

ALTERNITY

ACTION CHECK

ONLINE + MAGAZINE

STAR*DRIVE

GAMMA WORLD

DARK•MATTER

PRESENTS

TRANSMISSIONS

From The Pages of
Dragon[®] Magazine!

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Star*Drive and Dark*Matter
[Andy Collins, JD Wiker and Jeff "Zippy" Quick]

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TRANSMISSIONS



Gamemaster Hints

This transmission provides the heroes with the perfect excuse to go on a UFO hunt. Of course, what's really behind the sightings is up to the Gamemaster. (Deviousness is encouraged.) Some possibilities include the following:

- U.N. black helicopters spreading chemicals or viruses through the air.
- Secret military aircraft on routine training maneuvers.
- Illicit air deliveries of contraband to local airfields.
- Foreign aircraft operating out of a secret base, either under Lake Michigan or across the Canadian border.
- Alien spacecraft abducting innocent civilians, delivering emissaries, or shuttling personal between bases.

MILWAUKEE TRIBUNE • MONDAY NOVEMBER 1 1999

AUTHORITIES EXPLAIN AWAY SIGHTINGS

Kenosha, WI [AP] — Local authorities continue to claim that the bright lights seen in the night sky by local residents over the past few months come from low-flying planes or helicopters and that residents need not suspect anything out of the ordinary.

"We've had some recent changes in traditional flight paths at local airports," explained police spokesperson Tabitha Wickman. "This leads to unfamiliar lights, which at night could easily seem unusual or unexplainable."

Military officials refused to comment on the matter, stating that they "can neither confirm or deny the presence of experimen-

tal military aircraft" in the Kenosha area.

One resident, 53-year-old Roger Maxwell, insisted that the official explanation didn't hold water. "I was in 'Nam, and I know what a helicopter sounds like," claimed Maxwell. "I didn't hear no rotor sounds so unless they [have] some new Hueys that don't [have] rotors, that wasn't no helicopter."

Long-time residents note that this isn't the first rash of UFO sightings the area has experienced. In fact, the Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison area experienced several UFO-related "scares" in the mid and late 1970s. Those were generally explained away as mistaken sightings of weather balloons or small planes.



Local resident Susan Moeller captured this shot of the incident.



Gamemaster Hints

Bakx can have whatever psionic skills you want to give him, at whatever skill ranks seem appropriate. He will be looking for discreet transportation across the Verge to a destination of your choice. A group of heroes with their own ship or extra cargo space are a likely target.

GRIDWIDE NEWSFEED

>> ROGUE TELEPATH ESCAPES CONCORD PRISON <<

Concord authorities report a rogue mindwalker, **Tanmay Bakx**, has escaped from prison on Hale. Bakx is a blond human male, 5 feet, 9 inches tall, who possesses strong psionic abilities. **Common aliases: James Tanner and Mason Baksel.** Tanmay has demonstrated advanced telepathic and biokenetic abilities. **He is known to be dangerous** and believed to be heading for Verge space. **Concord Administrators advise caution** if traveling between Old Space and the Verge in the next two weeks. **Dr. Bejide Jorgensun, a Concord specialist in Mindwalker psychology has this bit of advice:** "Citizens should report to a Concord Administrator if they experience any unusual blackouts, lost time, or suspicious people in their neighborhoods." Jorgensun continued, "Tanmay was raised and educated in Hatire Community space. In a crowd he can be identified by his disdain of technology and avoidance of guns or more complex electronics."

Potential stories or side adventures include:

- Bakx might approach and attempt to buy passage wherever the heroes are headed. Maybe he just wants a ride, and the Concord tracks him to your heroes' ship. Maybe he wants to hijack their ship.
- Bakx might be hunting someone for a past wrong. That someone might be the same person the PCs need to talk to.
- The Concord might be playing down the threat Bakx presents to avoid panic. Bakx could be homicidally insane, killing every weren he sees, or worse yet, anyone he thinks looks like a weren!
- Having someone who can play with perceptions can challenge even wary heroes. Perhaps Bakx is near while they read this newsfeed, altering their perceptions of what they read. In that case, nearly anything could be true.

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\$1.50

Tulsa Examiner

Sunday
Edition

POTEAU, OK. [AP] — The Center for Disease Control declared a state of quarantine on the town of Sorrels late last night, citing an outbreak of the Houston virus. The quarantine soon turned into a Waco-style standoff when some of Sorrel's 750 citizens fired on Army helicopters assisting the CDC.

Though CDC and Army officials have so far refused to comment, residents of Sorrels have used cellular telephones to contact the media and tell their side of the story.

"We woke up to tanks right on our doorsteps," said Wayne Kilkenny, who operates the local filling station. "They said they needed to test us, but they wouldn't say for what. It's got a lot of folks scared."

The standoff has already claimed

the lives of two young people. The victims, identified as John Sturdevan, 17, and Amy Lambert, 18, were apparently attempting to bypass the roadblocks when they were fired upon by Army helicopters.

"They just blew up his truck," said another caller, who refused to be identified. "I might have turned myself in before, but now they're going to have to take me out of here in a body bag."

With the town of Sorrels blacked out by Army engineers, and the roads blocked by tanks and barricades, representatives of the Center for Disease Control and the U.S. Army have been meeting with the president since early this morning. A spokesman for the White House has said that the president is reviewing the situation, and a statement is expected this afternoon.



Gamemaster Hints

This story begins with an apparent outbreak of the so-called "Houston virus" in a small town in Oklahoma, and the subsequent response by the Center for Disease Control. The truth is that the CDC believes that the town has been compromised by sandmen and has asked the army for help. Unfortunately, the townspeople are refusing to give themselves up for "testing." This might be because a significant portion of the population have already been converted to sandmen. Alternatively, it might just be that the isolated community reacted to the quarantine with armed paranoia. The heroes can try to work with the CDC or try to slip past the troops and find out what is really going on in Sorrels.



Gamemaster Hints

Besides their prohibitive expense, genocoats really do live up to their press. Equipped with hoods, oversized genocoats can fit over armor and keep heroes warm and dry in most circumstances. The fashion press doesn't mention that the coats have a waste cylinder that must be replaced weekly, or that the coats require occasional grooming to stay healthy. Regardless, heroes who dress stylishly will be socially bereft without a genocoat for the season. Other complications include:

Winter fashions have arrived, and the watchword this year is mammalian!

Three top designers, including the vibrant Thuldan designer, Chevron, have unveiled living furred garments called Genocoats for the 2502 season to keep you toasty—and stylish—in the coldest of winter chills.

"These dazzling white and midnight black longcoats protect you from the cold by generating their own body heat," says Chevron. "It's like having a snuggly pet to help keep you warm."

A liquid protien fed through an implanted tube keeps each coat alive, shiny, and healthy for years. According to Chevron, the coats stay warm in -50° C temperatures, and they hibernate when outside temperatures reach +20° C. Function and beauty can be friends!

- The genocoat could give off pheromones or scents that attract predators on some worlds.
- Heroes who mistreat the coats could be hounded by ecological protesters.
- Allergies might make a genocoat a nuisance or useful—in certain circumstances.

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You are cordially invited to attend
MUFONia
MUFON for the NEW MELLENNIUM
Presented by the **Mutual Unidentified Flying Object Network**

Lexington Convention Center and Arena
FREE PARKING WITH REGISTRATION

Speakers & Guests Include:

Rev. Leon Oglethorpe
"Messages from the Divine"

Prof. Ian McKinley
"The Hill Incident"

Maj. Samuel Wylie, USAF
"Aerial Phenomena"

Janet Randall
"Psychic Encounters"

Alva Mayhill
"The Abductee Effect"

Amanur Prompattaya
"UFOs Abroad"

Many other guest speakers will be on hand for a variety of panel discussions and seminars.

Advance registration required for workshops due to limited space.

Call MUFON at (970) 555-UFOS to pre-register.
All major credit cards accepted.



Gamemaster Hints

The heroes have received an invitation to a Mutual UFO Network conference in Lexington, Kentucky. The heroes witness one of the speakers, Alva Mayhill, a former analyst for the Hoffmann Institute who resigned after an alleged alien abduction, being forced into a black sedan by two men dressed in black suits and wearing dark sunglasses.

Was Alva Mayhill abducted by the Men in Black? Or was her kidnapping merely a hoax orchestrated to generate publicity among the conspiracy-happy convention attendees? As rumors spread about Hoffmann Institute involvement, the pressure increases for the heroes to discover who is really responsible for Alva's disappearance.

VIRUS ALERT!

A new gridvirus, "Pushover" has been found in the local Aegis grid system. The Pushover virus is memory resident; it infects and destroys cybernetics files in the user's nanocomputer.

Gridpilots in or near the Aegis system are strongly advised to diagnose their wetware immediately. Pushover is extremely dangerous to cybernetics and Aleerins. Grid users with cybernetic organs in or near Aegis are advised to seek a safe jack-in point and proceed immediately to Inseer and VoidCorp gridsites for anti-virus updates.

The Pushover virus begins by destroying data related to cybernetic operation. Early warning signs of infection include muscle spasms, sensory organ feedback, and reconfigured bioart. Pushover spreads progressively over several days, finally constricting cybernetic musculature into a useless state. Pushover is fatal to victims with cardio-pulmonary cybernetic organs.



Gamemaster Hints

The state of the local grid in Aegis is atrocious. With a little effort, nearly anyone can slip invasive viruses into the system. In this case, a t'sa hacker has created Pushover as revenge on a mechalus business partner who cheated him in the sale of their company.

An infected cybernetic hero will not immediately know of his or her condition. Infection becomes apparent when he or she discovers reconfigured bioart or sees phantom images on cybereyes.

The bioart distortions and sensory ghosts are consistent over time, showing pictures or sounds of the mechalus who cheated his t'sa partner. What will the heroes do when they see him for real?

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Gamemaster Hints

This journal page could serve a variety of purposes. Perhaps the ghost still haunts this house, and the heroes must investigate. Is the ghost a harbinger of danger, an angry spirit, or merely a restless spectre denied a peaceful afterlife?

The journal page might be a hoax perpetrated to create a news story for a tabloid show. Alternatively, the heroes might need to contact the writer of the journal (or his next-of-kin) as part of a separate investigation into hauntings. The purpose selected by the Game-master determines the "how and why" that the journal page falls into the heroes' hands.

Saturday January 16, 1937

He appeared again last night just after midnight. I was fixing myself a late-night snack when I caught a flash of movement out of the corner of my eye. Turning, I saw him, muddy clothes, rifle and all, as if he had just stepped out of the trenches and into my kitchen.

I almost did not drop my sandwich this time. Even when it is not the first time, one simply does not become accustomed to seeing one of the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers standing in one's kitchen. At least I had the presence of mind to offer him a wedge of Stilton, though I cannot say I expected him to accept. After all he never speaks or shows any signs he understands my words.

Despite that, I almost feel I am beginning to know this young man, if that is truly the correct work to use when describing what for all the world seems to be nothing more than a spectre. He is definitely young; I cannot imagine him any older than eighteen at most, despite the tired look in his eyes. His gear marks him as a soldier in the Great War, and I have identified his battalion from markings on his jacket. His identity remains a mystery to me. However, there were simply too many young men like him who died in Beaumont Hamel and other hell-holes.

Still, I have to wonder how many more Sunday nights shall be marked with his appearance, as well as how long my sanity can last under such circumstances.



Gamemaster Hints

The heroes' ship might be in the area to hear Mount Illumination's distress call, or they could be hired to deliver emergency supplies to the settlement. Mount Illumination re-searches alien archaeological sites on Yellow Sky. While storms aren't unheard of, they usually aren't this strong. Why was this one so severe?

Winds measured at 145 kph drove through the Mount Illumination colony on Yellow Sky in the Tychus system two weeks ago. Dozens of deaths are reported, with more expected as workers clear devastated areas. Damage estimates are in the millions of Concord dollars.

Yellow Sky's corrosive atmosphere damaged several outlying buildings across the settlement, including several hydroponic farms. Although other Yellow Sky settlements have given assistance, Orlamu officials have appealed to the Galactic Concord and all nearby vessels for supplies, including food, water, clothing, and e-suits.

Mount Illumination has had a difficult existence in its 250-year history, continuing to be intensely self-reliant even after the Long Silence. Surviving colonists are reported to be dismayed but in good health.

- Archaeologists accidentally activated a dormant weather machine belonging to the previous inhabitants.
- Pirates seeded the atmosphere with a storm cocktail designed to cover up their activities.
- Perhaps the locals are right and an angry god really is unhappy with the desecration of its sacred sites.

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Gamemaster Hints

This photo was picked up by the Hoffmann Institute off a wire service as part of a report of "animal attacks" in the Mt. Rainier National Forest in Washington State. According to the piece, three separate campsites have been attacked in the past month. No injuries are reported. In each case, the campers had a good scare but didn't actually see the animals responsible.

A wild sasquatch is responsible for the attacks, but his motives are anything but murderous. That sasquatch's mate is pregnant and close to delivery, and he seeks to prevent anyone from venturing too close to their cave lair. Investigators might run into other interested parties (such as a team hired by the Center for Xenological Studies) and ultimately encounter the sasquatch themselves. A hero with Medical Science or Knowledge – *first aid* might aid in the delivery!



Get Away to the Shamondendra Days Festival for Only \$1,099!

Tired of the day-to-day grind? It's time for a vacation! Come to beautiful Simon's Leap in the Annahoy system for the sesquicentennial Shamondendra Days Festival.

Named for the mobile, carnivorous Shamondendron plant indigenous to Simon's Leap, the yearly festival celebrates the Simonians' independence, attained in 2353, when the native rebellion struck against the occupying regime in concert with the plant's 30-year bloom cycle. The decisive timing of the strike resulted in most of the government forces being devoured. Soon after, the planet returned to native rule.

The two-week long celebration is open to everyone. Festivities include parades, daily Shamondendra runnings, balcony feedings, and a full-scale recreation of the victory 150 years ago.



Gamemaster Hints

A planet with large, mobile, carnivorous plants is an adventure unto itself. Use the "Primate" statistics in the *Alternity Gamemaster Guide* (substitute "bite" for all other attacks), or look inside the *Alternity Alien Compendium II* accessory for commensurate creatures. Potential story elements include:

- Feeding the evidence to a carnivorous plant would be the perfect way to cover-up a murder.
- Most people believe Shamondendra to be roughly as intelligent as dogs. Some could be smarter.
- Political dissidents might use the symbolism of the celebration to launch another coup.
- Brave or foolhardy heroes might enjoy a recreational fling in a Shamondendra running, protein tosses for distance, or other physically challenging "fun" activities, without any extra danger or subplots.

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Gamemaster Hints

A memo meant for someone else in the Hoffmann Institute finds its way to the heroes by accident. The implications are that the Institute suspects an agent—perhaps one of the heroes—of stealing classified documents. The institute is prepared to take drastic action, including eliminating the “mole’s” entire team.

Of course, this all might just be a loyalty test on the part of the Hoffmann Institute, and there really is no spy. The heroes can get to the truth only if they confront the memo’s author and gain her trust. But doing so might compromise her investigation and let a spy go free.



“Improving the Human Condition”

The Hoffman Institute

New York • Chicago • Flagstaff • Washington D.C. • Barcelona • Cairo • Edo • Jakarta

READ & DESTROY

C:

Am now convinced information has been leaked to Fed. Document inventory missing classified documents. Fed investigation too close to material for coincidence.

Recommend action before entire team is compromised. Re-route, follow, or delete? Loss of entire team likely.

Please advise.

0



The following is a paid advertisement by Austrin Partners Ltd.

Austrin-Ontis Unlimited is providing for Vergers’ self-defense needs.

“We are very pleased by the Verge’s interest in self-defense,” said Austrin spokesperson, Gelaina deLoughton. “Money spent on preparation is money well spent.”

“People with guns are safer people. While the Concord is doing its best to help, sometimes a starfall is too far away. That’s when you need personal munitions.

“In an area of space where uncertainty is commonplace and External attacks are on the rise, experts recommend keeping a dependable light source, a two-week supply of uncontaminated food, and a loaded gun ready in the case of emergency.

“We at Austrin-Ontis are proud to be a major supplier of ordnance for so many prepared Vergers,” said deLoughton, “and want to remind everyone that an armed family is an unharmed family.”

Gamemaster Hints

Externals are hard to second guess, but it doesn’t take a xenology degree to know they don’t want well-armed targets. A small External strikeforce has been dispatched to disrupt Austrin-Ontis trade routes to the Verge. This is a good opportunity to have heroes interact with a small group of Externals. They could be traveling to the same destination as an Austrin freighter when the Externals attack.

Of course, attacking Austrin ships — even cargo ships — is a dangerous proposition. But a clever Gamemaster can drop clues from the strikeforce leading to the larger External threat.

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Gamemaster Hints
The police have discovered what might be a cult of demon worshipers. (See "Final Church" in Chapter 6: The Illuminati in the Dark*Matter campaign setting for more information.) They've contacted the Hoffmann Institute instead of the FBI, since one of the fingerprints found at the scene is that of an FBI agent.

In fact, the agent was one of several planted in the FBI to assist in covering up cult activities. He was participating in a secret ritual when the demon they summoned got away from them, forcing them all to flee.

Can the heroes track down the FBI agent? Will he talk? And where is the demon now?



Seattle Police Department

Precinct 33
Seattle, WA 98102

Crime Scene Report

Case Number: 67-6-6131	
Offense: homicide	
Victim: Martin Kelso	DOB: 7/13/80
Victim: Evelyn Gephardt	DOB: 9/04/81
Location: University R&R, 316 Calderon Road, Billiard room	
Time: approximately 0100-0300 hours	
Means: apparently ritual torture/mutilation	
Weapons: apparently curved knife or sickle (not found)	
Details: Reporting officer arrived at University R&R, 316 Calderon Road at 0310 hours, in response to a report of a possible homicide. Witnesses reported seeing several unclothed and bloody men and women exit University R&R and drive away in a gray van. R/O entered business (temporarily closed by Excise) and discovered bodies of college students. Bodies had been attached to billiard tables with leather straps and ritually tortured and desecrated. Internal organs had been removed and placed in jars. R/O found occult symbols drawn in blood on floor, along with candles and unidentified powder. Cleaning supplies were found nearby, along with thirteen suits of street clothing. No identification was found, except for those belonging to victims.	

WARNING /// WARNING /// WARNING

MANTEBRON SYSTEM NEWS REPORT

A water quarantine is in effect in the Mantebron system, according to an official release from the High Gulch governmental systems. Colonial Governor Giles Sandovar reports in the release that bacteria counts in High Gulch atmosphere condensers have risen 600% in the last two weeks.

Sandovar reassured off-planet family and friends that residents appear healthy and unharmed, but he declared a planet-wide state of emergency. No water is to be introduced to or exported from the ecosystem until further studies are completed. Off-planet visitors are required to recycle their own water and wastes until preliminary studies conclude in ten days.



Gamemaster Hints

If someone wanted to poison a desert planet's water system, that person would poison the atmosphere. Reasons for large-scale poisoning include extortion from hostile business interests, biological warfare released by Externals, or just a natural part of the planet's lifecycle.

Heroes can get involved as part of the cleanup efforts or perhaps as water smugglers. On a desert planet, water is scarce when there isn't a quarantine. Certain individuals might be willing to pay well for uncontaminated water during the government-imposed draught.

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Gamemaster Hints

The Journal entry was written by 22-year-old Andrew "Sandy" Irvine who, along with noted climber George Mallory, was part of a British ascent of Mt. Everest in 1924-29 years before the historic climb of Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay. When they disappeared on June 8 only a few hundred meters below the summit, they were assumed to have died in the ascent. Mallory's preserved body was found in May of 1999, lending credence to this opinion. However, Irvine's body, along with the camera they took with them that day, has never been found.

Did Irvine also perish on Everest, or did he encounter something unusual near the summit? A Grey station-ship is hidden in the area, and both the yeti and the Kha-glor monks have been known to wander throughout the Himalayas. Perhaps he was rescued from death by one of these beings. And who knows what pictures might still be preserved within the Kodak Vest-pocket Model B camera he carried?

For more on this mystery, check out the following websites:

www.mountainzone.com

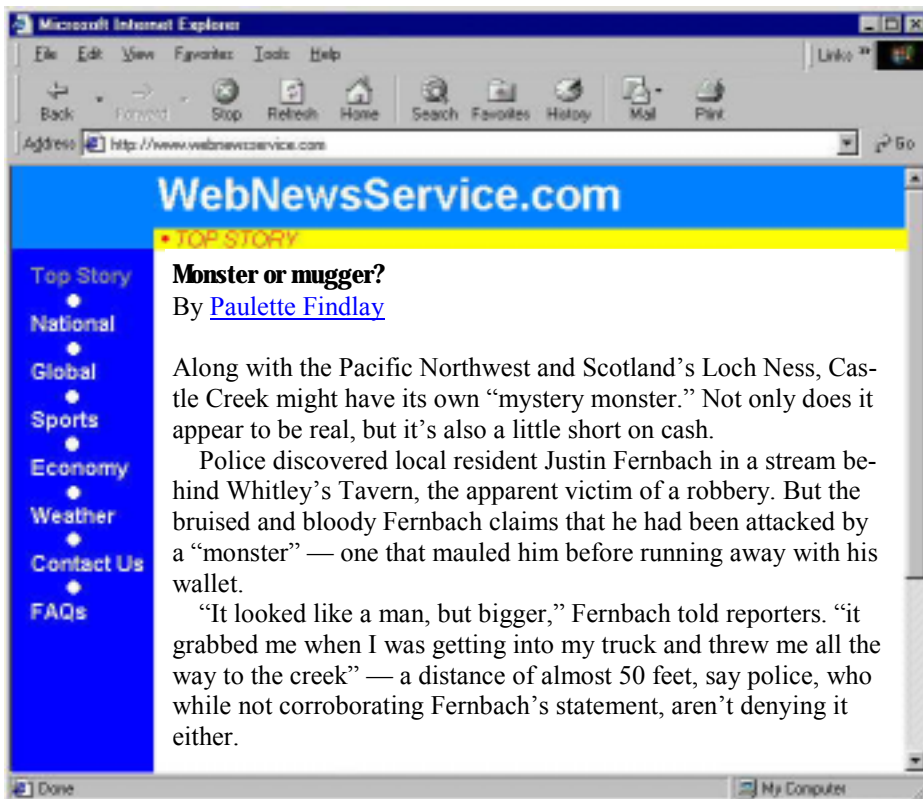
www.everestnews.com/jochen5.htm

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/everest/lost/mystery/

Mallory is already gone, and I do not believe I shall survive this night. I should never have let him talk me into the ascent. When Somervell and Norton both failed, we should have realized that "Sagarmatha" didn't want her summit reached. I had thought the Sherpas merely superstitious after the deaths of Shamsherpun and Manbahadur earlier in the climb, but I should have heeded their warnings.

I have begun hallucinating. I see figures in the darkness, standing just beyond my vision. I call out to them, thinking that Odell and the others have come to rescue me, but they never answer. I would fear insanity, though I believe it academic, since I won't live long enough to be examined by any doctor. Perhaps the photos I have taken with Odell's camera will one day be recovered by those who have come after us.

The last of my oxygen will soon be gone. After that, I imagine death will feel much like a welcome slumber, though in this case it will be the Grim Reaper, and not Morpheus, who comes to greet me.



Gamemaster Hints

This adventure hook introduces the heroes to a new kind of life-form: the throwback. A throwback is a human of a variety not seen for centuries, but somehow born today (perhaps as a mutation, or due to a long, hidden line of parallel human development). The throwback is an alien to the culture of modern man, responding only to its own needs for food and shelter.

The throwback that attacked Justin Fernbach did so because it felt threatened. After throwing him into the ditch behind the tavern, it pummeled him until other humans appeared, then fled into a nearby woods. There, it lurks safely hidden—though a nearby land development is scheduled to destroy the woods. When the bulldozers arrive, the throwback will attack the drivers to defend its home. The heroes must stop it, or the development project, before that happens.