



# MODERN

## ADELIE

### 14



By Charles Ryan

A Short Adventure for Four 6th- to 8th-Level Heroes

Not all international intrigue happens in presidential palaces, plush business offices, and smoky dives next to waterfronts. Some happens in the coldest, dreariest, most desolate places in the world. But regardless of the setting, the question is always the same: Who's lying?

*Adelie 14* is a *d20 MODERN* adventure set in the frozen wastes of Antarctica. In it, a group of 6th- to 8th-level characters becomes enmeshed in a deadly web of international intrigue and doublecross that spans more than half the globe.

### PREPARATION

You, the Game Master (GM), need a copy of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* to run this adventure. To get started, print out this adventure and read it through. Opponents' statistics are provided in abbreviated form in the areas where they appear. Any text in shaded boxes should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players.

### BACKGROUND

AgraTech is an international corporate conglomerate that counts both biotech and environmental businesses among its diverse profit centers. In conjunction with the latter interests, the corporation operates an environmental research station on the continent of Antarctica. But this facility, known as Adelie 14, also has a secondary purpose that has never been revealed to the public. In addition to their regular research, personnel at the lab routinely conduct mineral surveys of the area. Recently, these covert studies bore fruit when the researchers at Adelie 14 discovered oil—lots of it—beneath the Antarctic ice.

The mineral exploitation of Antarctica has been banned by treaty since 1961. Over the past few years, however, more and more companies and nations have become attracted to the potential resources that an

untapped continent might offer, and the ban has slowly been losing its international base of support. Nevertheless, its restrictions are still in force, and any large-scale violation would cause great controversy—at least initially. Thereafter, the floodgates of exploitation would almost certainly open wide as nations and corporations vied to grab pieces of the pie. A number of countries (specifically Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway, and the UK) have already claimed portions of Antarctica, but those claims have not yet been internationally recognized. Thus far, these nations have not even bothered to fight over the fact that the boundaries of some claimed areas overlap. But the discovery of oil on the continent would change this lackadaisical attitude quickly.

To date, the Russians have made no claims on Antarctica, but they have made a deal with AgraTech. Russia is prepared to claim and defend any region in which oil (or any other exploitable mineral deposit) is found, in exchange for a piece of the action. Such a maneuver will position Russia perfectly to grab the lead in the rush that will inevitably follow its claim. But because the Russians believe that any important discovery is still a year or so away, there are currently no sizeable Russian military forces in the region.

Officials in the Ukraine have learned about AgraTech's activities and about Russia's plans to exploit the results. The Ukrainians have a twofold interest in the situation—they want to stop Russia and they also want the oil for themselves. Political disputes between the two ex-Soviet nations have recently led Russia—the Ukraine's primary source of oil—to cut off supplies to that nation. The Ukraine is under intense international pressure to shut down its aging Soviet nuclear plants, and its industries cannot afford to rely on the high-priced oil available on the international market to meet their energy needs. So instead of just exposing the Russian plan, the Ukrainians want to create an international incident that will allow them to seize and annex Adelie 14. Then later, when the world is paying a little less attention, the Ukraine can lay claim to the region and its as-yet-unannounced oil reserves.

## SYNOPSIS

The Ukrainians are planning to create a scandal that will give them an excuse to take over Adelie 14. But the incident must appear completely legitimate—there must be no sign of fakery and no evidence connecting the Ukraine with the station. To that end, the Ukrainians plan to hire some capable stooges who will enter the facility and fabricate some evidence of illegal activities. These dupes will make it appear that the remote site was being used in the production of biological warfare agents, and that the Russians have forced Ukrainian scientists to work against their will at the facility. These two “facts” should give the Ukrainians sufficient justification for sending in a military force to take over the station. Of course, the stooges who plant this “evidence” cannot be allowed to go free afterward, so they must be killed in the Ukrainian raid. To lend further support to their story about Russian interference at the facility, the Ukrainians have arranged for the dupes to look like Russian soldiers.

These dupes are, of course, the heroes. The adventure begins when they are hired by Ukrainian agents to enter

Adelie 14 and find a certain scientist who, they claim, knows about the biological agents. Once the heroes find him, question him, and broadcast their results back to their employers, the Ukrainians intend to send a military force to take over Adelie 14. The soldiers in this strike force have orders to ensure that the heroes don't survive the raid.

## Character Hooks

This adventure requires a set of heroes who have experience with military special operations or espionage. As GM, you know best how to involve your players and their characters in an adventure. You can use the following adventure hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary to make them appropriate for the characters' interests.

- If this is the heroes' first mission together, the Ukrainians have recruited them individually for their unique skills and then formed them into a special operations team.
- One or more of the heroes has friends, contacts, or relatives in the Ukrainian intelligence community who recommended them for a planned special operation.
- Heroes with previous military or paramilitary experience managed to impress a Ukrainian official with their expertise while engaged in a recent multinational operation (such as a UN peacekeeping mission or a counterterrorism operation).

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure assumes that the characters have already been recruited for their mission by a representative of the Ukrainian secret service named Leonid Kuchma. In his offer, Kuchma said only that the mission would take place in Antarctica, that it would take less than 24 hours and should involve no bloodshed, and that all transportation and specialized equipment would be provided. The payment offered is generous for such a short mission—a +14 Wealth award. (If you wish to play out the recruitment process, you can place the encounter anywhere you wish—Kuchma knows where to find the characters.)

Upon their acceptance, Kuchma arranges for their transportation to the Ukrainian amphibious assault ship *Azovskoje*. The adventure begins when the characters are aboard the *Azovskoje* and en route to Antarctica. The time of year is late March, which is autumn in Antarctica.

## The Azovskoje

Leonid Kuchma joins the heroes in the ward room of the assault ship for a briefing. In his gravelly, heavily accented voice, he explains the situation as follows. His manner is laconic—almost bored.

“Adelie 14 is an AgraTech Corporation facility on Antarctica,” Kuchma says, leaning back in his chair to regard you. “Although its personnel supposedly do civilian





environmental research, we have obtained evidence that AgraTech is also conducting biological weapons research there on behalf of the Russian government. We want proof—and you are going to get it for us.

“We could, of course, just turn the whole situation over to the media or the UN, but where would that get us, eh? The world tires of bickering between Russia and Ukraine—by the time the world takes us seriously, Russians will have cleared out of Adelie 14, and the weapons research will be just another unsubstantiated rumor. No, no, we need proof—undeniable proof.

“This man,” Kuchma continues, producing a photo and a map of the station, “his name is Vitaliy Prytyka. He is Russian but has worked for AgraTech for long time—many years. He is head of whole project—he will be our proof. Find him and question him. We have video camera for you, with satellite link. Call when you find him, and broadcast your interview with him back to us. That way, no matter what happens, we have the evidence. You get out of this okay, I think, but why tempt fate, eh? After you question Prytyka, you let him go and then meet our helicopter for extraction. In and out—six hours tops. Nobody gets hurt. Oh, and you keep your faces covered on the video broadcast—this is encrypted digital system, but why take chances?

“Vitaliy Prytyka and AgraTech—they are making new RDHA—how to say—rapid decay haemorrhagic agent. It is made from *Streptococcus Pneumoniae*, a bacterium. You ask Prytyka about streptococcus when you question him, and look for signs of it in the lab. Include it on your video if you can.

“And another thing. This Antarctica situation is very delicate. Many countries have claimed parts of Antarctica, but nobody recognizes these claims. It is illegal to mine or exploit here, but still there are more than one hundred stations. What do all those countries and companies do, eh, if they do not mine or exploit? Making biological weapons here is very, very illegal, but so are military operations. That’s why we have you, eh? Keep this whole thing honest. Still, is wise that no word get out about you before we can tell the world what you find. So you disable the station’s communications and helicopter before you move in. That way, the Russians can’t make up their own story before we can tell ours.”

Kuchma answers any questions the heroes have in the hour or so before the operation begins. He is skillful at avoiding direct lies while still concealing his true plans and maintaining the cover story he has invented for the mission. A character who makes a successful Sense Motive check (DC 20) realizes that Kuchma is not telling them everything. Should the heroes confront him with that suspicion, Kuchma shrugs and says that some details are matters of Ukrainian national security, but he is being as open as he can (which is actually true).

In short, Kuchma expects the characters to head for the research station from the drop point, stop to disable both the helicopter and the communications tower, then enter the compound. Once there, they are to find Prytyka and

question him on camera, transmitting this conversation live to Kuchma via a satellite uplink that he’s providing.

The plan is to insert the heroes about 2 kilometers from Adelie 14, just beyond a rocky ridge, about an hour before dusk. They are to be extracted from the same site just after dawn, or they can call for an extraction closer to the camp and at a different time (after daybreak) if they wish. Weather this time of year is very unpredictable, and though it should cooperate for the next 24 hours or so, this favorable window may not stay open for long.

Any character with questions about RDHA may make a Knowledge (earth and life sciences) check (DC 20). Success means the hero knows that most haemorrhagic agents are viral, but that some bacterial agents are also in the experimental stages.

As the briefing draws to an end, Kuchma provides the heroes with the following arctic gear.

- Thermal undergarments, snowsuits, boots, parkas, snow goggles, gloves, and mittens for each hero.
- A digital video camera, a portable satellite phone (programmed with the number at which to reach Kuchma), and a special encrypted modem with which to transmit the video signal via the telephone. (No Wealth check is required to use this phone.)
- An AKSU-74 submachine gun for each hero. The heroes are welcome to carry any other personal firearms they desire as well, but Kuchma warns them that most firearms are unreliable in the extreme Antarctic weather.

All of the above equipment appears to be standard military gear, but it is unmarked. Kuchma’s claim that other weapons are unreliable in Antarctica is not really true; he simply wants the heroes to carry the gear he provides because it is Russian in style. Their use of such equipment will lend credence to his story when he later tells the world that the heroes were actually Russian thugs.

With a successful Knowledge (current events) check (DC 14), the heroes are aware that the Russians and the Ukrainians have not been getting along for the past couple of years. The two countries have been feuding over issues as diverse as fishing rights, compensation for lingering damage caused by Chernobyl, conflicts in neighboring ex-Soviet states, oil, and even control of the Black Sea naval fleet. In this light, Kuchma’s apparent belief that only the hardest of evidence will be taken seriously by the world (and then only if delivered before Russian spin-doctors get a shot at it) seems perfectly credible.

The encounters are presented below in the approximate order they should appear. If the heroes take a path other than the one assumed, use the encounters in any order they are needed.

## A. The Drop

The heroes are flown to the insertion point aboard a Ukrainian Mi-8 Hip that lifts off from the deck of the *Azovskoje* in the late afternoon. Read or paraphrase the following after the characters board the chopper.

The Soviet-made helicopter lifts laboriously from the deck of the Ukrainian ship, then turns quickly to fly low above the wind-whipped waves toward the dark smudge of land on the horizon.

The chopper quickly reaches the rocky, snow-blasted shore, flying so low to the ground that it seems as if you could reach out and touch it. For an hour and a half the helicopter weaves its way between ridges of low, rocky mountains, never more than a few dozen feet off the ground.

Finally the pitch of the rotor noise changes as the helicopter makes a sudden, banking turn. The Ukrainian flight engineer gives you a signal and slides open the side cargo door. A blast of frigid air roars through the copter's cargo bay, and the aircraft settles gently onto the dense snow.

As soon as the heroes have disembarked, the helicopter lifts off again, disappearing quickly behind a nearby ridge. The echo of its rotors dies off after just a few seconds.

The heroes have been deposited just behind a rocky ridge, about 2 kilometers north of Adelie 14. The weak sun sits very low in the sky—it'll be dark in less than an hour.

The weather here is bitterly cold (see Heat and Cold on page 213 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*). The special arctic gear that Kuchma provided grants a +6 equipment bonus on saves against the effects of cold, but dawdling outdoors is still inadvisable in weather such as this.

Between the ridge and the camp, the terrain is almost featureless and offers little cover. But since no one at Adelie 14 is expecting company, there is no chance that anyone will spot the heroes while they are approaching the facility unless they do something major to draw attention to themselves.

**Development:** On foot, the hike to the camp should take about an hour if the characters move straight toward the facility. On the way, however, they have the opportunity to stop and check out three areas of interest: a drilling site that gives mute evidence of oil exploration, the communications cluster (which contains the communications tower that the heroes have been told to disable), and the helicopter (which is parked next to the compound itself).

## B. The Drill Site

About 1/4 mile southeast of the insertion point, just over the ridge, is a test well that the researchers at Adelie 14 drilled to confirm the presence of oil. Any hero scanning the landscape from the insertion point notices this well site with a successful Spot check (DC 12).

Read or paraphrase the following aloud if the heroes approach the site.

Several pieces of distinctly industrial equipment rest on a large, dirty patch of snow. Numerous vehicle and foot tracks make it obvious that the area has seen a lot of traffic recently, but no one seems to be here now.

Heroes who investigate the site find a variety of equipment, including a tractor-mounted drilling apparatus. Several holes have been bored into the dense snow, and there are piles of

dirt and filthy ice nearby. A successful Search check (DC 16) reveals that many of the dirty stains in the snow are oil.

There is nothing else of interest at this location.

## C. The Communications Cluster

About 1/4 mile north of the compound lies the communications cluster. This set of equipment serves as the primary link between the compound and the outside world.

Several satellite dishes surround a tall radio tower. Cables from the communications devices converge at a small shack half-buried in snow near the base of the structure. There is no sign of human activity here.

The communications shack is locked with a simple padlock (Disable Device DC 25, Break DC 30). Inside is a junction station connecting the compound's many communications devices (including radio, internet connections, and direct satellite links to other AgraTech facilities) with the transmitters around the shack.

A successful Disable Device check (DC 20) disconnects the equipment without actually damaging it. (The DC for disabling the equipment without leaving any obvious evidence of tampering is 30.) Alternatively, the heroes can simply destroy the equipment (Break DC 10). In this case, a successful Intelligence check (DC 14) is required to ensure that the destruction completely prevents communication with the outside world.

## D. The Helicopter

Just to the east of the compound's main building sits the helicopter—a Bell Jet Ranger. Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the heroes get a good look at it.

A helicopter sits in a clear area slightly apart from the buildings that make up the compound. The tarp that covers the vehicle's dark, hunched form is dusted with snow and flaps weakly in the wind.

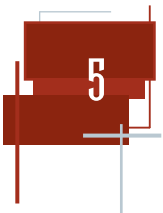
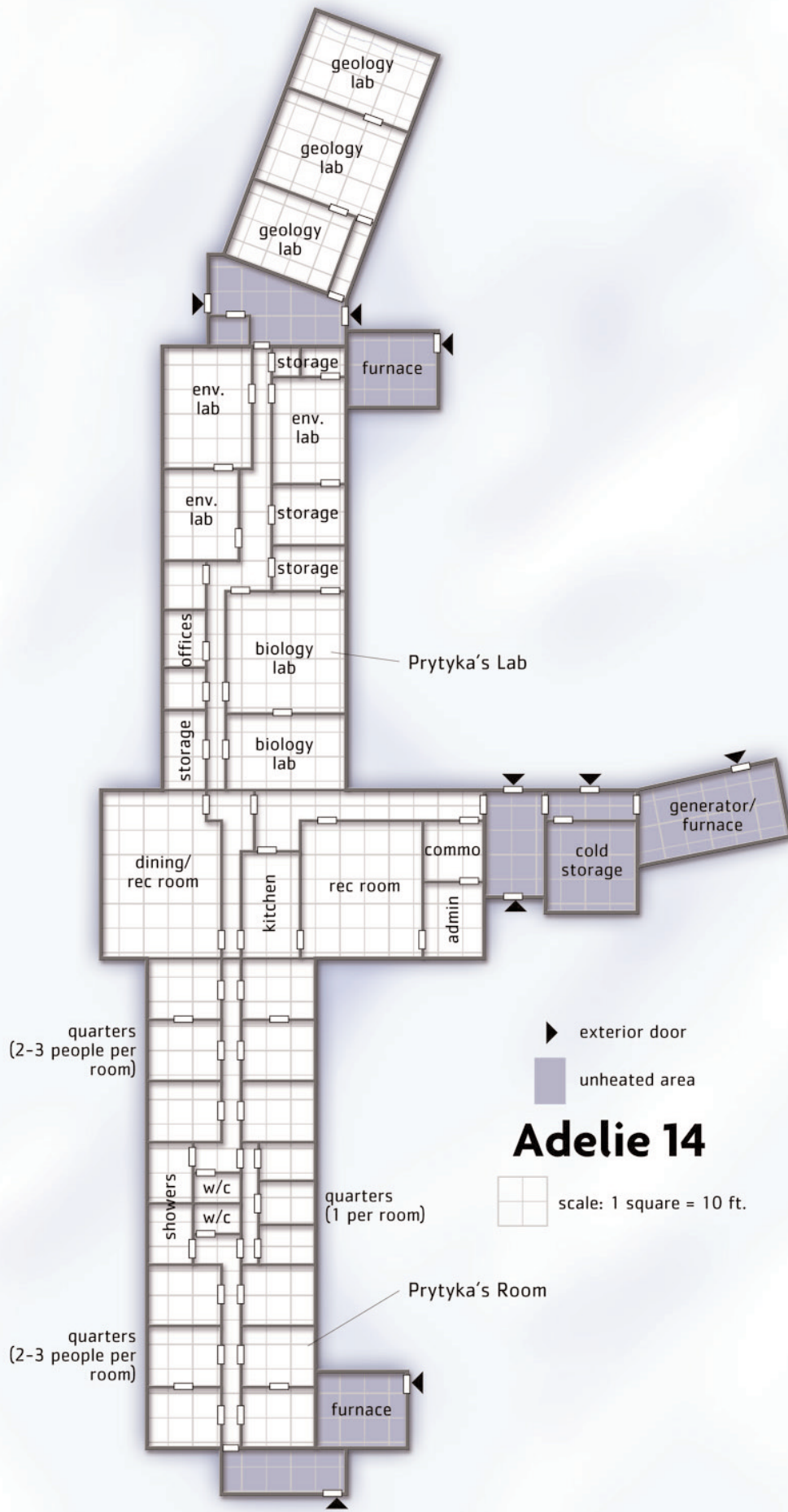
A successful Disable Device check (DC 20) disables the helicopter's engine without actually damaging it. (The DC for disabling the helicopter without leaving any obvious evidence of tampering is 30.) Alternatively, heroes can simply open the engine cowling and wreak havoc inside (Break DC 18). In this case, a successful Intelligence check (DC 10) is required to ensure that the destruction completely prevents the helicopter from functioning.

## E. Adelie 14

Adelie 14 is a medium-sized facility by the standards of Antarctic research stations. Its main structure is a long building (actually a series of connected buildings) running north-south. A series of outbuildings, most of which are located to the northeast of the primary structure, completes the station's facilities. Only the main building is inhabited; the outbuildings are sheds, maintenance shacks, and open vehicle shelters.







# ADELLE 14

## Physical Arrangement

Adelie 14's main building consists of three wings.

The southernmost of these, a single large prefab building with an attached furnace room and entryway, houses all the living quarters. Two or three staff members (usually the same gender) share each small bedroom. (Prytyka's quarters are in this section, near the southeast end, as shown on the map.) A few of the senior staffers have private rooms—the tiny cells in the center of the wing. The facility offers segregated showers and toilets for men and women.

The central wing is another large prefab building with separate storage and generator shacks attached to its eastern end. It houses the administration, recreation, and support areas.

The northern wing is dedicated to laboratories, offices, and associated storage facilities. It consists of two prefab buildings linked by an unheated entry hall with doors to the outside.

This arrangement is typical of the door and hall placement at Adelie 14—no exterior door leads directly into a heated area. Instead, it leads into an entry chamber that functions rather like an air lock on a submarine, protecting the adjacent heated areas from the elements as people come and go. These areas are cold (though not nearly as cold as the outdoors) and are typically used to store parkas, outdoor equipment, and other odds and ends.

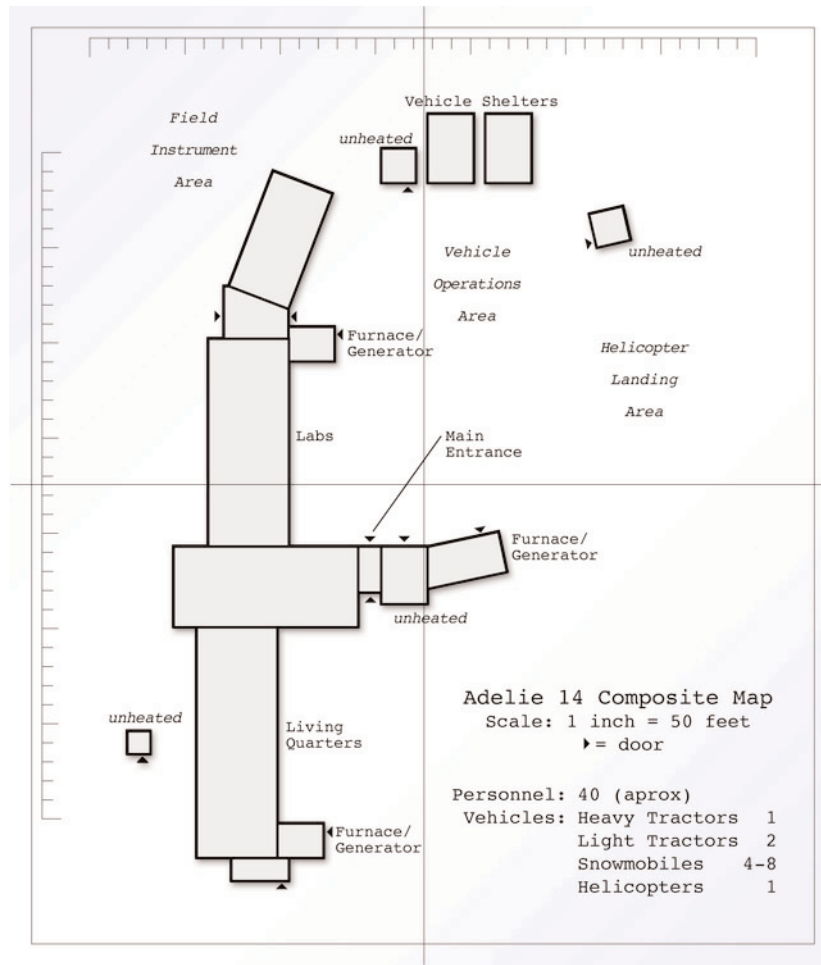
If the heroes have been careful so far, they should have no trouble entering the compound—none of the doors are locked.

## Standard Activities

There is little activity inside the compound after dark. Of the facility's forty or so inhabitants, about half a dozen are working late in the labs, while another five or six are in the recreation room watching TV. Most of the others are in their rooms reading, watching television, playing video games, or sleeping.

If the heroes have disabled the communications cluster, there is no mad rush of activity to fix it. Interruptions in telecommunications are not uncommon here, so although the problem may be noticed by a few people, it doesn't become noteworthy until two or three hours later, when the communication system has failed to come back up by itself.

Sneaky heroes may be able to move around Adelie 14 unnoticed for some time—perhaps even the entire adventure. If they do not make special efforts to avoid it, however, they are likely to encounter station personnel.



## Typical Station Personnel

Everyone here except Yosif Berdyaev (see Berdyaev, below) is a noncombatant. The typical staffer is shocked by the presence of armed invaders and easily intimidated (–5 penalty on checks made to oppose Intimidate attempts).

**GM Characters:** Use the low-level crime lab technician archetype on page 281 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* to represent a typical researcher at the station. Four of the staffers are mid-level crime lab technicians, and three more (who serve as managers of the team) are high-level crime lab technicians.

**Tactics:** If the heroes' presence becomes known, the station personnel generally try to avoid conflict. Except for Yosif Berdyaev, they are not armed and not interested in heroics. Depending on the options available to them, the station personnel may attempt any of the following actions in response to the heroes' presence.

- Go to the communications room and radio for help. Similarly, some may attempt to contact the outside world via the internet, using computers in their rooms or labs. If the heroes have disabled the communications cluster, such efforts are fruitless.
- Reach the compound's helicopter to escape. Again, if the heroes have successfully disabled the helicopter, it does not function.



- Negotiate with the heroes. Station personnel may assume that the heroes are terrorists and attempt to make deals with them. Since the heroes are unlikely to want anything from the facility personnel (or to intend them any harm), such efforts probably have no effect.

### Berdyaev

Most of the facility's inhabitants want to avoid trouble with the heroes, but Yosif Berdyaev is a notable exception. Although he ostensibly works as a technician, Berdyaev actually serves as a watchdog for the Russian government.

**GM Character:** An ex-police bruiser with some minor criminal activities in his past, Berdyaev was installed here to keep an eye on the situation and ensure that AgraTech keeps its word to the Russian government. The rest of the staff members know that he's more than just a technician, but they have no sense of his actual capabilities. An expert martial artist and a trained killer, Berdyaev can be brutal and heartless when his work demands it—such as when invaders arrive at the Antarctic compound he is assigned to guard.

**Yosif Berdyaev (Fast Hero 3/Smart Hero 2/Martial Artist 2):** CR 7; Medium-size human; HD 3d8+3 plus 2d6+2 plus 2d8+2; hp 40; Mas 12; Init +6; Spd 35; Defense 19, touch 19, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +7 class); BAB +5; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d6+3/19–20, unarmed strike) or +8 ranged (2d6, Glock 17); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+3/19–20, unarmed strike) or +8 ranged (2d6, Glock 17); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL AgraTech, Russia; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +3; AP 3; Rep +1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Criminal (class skills: Move Silently, Sleight of Hand).

**Skills:** Computer Use +3, Demolitions +7, Disable Device +9, Drive +5, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Jump +6, Knowledge (earth and life sciences) +4; Move Silently +11, Read/Write English, Repair +4, Research +4, Search +3, Sleight of Hand +8, Speak English.

**Feats:** Cautious, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Initiative, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

**Talents (Fast Hero):** Evasion, increased speed.

**Talent (Smart Hero):** Savant (Disable Device).

**Talents (Martial Artist):** Flying kick, living weapon 1d6.

**Possessions:** Glock 17, 34 rounds of ammunition.

**Tactics:** As soon as he becomes aware of the heroes' presence, Berdyaev looks for an opportunity to attack. He tries to catch one or two heroes alone, hoping to take out the intruders one by one. Failing that, he tries to ambush the group from a secure position. He knows the compound well and is clever enough to outflank the heroes by going outside if need be. He is the only resident of the compound who carries a firearm.

### F. Gathering Information

A wealth of information about the true situation at Adelie 14 is available to heroes who take the time to look for it. They may do so by questioning station personnel, or by examining research records and equipment at the facility.

Most of the facility's personnel know about the oil discovery, and some have mixed feelings about AgraTech's illicit

research. Many are involved only in legitimate research that has little to do with oil exploration, and none know of the Russian/AgraTech plan to claim and exploit the area. Any researcher can tell the heroes that the nearest inhabited facility is a British compound about 200 miles away.

A successful Search check (DC 15) made in the outbuildings reveals drilling, seismic, and other survey-related equipment among the environmental research devices. If the heroes check out the biology/chemistry labs in search of RDHAs or their components, a successful Spot check (DC 16) reveals the presence of streptococcus bacteria samples, but none of the containment equipment one would expect in a place where hazardous biological agents were in use.

Gaining information from one of the camp's computers requires hacking into the system. Two successful Computer Use checks are required—the first (DC 25) to defeat the security and log on, and the second (DC 20) to actually locate the geological survey information.

### G. Finding Prytyka

The most obvious way to locate a particular scientist is to check the room assignments log. A successful Spot check (DC 16) reveals that a list of all personnel, with their room assignments, is posted alongside the intercom in virtually every room in the building. A thorough search of the admin office (Search DC 18) turns up another copy. Alternatively, a character can try to find the information by hacking any computer in the compound. As above, this method requires two successful Computer Use checks—the first (DC 25) to defeat the security and log on, and the second (DC 15) to actually locate the file. Another option is to grab a random staffer and ask where Prytyka can be found. How such an interrogation unfolds depends on the care taken by the heroes during the process. As noted above, station personnel respond easily to threats.

Before 8:00pm, Prytyka is working in his lab. At 8:00, he goes to his quarters to read. If undisturbed, he goes to bed around 11:00pm and gets up at 6:00am. He is a typical station researcher (low-level crime lab technician equivalent).

### H. Interrogation

After the heroes find Prytyka, they must decide where to hold the interrogation. The scientist's quarters are small and cramped—in fact, his room is so small and so close to other occupied areas that carrying out the interrogation there would attract a great deal of attention. Moving Prytyka to a more private location (his lab or an outbuilding, for instance) is a formidable task that alerts the compound's other personnel unless the heroes are particularly clever and careful.

Setting up the video camera, modem, and satellite phone requires a successful Computer Use check (DC 10). Once the connection is made, the heroes can broadcast their interrogation of Prytyka back to Kuchma and hear responses from the Ukrainian agent.

Despite what Kuchma told the heroes, Prytyka is not an evil corporate researcher bent on biological warfare, nor is he even Russian. He's actually one of several researchers in the compound who are Ukrainian by citizenship or descent. The

Ukrainians intend to make use of this fact when they take over the facility, claiming that their citizens are in danger.

Prytyka answers questions honestly. He can't, of course, tell the heroes anything about biological weapons research because none of that goes on at Adelie 14. Prytyka freely admits to having plenty of streptococcus in his lab because it is a common research bacteria. But he insists that it has absolutely nothing to do with haemorrhagic fever.

As the interview progresses, Kuchma tells the heroes that Prytyka is lying and encourages them to take ever harsher measures to get him to talk. What Kuchma most wants is video footage of the heroes torturing or abusing Prytyka, although he doesn't come out and say that. Kuchma's demands become increasingly harsh until the heroes call off the interrogation, or until Kuchma has plenty of footage of them abusing Prytyka. At that point, Kuchma declares the broadcast over and tells the heroes to stay at the camp. Weather conditions, he claims, are forcing the Ukrainians to schedule the extraction a little earlier than planned—right at dawn—and if conditions gray out it will be easier to find the heroes at the camp than out on the snow.

**Development:** Once the broadcast is over, Kuchma and the Ukrainians cease answering the satellite phone—in fact, it goes completely dead. The nearest other station is nearly 200 miles away—well out of range of most radios to which the characters might have access. If the heroes disabled the communications cluster, the compound's radios and internet links do not function, although the heroes may be able to repair the damage they did (see encounter J, below). Even if the heroes do manage to contact anyone, no help can possibly reach the compound earlier than a couple hours after dawn.

## I. Outside News

The residents of the compound don't have a lot to keep themselves busy—there's a recreation room with exercise equipment and a ping-pong table, but watching TV is one of the primary leisure activities. The television satellite dish is located near the building, so its functioning isn't interrupted by disabling the communications cluster. Televisions are on in the recreation room and many bedrooms, as well as some labs and offices. At some point, if they are near anyplace where a TV is playing, the heroes notice something familiar on the cable news channel—the *Azovskoje*.

### Cable News Coverage of the Ukrainian Annexation

Kuchma has wasted no time in fabricating a video for the media. Read the following aloud if the heroes are watching the broadcast.

Rough home-video images show Ukrainian naval vessels churning through Antarctic waters. One of these is the *Azovskoje*, and it is accompanied by two or three other ships that weren't there when you were. The voice of a female correspondent says, “. . . *Azovskoje*, shown here in footage taken by an American tourist on a whale-watching tour just an hour or so ago, happened to have been on routine training operations in the Indian Ocean during the

past few days. It was routed to the area when Ukrainian officials first became aware of the situation. Ukrainian officials insist that they have ample reason to intervene.”

The image then shifts to video footage of you interrogating Prytyka.

This broadcast consists of the most brutal footage that Kuchma could splice together. There is no audio component, so the nature of the heroes' questions to Prytyka not clear. Continue with the following.

The image cuts to an interview with a Ukrainian official. “*The Ukraine of course respects the international ban on military operations on Antarctica; however, this Russian violation of international law and the threat it poses to our citizens puts us in this unfortunate position. Prytyka and the other Ukrainian nationals working for AgraTech were very brave to warn the world of these Russian activities, and as you can see from the video, they may already have paid the ultimate price. What can we do? Who else will protect our citizens and the world from the likes of these FSB hoodlums?*”

After another 30 seconds of video from your interrogation, the image shifts to the naval vessels once again. Troops from these ships are clearly boarding helicopters, some with their rotors already turning. The female correspondent says, “*From the looks of these Ukrainian naval vessels, the Ukraine is taking the steps it feels are necessary, despite international bans. And while international representatives decry the unfolding situation, it appears that the Ukrainians may be justified in their actions. Television news analysts confirm, based on the design of their arctic uniforms and equipment, that Prytyka's assailants do appear to be Russian military personnel. Ukrainian claims of illicit biological weapons research at the site remain unconfirmed, of course—officials at AgraTech have so far only reiterated their earlier statement that no such research was taking place there. The world will have to watch nervously while the situation unfolds.*”

**Development:** The heroes have all night to watch the cable news if they wish. Throughout the evening, the news reports make the heroes' position clear. They are identified by Ukrainian officials as “Russian FSB or Spetznaz hoodlums,” and their gear tends to support this allegation. The footage shown on the cable news channel seems to have been carefully edited to prevent the heroes from being recognized by anything other than their clothing and equipment, and their voices are never heard. While the news shows no new video footage from Antarctica, the reports continue to update the situation, and it is clear that the Ukrainians are planning an all-out assault.

Any other station personnel who see this video are duly alarmed. Their attitude toward the heroes depends upon whether they have seen them and how the heroes have treated them thus far.





## J. Getting Out

Kuchma is using the video of the heroes not only to unveil illicit research, but also to fabricate a Russian threat to Ukrainian lives that justifies the annexation of Adelle 14. The necessary additional evidence of biological weapons research will be planted during the annexation process. The heroes cannot be allowed to reveal the truth, so Kuchma has given his troops instructions to kill them during the assault. Their remains, which will not be easily identifiable, will be passed off as those of Russian thugs—still further evidence of an improper Russian military presence at Adelle 14.

Smart heroes should realize that their lives are in danger. They have a number of options available, of which the ones they are most likely to pursue are described below.

### Helicopter

Repairing the helicopter is a complex Repair task that requires the standard time if the vehicle was disabled, or 1d6 hours if it was destroyed. If the heroes get it running, they or others at the station can attempt to fly to the closest nearby facility (a British station about 200 miles away). If the heroes cannot fly the helicopter themselves, they must enlist a pilot from the compound. But no one there who has flying skills is initially willing to take the heroes to safety while leaving other station personnel in danger. A successful Diplomacy, Intimidate, or related check is required to secure cooperation.

### Call for Help

Repairing the communications cluster is a complex Repair task that requires the standard time if the cluster was disabled, or 1d6 hours if it was destroyed. If the heroes succeed in bringing up communications, they or someone else at the facility can easily contact the outside world. Telling non-Ukrainian authorities or the media the truth about their mission will not prevent the initial Ukrainian attack, but it will prevent any follow-ups (see encounter K, below).

### Cross-Country Hike

The heroes can set out cross-country, but the bitter cold conditions make it unlikely that they'll survive for more than a few hours. (See Heat and Cold on page 213 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*.)

### Fight the Ukrainians

The heroes can prepare for the inevitable raid by the Ukrainians. If they defeat the troops (see encounter K, below), they might be rescued after the battle.

## K. The Raid

One hour before dawn, Ukrainian helicopters deliver four groups of four soldiers each, dropping them off at points 100 feet north, south, east, and west of the compound. Each group moves into the station via a separate door, gunning down any resistance. Although ostensibly there to protect the station's inhabitants, these soldiers have no compunctions about killing innocents—they can always blame any unfortunate deaths on the heroes afterward.

**GM Characters:** Each group of soldiers may be encountered individually. The troops have been briefed on the heroes' presence and have orders to kill them, making sure the bodies are beyond recognition.

**Ukrainian Naval Infantry Troopers (Strong Ordinary 2/Fast Ordinary 2):** CR 3; Medium-size human; HD 2d8 + 2 plus 2d8+2; hp 22, 24, 27, 29; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 18, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 class); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt) or +6 ranged (2d8, AK-74); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, rifle butt) or +6 ranged (2d8, AK-74); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL comrades, Ukraine; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will -1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

**Occupation:** Military (class skills: Knowledge [tactics], Navigate).

**Skills:** Demolitions +2, Hide +5, Knowledge (tactics) +6, Move Silently +3, Navigate +4, Swim +4, Treat Injury +0.

**Feats:** Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus (AK-74).

**Possessions:** AK-74, 210 rounds of ammunition, 4 fragmentation grenades, 2 smoke grenades, first aid kit.

**Tactics:** The Ukrainian troops are disciplined and careful. When one group makes contact with the heroes, one of its members calls in the other groups. Thereafter, an additional group arrives every 2d6+4 rounds.

## New Weapons

**AK-74:** The AK-74 replaced the AKM in the last decade or so of the Soviet Union and quickly became the primary military assault rifle of many ex-Soviet states and Warsaw Pact countries (including Russia and the Ukraine). The AK-74 is very similar to the earlier weapon, but slightly smaller and lighter, and it fires a more modern ammunition type—the 5.45mmR round. The purchase DC for a box of 20 rounds of 5.45mmR ammunition is 5.

**Damage:** 2d8

**Critical:** 20

**Damage Type:** Ballistic

**Range Increment:** 70

**Rate of Fire:** S,A

**Size:** Large

**Purchase DC:** 17

**Restriction:** Res (+2)

**AKSU-74:** This submachinegun is a cut-down version of the AK-74, above. It functions identically and uses the same ammunition, but it is much smaller and lighter and has a folding stock. With its stock folded, the weapon grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Sleight of Hand checks made to conceal it.

**Damage:** 2d8

**Critical:** 20

**Damage Type:** Ballistic

**Range Increment:** 60

**Rate of Fire:** S,A

**Size:** Large

**Purchase DC:** 19

**Restriction:** Res (+2)

**Development:** If the heroes defeat all the Ukrainian troops, a second set arrives in 2d4 hours unless the heroes have managed to contact the outside world and explain the truth behind the situation (see encounter K, above). If the heroes emerge victorious from the first assault (and the second, if there is one), international scrutiny on the operation forces the Ukrainians to withdraw. The heroes and the surviving station personnel are then evacuated by rescuers from other stations during the next two days.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charles Ryan has been designing and editing games for more than twelve years. His credits include such diverse titles as the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, *The Wheel of Time Roleplaying Game*, *Deadlands*, *Millennium's End*, *The Last Crusade*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, *Dune: Chronicles of the Imperium*, and *Star Trek: Red Alert!*, to name just a few. Charles served as Chairman of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design, the professional organization of the games industry, from 1996 through 2001. He lives in Kent, Washington with his lovely wife Tammie, three cats, and a dog. He works for Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

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