

WILD TALENTS

ISSUE 5
AUTUMN/WINTER 2000
FROM CRUCIBLE DESIGN

Welcome to the third issue of wild-Talents that we have managed to crank out the door. For obvious reasons it is labelled issue 5.

Things have been happening since last we spoke: we've managed to get a US distribution deal – which was very cool – and we've thought up quite a few new ideas that we'll tell you a little about in the coming pages.

We've got an aggressive release schedule ahead of us which means a lot of work...

So...read on...

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So, what's been happening with us?

Q-CON Report

Sales were actually pretty good and we had four iMacs there as well running Myth II as an extra help for the con organisers. They were rather well organised this year with hats and mugs as well as the usual convention T-shirts. I didn't stay late any night and was flying out to London on the night of the annual Q-CON party...which is usually funny if not fun...

Writing

The Project Sourcebook has gone through a lot of proof-reading but I'm sure some mistakes will have got through. We need to do some expansions and rewrites on some areas that just didn't seem "right" as well as update some of the entries a little. Both Testament:1 and Zombi are almost ready to go - we've some art to get finished first.

Web pages

Yes. We're going to be redesigning them. And updating them. And making them look less silly. We have two of our best people currently looking at them!

GEN CON? GAELCON?

We're not going to GENCON here in the UK because it is frankly too expensive and there's no special treatment for us small people. We do WANT to go to GAELCON because we intend to release one of our books there!!!! We're also considering a line in CrucibleWear - TentacleGirl T-shirts, anyone?

“It’s just not that uncommon – the idea of the dead coming back to life. I’m not just talking about a spiritual afterlife either. The Egyptians tied their dead up in bandages after removing the brain – one may ask why all this detail. And the slaves who were buried alive? Were they alive? Were the walls of the pyramids designed to keep people out or keep something else within?”

There is even evidence to suggest that around 30 AD there was a spate of risings that might have been curtailed by some outside agent or active force. Was the most important thing about Lazarus the fact that he rose or that he didn’t attack people?

In my paper I have hundreds of examples. The Inuit have a legend of Walkers – spirits who occupy and animate corpses. In Iceland, the walking dead were a real phenomenon – the result of a curse. In Ireland they have a belief that when burying the dead, you should return home by a different route to confuse the dead who may otherwise follow you.

I don’t believe I need to remind you that the word Zombi is part of the afro-atlantic tradition. We saw the signs in Haiti and did nothing.

The list goes on and on. I postulate that the risings we are seeing are part of a natural phenomenon and our ancestors learned to deal with these plagues as part of everyday life.

In spite of our modern technology, or perhaps because of it, we know a lot less now than our ancestors knew. About natural laws and supernatural laws. If our ancestors could control it, then we can. We need to think the way they thought, live the way they lived.

We need to understand what is going on before we can attempt to solve the problem. “

Dr. Henry Willard, 14th October 1999, Open Lecture at Yale.

A Timeline

14/08/99

First recorded rising.

23/12/99

Death Day.

22/01/00

The Green opens its doors.

08/03/00

Rendezvous Point goes public.

04/07/03

The airwaves go silent.

zombi

ter·a·tol·o·gy

n. The biological study of malformations and monstrosities.

How do I use Terata in my game?

Terata have to be introduced with care. This shouldn't just be a bughunt after all. I see two types of Terata. The first, most commonly referenced is the huge ophing-and-bloping type – usually immobile and commonly off-the-scale in the psychic powers area. The second type is a little less alien.

Terata as Player Characters.

Most GMs are now saying “Whaaaat!!!” while most players are saying “Yesss!!!”

The Terata are not just huge bloated monstrosities. Some terata must lie in that middle ground between human and non-human. Some must be able to pass for human in a dark alley or maybe with a little disguise. That's what we deal with here.

“We've had Matthew in our care now for eight months. He has settled in and we haven't needed to sedate him in over a month. He's intelligent and fully aware of his surroundings and predicament. We haven't moved him in with the others mainly because of his appearance but also because of some incidents with a couple of telepaths. They sense him, sense that he is different. We now house them on the other side of the compound to minimise outbursts.” – Dr. Diane Green, Sept 1999.”

Terata characters follow a similar character generation process to psychic 23rd Letter characters. They have Endurance, Reflexes, Intellect and Strength as normal. They don't have to pay the 3 points for the Psychic quality because they already have a 3 point negative quality: Terata.

The quality has some serious repercussions from the point of view of the newly created Terata and the GM and player should discuss what these are.

The 23rd Letter – conspiracy game or superhero game?

The 23rd Letter is a conspiracy game. It involves psychics and genetically engineered psychic monsters. In the game the governments are trying to control psychic powers and are opposed not only by corrupt corporations but also by an underground organisation known only as the Network.

The 23rd Letter is a superhero game. You can play a psychic with terrifying mental powers. You can be part of a government-trained psychic tactical team or part of a secret underground movement trying to undermine the oppression of psychics everywhere.

Terata: a new positive/negative Quality for the 23rd Letter

The Terata quality has three aspects.

Sense: The ability of the Terata to sense their immediate environment. Some Terata have no eyes but their ability to perceive is remarkable. They have 360 degree perception without using their eyes and it is effective up to 30 metres. This means that with his eyes closed, a Terata can still “see” anything up to 30 metres away with absolute clarity.

Scourge: Other psychics don’t tend to like Terata. Any psychic that spends more than a few hours within 30 metres of a Terata will start to gain points of Stress. This is probably due to their preternatural sensory abilities. The rate of gain of Stress is entirely up to the GM but 1 point per 8 hours or part thereof seems to be okay. They also make normal humans edgy (as they don’t accrue Stress...)

Appearance: Terata are not human and they don’t look human. They don’t, however, look like humans with bits of latex attached to their ears and forehead. With a slouch hat and a trenchcoat they might be able to walk down the road unmolested but we should be thinking of John Merrick when we describe our Terata...

Notes: They said it couldn’t be done and we said it wouldn’t be done. These are just guidelines on what could be an interesting campaign. I just thought that a small group of players, escapees from the Angel Institute (you know about that yet?), having to make their way to the big city or find sanctuary in a place that may not see them as monsters.

The world of The 23rd Letter is much like the real world. These freaks will not be accepted. Even if they find some people who are “accepting”, their nature will eventually alienate their new friends. Maybe out there is a place “where the monsters go”...

Footnote: I’m sorry..I know I said that the Terata were special...and now I’ve gone and dumbbed them down for the MTV generation....

Simply put, Julius was a fucker. He looked like trouble the day he walked in the door. But the rest were all over him. Him and his good looks and poofier hair. He had the right stuff. Arrogant and aggressive, oh he knew how to ring their bells and keep them coming for more. He put two of them in the hospital with his bad temper and still they followed him around like he was their fucking shepherd. Well he won't be around much longer. I broke into the converted warehouse that he called his "Chapel of Flesh" and spent the morning picking hairs and toenail clippings out of his carpet. He kept his place pretty clean but there was enough here for something, something nasty. I spent my afternoon constructively building myself a pretty little fetish made of his droppings and wound with black thread. I then trapped and killed a stray cat by whacking it with a heavy stick (the fucker bit me...) and pushed the little fetish into its belly. The chant was something I picked up from a spooky book down the shops. Something from the Babylonians. I poked the cooling corpse with my athame while I slowly spoke the rhyme "Let him be struck down these days like this cat is struck down and cannot get up. Let it be thus for him as well. Let him be pierced through like the cat." It took two weeks for the curse to take effect and in that time he put three more in traction. But it's fixed now. The nurse that called round to turn him over this morning gave me her number. Magic is fucking cool.

Julius

A second Russian Project?

Gentlemen,

This extract is taken from a briefing given to the British Joint Intelligence Committee in October 2000 by the Head of WhiteChapel Section D (Russian Affairs), Anthony Christie.

It has long been our belief that only one government-sponsored agency for research into Twenty-Third Letter (TTL) phenomenon existed within the then-Soviet Union and currently CIS territories. Our operations against said agency have always reflected this belief, particularly in the last thirty years. Indeed, such was our confidence that we felt able to launch a penetrative assault into the upper echelons of the Soviet research hierarchy less than fifteen years ago. The unprecedented level of hostility meted out to our operatives on Russian soil in this prolonged endeavour, I think I speak for us all on this point, took us completely by surprise. The research facility at Kohzedub not only proved impenetrable to physical and TTL probing, but also claimed the lives of more than six operatives (at least three of whom were never accounted for). What little could be gleaned from the data that could be safely gathered in the aftermath made little, if any, sense.

However, something much more valuable can be learnt from the experience beyond the fact that the Russians proved a harder nut to crack than our American allies. For the last decade, my section has been investigating the possible explanations behind why the operation failed. The natural conclusion to jump to would be that the Russians were able to pre-empt our attack and devise a way to deflect or even defeat it. However, the resources necessary to mount this type of TTL counter-activity are well beyond our then-analysis of the Soviet capability. Whilst I accept that this may be correct, I feel there are more convincing arguments.

For example, might it not be more conceivable that the Russians have a much wider proliferation of TTL persons than previously suspected. This would certainly account for a deeper understanding of the threat our operations carried. Indeed, with adequate warning and a high level of preparation, one might almost expect a response similar, if not identical, to the one which our operatives encountered. Prolonged and much subtler research into this has revealed a wealth of information. Defections from the Russian academic community have helped to this end, and we must not forget to thank the fortuitous election of a former head of Russian intelligence to aid in the promotion of an atmosphere where academics no longer feel safe.

The findings are significant, not simply due to their intimidatory nature, but also due to the fact that we must now consider the Russian TTL community a significant threat once more, with all the budgetary considerations that this entails. Interestingly, there is a much more theoretical edge to the nature of Russian activity than ever before, or at least certainly since the 'brain drain' which characterised the growth of Soviet TTL activity in the 1950's and 1960's. The more militant research prevalent in the early 1990's has now been pushed to the back burner as the Russians may have at last realised that it is a battle that the Americans and Germans have already won. However, this in itself may be a dangerous step. With the scaling-down of military-style camps in remoter areas of northern Russia and a marked attempt to push more government funds towards the impressive former Soviet research centres, one can only guess at the potential this policy might reap in the coming decade if it remains unchallenged.



A second Russian Project by Paul Keenan

WHAT IS TESTAMENT?

Testament is a description of the last days of Earth. The game begins with the world ending. It doesn't end in a day but rather over a period of time. Devils and angels walk the Earth picking out the last of the virtuous and the damned and helping or hindering where they can. People will not see winged beings plucking people from the street but they will notice people going missing and the world being seemingly populated by strangers.

THE END

No-one can know exactly when the End is. But it is coming. Testament assumes that a story arc will be just over three years of in-game time. During that time the characters will be given more and more clues to what is happening. Some may take action and attempt to save themselves while others may dedicate themselves to saving others.

What happens at the End? One game might end with the GM taking everyones character and saying "Game over". Another might end with an epic of biblical proportions including seven-headed beasts and Babylonian scarlet tarts. A third option might be a "Hell on Earth" scenario that might keep the action going and tell the tale of a resistance movement on Earth.

THE GAME

Testament is game of two parts. The first part is the beginning. The second is the middle. The end is up to you. Testament will be released on-line only.

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The Horrors and the Museum A SpaceNinjaCyberCrisis XDO adventure by Colin Johnston

The PCs are contacted by a man called Hoshi Wanatabe who requests a meeting, "I need your help...maybe even the whole world needs your help."

Wanatabe is a well-known and highly respected San Marino District Attorney who is among other things investigating possible corruption in the purchasing of the land the Spire is built on. He tells the PCs that one of the exhibits in the San Marino Museum, an ornate Japanese sword, belonged to his family. Since it left the master swordmaker's forge, it was passed from father to son for nearly a millennium until it was lost in one of the wars of the Twentieth Century.

Recently it has reappeared in a museum exhibition celebrating the art of the weaponsmith. There Wanatabe recognised and offered to purchase it from the museum. However he was rudely rebuffed by the Chief Curator. So he will pay a very generous sum to the PCs to steal it for him, in addition, if the PCs operate outside the law, he offers to make things easier for them in their future conflicts with the justice system.

Should the PCs decline to help him, he will blackmail them into co-operation with (real or forged) evidence of their illegal activities. If asked why he wants this sword so much, he will raise matters of family tradition and honour, but eventually add that it is reputed to be a demon slaying blade. Without being specific, he will continue that his investigations into the Spire have lead him to believe that he may need such a weapon for protection. Depending on what the PCs know of the Horde, he may come across as a lunatic or a valuable ally. He tells them never to contact him at home or in his office but to use a secure e-mail address he supplies them with.



Museum layout (and some exhibits)

Basement (off-limits to the public): Staff canteen, science and art restoration labs (full of white-coated boffins, bottles of chemicals and tools), exhibit storage (lots of interesting crates), secure storage (a really big safe), back up generator (for use if the city's power fails)

Ground Floor: Lobby with ticket desk (Adult tickets 5 Beans, students and children 3 Beans and seniors free), cloakroom (with lockers), security post, souvenir shop, public snackbar (expensive but nice), Gallery of World Art: lots of priceless sculptures and ceramics (very fragile too), cases full of jewellery, paintings of notable San Marino citizens, Repulsive! a controversial show of grotesque HyperFuturisticGrosso Art

Second Floor: The Nature, Science and Technology Gallery: examples of world-changing meka-tek inventions, dinosaur skeletons, mock ups of landscapes from other planets, a temporary exhibit called Robots: Our New Friends And Servants (a collection of whirring non-sentient but observant metallic humanoids), lots of educational but cheerfully gross exhibits for the kids including tanks of live snakes, lizards and bugs, models of enlarged human body organs and insects magnified X100

Third Floor: Temporary Exhibition Gallery, currently showing Beautiful and Deadly: The Artistry of the Weaponsmith

Fourth Floor: The History Gallery: cases of artefacts, an Egyptian mummy (Queen Rubbatiti), more very realistic dummies of everyone from cavemen to astronauts. The Antiquarian Library: dozens of terminals for viewing multimedia works plus a few printed books.

Fifth Floor: The Museum Restaurant (hideously expensive gourmet fare) second only in status to the PersComm Tower, History of San Marino Exhibition which has as its centrepiece a beautifully detailed and very large scale model of the city with lots of press button operating features, a couple of modest lecture theatres, administrative offices (off-limits to the public)

Stairs, elevators and a ventilation shaft link floors and there's a washroom on each floor. A major sewer pipe passes under the building and could be a way in, as could the roof which has a landing pad for VTOLs.

The Exhibition

A whole floor of the museum building is devoted to the weapons exhibition. Everywhere the PCs look there are glass cases filled with every kind of bladed weapon, firearm and armour from every world culture from the last 3000 years. All are functional and all are priceless. There are dozens of very realistic mannequins of warriors armed with exhibited weapons, there's a Roman officer, Celtic and Viking chieftains, a medieval knight, an Aztec jaguar knight, a 17th Century musketeer, a samurai and so on. These mannequins look so alive they are a bit creepy, but perhaps a PC could pose as one (if this happens, a child will attempt to stick gum or carry out some other annoying activity on the PC). Numerous plaques and recorded voices explain the artefacts' histories and significance.

The sword is a beautifully made 800-year-old katana with unusual and intricate gold inlay in the black lacquered pommel and sheath. It is in a glass case filled with ornate swords and isn't singled out in any way (will the PCs lift the right one?). At the moment, as well as its usual stock, the museum shop is selling cheaply made, but expensively priced plastic replicas of the swords and other weapons from the exhibition. Perhaps the PCs could make a substitution?

There are a dozen lightly armed guards in the building at all times and about a hundred other staff members during the day. The guards are professionals, but are unused to trouble. All display cases are fitted with alarms. There are CCTV cameras and alarms triggered by the breaking of invisible laser beams everywhere. The latter operate only at night, as do the Museum's more dangerous security systems. By pressing a button in the security centre any floor can be flooded with non-lethal choke gas (potency 5). The gas is also a fire suppressant and can be released in the event of a fire.

At the centre of each gallery and the junction of every corridor, there is a concealed automatic gun turret (equivalent to a light pistol) in the ceiling. These are aimed by computerised motion detector (GunPlay 4) and will shoot



at any human sized moving target except guards and museum staff. Every museum employee's prominently worn name badge has a built-in transceiver which prevents the wearer from being fired on. All security systems are monitored and controlled from an office beside the cloakrooms in the museum lobby. The museum's alarms, locks and other security devices are Difficult to tamper with using B&E, there is no modifier to find hidden security devices using this skill, but it would be Difficult to use Awareness to locate them.

All museum staff except the Chief Curator wear a uniform; usually black pants and a green T-shirt, but the guards and some of the senior administrative staff wear white shirts, dark green blazers and a tie or scarf. The T-shirts, blazers and ties carry the Museum's logo as a badge. The guards are armed with a light pistol in a shoulder holster, wear discreet communications headsets and carry a small respirator mask in a waist pouch.

The Museum opened the previous year and is a huge gleaming metal and glass construction not unlike a grounded spaceship in looks. Sited near the marina, it overlooks the bay and offers splendid ocean views. It is competently run by Chief Curator Alyssa Trefusis, a tall, handsome and plump historian with a penchant for black suits, cheroots and comfortable shoes. Although she's vain and pompous, the curator is usually pleasant enough and very proud of her establishment and staff, but has a streak of intellectual snobbery, and will not contemplate selling any exhibit to a mere member of the public. This is why Wanatabe's offer to buy the sword was refused. While PCs trying to gain access to the sword by posing as academics of some kind could fool Trefusis; she may ask some very tricky questions. Trefusis is a workaholic and is often on her top floor office outside working hours, she will fight like a tigress to protect her museum and its contents. Most other staff members are young, cheerful and enthusiastic.

The Museum is open to the public from 0900 to 1900. During the day it is brightly lit and cheery, bustling with parties of schoolkids, happy families, sketching students (photography and videoing are not permitted) and note-taking scholars. At meal times workers and executives from surrounding offices come to eat in the snackbar and restaurant. In the evening most visitors are courting couples and lonely singles. The Museum has a deserved reputation as a pickup joint for intellectuals. Fifteen minutes before closing time, the guards begin moving the public out. A dozen cleaners, employees of a contractor, then spend a couple of hours cleaning, polishing, loafing and

gossiping. When they leave the lights are dimmed and it becomes decidedly spooky. A guard with a torch patrols each floor hourly.

There is much potential for dramatic action setpieces; a tyrannosaurus skeleton damaged by gunfire slowly collapses on a hapless PC, venomous snakes slide out of their shattered tanks, angry wasps swarm from their tank attacking a PC hiding from trigger happy guards, flames gradually spread across a priceless mural, an injured PC is sent sprawling across the model of San Marino, sending tiny skyscrapers toppling like dominoes and so on.

How the PCs go about the heist is up to them, but the important thing is they've been set up. Wanatabe really does want the sword and had tried to buy it, but for sentimental reasons only as he doesn't believe in demons, and he is an honest man who wouldn't dream of stealing it. He has never heard of the PCs either, for the Wanatabe the PCs are dealing with is a very convincing impostor sent by the Horde.

The impostor is a con man known in the local underworld called Murdo Lasker who is being paid a lot for his services and has had cosmetic surgery to make him look exactly like Mr Wanatabe. Wanatabe's investigations are bringing unwanted attention on the Church of the Spire, and rather than kill him, the Horde intends to totally discredit him.

As a secondary objective the Horde wants to cause trouble for PCs, as they are a potential threat too. Lasker has no idea who is behind the scheme and plans to disappear once it's over (and so he will, but into the Spire). The SMPD has been anonymously tipped off that a robbery is planned, so Detective Jonny Lee and his team are keeping the museum under surveillance. During opening hours, plainclothes detectives mingle with the public and two of the museum guards have been replaced by heavy armed and armoured cops from the SMPD SWAT team. A couple of HoverPadBikes are kept patrolling inside a minute's flight time from the Museum. The Horde wants at least some PCs to be taken alive for interrogation to identify their patron, but just in case there's a convincing trail of planted evidence leading from the PCs to Wanatabe, for that matter the PCs may have recorded their conversations with their Wanatabe.

WILD TALENTS

In the unlikely event that the PC succeed with the theft and get away scot free, when they try to hand the sword over to 'Wanatabe', they will walk into a police trap and so will the real Wanatabe, lured by an anonymous 'phone call. How the PCs get out of this mess is up to the players.

On the brighter side, the Horde does not realise that the sword really is a demon slayer blade. Its stats are as those of any other sword, except it ignores the 5 point of armour hide on any Horde demon.

NPC Stats

Lasker/Phoney Wanatabe

CloseCombat	3	GunPlay	3
B&E Action	3	Stealthing	3
Movement	3	Awareness	7
Streetwise	9	Persuasion	9
Technology	3	Research	3
MekaTek	0		

Most Museum Guards (if the GM wants there could be a grizzled old senior guard with CloseCombat, GunPlay and Stealthing of 7)

CloseCombat	5	GunPlay	5
B&E Action	5	Stealthing	5
Movement	5	Awareness	5
Streetwise	7	Persuasion	7
Technology	3	Research	3
MekaTek	0		

Chief Curator Trefusis

CloseCombat	3	GunPlay	3
B&E Action	3	Stealthing	3
Movement	3	Awareness	7
Streetwise	5	Persuasion	9
Technology	3	Research	9
MekaTek	2		

Mr Wanatabe (the real McCoy)

CloseCombat	3	GunPlay	3
B&E Action	5	Stealthing	3
Movement	3	Awareness	9
Streetwise	7	Persuasion	9
Technology	3	Research	5
MekaTek	0		

Manhunt – an adventure for the 23rd Letter by Paul Keenan

Background

Between the years 1936–45, a section of the SS, under the direct orders of Heinrich Himmler, pursued the possibility of harnessing psychic powers for use by the Third Reich. The results were mixed at best, but they did perform much of the groundwork that psycho-biologists were later to build upon to further knowledge of the condition. In order to find subjects to examine in the necessary depth, many hundreds of innocent people died in horrifying ways in the concentration camps dotted across wartime Germany. The men responsible for these acts were either dealt with at the Nuremberg Trials after the Allied victory or disappeared, whereupon they were presumed to have fallen into Soviet hands. However, a selected few were deemed valuable enough to continue their work with new identities in newly-adopted homes. Since the number of top scientists was limited and the Soviet domination of eastern Europe had been completed, it soon became clear that it was imperative that the Communists should not be allowed to gain an advantage in this field. As with much of the activity in the immediate post-war years, the hunt for the men responsible by the respective sides in the Cold War became a desperate race...

Synopsis

The year is 1946 and the setting is wartorn Vienna. The PC's play a group of WhiteChapel agents working for the British government (or so they believe), sent to the city to look for the whereabouts and personal effects of a German intelligence officer. Unbeknownst to them, he worked as a military liason for one of the Nazi Projects (the Krystall Project) and the information he possesses is being hotly pursued by the Soviets. As far as they are made aware, this man committed heinous crimes in the name of the Fatherland and personally oversaw sections of the Final Solution, hence he is being pursued with a view to bringing him to trial. The problem lies in the fact that he currently resides in the Soviet sector of the city and the powers that be are unwilling to rely on the efficient but ruthless methods of their 'allies' to apprehend him.

In reality, this man has been earmarked by Albrecht Bernhardt, a top Nazi biologist who worked with him in the Krystall Project. This man was the SS liaison officer to Nazi High Command and so was privy to the Third Reich's plans for the Project. This, coupled with the records that he stole when Bernhardt defected in 1945, makes him invaluable as a source on military uses for psychic phenomenon. The British intelligence services, with Bernhardt's input, have not been slow to realise this and the possibilities if he fell into Soviet hands. It is imperative therefore that he be captured or silenced, and any information he possesses be brought back to Britain.

The problem for British intelligence is that neither of their allies (French or US) has been made aware of this information, to their knowledge. More worrying still is the fact that Muller, like many Germans, holds the US in high regard and had discussed with Bernhardt his plans to plead with them for his safety if the war was lost. The Soviets may well be aware of his existence (having captured several of Bernhardt's associates) and may have sent people to apprehend him themselves, but then the PC's don't need to know this. From their point of view, the task is simple – catch him or kill him.

Briefing

The PC's are mostly demobbed soldiers from a variety of backgrounds – several have seen action in eastern Europe already. The information they are provided with at the briefing goes as follows:

- they are to catch or kill an ex-Nazi intelligence officer, by the name of Erich Muller, though he is believed to be now living under an assumed name for the moment**
- he is assumed to be living in the Soviet sector of Vienna since he still has family members living there, including his wife and children – however, he is probably planning to flee as quickly as he can move them**
- he had discussed previously planning to give himself up to the Americans, but was bound to return to Vienna to see his family, whom he feared the Soviets would threaten**
- he was in possession of several valuable documents which he plans to use to buy his immunity from the Americans and a new life in the US – these documents are to be returned to London or destroyed if this is not possible**

Vienna

Vienna suffered as many cities did during the war. Many of its fine buildings were levelled or badly damaged by fire, and the mark of the war can be seen on its citizens. They bear the harrowed look of a people under occupation, as if the soldiers on every street did not make one aware of it. No-one looks at anyone else and some still flinch at loud sounds. However, if one belongs to one of the occupying powers, then there are several places in the city where you are welcomed with open arms (particularly Americans). Money talks in this city and no-one should forget it.

Several things are essential: carry your papers at all times, don't cause any trouble (especially if you are in a different nationality's zone), and don't ask too many questions. With the high number of armed individuals on the streets, it is also extremely unwise to carry a firearm unless in uniform (to the armed forces, civilians with guns means trouble). Unfortunately, the PC's break the last rule by virtue of their work. They have been assigned a military liaison officer within the British zone: Sergeant Harry Lime. He can keep them on the straight and narrow as long as he is around them. The problems come when they wander off the beaten track.

Whilst the soldiers may be flavour of the month with anyone looking to make money, they are less-than-popular with many others. Locals object to mouthy foreigners asking the wrong sort of questions about their friends (and Muller has several in his neighbourhood). Crossing zones is also problematic. The Soviets look for any excuse to deny access to their territory and if the PC's cause trouble, they will arrest them, confiscate their papers and evict them forcibly. Anyone resisting arrest will be shot as a terrorist. They cannot expect a carte blanche of support from the British authorities either. They do not appreciate outsiders upsetting their delicate balance any more than the Soviets do.



Locating Muller

True to form, Muller has indeed returned to his family and moved them to a new residence in preparation for reaching a deal with the Americans. He has secured new (fake) papers which allow him to enter their zone unchallenged by the Soviets, and has reached a deal with them. However, they are under the impression that he was part of the liason team on the V-2 project. Nevertheless, he has enough evidence to keep them interested and hopes that his real information will sway them when he has defected and demonstrated its uses. As a result, the Americans plan to smuggle him and his family over the zonal boundary in several nights time.

In the meantime, they are living in the second floor remains of a hotel (the old ruined Imperial) in the Soviet sector. There are several ways that they can be located:

- 1. the PC's can locate their old residence (reduced to rubble by fires during the war) and work outwards from there – this would require incredible amounts of luck and persuasion by the PC's (for example, posing as comrades from the war if their German is good enough, or persuading his neighbours that they are here to help)**
- 2. finding their house and using detective work to figure out where they might be – this will also be very difficult since it requires quizzing the locals and then drawing conclusions from that, but it is the most likely to work successfully**
- 3. keeping an eye on the Soviet checkpoints to watch for signs of movement by people matching his decription – time consuming but ultimately rewarding, the only difficulty being that the Soviets will take notice**
- 4. a painstaking search of the Soviet sector for families of their size – also time consuming and less likely to work, since they are well-hidden (if they are getting nowhere, this is a good way to feed them a clue, eg. spotting him buying food)**
- 5. pooling resources with the Americans – the least likely to actually happen and potentially very dangerous, but ironically also the most productive since it will be the quickest way to find him, but what they do then is a mystery to me...**

The Soviets

The Reds have been trying this for slightly longer and having less luck, since if the Austrians are unlikely to talk to the British, they are even less likely to talk to the Russians. The Soviets are in a dilemma. The standard manhunt procedure is to search every household and force them out, but in this case, not only will that alert their 'allies' to his existence (they suspect a British involvement somewhere), but it may also drive him into their arms. Their one pressure point is his family, but he appears to have thought of this and has already concealed them. They have been forced to use subtler (and more time consuming methods) by sending in agents of their own – members of the newly-formed MVD. These men have similar orders to the PC's, except they tend to favour kill over catch every time.

Catching Muller

If the PC's think locating Muller is difficult, then apprehending him is even harder. This can be handled in one of two ways:

1. the direct approach – depending on how long they have spent locating him, this may be the more popular option, particularly with the more gung-ho characters. It is also a staggeringly bad idea. Firstly, Muller will fight like a man possessed, fearing that the PC's are going to kill him and his family. Secondly, the resulting fight and chase will alert the Soviet authorities which will lead to a world of pain for everyone involved. Finally, the PC's are unlikely to find out where the files are hidden. It will take a good deal of luck to carry this off successfully, and they will undoubtedly cause something to go wrong.

2. the subtle method – alternatively they can bide their time and tail Muller to find out where he and his family are based. This not only leads them to their man but also most likely to the hiding place of his bargaining chip – the files. The only drawback with this is that it is time-consuming and runs the risk of attracting attention. It still also faces the problem that they must at some stage reveal their presence to Muller and face his reaction.

3. the temptation method – much like the subtle approach, but pre-empts his contacting of the Americans by offering him asylum in the UK. They have the somewhat questionable involvement of

Bernhardt to show as a sign of good faith (unless Muller suspects the truth). However, his vision of a new life in the US is quite strong and they will need to be good to overcome this.

4. the fulcrum method – so-called because it is used to exert pressure on Muller. If the players are clever, it is possible they could combine the direct and subtle methods to good effect (e.g. find Muller quietly, wait until he reveals his hide-out and then kidnap his family). This is a not a pleasant way to get things done, but then if they don't do it, the Soviets will...

Resolution

Assuming that the PC's arrive on September 16th 1946, and depending on their actions, the following events should take place;

Sept 15th – Muller will have contacted the Americans and offered the files to them in return for a new life

Sept 20th – the Soviets will discover the involvement of both the Americans (and possibly the British) through a mole in the American embassy

Sept 22nd – Muller and his family will be smuggled out of the Soviet sector through the sewers, under cover of darkness. They will be intercepted and shot before reaching safety by MVD agents.

This is a rough guideline, and can easily be changed due to PC actions (eg. if they are caught and interrogated by the MVD before the 20th).

The frantic chase through the sewers (inspired by 'The Third Man') is intended as the finale to the piece, but can easily be worked in as something different. For example, if things go really badly and the PC's are wanted by the Soviet authorities, the sewers is one of the easier ways to leave their sector. For those who have not seen the film, the Viennese sewers are impressive (considering their function). They can easily fit two or three people across at the larger junctures and are around eight feet in height. The only danger comes if there is heavy rainfall (as there can be in early autumn in Austria). All of this should make for interesting dilemmas when fleeing an armed Soviet patrol in virtual darkness (even during the daytime).

Characters

Erich Muller

Many former Nazi officers following the war used the excuse that they were 'only following orders'. The same cannot be said of Muller. A brutal man who had risen through the ranks by way of the Hitler Jugend, he had taken great pride in his attachment to the Krystall Project. For him, it was a way to harness the innate superiority of the Uberman and translate it into physical reality. That he possessed no such strengths himself was of no consequence. Despite his record during the war, he was nevertheless a devoted family man and reacted with horror when he realised the fate of those captured by the Communists. Therefore, when all looked lost, he seized what he could and made for his home. The ascendancy of the Americans during the latter parts of the war and the daunting alternative convinced him that the future lay in the West. He is not aware of what became of his former colleagues, but if informed, this might prove an interesting alternative (especially given their new work). However, he doesn't entirely trust Bernhardt and his somewhat blind devotion to his ambiguous aims.

The Muller family

Clara and her two sons, Dietrich and Martin, are much like many other families in the aftermath of the war. They are glad to be alive. So far they have avoided the Soviet patrols and the consequences, though Clara knows what may happen should they be discovered. She is aware of what her husband did during the war, though her's is a more sanitised version of the truth. The boys are blind to any wrongs their father may have committed and long simply to be able to spend some time with him (they view him as a hero).

Sgt Harry Lime

Lime was part of the push up through Italy which ended in a sweep into southern Germany and Austria. He has seen more in the last number of years than he would care to remember. He still has dreams about some of the hairier moments (Monte Cassino, amongst them). Nevertheless he is happier now he is settled. Vienna isn't the worst billet... I mean, let's face it, it could be Berlin! He has gotten to know his way around and what not to do. However, he does not appreciate being dragged off on wild goose chases or bailing out troublemakers. Of course, if he were made aware of what Muller had done....

Nicolai Menshikov and Alexei Topolev

Two veterans of the old NKVD and well-used to 'dealing' with people, particularly bloodthirsty fascists who committed great crimes against the Russian people. They are both diligent and efficient, though Alexei is partial to blondes (not necessarily willing to discern past that point however). Above all else, they are willing to do what it takes to ensure that the aims of the people are met. If they enjoy their work, there is no harm in that. The PC's will need to be very careful around these two. The slightest sign of people asking the wrong sort of questions in their area and Nicolai/ Alexei will detect it. It is then a question of confrontation.

Player Characters

There are no pregenerated characters, simply guidelines for creating WW2 era PC's. Obviously skills like Computers are out unless the PC's know and work with Turing. The vast majority of European and American characters will have served in the military at some point between 1939 and 1945, so combat skills can be easily explained (depending on what they did). It also gives more scope for Negative Traits (nervous twitches, scars, trigger-happy, bad nerves and so on). For this particular piece, characters with good people skills (languages, common sense) will probably do well, but the odd ex-commando probably wouldn't go amiss. WhiteChapel may be in its infancy, but it does not wish to risk an international incident.



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Thanks:

**Lesley, Roisin, Naiomh,
Julie and others for al-
lowing us to do this in our
spare time. Also thanks to
my special friend Pismo.**

**Made with a Mac 
in a church. Beat that!**

