

BAD COMPANY

GUMSHOE™ CONVERSION NOTES

This document contains GUMSHOE™ conversion notes for the “Bad Company” adventure by Alan Bligh. This adventure was published in *Cthulhu Britannica*, by Cubicle 7. This conversion requires the text of the original adventure to play. Regrettably, *Cthulhu Britannica* is out of print as of December, 2017. All page references refer to the original book.

The spells Death Curse, Enthrall Victim, Mental Suggestion, Power Drain, and Send Dreams were lifted from Christopher Smith Adair’s *Trail of Cthulhu* conversion for *Our Lady of Sorrows* from Miskatonic River Press. Find this and many more conversions [here](#).

GENERAL NOTES

This scenario is set in the Gaslight Era of *Call of Cthulhu*, around 1895. This won’t require significant changes to the *Trail of Cthulhu* rules, but the Keeper should bear in mind the change in tech levels. Note the following:

- Pilot is not an available Occupation, since planes weren’t invented yet
 - The Pilot skill applies to boats as well as planes, so is not completely useless
- The state of science is 40 years less advanced, but all scientific skills are still useful
- Doctors were aware of germ theory and in general the Medicine skill will function as usual

The sidebar on page 8 of *CB*, “Attempted Shortcuts & Easy Answers,” discusses ways to get Investigators back into the adventure if they retreat early. *Trail of Cthulhu*’s Drives provide a clean mechanism for this, but the Keeper may also wish to put Sources of Stability in peril.

For the most part, stats are not provided for the NPCs. NPCs who might plausibly come into physical conflict with the Investigators get numbers.

SCENES

The following section consists of notes on scenes and locations described in the adventure.

LONDON SOCIETY (CB 14)

Additional clues introduced via mutual acquaintances and social connections require a 1 point **Credit Rating** spend.

ABNER TRAVISHAM (CB 14)

Bargain will provide information about the spat with Blaylocke and the *Duchess of Malfi* production, if the Investigators offer information rather than money in exchange. Investigators with **Credit Rating** will know that money is not useful with Abner, and will also know better than to use **Intimidation**.

A 1 point **Flattery** spend will yield the clue about Madame Byrigan if a) the Investigators ask about her directly and b) the Investigators have already established a working relationship with Abner.

THE POLICE INVOLVEMENT IN SOMMERS’ DISAPPEARANCE (CB 17)

Inspector Bridger will be frank when **Cop Talk** is used. He will imply that Sommers is a drug

abuser if pressed at all; no spend is required, since this is a red herring.

VISITING ARTHUR'S APARTMENT (CB 17)

A **Sense Trouble** roll at difficulty 6 will betray the presence of watchers, but the Straw Men will retreat if they are aware they've been spotted.

ARTHUR SOMMERS' APARTMENT (CB 18)

Many of the clues are obvious. The Keeper should reveal The Broken Mirror, Waste Paper, and The Pistol as the Investigators search the room.

Evidence Collection adds the following clues:

- The scuff marks and scrapes in the floorboard: using **Forensics** will further reveal their cause
 - Signs of Violence: **Medicine** or a 1 point **Scuffling** spend will allow Investigators to conclude that a cutting weapon was involved and that it was a superficial cut
 - The Hidden Letter: no further skills are needed to find the handout
 - Straw: no further skills are necessary to identify the smell as perfume
 - Theater Program: any Investigator with **Credit Rating** 6 or higher will be able to determine who "A. T." is without asking others
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MARCUS BORELLI (CB 20)

Borelli's misdirection is obvious to Investigators with **Assess Honesty**. Any Interpersonal skill will do for extracting a confession and obtaining the medical bag once it's clear he's lying.

Occult and **Medicine** are necessary to identify the subject matter of the notebook. There's enough material in English to provide

context if none of the Investigators know Latin or Latvian.

A NIGHT AT THE THEATER (CB 21)

Using **Flattery**, **Oral History**, or **Reassurance** will get the theater staff talking. Consider making these skills useful with specific theater company members.

LILY'S STORY (CB 22)

Gaining Lily's confidence requires **Reassurance**.

THE ADDICT AND THE ABORTIONIST (CB 25)

Visiting the Limehouse and the Jago is slightly risky. **Streetwise** will tip off the Investigators that they can pass through safely if they appear confident.

Historical note: "the Jago" is a fictionalized version of the Old Nichol. The source of the name is *A Child of the Jago*, an 1896 novel by Arthur Morrison. Slightly anachronistic!

JAKESWILL (CB 25)

Tomas Jakeswill will give up Dr. Salt's location and plan to Investigators if they use **Intimidation**.

THE LODGING HOUSE ON PENNYFORTH STREET (CB 26)

Salt's desperation makes him impervious to any Interpersonal approach other than **Bargain**. Investigators with **Psychoanalysis** or **Streetwise** will realize this immediately.

If the group generally has low **Credit Rating** scores, they'll have difficulty bribing Salt. Baronet Sommers could easily provide the

necessary funds, but if the group leaves Salt unguarded the Straw Men will capture him.

PAINTED CRIMSON AND GOLD (CB 27)

Maxwell's address is available by simply asking the Orpheum Theater. **Art** or **Art History** will provide the names of galleries he's exhibited at, any of which will likewise give up his address.

BARTHOLOMEW "MAX" MAXWELL (CB 28)

In the event that he can be questioned, only **Pharmacy** (for identifying the proper drugs) or **Hypnosis** can get anything out of him.

THE ARTIST'S STUDIO (CB 28)

Locksmith will both open the hasp and confirm that Maxwell bypasses it to get in. If the Investigators choose to use brute force, it's an **Athletics** roll with a target of 4.

When searching the studio, **Evidence Collection** reveals the presence of women's clothing.

MAXWELL'S VISION (CB 28)

Maxwell's art isn't just disturbing, it reveals much about the Mythos. Detailed examination requires a 4-point **Stability** test, at +1 difficulty.

Recognizing familiar faces in the artwork does not require a roll.

No skill is required to unearth Player Handout 3.

HIS DARK MATERIALS (CB 29)

The bathtub scene triggers a 3-point **Stability** test. This is distinct from the art, and **Stability** losses stack.

Forensics provides all relevant information about the corpse. The word "Chernabog" is obvious without any use of skills. Either **Cthulhu Mythos** or **Occult** will yield the basic Chernabog information in the sidebar; using **Cthulhu Mythos** will also give the Investigators the Y'Golonac connection.

THE ARTIST'S RETURN (CB 30)

Maxwell will attack unless the investigators use **Reassurance** as their very first ploy upon his entrance, and they must further convince him that they're connected to Byrigan.

THE HOUSE IN THE STRAND (CB 31)

The final confrontation is loosely defined. Keepers should keep the following in mind:

- Reward any relevant skill at all with hints of the house's off-kilter presentation. Remember the themes that flow through the adventure. The house is in part a metaphor for the waste and excess of the upper class. Position the Investigators as outsiders.
 - Assign **Stability** checks as needed. The cellars count as a 3-point test (for a particularly grisly murder scene). So does the second floor bathroom. Being attacked by a Straw Man is the usual 5-point test for being attacked by supernatural creatures.
 - The muted woman is a 2-point **Stability** test.
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THE LADY'S CHAMBERS (CB 33)

Seeing Arthur Sommers and the rest of the room requires a 4-point **Stability** test.

NPCs AND MONSTERS

THE STRAW MEN

Abilities: Athletics 9, Health 9, Scuffling 12, Weapons 10

Hit Threshold: 4

Weapon: +1 (hooked blade)

Stability Loss: +1

Unbarred Passage: as per the original text.

Created of the Black Arts: slashing weapons do damage as normal; fire does double damage; all other attacks do 1 point of damage at most.

Mask of Shadows: Investigators must make a **Sense Trouble** roll with a target of 4 to see a Straw Man. The target may increase at the Keeper's convenience if the Straw Men are also concealed by mundane methods.

DR. JOSEF SALT

Abilities: Athletics 8, Health 4 (currently), Scuffling 4, Weapons 5, Firearms 3

Hit Threshold: 3

Weapon: +0 (surgical blade), +1 (single-shot pistol)

BARTHOLOMEW "MAX" MAXWELL

Abilities: Athletics 9, Health 7, Scuffling 6, Weapons 8

Hit Threshold: 4

Weapon: +1 (meat cleaver)

The Touch of Chernabog: Maxwell recovers 2 Health points every 10 minutes.

MADAME ONLENIA BYRAGAN

Abilities: Athletics 10, Health 12, Scuffling 15, Weapons 12, Stability 14

Hit Threshold: 4

Weapon: +1 (claws & teeth)

Stability Loss: +1

Bloody Gaze: Madame Byrigan may attack with her gaze using her Weapons pool. The difficulty is 3, regardless of the target's Hit Threshold. The target takes +1 damage if she hits.

Undying: all weapons inflict minimum damage. When reduced to 0 Health, she makes Consciousness rolls as an Investigator would. If she fails a Consciousness roll, she is stunned but will not die, even if her Health drops below -12. She regains 4 Health points per round or as the Keeper sees fit out of combat.

Dark Glamour: at the Keeper's option, allow a **Sense Trouble** roll at difficulty 3 to sense something "wrong" about Madame Byrigan. If the campaign uses rules for psychics, the Keeper may want to restrict detecting her nature to those with actual psychic powers.

Stability loss only applies if she reveals her natural form. This will happen if she's killed as well.

Spells: Animate Straw Man, Call Chernabog (Y'Golonac), Death Curse, Enthrall Victim, Mental Suggestion, Power Drain, Send Dreams, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler, and any other the Keeper deems appropriate.

Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler is available in the *Trail of Cthulhu* rulebook. The other spells are detailed below.

ANIMATE STRAW MAN

The caster spreads an ounce of his or her bodily fluids on a specially constructed straw dummy, then invokes Chernabog to breath life into the Straw Man.

Stability Test Difficulty: 4

Cost: 2 Stability to cast

Time: Ten minutes

CALL CHERNABOG (Y'GOLONAC)

The caster must ritually sacrifice at least 1 human being in as painful a method as possible. During the ritual, the caster must be surrounded by artwork dedicated to Y'Golonac. The ritual must take place in a human settlement with at least 10,000 residents; Y'Golonac is a god of depravity, and is uninterested in visiting a location without the potential for sustained corruption.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5

Opposition: Rituals to Call Y'Golonac in the guise of Chernabog pit the caster's Stability against reality's Inertia: 8 if 12 or more humans were sacrificed as part of the ritual, 24 otherwise. Rituals to Dismiss Y'Golonac face Y'Golonac's Inertia pool of 42, lowered by 6 for each human sacrificed to him while he was present.

Cost: Calling Y'Golonac costs 5 Stability. Dismissing him costs 10 points of self-inflicted Health.

Time: one hour

DEATH CURSE

This devastating attack spell causes a target within point-blank or close range to burst into flame. The spell takes 1d6 rounds of concentration to take affect, and during that time, the caster must succeed in a test against the target's current Stability each round. If the caster succeeds in all the tests, the target's skin blisters and he or she takes 1d6-2 damage. In the next round, the target takes 1d6-1 damage. On the third round, the target bursts into flames and takes 1d6+1 damage then and each following round.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5

Cost: 13 Stability

Time: see above

ENTHRALL VICTIM

This spell can be cast at any visible target at long or closer range, but the target must be able to hear and understand the caster. After the test to cast the spell and a round or so of talking, the caster makes a second Stability test against the target's current Stability. If the test is successful, the target stands struck, numb and dumb, until relieved from the trance by physical assault or some similarly shocking event. If the caster fails to overcome the target, he or she may try the spell the following round.

Stability Test Difficulty: 4 (3 with Hypnosis)

Cost: 3 Stability

Time: 1 round

MENTAL SUGGESTION

This spell can be cast at any target at long range or closer that is visible to the unaided eye of the caster. After the test to cast the spell, the caster makes a second Stability test against the target's current Stability. If the test is successful, the target is completely controlled for one round. If the test fails, the spell does not take effect. Whether successful or not, the caster may cast the spell again against the target.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5 (4 with Hypnosis)

Cost: 6 Stability

Time: Three rounds to cast.

POWER DRAIN

The target must be within near range or closer. After the test to cast the spell, the caster makes a second Stability test against the target's current Stability. If the caster succeeds, then the target loses 1d6-1 Magic or Stability points, and the caster gains them; if the target does not have a Stability or Magic rating, the points are drained from Health instead, and the caster's Magic or Stability pool increases by that many points. If the caster fails the test, the caster

loses 5 Magic or Stability points and the target gains them.

Stability Test Difficulty: 4

Cost: 2 Stability

Time: One round

SEND DREAMS

The target must be asleep and within 20 miles of the caster. If the spell is successful, the caster specifies the content of the dreams the target is subjected to. If the visions in the dreams are horrific, the target must make a Stability test (with a Difficulty Number of 4 or 5, depending on the nature of the vision) or lose 2 points of Stability. A dream-vision of a Great Old One or Outer God, however, causes the target to make a Difficulty 5 Stability test or lose 3 Stability and 1 Sanity.

Stability Test Difficulty: 6

Opposition: The caster sacrifices a number of Stability points into the burning herbs. All points beyond the first one spent are used in a contest against the target's Stability. If the caster wins, the target experiences the dreams sent by the caster.

Cost: Variable (see above)

Time: A half hour

BYRAGAN'S SYBARITES

Abilities: Athletics 8, Health 8, Scuffling 6, Weapons 8

Hit Threshold: 4

Weapon: +0 (razor)

Cultist of the Inner Circle: Byragan's inner circle regenerates 2 Health per round until dead. They do not get to use Investigator Health pool rules; as per the usual *Trail of Cthulhu* rules, they die at 0 Health.