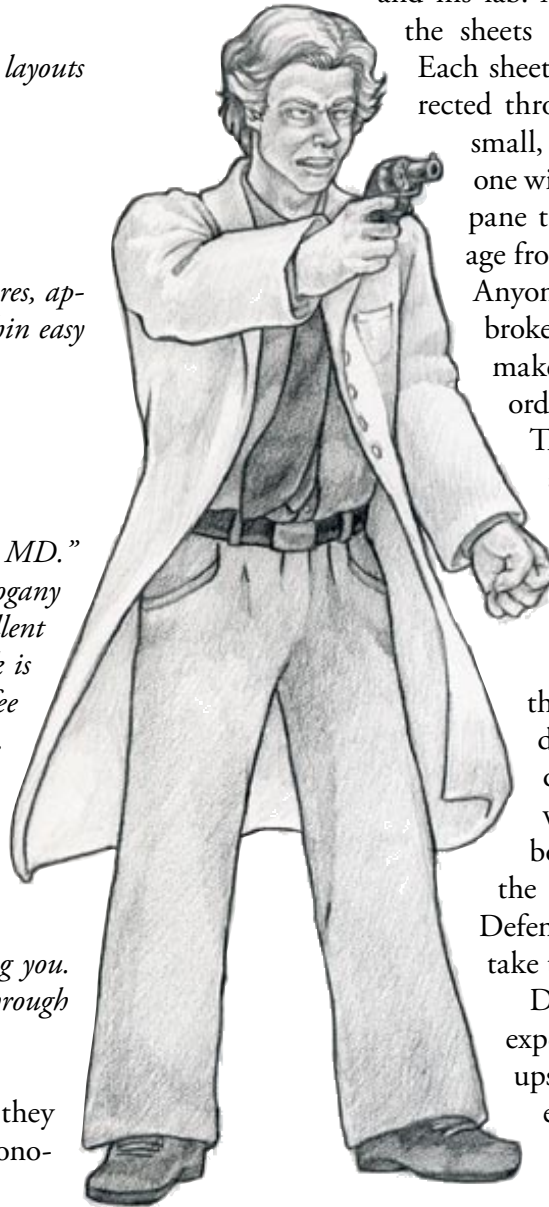
one within 10 feet of a breaking pane takes 1d3 points of damage from the shrapnel-like glass.

Anyone attempting to cross the broken glass in bare feet must make a Will save (DC 15) in order to make the attempt.

Those who make the save and choose to cross take 1 point of damage and suffer a penalty to Defense of 1d4 points.

Characters wearing shoes or characters with the Toughness feat, the damage reduction special quality, or those infected with the Constitution-boost virus need not make the Will save or suffer the Defense penalty, but they still take the indicated damage.

Dr. Perry honestly does not expect the characters to be upset with him. He considers his research the most important thing in the world, and expects every-



one else to feel the same. He cannot understand that anyone would resist helping with his great project.

Jack Thorne is also in the lab, standing in the southwest corner of the room, concealed against the door leading to “Room 54: Decontamination Room.” The heroes notice him with a successful *Spot* check (DC 16).

If the party resists or reacts violently, Dr. Perry flies into a rage, draws his Colt Double Eagle, and fires until it is empty. If he is still in the lab when he attacks, then his first shot shatters the glass wall. When he runs out of ammunition, he charges into melee using the pistol as a club.

Thorne fights to protect Sweet Heart’s investment. He considers Dr. Perry too unstable to leave alive, but he wants the test subjects dead as well. With that in mind, Thorne targets whomever he feels is most dangerous. If the party is having trouble defeating Perry, he shoots Perry in the back. If the heroes are doing well, he attacks the most dangerous party member. He pays special attention to characters infected with the Constitution-boost virus because he knows that they are hardest to kill.

If the guard at the reception desk is still there when shooting starts, he stays far away from any shooting, either fleeing into the fields or hiding under his desk.

Combat in the lab sets off the building’s security system, alerting the local police. They arrive in 10–15 minutes.

Dr. Perry’s desk is thick wood and provides hard cover. After the combat, a *Search* check (DC 12) on the desk reveals an undeveloped roll of film taken from Joe Landis’ camera after his death.

A *Search* (DC 10) of the lab uncovers a small rack of test tubes labeled “Original DNA.” Each tube has the name of one of the characters. Characters who drink or inject the contents of their own tube fall unconscious for 12 hours and awaken in their original form.

Characters who drink or inject the contents of someone else’s tube awaken to find themselves changed. Their new physical ability scores will represent an average between their own original physical ability scores and those of the other character. In addition, such characters must roll 1d4+1 times on the Psychological Illness Table in “Appendix 3: Psychological Illnesses.” The effects are permanent.

## 53: Decontamination Equipment

*A machine that looks to be straight out of a horror film fills this room. Several large, translucent, white tanks hold an unknown liquid. These tanks feed into an ominously humming machine with dozens of small tubes snaking through the wall. An eerie glow like that from a black light seeps through the holes and along the plastic tubes. An orange cylinder, labeled “Anesthetic,” hangs bolted to the wall, adding its own tube to the weird plumbing.*

*A computer rack stands in one corner, looking very out of place.*

This equipment operates the decontamination room. The anesthetic cylinder, filled with knockout gas, is detachable. If fully opened, it will fill a 50' × 50' area with knockout gas for 1d6 rounds. (All in the area must make a Fortitude save [DC 18] or fall unconscious for 1d3 hours.)

This room also contains a single computer rack holding the server for Dr. Perry’s private network. The wireless router that Joe Landis installed is still in place, hidden behind a bundle of cables.

## 54: Decontamination Room

*This room is rather ominous. Behind the glass walls you see hundreds of dark, black bulbs. Transparent tubes snake to dozens of tiny sprayers mounted evenly over the walls. Next to the door you see a large, red button, a rack with six blindfolds, and a plaque that reads, in large letters,*

*Decontamination Instructions:*

- 1) Place a blindfold over your eyes. Failure to wear eye protection could result in permanent vision damage or blindness. Closing your eyes or covering them with your hands will not protect them!*
- 2) Stand near the center of the room with your hands away from your sides and your feet at shoulder width. If processing a group, keep at least three feet between individuals.*
- 3) Press the start button. Breathe normally during decontamination; the chemical mist is harmless. A chime will sound when decontamination is complete. The process takes approximately five minutes.*

## 3.7: Raiding MasterGene

This room uses ultraviolet light and a light chemical mist to kill any bacteria or viruses on the people within. Decontamination takes five minutes.

There is a button disguised as a bolt in the wall. Pressing this button releases knockout gas into the chamber. If Dr. Perry is not actively concealing this button with his body, then characters in the chamber can notice this button with a successful *Spot* check (DC 22).

Pressure pads in the floor detect the number of people inside the room. When a person enters the room, the opposite door locks and cannot be unlocked until the decontamination is complete or the room is empty.

### 55: Dr. Perry's Lab

*This is a fully automated laboratory. Dozens of mysterious machines fill the room. Small dishes under a plastic hood grow unknown cultures. Large machines sprouting hundreds of tiny tubes hum quietly. This lab has everything except two big metal balls with an electric arc between them.*

*The lab is very open because of the large windows looking into Dr. Perry's office.*

Everything that happens here is included in the description of "Room 52: Dr. Perry's Office."

### M and W: Restrooms

*This is a standard restroom. A first-aid kit hangs next to the entrance.*

### E: Elevator

*This elevator contains a standard emergency telephone compartment and two buttons labeled "G" and "B1."*

A successful *Search* check (DC 15) reveals the B2 button concealed in the emergency telephone compartment behind the telephone. Characters can open an emergency trapdoor in the ceiling and climb up rungs inside the elevator shaft. The elevator is not trapped, but it does have a camera that can be monitored from "Room 19: Security Office."

If the heroes go with Deputy Sean Richards to MasterGene, the descriptions are the same as above, with the following changes:

### Room 49: Reception Area

When Deputy Richards and the characters arrive, MasterGene is closed but the front doors are unlocked. The security guard tells them to stop, and threatens to alert the police if they do not leave. He sets off the building alarm if he sees a weapon, if he is attacked, or if the characters move beyond the lobby. He does not try to stop the party himself, and he flees if attacked. If he has a chance, he runs to the elevator and descends to the security floor, adding one to the number of guards the party must fight there. He fights if cornered, using his 9mm pistol first, and then his tonfa.

### E: Elevator

Someone has left the door over the emergency telephone open. Anyone entering the elevator notices the door. A *Spot* check (DC 12) reveals the button for level B2 hidden behind the handset.

### Level B2

The combat when entering this level is unchanged. However, the door to the stairway is locked. To go down the stairs, the party must find the key (in "Room 21: Jack Thorne's Office") or destroy the door (Hardness 10, 120 hp).

### Room 17: Prison Room

One of these rooms holds Alicia Rodriguez. She is the only fluent English speaker among MasterGene's prisoners. While most of the prisoners rush to escape, if the investigators are remotely kind, she asks to accompany them in order to find her brothers.

### Room 20: Armory

The minigun used in the machine-gun trap (see "Room 16: Stairway Up to Level B2" in "3.3: Level B3") is here, along with all of the weapons available to the Special Security force.

### Level B3

Since Dr. Perry is not testing the investigators' abilities, this level does not contain any traps. There are

## The Beast Within

no grenades in the cubicles, no machine-gun trap in the stairway, and no acid trap in the chemical-storage room.

### Room 1

Three people (Jose, Manuel, and Eduardo Rodriguez) lie strapped to gurneys. Dr. Perry has given them the three rejuvenator viruses. One is swelling with muscles, one is shrinking to skin and bones, and one resembles a bloated corpse. All three are unconscious. They do not wake up until the transformation is complete (in six hours).

The antidotes for Jose, Manuel, and Eduardo are in the pocket of Dr. Philip Perry's lab coat. If the party subdues Perry by force, 1d6-3 of the vials are broken. The vials are numbered, the numbers matching those on the foot of each gurney. After the antidote is administered, the recipient returns to normal after 12 hours of sleep. If not treated, the men will go insane within 24 hours. They will kill themselves, attack others until killed, or become catatonic until they starve.

### Room 9

The two mutants, one tiger man and one gorilla man, pace around this room. The halon ball from "Room 10: Kitchen," rigged with a remote switch, sits inconspicuously under a table near the center of the room.

Dr. Perry waits in "Room 8: Experiment Observation Room," watching his latest experiments on the monitors. He also has an eye on the hallway cameras. He sees anyone approaching this room and is ready.

When the party enters the room, read the following:

*As you enter the room, you see Dr. Perry standing in a doorway to the west. On either side of him stand two horrible, twisted creatures. The one on his left looks like a man with short, orange fur, clawed fingers, and wide eyes with slitted pupils. The one on his right also looks vaguely human, but is covered in coarse, black fur and has a jutting jaw, grotesquely long arms, and bulging muscles. Both are obviously people mutated with animal DNA. They are horrible, not so much because of what they are, but because of what has been done to them. Both mutants wear collars with black, plastic boxes attached.*

*The room appears to be a cafeteria. It is empty, apart from a strange device that looks like a bowling ball on the floor under a table. The device is marked with yellow-and-black bands and the word "Danger" in black on a red background.*

*"You really should have allowed my guards to bring you in." Dr. Perry says. "Then you could have been part of my grand plans, my perfection of mankind! These two are dead ends—impressive, but worthless. No, I had to take the time, spend the effort to understand the human genome in order to perfect the body without destroying the mind.*

*"As we speak, I am taking the first steps down the correct path. Unfortunately, you will not see my glorious results. Kill them!"*

*The two mutants instantly spring toward you, snarling and baring their teeth.*

The mutants fight until killed.

The device under the table is a halon ball, a portable fire suppressant often used in small spaces, such as wiring closets or small computer rooms. The halon has been replaced with Paris green (Save Type: Inhaled; DC: 14; Initial Damage: 1d2 CON; Secondary Damage: 1d4 CON), an easy-to-make poison once used on rats in Europe.

Perry backs into "Room 8: Experiment Observation Room" (+5 to Defense against ranged attacks for cover) and watches the battle. If it looks like the mutants are going to lose, he closes the door and triggers the halon ball.

One round after setting off the halon ball, Perry emerges from "Room 8: Experiment Observation Room" and attacks with his pistol. He fights until killed.

## 3.8: Conclusion 1—

### After Escaping MasterGene

The characters wake up in a hospital room with sunlight streaming through the windows. They have completely returned to normal and have full hit points.

Moments later a doctor bustles into the room with two nurses and they begin checking the party. After a quick status check of the entire group, the doctor explains that the characters were found lying by the road

(or in their beds if they were abducted from home.) They suffer from the effects of an illegal knockout drug that causes bizarre hallucinations. The doctor emphasizes that they should not take anything they remember during the last 24 to 48 hours seriously, because the gas has severely affected their memories.

The doctor does his best to answer any questions. The heroes' car has been found abandoned and badly damaged. Their clothes and personal effects are in paper shopping bags next to their beds. Landis's journal, Gary Sheets's business card, and any cash are missing. Any notes or pieces of evidence about MasterGene or Gary Sheets are also missing. The doctor has never seen any of the missing items.

After checking the characters' health, the doctor says that they may check out. As they leave, they see the doctor talking to a man in a Texas Ranger's uniform. If they approach, the Ranger ducks into a stairway and disappears. If asked, the doctor explains that all charges against them have been dropped by order of the Texas Rangers. This includes the original reckless-driving charge. Their lawyer or the Sheriff's Department confirms the same. If the heroes check with the Texas Rangers, their headquarters reveals that they are unaware of the characters' case.

The Pinebox newspaper on Monday carries a story titled "Local Entrepreneur Killed in Accident." The article explains that Dr. Philip Perry and several security guards died in an accidental fire. A representative of Sweet Heart Investments, parent company of MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc., gives a statement saying that Dr. Perry's death is a blow, but MasterGene will survive.

If Gary Sheets was killed in the jail, there is an article on the last page of the paper titled "Flowers' Ghost Strikes Again!" The article mentions that Gary Sheets died of an apparent heart attack in the holding cell of the county police station in Pinebox. The majority of the article is about the ghost of Hank Flowers, a gunman who hanged himself in the jail in 1894.

If the party retrieved Joe Landis's 35 mm film from Dr. Perry's desk (see "Room 50: Dr. Perry's Office" in "Section 3.6: Ground Floor Details"), it is still with their possessions. When developed, it only shows headlights in darkness. No details can be seen, only some very blurry silhouettes.

### 3.9: Conclusion 2

#### After Raiding MasterGene

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When the party leaves MasterGene, they find that Golan County police have surrounded the building. The police order them to drop their weapons and lie on the ground. There are dozens of officers present. If the party resists, the result is 1d6+4 attacks with M16A2 assault rifles on each character.

After they take the heroes into custody, the police take them to the county jail in Pinebox and book them (again). Sergeant Don Cavanaugh is nowhere to be seen.

After the characters wait in a cell for several hours, an officer comes and releases them. He explains that all charges have been dropped by order of the Texas Rangers. This includes the original reckless-driving charge. The police, all of whom seem in a hurry to get rid of the party, return their belongings and usher them outside as quickly as possible.

If the party retrieved Joe Landis's 35 mm film from Dr. Perry's desk (see "Room 50: Dr. Perry's Office" in "Section 3.6: Ground Floor Details"), it is still with their possessions. When the film is developed, the resulting photographs only show headlights in darkness. No details can be seen, only some very blurry silhouettes.

The Pinebox newspaper on Monday carries a story titled "Local Entrepreneur Killed in Accident." The article explains that Dr. Philip Perry and several security guards died in an accidental fire. A representative of Sweet Heart Investments, parent company of MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc., gives a statement saying that Dr. Perry's death is a blow, but MasterGene will survive.

If Gary Sheets was killed in the jail, there is an article on the last page of the paper titled "Flowers' Ghost Strikes Again!" The article mentions that Gary Sheets died of an apparent heart attack in the holding cell of the county police station in Pinebox. The majority of the article is about the ghost of Hank Flowers, a gunman who hanged himself in the jail in 1894.

Sergeant Cavanaugh went into hiding in Mexico. Jack Thorne returned to Sweet Heart and moved on to his next assignment. Both men are officially "missing."

# Appendix 1: Cast of Characters

## Sergeant Don Cavanaugh (The Unfriendly Cop)

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### Statistics

**Strong Hero 1 / Tough Hero 2 / Smart Hero 1  
(CR 4); Law Enforcement; HD 1d8+2d10+1d6+8**

<b>Initiative</b>	+1	<b>BAB</b>	+2	<b>STR</b>	11 (+0)
<b>Defense</b>	17; touch 14; flat-footed 16	<b>Melee</b>	+2	<b>DEX</b>	12 (+1)
<b>Hit Points</b>	29	<b>Ranged</b>	+3	<b>CON</b>	14 (+2)
<b>FORT</b>	+5	<b>Grapple</b>	+2	<b>INT</b>	12 (+1)
<b>REF</b>	+1	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	14	<b>WIS</b>	8 (-1)
<b>WILL</b>	+0	<b>Action Points</b>	2	<b>CHA</b>	9 (-1)

**Attacks:** *unarmed*: Atk +3; Dmg 1d6+1; Crit 20; Bludgeoning (nonlethal)  
*Colt M1911*: Atk +3; Dmg 2d6; Crit 20; Rng 30 ft; Ballistic  
*tonfa*: Atk +2; Dmg 1d4; Crit 20; Bludgeoning

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft / 5 ft

**Skills:** *Drive* +5; *Forgery* +5; *Gather Information* +1; *Hide* +1; *Intimidation* +4; *Knowledge (current events)* +4; *Knowledge (streetwise)* +10; *Knowledge (tactics)* +5; *Listen* +3; *Move Silently* +1; *Profession (police officer)* +3; *Search* +5; *Sense Motive* +1; *Spot* +2; **Languages:** *English (native)*

**Feats:** Alertness; Armor Proficiency (light); Brawl; Point Blank Shot; Simple Weapons Proficiency; Personal Firearms Proficiency

**Occupation Skills:** Drive; Knowledge (streetwise)

**Talents:** Melee Smash; Savant (Knowledge [streetwise]); Second Wind (+2 hp)

**Wealth:** +5

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +1 / Pinebox Police Department; Jack Thorne

**Possessions:** old Chevrolet Impala; small house in town; Colt M1911 (box magazine [x3], .45 ammunition [100]); police tonfa; police radio; undercover vest

### Profile

(43 years old)

Sergeant Don Cavanaugh is greedy, lazy, and corrupt. He reached the rank of Sergeant by covering his mistakes and cleverly maligning more-qualified men. Jack Thorne is only one of several people keeping Sergeant Cavanaugh on their payroll.

Cavanaugh sees Sheriff's Deputy Sean Richards as a threat. He worries about any underling who is popular, honest, or dedicated, and Richards is all three.

Cavanaugh has been waiting for a chance to smear Richards, and Landis's death is his chance. He contacts his superiors and most of the city council, telling them that Richards is obsessed with the Landis case. By Friday afternoon, Richards's reputation is ruined.

### Character Speak

*"People die in car crashes all the time."  
"I'm taking over this investigation."*

## Steve Church

### (Joe's Roommate)

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### Profile

(22 years old)

Steve Church did not much like his roommate, Joe Landis, and since he seldom spent time in their shared dorm room, the two seldom spoke. His major is business administration. He and Landis had nothing in common; and to Church, those who have nothing interesting to say are worthless.

He has the decency to be stunned when he learns that Landis is dead. He is willing to help find out what happened to Landis, and will let the party search Landis's stuff for clues even though they are not the police. Beyond this, however, he will not let Joe Landis's death affect his busy schedule.

### Character Speak

*"Whatever you need, just don't touch my stuff."  
"I come here to sleep and store my books. It's not my job to watch my roommate."*

## Dr. Steven Glass, Head of the Computer Sciences Department at ETU (Joe Landis's Advisor)

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### Profile

(43 years old)

Dr. Steven Glass is relatively new to ETU, having been a professor for only three years. He received his PhD in computer science at MIT and did his post-doctoral work at Los Alamos National Laboratory. While at Los Alamos, he programmed nuclear weapon simulations, an assignment about which he does not speak. Now he works hard to teach his students and place them in stable careers.

### Character Speak

*"Joe is ... was an excellent student."*

## Vern Justice (Fisherman)

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### Profile

(72 years old)

Vern Justice is a simple man. He worked for 40 years delivering mail, and he spends his retirement fishing, hunting, and telling lies about both.

### Character Speak

*"Kestrell Lake has some great fishin'."  
"I expect to be a local hero soon."*

## Ben and Sharon Landis (Joe's Parents)

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### Profile

(50 and 48 years old, respectively)

Joe Landis's parents are both retired. Until their son's death, they spent most of their time on miscellaneous hobbies and volunteer work for their church. If the

characters speak to them, the Landises are shattered and barely have the will to respond to questions.

They oppose biotechnology vehemently, considering it a violation of God's plan for the universe. If they had known that their son worked at MasterGene, they would not have approved. Now that he is dead, the shock of learning about MasterGene is insignificant.

### Character Speak

*"Why would anyone hurt Joe?"*

## Joe Landis (Murder Victim)

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### Profile

(19 years old)

Joe was a bright, energetic, introverted young man. He had few if any real friends at ETU, but many acquaintances. He spent his time in class studying and finding ways to get into places he was not supposed to go. This included physical locations and computer systems.

His only real friends were other hackers he knew through the Internet, and none of them has any bearing on this adventure. His parents hoped living in the dorms on campus would bring Joe out of his shell and get him to interact with other people more. All it did was give him freedom to spend even more time hacking.





## MasterGene Special Security Guard

### Statistics

**Strong Ordinary 1 (CR ½); Rural; 1d8+1**

<b>Initiative</b>	-1	<b>BAB</b>	+1	<b>STR</b>	12 (+1)
<b>Defense</b>	10; touch 10; flat-footed 9	<b>Melee</b>	+2	<b>DEX</b>	9 (-1)
<b>Hit Points</b>	5	<b>Ranged</b>	+0	<b>CON</b>	13 (+1)
<b>FORT</b>	+2	<b>Grapple</b>	+2	<b>INT</b>	10 (+0)
<b>REF</b>	-1	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	13	<b>WIS</b>	8 (-1)
<b>WILL</b>	-1	<b>Action Points</b>	0	<b>CHA</b>	11 (+0)

**Attacks:** *unarmed*: Atk +2 melee; Dmg 1d3+1; Crit 20; Bludgeoning (nonlethal)

*HK MP5 submachine gun*: Atk +0 ranged; Dmg 2d6; Crit 20; Range 50ft; Ballistic

*tonfa*: Atk +2 melee; Dmg 1d4+1; Crit 20; Bludgeoning

*stun gun*: Atk +2 melee; Dmg 1d3; Crit 20; Fort save (DC 15) or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds; Electricity

*concussion grenade*: Atk +0 ranged; Dmg 2d6; Crit -; Rng 10 ft; Burst 10 ft; Concussion

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft / 5 ft

**Skills:** *Climb* +3; *Drive* +3; *Jump* +2; *Knowledge (current events)* +2; *Swim* +5; **Languages:** *English (native)*

**Feats:** Drive-By Attack; Personal Firearms Proficiency; Run; Simple Weapons Proficiency

**Occupation Skills:** Drive; Swim

**Wealth:** +0

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +0 / Jack Thorne

**Possessions:** HK MP5 Submachine Gun (box magazine [x3], 9mm ammunition [100]); tonfa; 2 concussion grenades.

### Profile

The MasterGene Special Security force is loyal to Jack Thorne and only Jack Thorne. He chose them for their ruthlessness and willingness to do illegal acts to please him. They are local thugs who would be in gangs or in prison if Thorne had not hired them.

While the Special Security force is loyal to Thorne, they are not fanatics. If a group is attacked, then every time one of their own goes down, the remainder must make a Will save (DC 8) at -1 for each man down. Roll once for the entire group. On a failure, the entire group breaks and flees.

### Character Speak

*“Stop and raise your hands. I will shoot!”*

## Edna Nunn

### (Old Trailer Lady)

### Profile

(78 years old)

Edna Nunn is old and retired. She spends her time on her hobby—keeping tabs on all of her neighbors. Nunn is the official busybody of the Indian Summer Trailer Park. She knows everything that happens and loves to talk about it. Luckily for her neighbors, she is nearly unintelligible. Any useful information is buried under rambling about her extended family, other happenings around the trailer park, and her rheumatism.

### Character Speak

*“I did see something strange earlier, reminded me of my cousin Vera’s husband. He was a real pip, that one ...”*

*“I don’t get around so well, with my rheumatism and all.”*

## Dr. Philip Perry (Mad Scientist)

### Statistics

**Smart Hero 2 / Charismatic Hero 1 /**

**Field Scientist 2 (CR 5); Academic; 3d6+2d8+20**

<b>Initiative</b>	+4	<b>BAB</b>	+2	<b>STR</b>	18 (+4)
<b>Defense</b>	20; touch 20; flat-footed 12	<b>Melee</b>	+6	<b>DEX</b>	18 (+4)
<b>Hit Points</b>	42	<b>Ranged</b>	+6	<b>CON</b>	18 (+4)
<b>FORT</b>	+7	<b>Grapple</b>	+6	<b>INT</b>	19 (+4)
<b>REF</b>	+7	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	18	<b>WIS</b>	12 (+1)
<b>WILL</b>	+3	<b>Action Points</b>	2	<b>CHA</b>	16 (+3)

**Attacks:** *unarmed:* Atk +6 melee; 1d3+4; Crit 20; Bludgeoning (nonlethal)

*Colt Double Eagle:* Atk +6 ranged; Dmg 2d6; Crit 20; Ballistic

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft / 5 ft

**Skills:** *Craft (chemical)* +12; *Craft (electronic)* +11; *Craft (pharmaceutical)* +14; *Craft (writing)* +10; *Diplomacy* +7; *Drive* +6; *Forgery* +10; *Handle Animal* +4; *Intimidate* +6; *Knowledge (behavioral sciences)* +8; *Knowledge (business)* +5; *Knowledge (current events)* +6; *Knowledge (earth and life sciences)* +16; *Knowledge (history)* +6; *Knowledge (physical sciences)* +12; *Knowledge (technology)* +10; *Pilot* +6; *Research* +13; *Search* +11; *Sense Motive* +2; *Spot* +2; *Treat Injury* +3; **Languages:** *English (native)*

**Feats:** Educated (Knowledge [earth and life sciences], Knowledge [physical science]); Medical Expert; Meticulous; Personal Firearms Proficiency; Simple Weapons Proficiency

**Occupation Skills:** Knowledge (earth and life sciences); Knowledge (physical sciences); Research

**Talents:** Coordinate; Savant (Knowledge (earth and life sciences)); Scientific Improvisation; Smart Defense

**Special Qualities:** Suffers the symptoms of antisocial personality disorder (see sidebar on page #).

**Wealth:** +10

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +3 / MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc.

**Possessions:** Colt Double Eagle pistol (box magazine [×3], 10mm ammunition [100]); keys to all locks in MasterGene; Porsche 911; house in Pinebox

### Profile

(39 years old)

Dr. Philip Perry founded MasterGene five years ago at the age of 34. Before that he earned doctorates in chemistry and biology and spent seven years working for a major pharmaceutical



company in their biotechnology division.

MasterGene had a great start, with several contracts from Perry's previous employer. After two years of solid results, MasterGene received a difficult assignment from a government agency through an investment company called Sweet Heart Investments.

The goal of the Enhanced Human Project was to create a drug or series of drugs to increase the survivability of patients undergoing dangerous medical treatments. He created the rejuvenator virus, which makes specific genetic changes in every cell of a host organism. The rejuvenator was a revolution in biotechnology, but it was only the first step in the project.

The next step was to identify and perfect the specific genes that control healing ability, the theory being that a person could be given a tendency to be tough. This proved difficult to do and nearly impossible to test.

After two years, he had very little proof of success. Animal testing proved useless, and testing on cultured human cells failed to prove the project's success. How do you tell that a cultured cell is stronger or faster? Sweet Heart, discouraged by the lack of results, threatened to withdraw funding. This would have destroyed MasterGene.

Stress, frustration, and desperation made Perry careless. He broke a test tube and cut himself on the jagged edge, accidentally infecting himself with a test virus. Over the next 24 hours he gained 30 pounds of muscle, his reflex speed increased by 45 percent, and his endurance increased by 50 percent.

# The Beast Within

With such dramatic proof, Sweet Heart restored funding and the research continued. As time passed, Perry became hostile and paranoid. He sealed off the lowest basements of the MasterGene building and devoted them to the Enhanced Human Project. As his mental state deteriorated, he began testing new variations of the virus on humans; first on abducted homeless people, then on illegal immigrants.

Today Dr. Perry suffers from antisocial personality disorder. He thinks nothing of torturing and killing people to test his work. He will do or say anything to achieve even the most insignificant goals, and he has no concept of right and wrong. His only concern is what he wants at the moment.

## Character Speak

*“You will be part of a great leap in medical knowledge. I know you are proud.”*

*“You only object because you do not understand the importance, the greatness, of my research.”*

## Alex Potts

**(Gary Sheets’s Brother-in-Law)**

## Statistics

**Strong Ordinary 3 (CR 2); Blue Collar; HD 3d8+3**

<b>Initiative</b>	+0	<b>BAB</b>	+3	<b>STR</b>	13 (+1)
<b>Defense</b>	12; touch 12; flat-footed 12	<b>Melee</b>	+4	<b>DEX</b>	11 (+0)
<b>Hit Points</b>	16	<b>Ranged</b>	+3	<b>CON</b>	12 (+1)
<b>FORT</b>	+3	<b>Grapple</b>	+4	<b>INT</b>	9 (-1)
<b>REF</b>	+1	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	12	<b>WIS</b>	10 (+0)
<b>WILL</b>	+1	<b>Action Points</b>	0	<b>CHA</b>	8 (-1)

**Attacks:** *unarmed:* Atk +6 melee; Dmg 1d8+1; Crit 20; Bludgeoning (non-lethal, +1d4 once per round)

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft / 5 ft

**Skills:** *Climb* +3; *Craft (structural)* +1; *Drive* +2; *Handle Animal* +2; *Intimidate* +2; *Swim* +2; **Languages:** *English (native)*

**Feats:** Brawl; Improved Brawl; Streetfighting; Simple Weapons Proficiency; Personal Firearms Proficiency

**Occupation Skills:** Climb; Handle Animal; Intimidate

**Wealth:** +2

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +0/None

**Possessions:** mobile home; old pickup truck; pocket knife (will *not* use for fighting)

## Profile

(28 years old)

Alex Potts was born and reared in Pinebox. He works hard, drinks hard, and rules his trailer like a tyrant. He thinks his behavior is normal, and sees nothing wrong with treating Robin like an inferior servant. He dotes on his son, Bobby, however, and has softened since the boy was born.

Still, Alex is a proud, aggressive man, and does not take kindly to anyone disrupting his home. If he feels that someone is threatening him or his family, he will try to intimidate that person into backing down. If intimidation fails, he will fall back on his formidable unarmed combat skills.

## Character Speak

*“You mess with me, I’ll knock you into the middle of next week.”*

*“Is this about Robin’s worthless waste-of-space brother?”*

*“I don’t care what you want, get out of my house or I’ll kick you out!”*

## Robin Potts

**(Gary Sheets’s Sister)**

## Profile

(20 years old)

Robin Potts is a woman living her own private nightmare. Three years ago, her parents died and her brother disappeared. She found herself suddenly alone with nobody to help her. She married her boyfriend, Alex Potts, just to have a place to live.

# The Beast Within

Now she has settled into a blur of despair. Her husband is controlling and mentally abusive. His calling and stopping by while she worked cost Robin three jobs before she stopped looking for work. Now she has a baby, and she spends all her time and energy taking care of him.

Robin's main fear is that something will happen to make things even worse—such as Alex beating her, or her brother causing some problem that prompts Alex to throw her out.

## Character Speak

*“I don't know you and I want you to leave.”*

*“My husband works right across the street. Don't make me call him.”*

## Sheriff's Deputy Sean Richards (The Friendly Cop)

### Statistics

**Tough Hero 1 / Charismatic Hero 2 (CR 3); Law Enforcement; HD 1d10+2d6+3**

<b>Initiative</b>	+1	<b>BAB</b>	+1	<b>STR</b>	12 (+1)
<b>Defense</b>	17; touch 14; flat-footed 16	<b>Melee</b>	+2	<b>DEX</b>	13 (+1)
<b>Hit Points</b>	17	<b>Ranged</b>	+2	<b>CON</b>	13 (+1)
<b>FORT</b>	+4	<b>Grapple</b>	+2	<b>INT</b>	12 (+1)
<b>REF</b>	+3	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	13	<b>WIS</b>	10 (+0)
<b>WILL</b>	+0	<b>Action Points</b>	1	<b>CHA</b>	18 (+4)

**Attacks:** *unarmed:* Atk +2 melee; Dmg 1d3+1; Crit 20; Bludgeoning (nonlethal)

*Glock 17:* Atk +3 ranged; Dmg 2d6; Crit 20; Ballistic

*tonfa:* Atk +2 melee; Dmg 1d4+1; Crit 20; Bludgeoning

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft / 5 ft

**Skills:** *Bluff* +6; *Diplomacy* +12; *Drive* +3; *Gather Information* +12; *Intimidate* +9; *Investigate* +4; *Knowledge (behavioral sciences)* +5; *Knowledge (current events)* +3; *Knowledge (streetwise)* +5;

*Search* +2; *Sense Motive* +3; *Spot* +1; **Languages:** *English (native); Spanish (read/write)*

**Feats:** *Armor Proficiency (light); Armor Proficiency (medium); Simple Weapons Proficiency; Trustworthy; Personal Firearms Proficiency*

**Occupation Skills:** *Diplomacy; Gather Information*

**Talents:** *Coordinate; Remain Conscious*

**Wealth:** +4

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +1 / *Pinebox Sheriff's Department; US Constitution*

**Possessions:** *new pickup truck; rents an apartment in town; Glock 17 (box magazine [x3] 9mm ammunition [100]); police tonfa; undercover vest; binoculars*

### Profile

(29 years old)

Sheriff's Deputy Sean Richards raised more than his share of hell as a teenager in Pinebox, but he sobered up fast when his best friend died in a hunting accident. A drunken hunter from out of state fired at a moving branch and hit Richards's friend in the chest. At the trial it was revealed that an officer had ticketed the man for speeding 20 minutes earlier, but did not realize the man was drunk. Richards was 17 at the time.

After high school, he decided to become a police officer and stop similar accidents from happening again. Richards is one of the most lenient officers in the county for infractions that are not dangerous, but he has no sympathy for people who act recklessly or intentionally hurt others.

Richards is a tall, handsome African American man. He stands 5' 11" tall and seems to be made of stone when he is angry. He is also one of the friendliest men you could meet. He always smiles and says hello, and calls everyone sir or ma'am.

### Character Speak

*“Oh no! Not Joe!”*

*“Something ain't right here, and that tub of lard wants it covered up.”*

*“I'll do whatever it takes to get to the bottom of MasterGene. Whatever it takes. Got it?”*

## Alicia Rodriguez

### (Future Nurse and Unwilling Test Subject)

#### Statistics

**Dedicated Ordinary 2 (CR 1); Student;**  
**HD 2d6+1**

<b>Initiative</b>	+1	<b>BAB</b>	+1	<b>STR</b>	10 (+0)
<b>Defense</b>	13; touch 13; flat-footed 12	<b>Melee</b>	+1	<b>DEX</b>	13 (+1)
<b>Hit Points</b>	8	<b>Ranged</b>	+2	<b>CON</b>	8 (-1)
<b>FORT</b>	+1	<b>Grapple</b>	+1	<b>INT</b>	9 (-1)
<b>REF</b>	+1	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	8	<b>WIS</b>	11 (+0)
<b>WILL</b>	+4	<b>Action Points</b>	0	<b>CHA</b>	12 (+1)

**Attacks:** *unarmed:* Atk +1 melee; Dmg 1d3; Crit 20;  
Bludgeoning (nonlethal)

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft / 5 ft

**Skills:** *Craft (pharmaceutical)* +2; *Knowledge (behavioral sciences)* +4; *Knowledge (current events)* +2; *Knowledge (earth and life science)* +2; *Knowledge (history)* +1; *Knowledge (streetwise)* +2; *Treat Injury* +7; **Languages:** *Spanish (native); English (speak, read/write)*

**Feats:** Iron Will; Medical Expert; Simple Weapons Proficiency; Toughness

**Occupation Skills:** Knowledge (behavioral sciences); Knowledge (current events); Knowledge (history)

**Wealth:** +0

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +1 / Rodriguez family

#### Profile

(25 years old)

Alicia is the oldest member of the Rodriguez family, and the leader of the group. She helped raise her younger brothers, and they all respect her as a surrogate mother figure. Her parents died just over a year ago when their house collapsed during an earthquake. Alicia and her brothers (Jose, Eduardo, and Manuel) became refugees. They have moved from place to place, living on day labor and handouts.

Alicia was training to become a nurse before the accident. She has good first-aid skills and an excellent bedside manner. Her calm, compassionate demeanor made her a better nurse than other students who may have been smarter.

Her goal is to keep the family together and alive until they can create a more stable life. Alicia dreams of returning to nursing school and sending Eduardo back to the seminary so he can become a priest.

#### Character Speak

*"We must stay together."*

*"We can survive this, if we work together and stay calm."*

## Eduardo Rodriguez

### (Aspiring Priest and Unwilling Test Subject)

#### Statistics

**Dedicated Ordinary 1 (CR 1/2); Religious; HD**  
**1d6+1**

<b>Initiative</b>	+1	<b>BAB</b>	+0	<b>STR</b>	9 (-1)
<b>Defense</b>	12; touch 12; flat-footed 11	<b>Melee</b>	-1	<b>DEX</b>	12 (+1)
<b>Hit Points</b>	4	<b>Ranged</b>	+1	<b>CON</b>	12 (+1)
<b>FORT</b>	+2	<b>Grapple</b>	-1	<b>INT</b>	11 (+0)
<b>REF</b>	+1	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	8	<b>WIS</b>	13 (+1)
<b>WILL</b>	+2	<b>Action Points</b>	0	<b>CHA</b>	10 (+0)

**Attacks:** *unarmed:* Atk -1 melee; Dmg 1d3-1; Crit 20; Bludgeoning (nonlethal)

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft / 5 ft

**Skills:** *Craft (writing)* +4; *Diplomacy* +2; *Gather Information* +2; *Knowledge (current events)* +2; *Knowledge (history)* +3; *Knowledge (theology)* +5; *Listen* +5; *Sense Motive* +6; *Spot* +3; **Languages:** *Spanish (native)*

**Feats:** Alertness; Simple Weapons Proficiency; Trustworthy

**Occupation Skills:** Knowledge (history); Knowledge (religion); Sense Motive

# The Beast Within

**Wealth:** +0

**Reputation/Allegiances:**+1 / Rodriguez family

## Profile

(23 years old)

When the earthquake killed his parents, Eduardo was studying to become a priest. He could have returned to the seminary to complete his education, but he decided to go with his brothers and sister. He reasoned that God is everywhere, but his family is not.

Eduardo was the least prepared for a nomadic life. He is thin and not very strong, so he is rarely chosen as a day laborer. He sometimes helps at clinics or libraries, but his jobs rarely pay.

He may not be physically able to support the family, but his emotional support has been essential. He often says, “The world tests your faith, but God rewards it.” He staunchly believes that their problems will eventually end and they will have a new home, as long as they have faith.

## Character Speak

*“Do not be afraid. God sees us even here.”*

*“The world tests your faith, but God rewards it.”*

## Jose Rodriguez

### (Man of Action and Unwilling Test Subject)

## Statistics

**Strong Ordinary 1 (CR 1/2); Rural; HD 1d8+4**

<b>Initiative</b>	-1	<b>BAB</b>	+1	<b>STR</b>	13 (+1)
<b>Defense</b>	10; touch 10; flat-footed 10	<b>Melee</b>	+2	<b>DEX</b>	9 (-1)
<b>Hit Points</b>	8	<b>Ranged</b>	+0	<b>CON</b>	12 (+1)
<b>FORT</b>	+2	<b>Grapple</b>	+2	<b>INT</b>	11 (+0)
<b>REF</b>	-1	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	12	<b>WIS</b>	8 (-1)
<b>WILL</b>	-1	<b>Action Points</b>	0	<b>CHA</b>	10 (+0)

**Attacks:** *unarmed:* Atk +2 melee; Dmg 1d3+1; Crit 20; Bludgeoning (nonlethal)

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft / 5 ft

**Skills:** *Handle Animal* +5; *Jump* +3 (+5 long jumps); *Knowledge (current events)* +2; *Repair* +3; *Swim* +3; **Languages:** *Spanish (native)*

**Feats:** Personal Firearms Proficiency; Simple Weapons Proficiency; Run; Toughness

**Occupation Skills:** Handle Animal; Repair

**Wealth:** +0

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +0 / Rodriguez family

## Profile

(22 years old)

Before the earthquake, Jose provided extra income for his family working on farms and ranches in the area. After the earthquake, Jose became the primary source of income. His skill with animals and ability to learn quickly make him popular wherever he works.

His chief weakness is his tendency to be rash and aggressive. He knows that he should not take excessive risks, but he just cannot pass up a challenge—or an opportunity. He is very protective of his family, and he will be the first in line for any risks.

## Character Speak

*“Let me go first.”*

## Manuel Rodriguez

### (Simple Man and Unwilling Test Subject)

#### Statistics

**Tough Ordinary 1 (CR 1/2); Rural; HD 1d10+4**

<b>Initiative</b>	-1	<b>BAB</b>	+0	<b>STR</b>	12 (+1)
<b>Defense</b>	10; touch 10; flat-footed 10	<b>Melee</b>	+1	<b>DEX</b>	8 (-1)
<b>Hit Points</b>	9	<b>Ranged</b>	-1	<b>CON</b>	13 (+1)
<b>FORT</b>	+2	<b>Grapple</b>	+1	<b>INT</b>	9 (-1)
<b>REF</b>	-1	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	13	<b>WIS</b>	10 (+0)
<b>WILL</b>	+0	<b>Action Points</b>	0	<b>CHA</b>	11 (+0)

**Attacks:** *unarmed:* Atk +1 melee; Dmg 1d6+1; Crit 20; Bludgeoning (nonlethal)

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft / 5 ft

**Skills:** *Drive* +1; *Gamble* +3; *Intimidate* +4; *Knowledge (current events)* +1; *Survival* +3; **Languages:** *Spanish (native)*

**Feats:** Brawl; Confident; Simple Weapons Proficiency; Toughness

**Occupation Skills:** Drive; Survival

**Wealth:** +0

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +0 / Rodriguez family

#### Profile

(18 years old)

As the baby of the family, Manuel endured more than his share of abuse as a child, and he learned to shrug it off and drive forward. He enjoys simple, physical work and is a popular worker. His low intelligence makes him easy to manipulate, and he tends to let people take advantage of him.

Manuel does not take risks the way Jose does. He will not charge into a fight or an unknown situation without thinking it through or getting direction from Alicia or Eduardo.

#### Character Speak

*"If that's the way to do it, let's do it."  
"I should see what Eduardo thinks."*

## Gary Sheets

### (Coyote)

#### Statistics

**Fast Ordinary 1, Charismatic Ordinary 1 (CR 1); Criminal; HD 1d8+1d6**

<b>Initiative</b>	+0	<b>BAB</b>	+0	<b>STR</b>	11 (+0)
<b>Defense</b>	13; touch 13; flat-footed 13	<b>Melee</b>	+0	<b>DEX</b>	11 (+0)
<b>Hit Points</b>	7	<b>Ranged</b>	+0	<b>CON</b>	10 (+0)
<b>FORT</b>	+1	<b>Grapple</b>	+0	<b>INT</b>	10 (+0)
<b>REF</b>	+2	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	10	<b>WIS</b>	9 (-1)
<b>WILL</b>	-1	<b>Action Points</b>	0	<b>CHA</b>	12 (+1)

**Attacks:** *unarmed:* Atk +1 melee; Dmg 1d6; Crit 20; Bludgeoning (nonlethal)

*Ruger Service-Six (.38S revolver):* Atk +0 ranged; Dmg 2d6; Crit 20; Rng 30 ft; Ballistic

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft / 5 ft

**Skills:** *Bluff* +2; *Drive* +4; *Gather Information* +3; *Hide* +2; *Knowledge (streetwise)* +5; *Move Silently* +7; *Perform (percussion)* +3; *Profession (coyote)* +3; *Swim* +1

**Feats:** Brawl; Personal Firearms Proficiency; Simple Weapons Proficiency; Stealthy

**Occupation Skills:** Knowledge (streetwise); Move Silently

**Wealth:** +3

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +2 / the Sietes Rojos street gang

**Possessions:** Ruger Service-Six revolver (.38 ammunition [100]); wallet with driver's license and some cash; keys to the crashed van

#### Profile

(26 years old)

Gary Sheets is not very bright, not very capable, and completely out of his league. He decided at a young age that working for a living was not for him. He gradu-



## Jack Thorne

### (MasterGene Head of Security)

ated from high school and lounged around Pinebox, living with his parents and committing petty crimes. Four years ago, Sheets was arrested for petty theft and drug possession. He paid a fine and was placed on probation.

A year later, his parents' house burned down and both of his parents died. Investigators never discovered what started the fire, but they found the remains of a substantial amount of marijuana in the basement. Sheets disappeared the next day.

Rumors flew all around town: Gary Sheets was growing pot in the basement and the lights started the fire! Gary Sheets started the fire for insurance money! Gary Sheets killed his parents and started the fire to cover it up!

In truth, the fire was Sheets's fault, but he did not start it deliberately. He had stashed a large amount of someone else's marijuana behind the furnace and forgotten to move it when the weather turned cold. When his parents turned on the furnace one chilly evening, the marijuana caught fire and the house burned to the ground. The blaze destroyed the marijuana, and Sheets had no way to pay its owner back.

Over the last three years, he has managed to pay back his drug suppliers. Now he has fallen in with the Sietes Rojos as a coyote. (See sidebars for more information on the Sietes Rojos.) He does not much like the business, but it keeps him alive and is not particularly dangerous—not for him, anyway.

MasterGene has been an especially good gig. The Sietes Rojos get a cut of what the immigrants pay, and of what Jack Thorne pays. Sheets gets his normal percentage, but Thorne pays 10 times the usual rate, so Sheets gets 10 times the usual cut. Sheets thinks that MasterGene uses the immigrants as farm hands, and he does not ask questions of people who pay him.

### Character Speak

*"They're gonna kill me!"*

*"I gotta get out of town, but I'll let things calm down first."*

### Statistics

**Strong Hero 2, Fast Hero 2, Soldier 2 (CR 6); Criminal; HD 4d8+2d10+12**

<b>Initiative</b>	+3	<b>BAB</b>	+4	<b>STR</b>	13 (+1)
<b>Defense</b>	20; touch 20; flat-footed 17	<b>Melee</b>	+5	<b>DEX</b>	16 (+3)
<b>Hit Points</b>	44	<b>Ranged</b>	+7	<b>CON</b>	14 (+2)
<b>FORT</b>	+6	<b>Grapple</b>	+4	<b>INT</b>	12 (+1)
<b>REF</b>	+7	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	14	<b>WIS</b>	10 (+0)
<b>WILL</b>	+0	<b>Action Points</b>	3	<b>CHA</b>	8 (-1)

**Attacks:** *unarmed:* Atk +5 melee; Dmg 1d3+2; Crit 20; Bludgeoning (nonlethal)

*knife:* Atk +7 ranged; Dmg 1d4+1; Crit 19–20; Rng 10 ft; Piercing

*HK MP5 submachine gun:* Atk +8 ranged; Dmg 2d6+2; Crit 20; Rng 50 ft; Ballistic

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft / 5 ft

**Skills:** *Bluff* +0; *Craft (mechanical)* +3; *Escape Artist* +5; *Gather Information* +1; *Hide* +7; *Knowledge (current events)* +2; *Knowledge (history)* +2; *Knowledge (physical sciences)* +2; *Knowledge (streetwise)* +2; *Knowledge (tactics)* +9; *Move Silently* +7; *Spot* +6; *Survival* +2; *Swim* +4; *Tumble* +5

**Feats:** Advanced Firearms Proficiency; Armor Proficiency (light); Armor Proficiency (medium); Combat Reflexes; Personal Firearms Proficiency; Point Blank Shot; Simple Weapons Proficiency; Strafe; Weapon Focus (HK MP5 submachine gun); Weapon Specialization (HK MP5 submachine gun)

**Occupation Skills:** Hide; Move Silently

**Talents:** Melee Smash; Evasion

**Wealth:** +12

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +0 / Sweet Heart Investments



**Possessions:** HK MP5 submachine gun (box magazine [×3], 9mm ammunition [100]); combat knife; soft-top Jeep Wrangler

### Profile

(43 years old)

Jack Thorne began his career as an enforcer for an organized crime syndicate in Houston. Always a perceptive man, he soon saw that he had little future, so he enlisted in the military.

During his time in the Army, he honed his weapons skills and learned to move within the military criminal community. When his enlistment ended, he left with contacts who could supply weapons, ammunition, and trained fighters. Through a friend in the army, he secured a job with Sweet Heart Investments as a “security consultant.”

Thorne is methodical, careful, and ruthless. When he fights, he aims to kill. He makes decisions quickly and coldly. Thorne’s organized, perceptive mind makes him an excellent, if ruthless, administrator. Although Sweet Heart periodically “loans him out” so that he can personally shepherd promising start-ups along, his loyalties lie firmly with Sweet Heart. Likewise, the security guards under his control are loyal directly to him and not the company of the moment. Thorne’s job is twofold: keep Sweet Heart’s research investment on track, and keep Sweet Heart’s involvement a secret. Thorne goes to any length to fulfill that mission, including bribery, extortion, kidnapping, and even murder.

Thorne sees that the Enhanced Human Project is going badly. Dr. Philip Perry is growing increasingly unstable, and only luck stopped Joe Landis from revealing the operation. Thorne’s damage-control solution is to eliminate the remaining witnesses, namely Gary Sheets and the heroes. He means to let Perry finish his experiments on the current subjects, then erase MasterGene. He plans to kill Perry, leave his body on the bottom level of the MasterGene building, and permanently seal the lowest two levels. He will then leave, taking the Special Security force and all of Perry’s data with him.

### Character Speak

*“Time to cut off the loose ends.”*

# Appendix 2: Cast of Creatures

The mutants long ago went mad from their deformity and now have the minds of violent, brutally trained beasts. Jack Thorne and Dr. Philip Perry are their masters, and the mutants want to kill and, if possible, eat anyone else. If neither of their masters is around, they attack anyone and anything, including each other. They fight until killed, showing no fear and no mercy. Mr. Thorne has trained them to be unthinking killing machines.

## Gorilla Man

### Statistics

**Large Monstrous Humanoid (Mutated Human)**  
(CR 1); HD 2d8+2

<b>Initiative</b>	+1	<b>BAB</b>	+2	<b>STR</b>	20 (+5)
<b>Defense</b>	12; touch 10; flat-footed 12	<b>Melee</b>	+6	<b>DEX</b>	12 (+1)
<b>Hit Points</b>	11	<b>Ranged</b>	+2	<b>CON</b>	12 (+1)
<b>FORT</b>	+1	<b>Grapple</b>	+11	<b>INT</b>	3 (-4)
<b>REF</b>	+4	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	12	<b>WIS</b>	4 (-3)
<b>WILL</b>	+0	<b>Action Points</b>	0	<b>CHA</b>	5 (-3)

**Attacks:** *claw*: Atk +6 melee; Dmg 1d6+5; Crit 20; Slashing

**Full Attack:** 2 *claws*: Atk +6 melee; Dmg 1d6+5; Crit 20; Slashing

*bite*: Atk +1 melee; Dmg 1d6+2; Crit 20; Piercing

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing and Reach:** 10 ft. by 10 ft. ; 10 ft.

**Skills:** *Climb* +9; *Jump* +9

**Feats:** None

**Special Qualities:** *darkvision* 60 ft; *improved grab*; *scent*

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability the ape man must hit with a claw attack. Refer to the *Friends and Foes* section of the *d20 Modern* Roleplaying Game for more information on this ability.

**Scent (Ex):** This ability allows the ape man to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +0 / Dr. Philip Perry; Jack Thorne

### Description

The gorilla man was once a human, but Dr. Philip Perry's attempts to make him stronger by adding gorilla DNA severely damaged his brain, leaving him only slightly more intelligent than a horse. His feelings are always extreme: insane rage, ravenous hunger, terrible fear. He understands simple commands and obeys Dr. Perry and Jack Thorne only because they can cause him pain at any time through the shock collar around his neck.

If he encounters a stranger, he will attack unless ordered not to by Perry or Thorne. If injured he will either attack in rage or flee in terror, GM's choice.

## Tiger Man

### Statistics

**Medium-size Monstrous Humanoid (Mutated Human)**  
(CR 1); HD 2d8+2

<b>Initiative</b>	+4	<b>BAB</b>	+2	<b>STR</b>	18 (+4)
<b>Defense</b>	15; touch 14; flat-footed 11	<b>Melee</b>	+6	<b>DEX</b>	18 (+4)
<b>Hit Points</b>	11	<b>Ranged</b>	+6	<b>CON</b>	12 (+1)
<b>FORT</b>	+1	<b>Grapple</b>	+6	<b>INT</b>	4 (-3)
<b>REF</b>	+7	<b>Dmg Threshold</b>	12	<b>WIS</b>	6 (-2)
<b>WILL</b>	+1	<b>Action Points</b>	0	<b>CHA</b>	7 (-2)

**Attacks:** *claw*: Atk +6 melee; Dmg 1d6+4; Crit 20; Slashing

**Full Attack:** 2 *claws*: Atk +6 melee; Dmg 1d6+4; Crit 20; Slashing

*Bite*: Atk +1; Dmg 1d8+2; Crit 20; Piercing

**Speed:** 30 ft

**Facing and Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft; 5 ft

**Skills:** *Balance* +6; *Hide* +6; *Jump* +6; *Listen* +0; *Move Silently* +6; *Spot* +0

**Feats:** None

**Special Qualities:** *darkvision* 60 ft; *pounce*; *rake*

## The Beast Within

**Pounce (Ex):** If a tiger man leaps upon a foe during the first round of combat, it can make a full attack even if it has already taken a move action.

**Rake (Ex):** If a tiger man gets a hold on an opponent, it can make two rake attacks (+6 melee) for 1d6+4 points of damage each. If a tiger man pounces on an opponent it can also rake.

**Reputation/Allegiances:** +0 / Dr. Philip Perry; Jack Thorne

### Description

The tiger man was once a human, but Dr. Perry's attempts to increase his reflex speed by splicing in tiger DNA damaged his brain, leaving him only slightly more intelligent than a chimpanzee. He has no concept of the future, thinking only of immediate needs. If given an order by Dr. Perry or Jack Thorne, he follows it to avoid pain. Without orders, his usual driving force is hunger. He will attempt to kill and eat any animal he encounters unless Perry or Thorne orders him not to. He has no concept of mortality and will attack until killed.

# Appendix 3: Psychological Illnesses

Roll on this table every time a character fails a Will save against the effects of mutation. The first time a particular number is rolled, use the illness in the Primary Illness column. If the same number is rolled again, add the illness in the Secondary Illness column. If the same number is rolled a third time, roll again.

**Table A3–1: Psychological Illness**

Roll	Primary Illness	Secondary Illness
1	Depersonalization Disorder	Dissociative Identity (Multiple Personality) Disorder
2	Generalized Anxiety Disorder	Panic Disorder
3	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	Cleaning/Arranging
4	Body Dysmorphic Disorder	Pain Disorder
5	Schizoid Personality Disorder	Schizotypal Personality Disorder
6	Paranoid Personality Disorder	Antisocial Personality Disorder
7	Histrionic Personality Disorder	Narcissistic Personality Disorder
8	Avoidant Personality Disorder	Borderline Personality Disorder

**Depersonalization Disorder:** You feel disconnected from yourself and from what is going on around you, as if you were in a dream or watching a television show about your life. You constantly question the reality of what you see. All initiative and surprise rolls are at –2.

**Dissociative Identity (Multiple Personality) Disorder:** You form a new, secondary personality that immediately takes over. This secondary personality has all of your memories up to the time of its creation, but experiences are not shared after the split. The secondary personality feels better equipped to deal with the current situation.

Any traumatic event (entering combat, taking damage in combat, being surprised or threatened) may cause personalities to switch. The personality ‘switching in’ is confused and unable to act for one round.

**Generalized Anxiety Disorder:** You are tense and jumpy. You have trouble focusing on anything other than your worry. You may not take 10 or take 20 on any task.

**Panic Disorder:** Stressful situations may cause you to panic. When performing any task with a chance of

failure (i.e., you have to roll) make a Will save (DC 12). If the Will save fails, you panic. Your heart races, breathing becomes difficult, and you feel that you are about to die. The only action you can take is to move away from any perceived threats.

**Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder:** You must do everything “properly.” You must take 10 or 20 whenever possible. When performing a task with a chance of failure (i.e., if you have to roll to determine success) you may do nothing else until you succeed. If you fail at a skill that allows only one attempt (such as *Drive*), you must attempt to recreate the circumstances so you can try again. If you cannot recreate the situation, you panic; your heart races, breathing becomes difficult, and you feel that you are about to die. The only action you can take is to move away from any perceived threats.

**Cleaning/Arranging:** In addition to the obsessive behavior, above, you also become compulsive. Roll 1d6 and compare the result to Table A3–2: Compulsion to determine which compulsion you have.

**Table A3–2: Compulsion**

Result	Compulsion	Explanation
Even	Cleaning	You must be clean. Even if you are already clean, you feel the need to wash yourself. If you have an obvious stain, you receive a –2 penalty to all actions until you clean yourself. If the stain cannot be cleaned (e.g., you are wounded and bleeding) you must clean yourself up as much as possible, and the –2 penalty remains in effect.
Odd	Arranging	Everything must be in its place. You must optimize the order of your equipment to facilitate easy retrieval. Items on shelves must be sorted. Spilled or broken objects must be cleaned up. If anything in your field of view is chaotic or disordered, you suffer –2 to all actions until order is restored.

**Body Dysmorphic Disorder:** You become obsessed with some “defect” in your appearance. You must conceal this defect or avoid contact with others so they will not see it. If you cannot conceal the defect, you worry constantly about how others perceive it. You suffer a penalty of –1 to all actions if any other person can see your “defect.”

The defect is not necessarily related to a character’s mutation. A character with the Dexterity-boost mutation may decide that his nose is overly large and insist on wrapping a towel around his head.

## The Beast Within

**Pain Disorder:** You experience terrible, searing pain with no physical source. Pain controlling drugs have no effect. You suffer a penalty of -1 on all actions.

**Schizoid Personality Disorder:** You suffer from a diminished ability to empathize with others. You have no desire to be physically or emotionally close to other people. You must make a Will check (DC 12) in order to endanger yourself for the benefit of another person.

**Schizotypal Personality Disorder:** You experience very little emotion and cannot empathize with others. You believe in supernatural or occult forces that dictate events in the real world. These forces are not necessarily good or evil, but they are important—more important than friends, family, or society. The most insignificant event is designed specifically to affect you, for good or ill. You can tell that you are being watched over at all times, even when you are alone. You will not endanger yourself to help another person, but you may defend yourself if attacked.

**Paranoid Personality Disorder:** Everyone is out to get you. Even your closest friend will stab you in the back if you give him the chance. You become enraged at the slightest insult or criticism.

**Antisocial Personality Disorder:** You do not care about the thoughts and feelings of others. You are the only important person in the world. You react with surprise and anger when anyone suggests that what you want is incorrect, or that your method of achieving your desires is wrong. You recognize no morality. You must take the simplest path to any goal, no matter how much it involves lying, stealing, or harming others.

**Histrionic Personality Disorder:** You want to be the center of attention. All of your actions are exaggerated and extreme. You need constant approval from your peers and take great risks to achieve it. You must be involved in whatever is happening. You must make a Will check (DC 12) to allow someone else to attempt a task that you have not attempted. If someone does not pay attention to you, you feel that it is your fault and work even harder to draw attention.

**Narcissistic Personality Disorder:** You *must* be the center of attention. All of your actions are grandiose and extreme. You become angry and resentful if you are not the center of attention. You will take any risk to keep attention on yourself. In any situation

where a skill is used, you must try first, even if you do not have the skill in question. In combat you stand in the open and attack from the front. You never take cover or run away. If someone does not pay attention to you, you blame that person for not recognizing your superiority.

**Avoidant Personality Disorder:** You have low self-esteem and fear rejection. You attempt to avoid situations where you could fail. You must make a Will check (DC 12) to use any skill or to attack in combat.

**Borderline Personality Disorder:** You have very low self-esteem and consider yourself a failure. Your self-loathing often results in violence against yourself. Any time you fail at any task you must make a Will check (DC 12) or harm yourself in some way. Common methods are punching, cutting, or burning. The attack requires an attack action and does 1d3 HP of damage.

## Rejuvenator Virus

---

This purpose of this synthetic virus, designed by Dr. Philip Perry of MasterGene Biotechnology, Inc., is to modify the genetic code of a living mammal. To be used it must be attached to a sample of the DNA to be reproduced. It is of no use to players unless it has been specifically tailored to their DNA.

If a character contracts a “raw” rejuvenator virus, it will have no effect. The virus will reproduce, make no changes, and die. If a character contracts a rejuvenator virus tailored to another person, the effect could be drastic or minor, depending on the DNA changed by the virus.

The virus can be coded with a “generic” change that will affect nearly all humans in the same way. The assassin virus is an example of such a virus.

## Assassin Virus

---

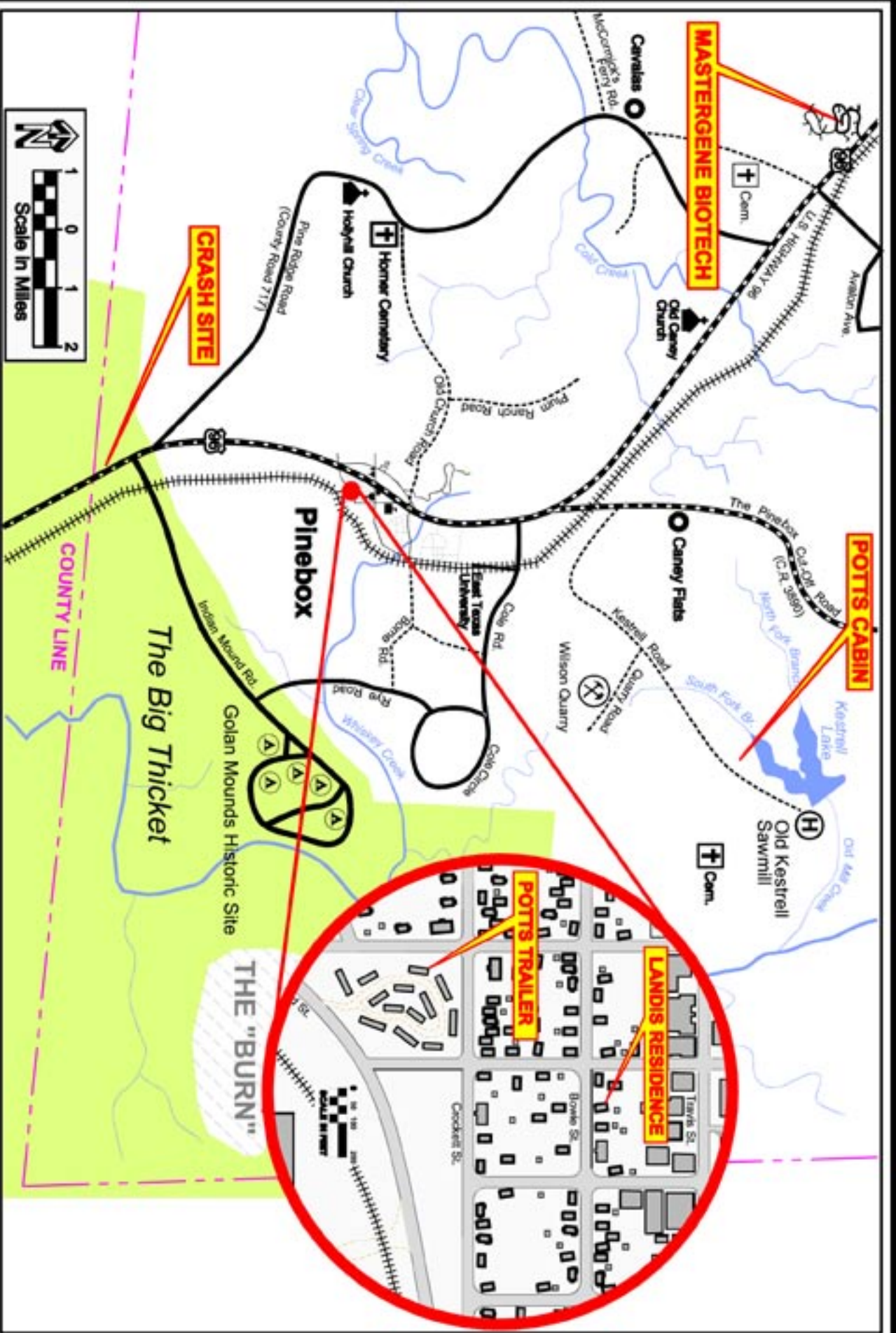
The assassin virus is a specific application of the rejuvenator virus. Dr. Perry designed it to give the subject a deadly genetic heart defect. Every 30 minutes after being infected, the victim loses 1 point of Constitution and must make a Fortitude save (DC 12). On a failure, the character has a fatal heart attack. The only way to combat the assassin virus is with powerful antiviral drugs. A character who is taking antiviral drugs for AIDS or another viral illness, or who takes antiviral drugs within the first 30 minutes after infection, may make a Fortitude save (DC 18). On a success, the assassin virus dies before it can significantly damage the heart.

## Trauma Ointment

---

This medicinal ointment uses a modified rejuvenator virus and human stem cells to reconnect and replace damaged flesh. This ointment heals traumatic injuries, such as bullet wounds, lacerations, and burns, in seconds. The white, sticky ointment looks just like any number of creams for treating wounds.

The trauma ointment must be applied using the *Treat Injury* skill. Successful application immediately heals 1d8+1 points of damage per jar of ointment used. Trauma ointment is perishable. If not refrigerated, it will lose effectiveness in one hour. If kept on ice or in a standard refrigerator, it will be effective for 1d3 days. When the trauma ointment goes bad, it changes to a pale-brown color and takes on a rotting smell. Spoiled ointment is harmless.



12 TO MIDNIGHT  
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GM FIGURE 1

# GM'S LOCATION MAP



SCALE:  
AS INDICATED



12 TO MIDNIGHT

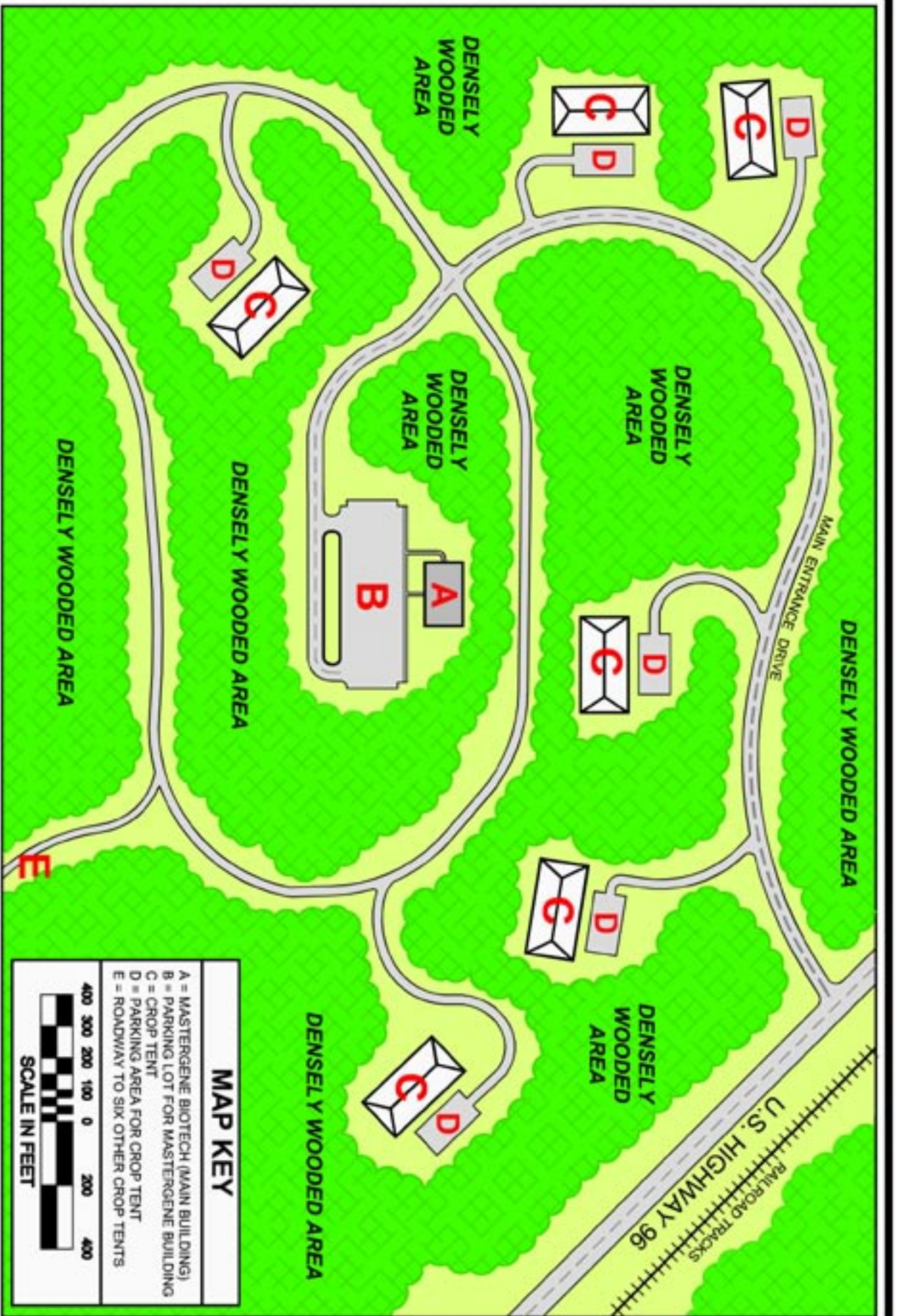
12to midnight.com

GM FIGURE 2

# MASTERGENE COMPLEX



SCALE:  
AS INDICATED



### MAP KEY

- A = MASTERGENE BIOTECH (MAIN BUILDING)
- B = PARKING LOT FOR MASTERGENE BUILDING
- C = CROP TENT
- D = PARKING AREA FOR CROP TENT
- E = ROADWAY TO SIX OTHER CROP TENTS







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GM FIGURE 3

# BASEMENT LEVEL B-3



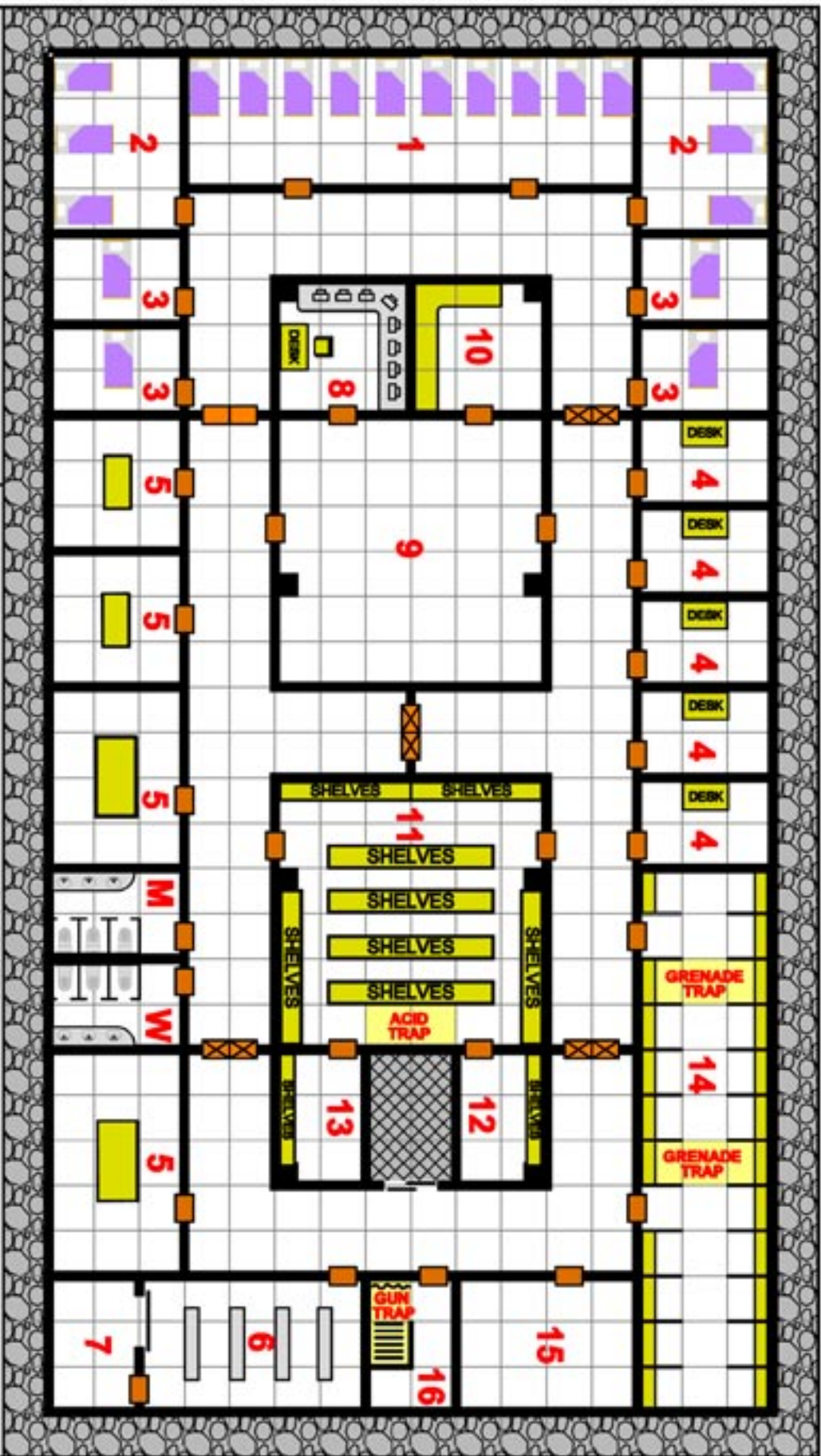
SCALE:  
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

- MAP KEY**
- NORMAL DOOR
  - WELDED FIRE DOOR
  - CONCRETE COLUMN

- ROOM KEY**
- 1 - GROUP TESTING ROOM
  - 2 - MUTANT TESTING ROOM
  - 3 - SINGLE TESTING ROOM
  - 4 - OFFICE
  - 5 - CONFERENCE ROOM
  - 6 - TRAINING ROOM

- 7 - PROJECTION ROOM
- 8 - EXPERIMENT OBSERVATION ROOM
- 9 - CAFETERIA
- 10 - KITCHEN
- 11 - CHEMICAL STORAGE
- 12 - WALK-IN REFRIGERATOR

- 13 - WALK-IN FREEZER
- 14 - CLIBICLES
- 15 - STORAGE
- 16 - STARWAY TO LEVEL B-2
- M - MEN'S RESTROOM
- W - WOMEN'S RESTROOM





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GM FIGURE 4

# BASEMENT LEVEL B-2

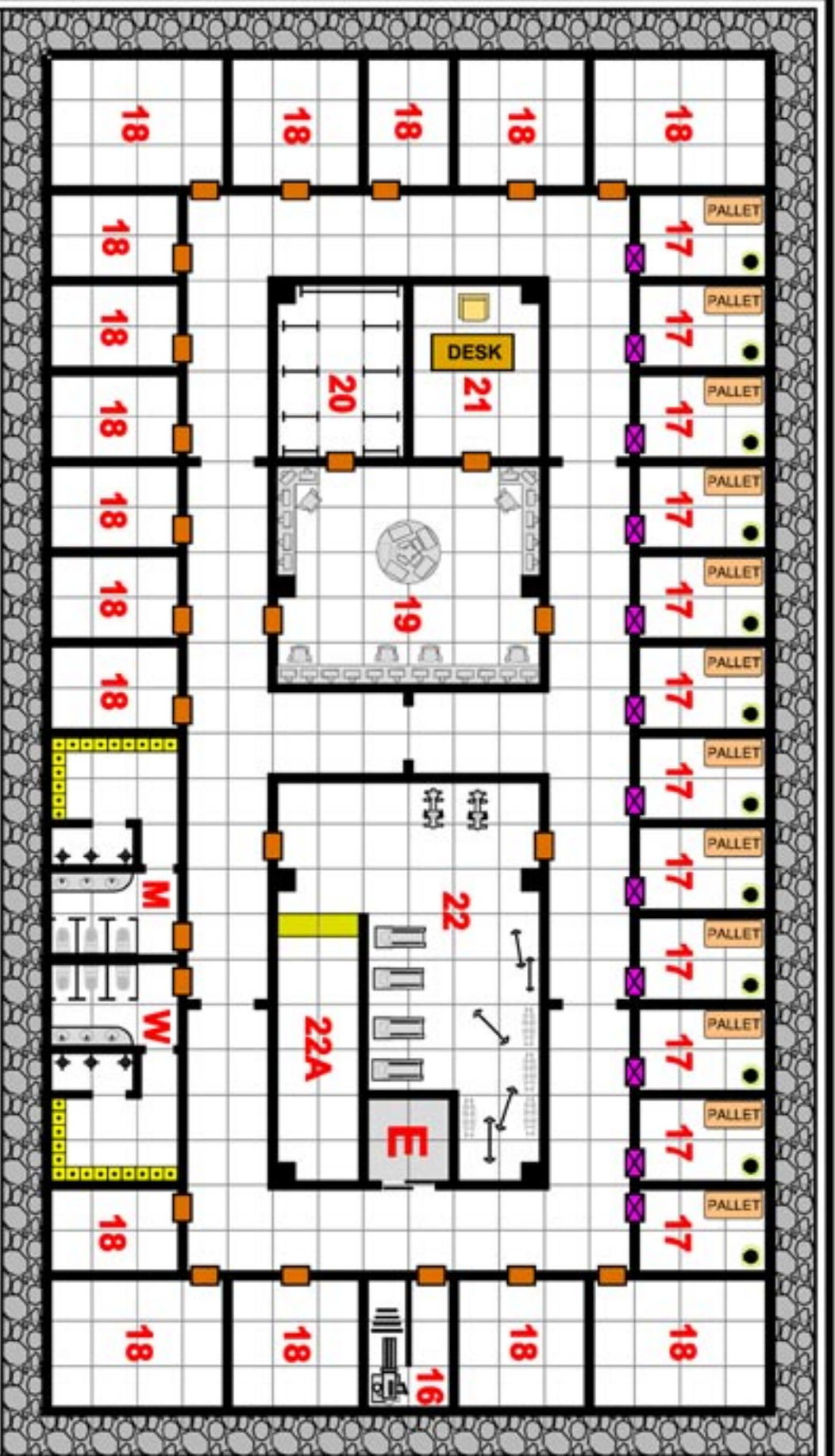
SCALE:  
1 SQUARE = 6 FEET



- MAP KEY**
- NORMAL DOOR
  - BARRED DOOR
  - LOCKER
  - CONCRETE COLUMN
  - SHOWER HEAD
  - CAMP TOILET
  - AUTOMATED MINIGUN

- ROOM KEY**
- 16 - STAIRWAY (UP FROM LEVEL B-3)
  - 17 - PRISON ROOM
  - 18 - EMPTY OFFICE
  - 19 - SECURITY OFFICE
  - 20 - ARMORY
  - 21 - JACK THORNES OFFICE
  - 22 - GYM
  - 22A - SHOOTING RANGE

- M - MEN'S RESTROOM & LOCKERS
- W - WOMEN'S RESTROOM & LOCKERS
- E - ELEVATOR





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GM FIGURE 5

# BASEMENT LEVEL B-1

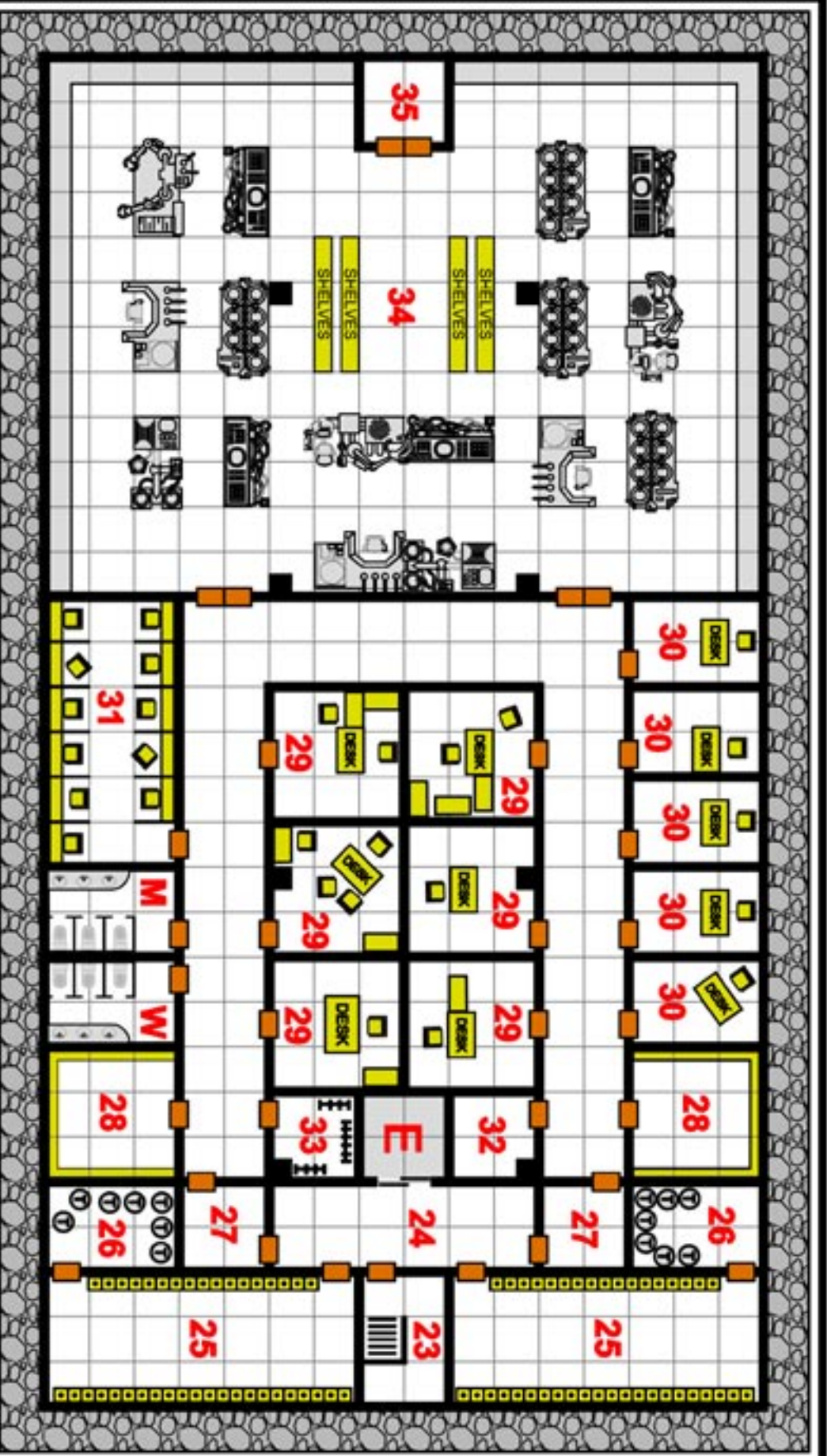
SCALE:  
1 SQUARE = 8 FEET



- MAP KEY**
- NORMAL DOOR
  - TANK/CAINISTER
  - CONCRETE COLUMN
  - LOCKER

- 23 - STAIRWAY
- 24 - HALLWAY
- 25 - LOCKER ROOM
- 26 - DECONTAMINATION EQUIPMENT
- 27 - DECONTAMINATION ROOM

- ROOM KEY**
- 28 - CHEMICAL STORAGE
  - 29 - SENIOR SCIENTISTS OFFICE
  - 30 - JUNIOR SCIENTISTS OFFICE
  - 31 - INTERN CLUBS
  - 32 - JANITORIAL CLOSET
  - E - ELEVATOR
  - 33 - TELEPHONE CLOSET
  - 34 - LABORATORY
  - 35 - REFRIGERATOR
  - M - MEN'S RESTROOM
  - W - WOMEN'S RESTROOM





12 TO MIDNIGHT

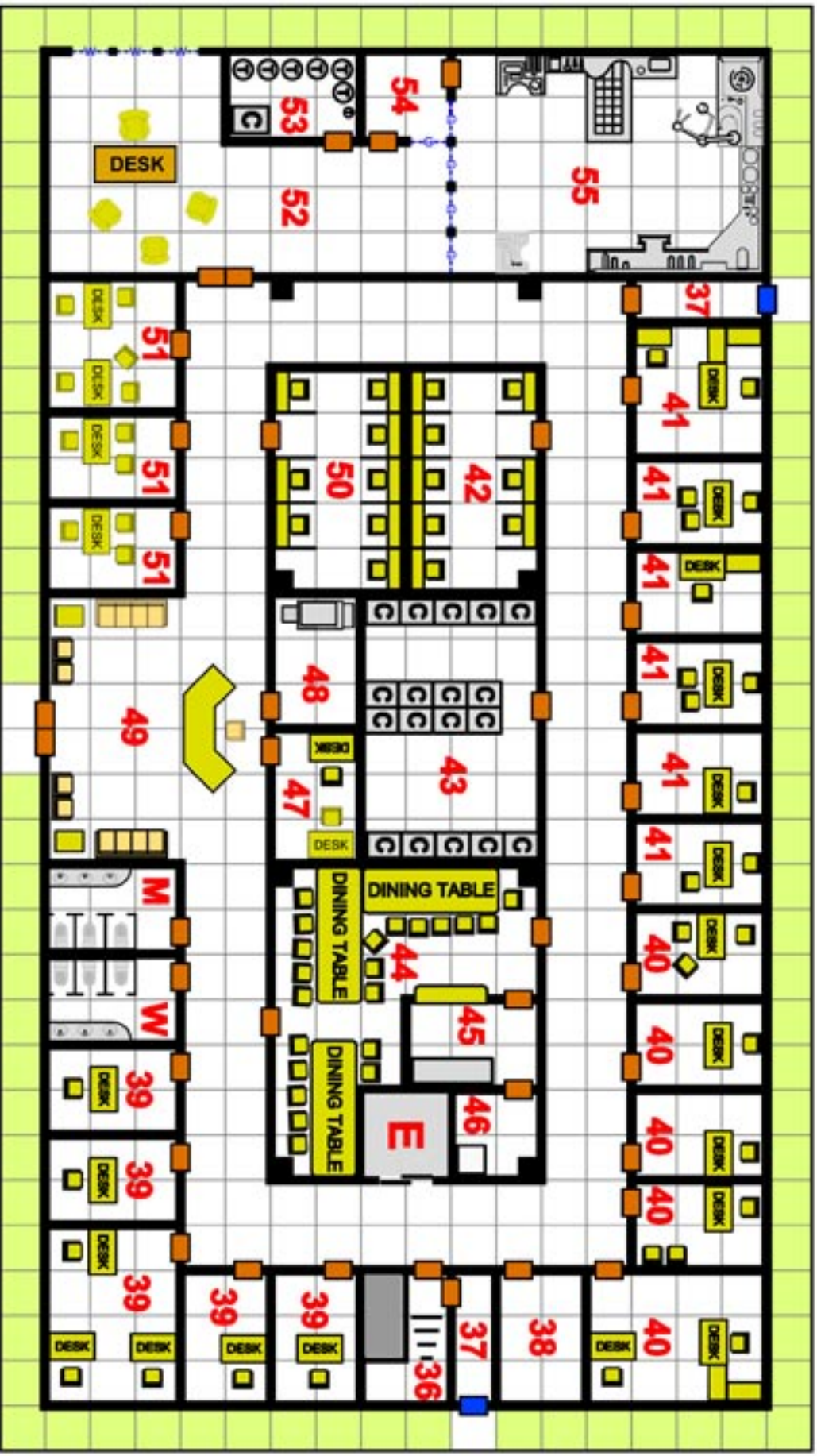
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GM FIGURE 6

# GROUND-FLOOR LEVEL



SCALE:  
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



### MAP KEY

- NORMAL DOOR
- FIRE DOOR
- WINDOW
- GLASS PARTITION
- COMPUTER RACK
- TANKICANISTER
- CONCRETE COLUMN

### ROOM KEY

- 36 - STAIRWAY
  - 37 - EXIT HALL
  - 38 - JANITORIAL CLOSET
  - 39 - SALES OFFICE
  - 40 - MARKETING OFFICE
  - 41 - IT OFFICE
  - 42 - IT INTERN CLUBS
  - 43 - COMPUTER ROOM
  - 44 - CAFETERIA
  - 45 - KITCHEN
  - 46 - STORAGE
  - 47 - SECURITY OFFICE
  - 48 - COPY ROOM / SUPPLIES
  - 49 - RECEPTION AREA
  - 50 - MARKETING INTERNS
  - 51 - HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE
  - 52 - DR. PERRY'S OFFICE
  - 53 - DECONTAMINATION EQUIP.
  - 54 - DECONTAMINATION ROOM
  - 55 - DR. PERRY'S LAB
- M - MEN'S RESTROOM    W - WOMEN'S RESTROOM    E - ELEVATOR

# Appendix 6: Player Handouts

## About These Handouts

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This adventure includes templates for creating official accident reports for use during the early stages of the encounter. These templates are meant to be printed and filled out by you, the GM. To aid you in filling out these forms, we have also included five pages of examples. Bear in mind that while the “Vehicle 2” portion of the first page is empty, you should fill out that side to match the information from your heroes. If you are using this adventure to kick off a campaign and decide to introduce strangers to one another in a multi-car pile-up, you may add Vehicle 3, 4, and so on to the report.

The forms provide a lot of room for you to add detail, but are not meant to be tedious for you. Only fill out as much or little information as your players will appreciate. For added realism, print out the forms on colored yellow or green paper and search the internet for a photo you can use as a mug shot of Gary Sheets.

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GOLAN COUNTY, TEXAS  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Vehicle Accident Report

Accident Date	Day of Week	Time	No. of Vehicles	No. Injured	No. Killed	Left Scene	Not Investigated	Photos Taken
	F	3:18 Am	2	0	1		Accident Reconstructed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Vehicle 1					Vehicle 2				
Driver Name-exactly as presented on license <b>Joseph Landis</b>					Driver Name-exactly as presented on license				
Address <b>604 Bowie St</b>				Apt. No.	Address				Apt. No.
City or Town <b>Pinebox</b>			State <b>TX</b>	Zip Code	City or Town			State	Zip Code
Date of Birth <b>8/14/86</b>	Sex <b>M</b>	Occupants <b>1</b>	US Citizen <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Uninsured <input type="checkbox"/>	License State & No. <b>TX 14377230</b>	Date of Birth	Sex	Occupants	US Citizen
Vehicle Registration Name <b>Gary Sheets</b>					Vehicle Registration Name				
Address <b>180071 Azalea Dr</b>				Apt. No. <b>1302</b>	Address				Apt. No.
City or Town <b>Houston</b>			State <b>TX</b>	Zip Code <b>78743</b>	City or Town			State	Zip Code
Plate Number <b>SX2-389</b>	State of Reg. <b>TX</b>	Vehicle Year & Make <b>1995 Chev</b>	VIN	Plate Number	State of Reg.	Vehicle Year & Make	VIN		

Check if involved vehicle is: <input type="checkbox"/> More than 95 inches wide <input type="checkbox"/> More than 34 feet long <input type="checkbox"/> Operated with an overweight permit <input type="checkbox"/> Operated with an overdimension permit Ticker/Arrest: <input type="checkbox"/> Driver <input type="checkbox"/> Passenger(s) Ticker/Arrest Number(s):	<b>Accident Diagram</b> 	Check if involved vehicle is: <input type="checkbox"/> More than 95 inches wide <input type="checkbox"/> More than 34 feet long <input type="checkbox"/> Operated with an overweight permit <input type="checkbox"/> Operated with an overdimension permit Ticker/Arrest: <input type="checkbox"/> Driver <input type="checkbox"/> Passenger(s) Ticker/Arrest Number(s):
	Vehicle Towed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Impaired</b> <b>Vehicle 1 Damage Codes</b> Box 1 - Point of Impact Box 2 - Most Damage Enter up to three more Damage Codes <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">6</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">11</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3</div> </div> Estimated cost of repairs to any one vehicle meets criteria for "repairable" threshold. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

Accident Description  
**See attached**

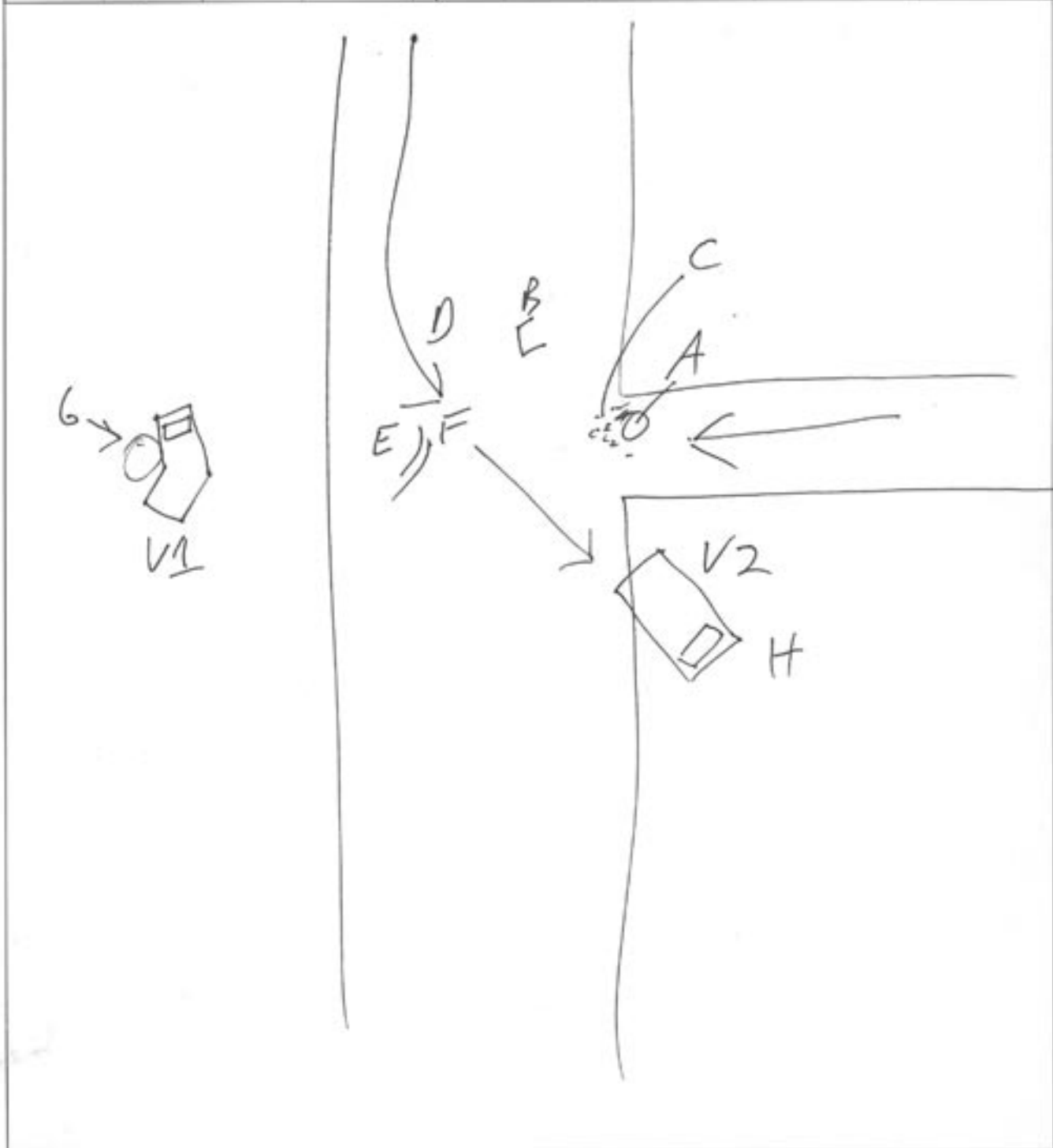
<b>Vehicle Damage Coding</b> 1-13 See diagram 14. Undercarriage 15. Trailer 16. Overturned 17. Demolished 18. No Damage 19. Other		<b>Accident Location</b> Highway/Road/Street Name <b>Hwy 96</b> Nearest Intersection <b>unnamed private logging road 0.8 mi N. of County line</b> Approx. Distance and Direction from Intersection
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<b>SIGN HERE</b>	Officer's Rank and Name	Badge ID No.	Date/Time Received	Initials
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GOLAN COUNTY, TEXAS  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

# Vehicle Accident Report

Accident Date	Day of Week	Time	No. of Vehicles	No. Injured	No. Killed	Left Scene	Not Investigated	Photos Taken
	F	3:18AM	2	0	1		Accident Reconstructed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



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GOLAN COUNTY, TEXAS  
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## Vehicle Accident Report

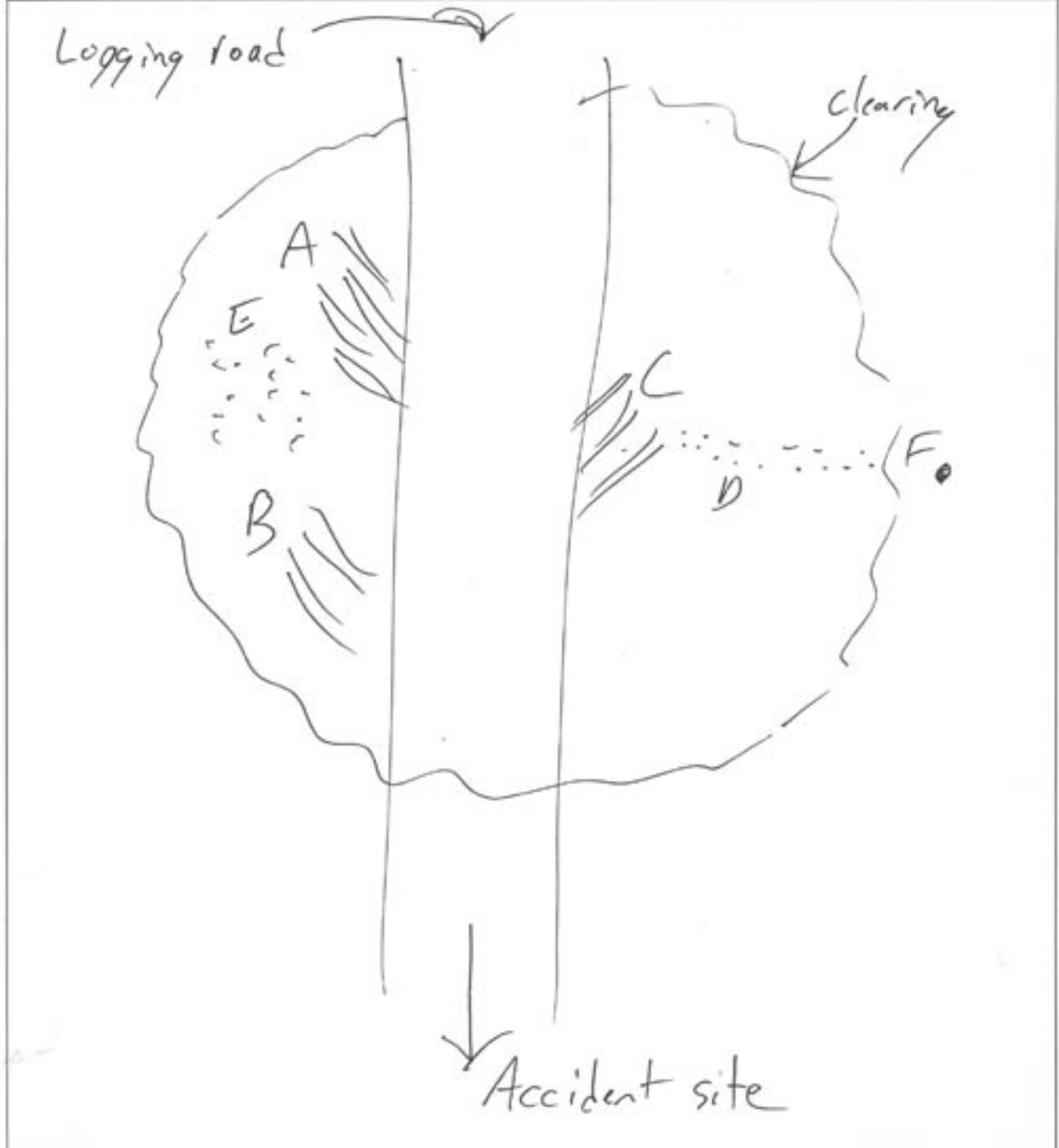
Accident Date	Day of Week	Time	No. of Vehicles	No. Injured	No. Killed	Left Scene	Not Investigated	Photos Taken	
							Accident Reconstructed		
<p>V1 = Vehicle 1</p> <p>V2 = Vehicle 2</p> <p>A = significant pothole</p> <p>B = Bumper from V1</p> <p>C = Glass and plastic debris (impact with pothole?)</p> <p>D = Vehicle 2 skid marks</p> <p>E = Vehicle 1 skid marks</p> <p>F = Impact between two vehicles</p> <p>G = Vehicle impact with tree</p> <p>H = Vehicle 2 stop in ditch</p>									
<b>SIGN HERE</b>	Officer's Rank and Name						Badge ID No.	Date/Time Received	Initials



GOLAN COUNTY, TEXAS  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

### Vehicle Accident Report

Accident Date	Day of Week	Time	No. of Vehicles	No. Injured	No. Killed	Left Scene	No. Investigated	Photos Taken
	F	3:18 AM	2	0	1		Accident Reconstructed	✓



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GOLAN COUNTY, TEXAS  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Vehicle Accident Report

Accident Date	Day of Week	Time	Nos. of Vehicles	Nos. Injured	Nos. Killed	Left Scene	Not Investigated	Photos Taken
							Accident Reconstructed	

A, B, C = Vehicle Tire tracks

D = Deep footprints, widely spaced, bare foot

E = Many jumbled footprints

F = tracks end

Van registered to Gary Sheets.  
Arrested in Pinebox three years ago.  
Records show parents and a sister in town,  
but address is out of date. Maybe they  
know connection?  
Check Joe's friends + teachers. Did he  
have enemies?  
- Richards

SIGN HERE	Officer's Rank and Name	Badge ID No.	Date/Time Received	Initials

**GOLAN COUNTY, TEXAS  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

# Vehicle Accident Report

Accident Date	Day of Week	Time	No. of Vehicles	No. Injured	No. Killed	Left Scene	Not Investigated	Photos Taken							
							Accident Reconstructed								
Vehicle 1					Vehicle 2										
Driver Name- exactly as presented on license					Driver Name- exactly as presented on license										
Address				Apt. No.	Address				Apt. No.						
City or Town			State	Zip Code	City or Town			State	Zip Code						
Date of Birth	Sex	Occupants	US Citizen	Uninsured	License State & No.										
Vehicle Registration Name			Vehicle Registration No.		Vehicle Registration Name			Vehicle Registration No.							
Address				Apt. No.	Address				Apt. No.						
City or Town			State	Zip Code	City or Town			State	Zip Code						
Plate Number	State of Reg.	Vehicle Year & Make		VIN	Plate Number	State of Reg.	Vehicle Year & Make		VIN						
Check if involved vehicle is: <input type="checkbox"/> More than 95 inches wide <input type="checkbox"/> More than 34 feet long <input type="checkbox"/> Operated with an overweight permit <input type="checkbox"/> Operated with an overdimension permit				<b>Accident Diagram</b>					Check if involved vehicle is: <input type="checkbox"/> More than 95 inches wide <input type="checkbox"/> More than 34 feet long <input type="checkbox"/> Operated with an overweight permit <input type="checkbox"/> Operated with an overdimension permit						
Ticket/Arrest: <input type="checkbox"/> Driver <input type="checkbox"/> Passenger(s) Ticket/Arrest Number(s):									Ticket/Arrest: <input type="checkbox"/> Driver <input type="checkbox"/> Passenger(s) Ticket/Arrest Number(s):						
Vehicle Towed <input type="checkbox"/>	By: _____ To: _____								Vehicle Towed <input type="checkbox"/>				By: _____ To: _____		
Vehicle 1 Damage Codes									Vehicle 2 Damage Codes						
Box 1 - Point of Impact Box 2 - Most Damage Enter up to three more Damage Codes 1 <input type="text"/> 2 <input type="text"/> 3 <input type="text"/> 4 <input type="text"/> 5 <input type="text"/>										Box 1 - Point of Impact Box 2 - Most Damage Enter up to three more Damage Codes 1 <input type="text"/> 2 <input type="text"/> 3 <input type="text"/> 4 <input type="text"/> 5 <input type="text"/>					
Estimated cost of repairs to any one vehicle meets criteria for "repairable" threshold. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No															
Accident Description															
<b>Vehicle Damage Coding</b> 1-13 See diagram 14. Undercarriage 15. Trailer 16. Overturned 17. Demolished 18. No Damage 19. Other						<b>Accident Location</b>									
						Highway/Road/Street Name:  Nearest Intersection:  Approx. Distance and Direction from Intersection:									
<b>SIGN HERE</b>	Officer's Rank and Name				Badge ID No.		Date/Time Received		Initials						

GOLAN COUNTY, TEXAS  
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# Vehicle Accident Report

Accident Date	Day of Week	Time	No. of Vehicles	No. Injured	No. Killed	Left Scene	Not Investigated	Photos Taken
							Accident Reconstructed	

<b>SIGN HERE</b>	Officer's Rank and Name	Badge ID No.	Date/Time Received	Initials

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