A JUSTICE ADVENTURE #1

TRAIL OF THE GOLD SPIKE

BY AARON ALLSTON

DEATH STALKS THE LOST MINE!

HERO GAMES

APPROVED FOR USE WITH:

CALL of CTHULHU ADVENTURE

DAREDEVILS™

MERCENARIES SPIES & PRIVATE EYES™

TRAIL OF THE GOLD SPIKE

Author
Aaron Allston

Editor
Dennis Mallonee

Graphic Design
Shannon Hudson

Cover Graphics
Shannon Hudson

Interior Design
Thessaloniki Canotas

Production
Thessaloniki Canotas

Typesetting
Dennis Mallonee

Cover Art
Stephan Peregrine

Interior Illustrations
Stephan Peregrine

Map Graphics
Elena Schott Carolyn Schultz

Produced by Hero Games

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Playtesters
Thanks go to playtesters Denis Loubet (Walter Ransley) and Jan Malone (Mercedes Grant), and to Elton Fewell, Jr., for technical assistance.

If you have any questions or comments, please write to us! Hero Games 92A 21st Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want the answers to the questions. Ask for our free catalog!

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Introduction

This adventure is a scenario for two to six players plus you, the GM. *The Trail of the Gold Spike* was written primarily for players of Hero Games' *Justice Inc.,* but conversions are provided for three other popular games that cover the same era: *Call of Cthulhu, Daredevils,* and *Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes.* If you don't have all of these games, we recommend you pick them up; all take a different approach to the pulp era, and all contain valuable material.

More specifically, *The Trail of the Gold Spike* is set up for investigative heroes of the pulp-adventure type: detectives, crime-fighters, journalists, etc. It would help if one or more characters knew how to fly aircraft in combat, although this is by no means necessary for the adventure to progress. Also, it's better if few or none of the characters are of the psychic-investigating or monster-hunting variety; while they may feel at home during certain points of the scenario, the adventure plays better with ordinary joes in the hero roles. Again, though, the adventure will not grind to a halt if Victor Vampirestomper and Cornelius J. Medium are along.

The plot, in capsulation, is this: The Gold Spike Mining Co., located deep in the Colorado Rockies, is under seige by a mysterious mastermind known as the Condor. The Condor has arranged several accidents and mishaps for the company, all with the obvious intent of forcing management to abandon the site. Non-player characters involved include that pillar of all hero-pulp fiction, the Beautiful Young Woman in distress, and numerous other characters, one of whom—as all good pulp-reading players will know—has to be the mastermind in his true identity. The player-characters—the heroes of the piece—must stop the Condor's activities, unravel the mystery of his identity, and find out what it's all about.

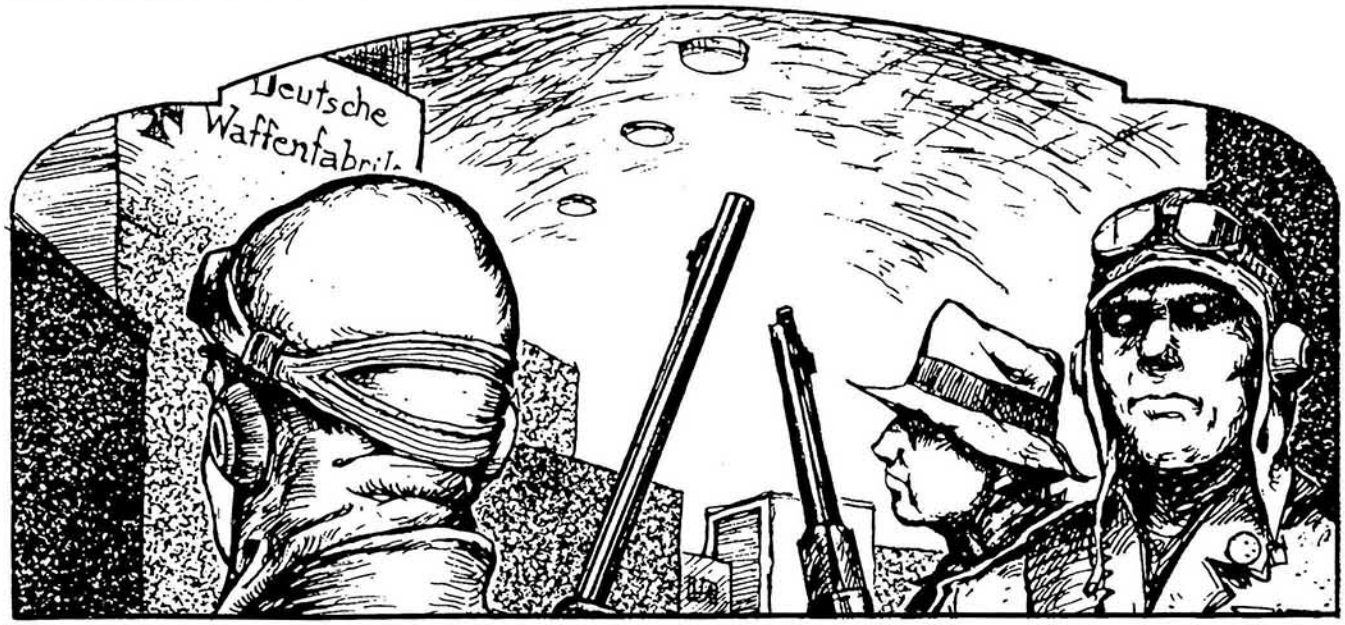
Scattered throughout the text will be comments on what's going on in the scenario from an adventure-design point of view. For the prospective game-master, a running commentary on what function each plot element serves is included. I hope this will give a beginning referee a clearer idea of what goes into a pulp adventure.

People who intend to play in this adventure should read no further; however, the GM should read all the way through before running the adventure. A complete knowledge of the events in *Gold Spike* means you can create a more fascinating adventure. At the very least, events should be tailored for specific player-characters; each PC should have something interesting and unique happen to him to keep him busy.

All the character descriptions, pictures, and game statistics are in the back of this book. As you come across a new character when reading the adventure, turn to the back of the book for a description and relevant statistics. Some optional ideas are also listed there; feel free to make changes to *Gold Spike* if it will make things more interesting for your players.

Now it's time to sit back, turn the page, and begin gaming in black and white once more . . .

—Aaron Allston



CHAPTER ONE

A Timely Intervention

If your JUSTICE, INC. campaign makes use of the Empire Club concept introduced in the *JI Campaign Book,* the easiest thing to do is to begin *The Trail of the Gold Spike* there.

Dusk is falling across the city, casting dim shadow across the concrete canyons of Manhattan (or wherever you choose to base your campaign) as a group of two or more player-characters arrives in front of the Club. Before they can enter the building, a black limousine pulls up to the curb, and the club doorman steps over to the passenger side to assist an archetypal vision of loveliness: a young woman, no more than twenty years old, with bright red hair and steel-blue eyes, wearing a top-coat over the latest fashion. As she reaches into her purse in search of a coin to give the doorman, she stares intently at the windows on the second floor of the club.

Meanwhile, across the street, a tall, pale-skinned, cold-looking man has stepped out into traffic and aimed a Colt .38 revolver at the young lady's back.

Assuming that our heroes see the gunman (it's getting dark, so a simple Perception Roll should be required), they have a limited range of options: (1) they can ignore the whole thing (though if that's their choice the cads are playing the wrong game); (2) they can call out a warning and trust that the woman will both hear it and react to it; (3) they can take a direct approach and tackle the young woman, bringing her down behind the relative safety of the still-parked limousine; (4) if armed, they can draw and fire on the attacker, who's Bracing on his target, which delays his fire for half a phase.

Whatever the heroes choose to do—whether they've removed the intended victim to safety or opened fire on the assassin—a passing taxi will hit the gunman and hurl his broken body onto the far sidewalk. The cabbie, Mickey Dukes of the Bronx, will stop his car and tell anyone who'll listen to him that the pale-faced gunman "just stepped right out inna middle of da street. It was his fault! You saw it, right? His fault, right?"

The would-be assassin is likely to be dead. A search of the body will reveal no identification other than a college class ring with the initials "ABF" inscribed on the inside of the copper band. A character who has Familiarity: Colleges may recognize the insignia on the ring immediately (it's from the University of Colorado); otherwise it will take a while to track it down. The gunman has no possessions other than the ring, his suit, his Colt, and $12.95 in bills and change.

The intended victim—visibly shaken but under control and apparently not completely surprised by what has happened—will be more than willing to answer any questions the heroes may have. But before anything more than perfunctory questions can be put to her, the local cop-on-the-beat will call the incident in, and a police siren from a patrol car less than a block away will begin to wail. "I'll tell you everything," she'll say, "just don't involve me yet with the police. Tell them he went crazy and started shooting at random."

Whether or not our heroes agree to do as she wishes, it should be a simple matter to deal with the police. Statements will be taken from witnesses (there are bound to be other passers-by who saw the shooting), the body will be carted away to the coroner, and our heroes and the young lady will probably not be detained. If the police learn that the dead man was aiming specifically at the young lady, they may ask her to come to the nearest precinct station a few blocks distant for more detailed questioning, but that shouldn't take very long, and she won't tell the police very much. If the player-characters manage to bungle things completely with the police, the situation may still be saved with the timely arrival of Horace M. Crompton on the scene. The police know Crompton as a gentleman of some importance, and will defer to him if he vouches for the character of the young woman or a fellow member of the Club.

In any case, the young woman has come to the club this evening to meet with Crompton to discuss a matter of some urgency. If the player-characters wish to sit in, neither Crompton nor the young woman will object. In fact, after this harrowing experience, the young woman would most likely *prefer* to have her rescuers beside her, just in case.

Notes to the GM

If your *Justice, Inc.* campaign makes use of the Empire Club concept introduced in the *Justice Inc. Campaign Book,* the easiest thing to do is to begin *The Trail of the Gold Spike* there. If not, the scenario can begin outside the uptown offices of Horace M. Crompton. By sheerest coincidence, the player characters can be passing by on their way to some other appointment when the adventure begins.

Before the scenario begins, it's a good idea for the GM to note which player characters do and do not make it a habit to carry a gun. While in this particular scenario having a gun at hand might be advantageous, situations could arise in the future in which a firearm could be a positive drawback. The police tend to frown on people who carry concealed weapons . . .

If the GM feels inclined to complicate the scenario, the gunman need not be killed in traffic. The gunman might be allowed to survive but be hospitalized and unconscious for several days. In order to question the gunman, one of the player-characters would have to remain behind when the others head off to Colorado . . .

CHAPTER TWO

The Lady Tells Her Story

If introductions are in order after things calm down and everyone moves into the Empire Club, Horace Crompton will be quite capable of performing them. The young woman's name is Bethlehem Whitley. Her father, Angus Whitley, owns and operates the Whitley Mining Company on property adjacent to land owned by the Crompton Mills in Colorado.

The reason the beautiful Bethlehem has come such a great distance to speak to Horace Crompton is that over the last few weeks persons unknown have been trying to run her father's company out of business. There have been accidents. Miners have turned up missing. At first, the Whitleys chalked it up to a run of bad luck and agreed with the authorities that the missing miners had simply run off, but then the messages started coming in every day over the wireless: "Leave or die!" was what the voice said, over and over.

Last week, just at sunset, Bethlehem's Uncle Jake was accosted by a weird, pale-faced man who told him to move on while he still could. Since then, other weird men have been seen at dusk, moving around on top of the hills surrounding the mining camp. All this has unnerved the miners. Unless the Whitleys can find out what's going on, they may *have* to shut down their operations. Jake and Bethlehem have already had to shut down the Whitleys' newer dig for lack of help.

What Bethlehem wants to find out from Crompton is whether or not the Crompton Mills have been having the same sort of trouble. The Whitleys have tried to speak to the people who run the sawmills for Crompton, but couldn't get any information out of that tight-lipped crew, so Bethlehem has taken it on her own initiative to contact Crompton's office in New York and arrange this meeting. Her uncle Jake, who manages the mines, told her that she shouldn't come, that she shouldn't involve outsiders, and her father agreed, but she came anyway, sneaking out that morning and leaving a note so they wouldn't worry about where she'd gone. She's sure she'll catch some trouble for it when she gets back.

As far as Crompton knows, his people have reported no such incidents. But that doesn't mean they haven't happened. The fact is that the Crompton Mills, though they carry his name, are not an important part of his investment portfolio and he doesn't keep close tabs on the details of the operation. However, it has been several months since his last visit to Colorado, and if Bethlehem wishes him to do so he will go there later this week to consult with his staff. If there *is* something going on which threatens the lovely Bethlehem's family, and which may conceivably threaten his investment, he is as determined as anyone to get to the bottom of it.

Crompton will invite Bethlehem to stay at the Empire Club for a few days while he makes arrangements for his trip, but she will decline, saying that she feels an obligation to return to her father as quickly as possible. She will make an effort to persuade some or all of the player characters to accompany her. If any of the player characters are private investigators who require money for their time, she will gladly put down a retainer and pay expenses; if there are several such characters, the GM may have Crompton offer to contribute to the retainer, since Bethlehem wouldn't be carrying a great deal of money with her.

Notes to the GM

If the GM decides that Crompton wouldn't be familiar with the player characters, or if he hasn't shown up by the time introductions are required, the players will have to introduce themselves. If for any reason the player characters don't attend the meeting, they can still get the gist of the information from Bethlehem by arranging to meet her for breakfast in the morning, at which time she will try to convince them to accompany her to Colorado.

If the player characters are interested and want to know more about the Whitley mining operation at this time, the GM can refer to chapter four and give the players some of the information contained therein.

The Alternate Story

If our "heroes" are crass enough not to protect a beautiful woman from the police, she'll give the following story to the authorities:

Her name is Bethlehem Whitley of the Whitley Mining Company, and she's here to speak to Mr. Crompton regarding the possibility of purchasing or leasing some of his property which adjoins her family's. She was accosted on her flight here by a man who made indecent proposals to her, and he became angry when she refused. He even threatened physical violence. Evidently, he followed her from the airport and tried to

make good on his threats. She had never seen him before, and consequently has no idea who he was.

It's a skillfully-told mixture of lies and half-truths, and should satisfy any policeman who questions her.

If Bethlehem has been given any reason to mistrust the player characters, she may well tell them the same story, at least until Crompton is able to convince her that his friends in the Empire Club can be trusted with the truth.

CHAPTER THREE

The Big City

It's conceivable that some characters may choose not to go immediately to Colorado. If some choose to remain behind to investigate the pale man, or have suspicions which would require them to stay in New York, this section will be of use to the GM.

One advantage any characters who stay behind may have is Mickey Dukes, the cabdriver who inadvertently hit the pale-faced man with his taxi. Dukes is a first-rate cabbie, a streetsmart fellow with the kind of knowledge about a city one can only acquire by driving all over it for twenty years. If the characters have already checked Dukes out and let him go, it would be an easy matter to have him be the first cabbie hailed the next time the characters shout for a taxi.

Things to do in the big city include:

(1) Trying to track down more data on the pale-faced man—how he came to be in the big city, where his gun came from, where he stayed, what his problem was, etc.

(2) Trying to find out more about the Whitleys, their mine, Horace Crompton, etc.

The following notes are given presuming that the characters have thought up these investigations themselves. In other words, don't tell the players that they should contact Person A or check the courthouse records of City B. Let them come up with the methods of their investigations themselves. However, in a tight spot—when the players are obviously stumped and the play is at a standstill—you may wish a character to make a Deduction roll, then give him enough hints to get the action going again.

The Pale-Faced Man

Contact with the University of Colorado, which is the school indicated on the ring worn by the pale-faced assassin, will yield the name of the Denver jeweler who made that class's rings. That jeweler will identify the owner as one Andrew B. Finster. Another communication with the U of C will indicate that Finster graduated about two years ago. He lived in Millston, Colorado, which is about fifty miles from the valley which contains the Whitley Mining Company and the Crompton Mills.

Any contact with Millston authorities will reveal that Finster died a year ago of heart failure while chopping wood. If presented with news that an assassin in New York was wearing Finster's ring, the authorities will figure that it was stolen from Finster prior to his death. They won't cooperate with any long-distance exhumation requests, though their attitude might be different were the big-city adventurers to take the trouble to show up in Colorado.

The assassin's Colt is a government-issue 1911A1 automatic pistol. Tracking down the serial number will take some time and work: Have the character doing the investigations make a Deduction roll. The investigation will take five days, minus one day for every pip by which the roll was made, to a minimum of one. Knowledge of the Military (or specifically the Army) could be used as a Complementary roll. The weapon turns out to come from a Los Angeles-area Army Air Corps base, and was stolen about two years ago along with thirty-nine similar guns. No trace of these weapons has turned up before now. If our investigative heroes pursue this topic and ask about any other strange occurrences at about the same time, the base commander, a Colonel Tipps, could tell them that several days before the guns disappeared an entire flight of a dozen planes and their pilots also vanished from the base—took off for a reconnaissance training flight and never returned. No clues, no subsequent success in the Army investigation.

If the GM wishes to complicate the players' lives at this point, he can throw a curve at them by having the Army—which is understandably still interested in the case of the missing pilots—assign them an investigator. Whether the Army investigator is a good guy—perhaps even a player-character—or a villainous sort, or even a minion of the Condor is left to the GM's discretion.

It will be possible to track down the pale man's traveling schedule. As distinctive as the pale man was, all it will require is a goodly amount of flatfoot-type work: Talking to airline personnel and similar activities. For the amount of time this will take, use the same means as tracking down the serial number of the Colt above, using Streetwise as a complementary roll. He will have flown in to the same airport as Bethlehem on the flight which immediately followed hers from the Denver airport, with no checked luggage. There is no indication whether he had the pistol with him in Denver, or picked it up here (airlines being somewhat less stringent in their precautions against hijackers in those days). It seems likely, though, since the assassination attempt took place only an hour after his arrival, that he didn't have time to purchase it in New York. It will be possible to track down the cabbie who took the assassin away from the airport; use the rolls vs. time arrangement mentioned above unless Mickey Dukes is working with the characters, in which case his Streetwise may be used as a complementary roll to the characters' Deduction and the final amount of time cut in half.

If that cabbie (it won't be Dukes) is found, he will claim to have taken the pale-faced man from the airport to a dockyard-area building, thence to the Empire Club.

The dockyard building is a small warehouse arrangement used for some import traffic off the river. It's a smallish steel-sided warehouse with the name "Harmon Imports" overhead. How the characters approach the investigation of the place will determine what they learn:

If they walk in the front door, asking questions, they'll get the polite runaround from the company employees, who seem to be a pretty normal lot working in a legitimate firm. No, they'll say, they received no such individual on that day. In fact, the hour given by the cabbie is after normal closing hours for the firm. Harmon Imports? Owned by one Edgar Harmon, a businessman here in the big city. What do they import? Various goods from Europe and South America—fruits, woods, cloths, etc. Not stolen guns.

Cursory investigations of the company will corroborate this data.

If the characters choose to break in to the building during the night, have them attacked by some individuals in the warehouse—pale-faced men armed with Colt .45 automatics, one or two for every adventurer who shows up. These men, if captured, will withdraw into an autistic condition and evidently be unable to answer questions; if interrogated with the Interrogation, they will make some response, but they do have Resistance. They can be identified as ex-employees of this firm, all of whom have quit or been fired within the last couple of years. None of the current company employees seem to be pale-faced men, and none of them knows anything about any of this weirdness.

Edgar Harmon, however, turns out to be a dead-end. The company employess have never seen him; the manager receives his instructions over the phone. No address is available. There isn't even a phone number, since Harmon calls each morning regular as clockwork. However, the day after the attack on the warehouse, there will be no phone call from Harmon.

The Whitleys and their Mine

Information a couple of chapters further on will tell you what the characters are likely to be able to learn about the Whitleys, their mine, Crompton, and territories around the Whitleys' in Colorado. However—

Trouble on the Horizon

If characters are going to be staying in the big city to investigate these things, you might as well make things interesting for them. The Harmon Imports Company is in fact being used by the Condor as a drop-point for some of his minions. Thus, the Condor has a certain amount of manpower in the big city and can mount some sort of opposition to the heroes' investigations. Some recommendations:

(1) A blazing tommy-gun battle between the vehicles of the pale men and our heroes up and down some major thoroughfare;

(2) An unsuccessful kidnaping of one or more of our heroes by the pale men;

(3) A successful kidnaping of one or more of our heroes by the pale men, after which our heroes can end up being shipped to Colorado (a recommended option), or rescued (if the kidnaping victims were NPC's) by the people who weren't caught; the GM should note that any character who is captured by the Condor (such as a troublesome telepath) could be exposed to Condorite and transformed for the duration of the scenario into a pale-faced agent of the Condor himself;

(4) Any attack on our heroes by the pale men can lead to the pale men being captured. If this happens, there is a possibility that the source of their strange coloration and behavior will be discovered and an antidote developed by a medical-type player-character.

Simultaneous Plot Progression

One problem you'll encounter if some of the heroes stay in the big city to do some investigations is this difficulty: You'll either have to play one group straight through, then switch to the other, or switch between the two groups in an episodic fashion. The latter option is the preferable one, of course.

Eventually . . .

Eventually, the characters will run out of leads in the big city. If they insist on staying behind and digging further, perhaps running down all the information there is to be found on the Harmon Imports Company, evidence will eventually be turned up that will link the company to the true identity of the Condor, but the timeframe required for that information will probably take the investigating character beyond the resolution of events in Colorado (the Condor has hidden his tracks well). On the other hand, if things go badly in Colorado, and the identity of the Condor is never discovered, the Imports Company could be used as a tool of last resort to uncover the truth.

Once the leads in the big city dry up and the pale men

have been reduced in number to a manageable size, the characters will probably have to make their way to Colorado. If they've been keeping in contact with Horace Crompton, Crompton can take them with him when he departs. Otherwise, they'll have to make their own travel arrangements. The GM might want to drop a bug in their ears by letting them know that the situation at the Whitley mines is becoming desperate; the characters are needed there!

CHAPTER FOUR

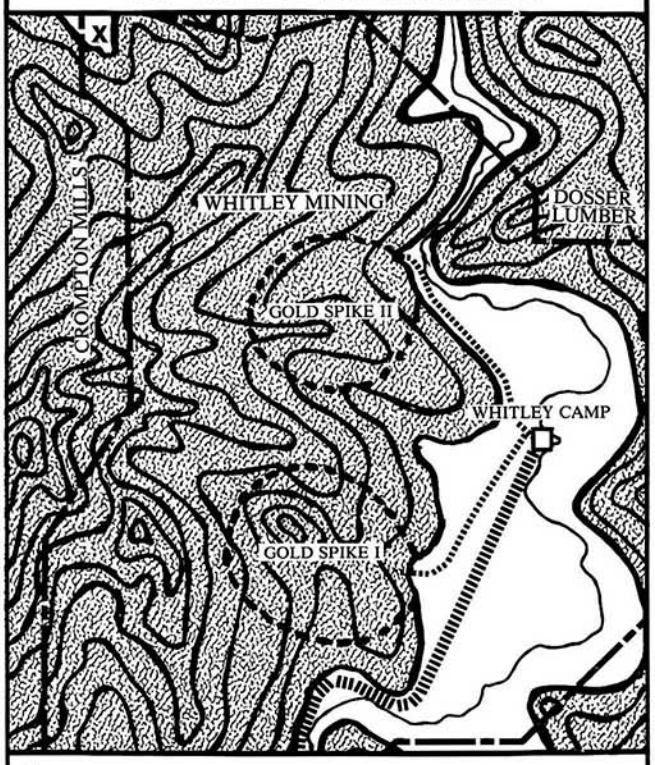
The Gold Spikes

The commercial flight from New York will end in Denver, where the Whitley pilot, Hank Millburn, is waiting with the company's small cargo plane to take the arrivals on the final leg to the camp. The camp, Beth will explain, has a small airstrip; due to the rotten quality of roads near the camp, Bethlehem's father, Angus, maintains a plane and a pilot. Millburn is a tall, reasonable-looking, rather mournful-appearing fellow. With a Perception roll, anyone will see that he's carrying a torch for Bethlehem, but she's having none of it; if she ever does decide to get married, it will be to someone more like a younger version of Horace Crompton. Millburn is an excellent flyer, and the last leg of the flight, a journey of two hours, will probably be uneventful. If the characters are flying out of New York in an aircraft of their own, they can bypass Denver altogether and fly directly to the Whitley camp, in which case they'll meet Millburn there.

Notes to the GM

This is the principal romantic complication for the adventure. If any player-character displays any romantic inclinations toward Beth—and if they're a proper hero-pulp bunch, some of them should—Hank will be there as a passive antagonist, and Crompton as an ever-present shadow coloring Beth's perception of the player-characters. This antagonism should not be overdone, but it could contribute to any suspicions the player-characters may have about Hank being the Condor if and when the possibility comes up for discussion. After all, if it could be proven that a rival were the Condor, then the path to winning the beautiful Bethlehem's heart would be that much clearer . . .

TOPOGRAPHIC MAP OF WHITLEY MINING



Key

MOUNTAIN—ELEVATION 2500 METERS
RAILROAD
RIVER
NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD
BOUNDARY LINE
1000 METERS
'x' marks the Condor's Lair.

WHITLEY MINING CAMP

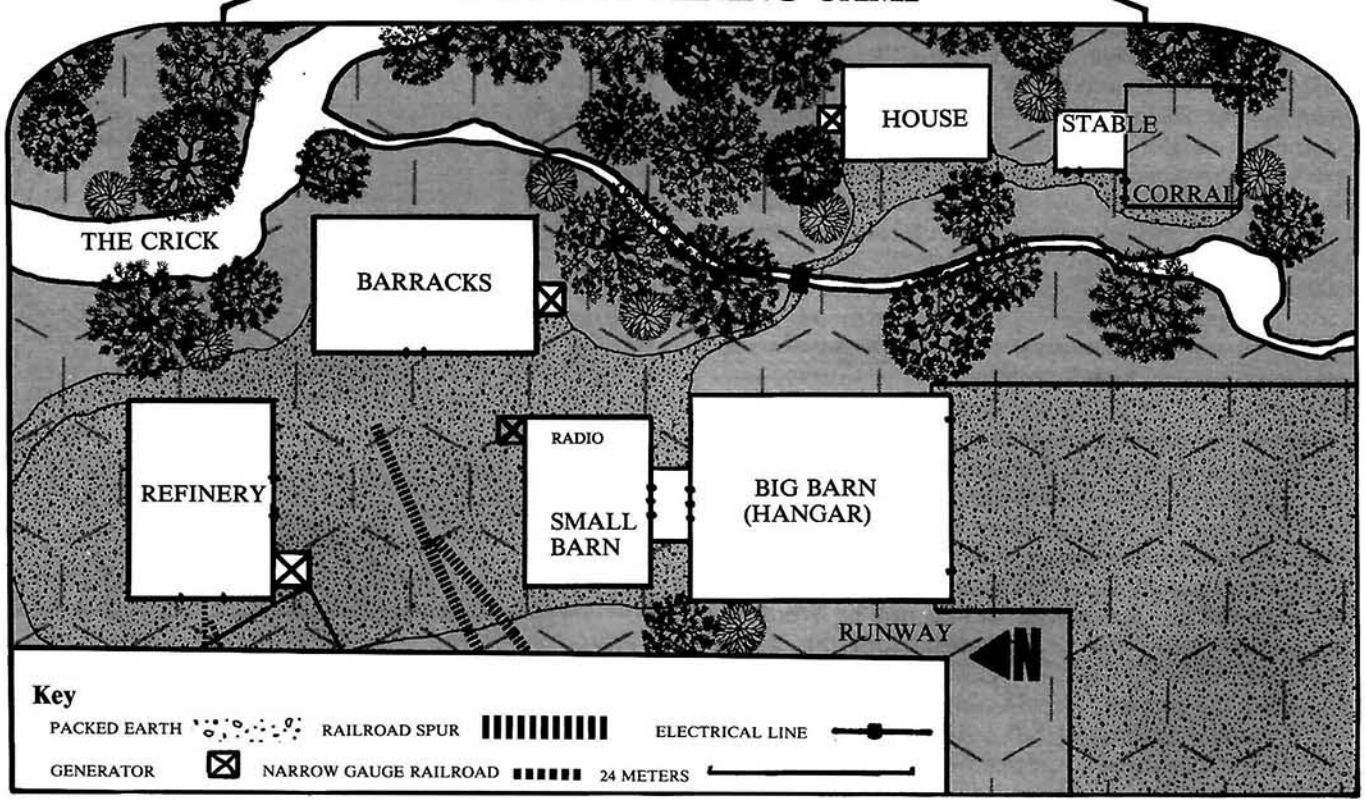
(1) *The Barns.* These are barnlike wooden buildings. The larger of the two, the Big Barn, is actually the hangar for the Whitley airplane; the hard-earth airstrip extends south from it. The Small Barn is a large storage building; cargo is offloaded from the plane in the Big Barn, then transferred to the Small Barn across the concrete slab adjoining the two. Also stored in the Big Barn, Beth says, are a couple of biplanes Hank owns. He used them when he was a flight-instructor in France, and since the trouble with the Condor started he's serviced and repaired them into decent shape and mounted a couple of Lewis guns on them.

(2) *The Refinery.* Here the mined ore is processed and separated from the gold. The small building to the right is the generator shack; the main generator is fired up ten hours a day, and power cables lead, as shown, to the main house, the Small Barn, and off to the Gold Spike I. During nighttime hours, the main house and the barracks have small gasoline-powered generators to use, if desired. Left of the refinery, a dirt road leads first to the company barracks (not shown), then to the slightly larger dirt road that services this small corner of the mountain territory. That road becomes all-but-impassable during the winter and spring due to snows and floods. West of the refinery are the railroad tracks leading to the two major shaft networks being mined: the Gold Spike I and the Gold Spike II. The left fork services the I, the right fork services the II and continues on to the genuine railroad line which runs a mere three miles from the encampment. The train lines are nearly always open. The refinery, in addition to the refining equipment and foreman's office, houses quite a number of carts, one railroad handcar, and one open-air flatbed steam engine constructed as a hobby by Hank Millburn and maintained in case of emergency.

(3) *The Main House.* This is where Bethlehem and the Whitley household live. This was the site of the log cabin built by old Taylor Whitley in '02 when he discovered gold in the valley.

(4) *The Crick.* This little creek, bearing gold from quartz deposits up the slopes a little ways, is responsible for the Whitley family fortune. It was called the "Crick" by Tennessee Taylor Whitley, and has never needed a better name. It swells up to the banks shown in springtime; in the off-months, the actual stream is half that width. A small rivulet runs off the Crick in front of the main house. It's picturesque, and provides an extra bit of distance (perceived, not real) between the workers and the Whitleys. The concrete footpaths and the footbridge crossing the rivulet are of recent construction, and are affectations of Bethlehem.

WHITLEY MINING CAMP



From Gossip

The Whitley mines are doing pretty well right now. Angus Whitley (Beth's father) seems to be plowing most of the profit back into the mine, though, so they don't have a lot of money on hand. There's supposed to be another mine, lost up in the hills on the west side of the valley, within the borders of the Whitley property. Tennessee Taylor Whitley, Angus's father, is supposed to have discovered the Gold Spike III sometime in 1910, just before he died. However, the old coot had used his brains and money so well, and bought up so much of the valley, that "on the Whitley property" covers a lot of territory, and the Gold Spike III has never been rediscovered.

From Research

The surrounding area of about three square miles is owned by Angus Whitley (this information can be learned by wiring the Denver land grants office). The Whitley Mining Company was founded in 1908 by Taylor Whitley; Angus assumed the presidency in 1910. The Gold Spike I was opened in 1902, the Gold Spike II in 1910. Whitley seems to have no significant debts and no mysterious backers. Research will indicate no important enemies working against the company. The property west of the Whitleys' is owned by the Crompton Mills; east and south by the federal government; north by another mill, the Dosser Lumber Company. Agnes Dosser, the owner of that company, has already spoken to Bethlehem and admitted to no unusual happenings. The GM should be prepared to improvise if a player-character decides to check up on Agnes Dosser himself; the lead is a dead-end, but something interesting could happen.

On landing, Bethlehem is greeted warmly by her family, though Angus has some harsh words to say to her about running off on her own like that. She will narrate in graphic detail exactly what happened to her in the big city—which should put the characters, at least temporarily, in good graces with the Whitleys. Once all the story-telling is over, the characters can get down to the serious business of meeting everyone and conducting an investigation.

What follows is a series of character descriptions of important people at the Whitley camp. Immediately after that will be a timeline of events which could or should happen, and clues which the characters may be able to acquire to head them toward the solution to the mystery.

Notes to the GM

This is a reflection of what's probably the easiest way to create an adventure for JI. First, set up the situation—in this case, a mining camp with accidents happening, strange pale men wandering around and trying to kill people, and a long-lost gold mine. Once that's set up, you can get the characters involved in the adventure, generally through a series of fairly straightforward events leading to inevitable conclusions—in this case, the conclusions being Meeting Bethlehem Whitley and Going to Colorado. Once these firmly-plotted events are concluded and the characters are where they should be, the characters should be given as much free reign as possible to do their own investigations. Your players will quickly come to realize that you'll generally have to lead them around by the nose until they get involved in the story-line. Then they can be allowed to operate at their own pace.

The stage has now been set for a thrilling adventure no true hero of the pulps could pass up. All the essential ingredients are here: the beautiful woman in distress, the sinister and mysterious plot, and the promise of financial reward.

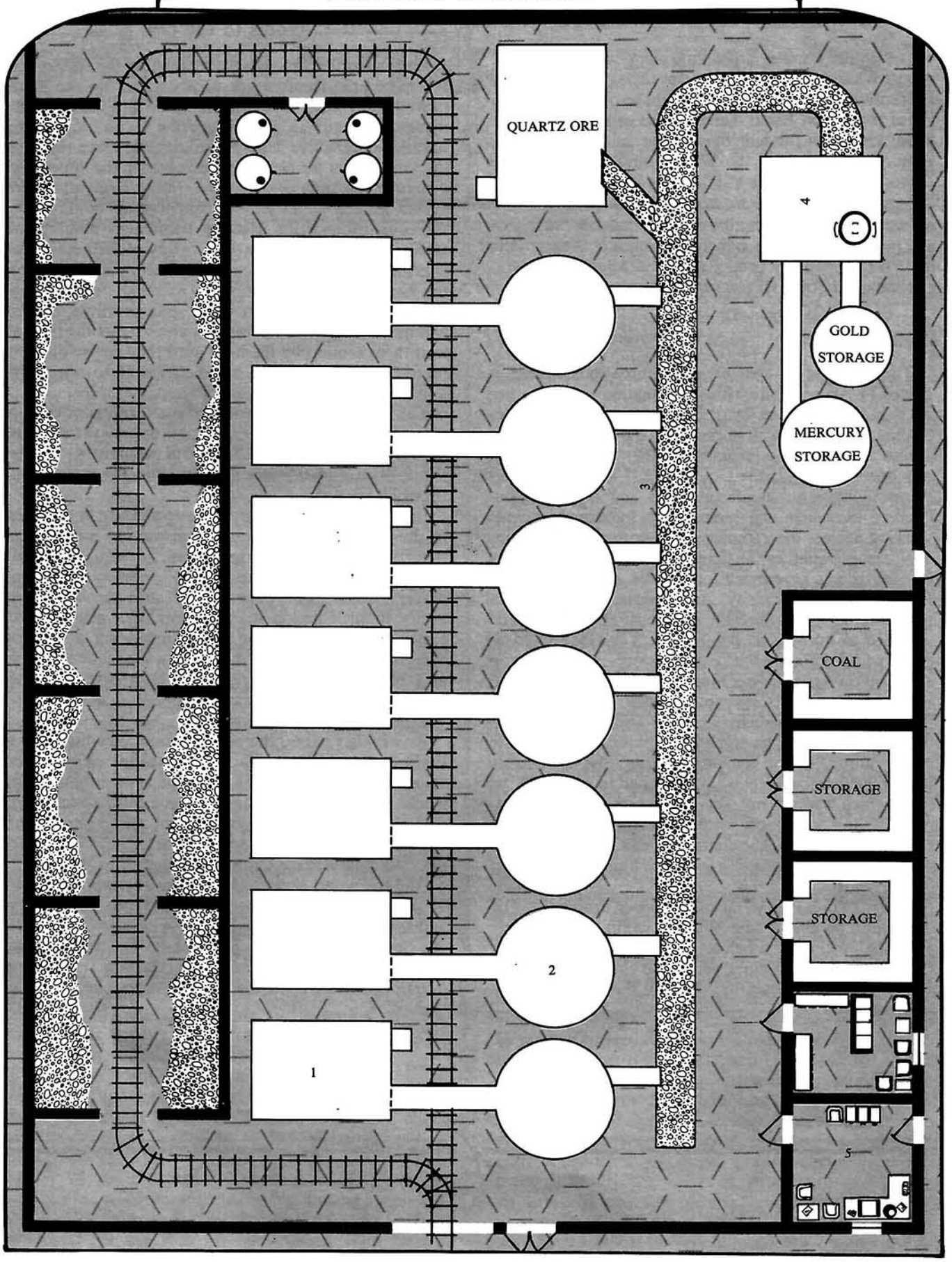
Implicitly, many questions have already been posed to the players. Indeed, there have been so *many* posed that the players may overlook some of them. If the GM feels that something important has been missed by his players, it's his job to provide them with another opportunity to pick up on it. Take this as a general rule: players should always be given first crack at finding clues and figuring things out. NPC s are made available as a plot device of last resort, to do things of consequence only when PC s have dropped the ball.

Consider these questions:

Beyond her name, the players know very little about Bethlehem Whitley; who is she, really? Why would someone shoot at her? Who was the assassin? And why would he step out so blindly into a busy street? Was there a direct connection between the assassin and Bethlehem? If not, who sent him after her? How does the esteemed Horace Crompton figure into this?

And these only scratch the surface of the possibilities. Truly devious minds will reach deeper into the mystery, and the GM would be advised to be prepared to handle any line of investigation. That cabbie, for example, did a pretty fair job of keeping the assassin from being questioned. Maybe someone ought to check up on him . . .

WHITLEY REFINERY



Refinery

The refinery is a two-story-tall building. It has only one floor, but the equipment within is tall enough to warrant the extra height. It contains all the refining equipment necessary to get the gold out of the gold-bearing ore.

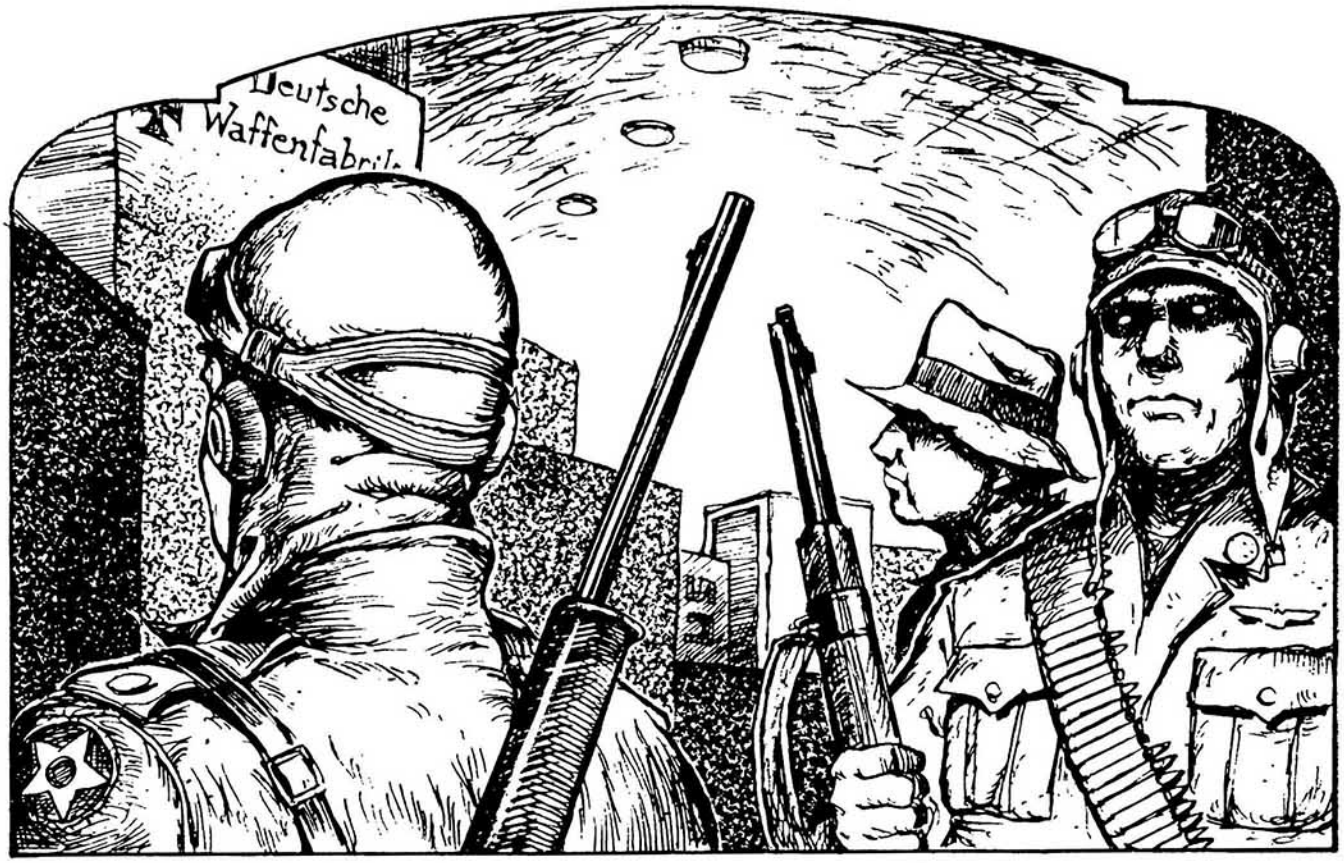
(1) This is the bank of stamp mills which grind the gold-bearing quartz into gravel to aid in the refining process. These are huge hydraulic machines which would do a vast amount of damage to anyone crawling in (or being thrown in) who gets stamped. Bulletproof vests wouldn't help against the 1D6 killing damage per segment this machine does, but suit of medieval-style metal armor might, at half its normal armor value. The bank of stamps is connected by a series of conveyor belts to:

(2) A bank of tanks used in the amalgamation process. Here the crushed ore is deposited into tanks containing mercury. The mercury amalgamates with the gold, but not the quartz, allowing for easy separation. The quartz ore is collected by railcars and deposited at an ore dump outside the Gold Spike I.

(3) This conveyor belt leads from the amalgamation tanks, carrying the gold-mercury amalgam to the furnace. It might be entertaining to have a struggle between one of our heroes and a pale-faced villain atop the conveyor belt as it rolls the two of them toward a fiery death. The conveyor rolls at a rate of 2" per segment.

(4) This is the furnace. Here, the mercury is separated by heat from the gold. Should someone be silly enough to roll through the conveyor into the furnace, he'll pay for his folly with 2D6 killing damage per segment for one full turn. A full-body suit made out of asbestos is about the only thing which would protect a character from this body damage, though not necessarily from asphyxiation.

(5) This is Abner Haley's office, from which he conducts most of his managerial duties. It contains one desk for work, a second for the shortwave radio, and tables littered with papers, gold samples, and unusual stones.



CHAPTER FIVE

Suspects and Victims

The characters described are individuals our heroes will meet and interact with at the mining camp. Each one's description is in four parts:

From Observation: This paragraph will describe what our heroes will realize about a character just from looking at and talking to him.

From Gossip: These facts will be learned from talking to the character a little more extensively, or from gossiping about the character with someone who knows the character. In dealing with gossip, use common sense; it's not likely that one of the miners would have first-hand knowledge that Mrs. Whitley is a marvelous cook, but anyone living in the main house would.

From Research: These facts are difficult to learn and will not fall into a character's lap as an Observed or Gossiped fact can. A character finds out a Research fact by talking to someone who would know it. Researching Millburn's Air Corps record, for example, would entail wiring the Air Corps and presenting them with a good reason they should release the information. In other words, if a character were to ask you, "Does this Myatt fellow have a police record?" you ask him in turn, "How do you propose to find out?" Let him figure out who to contact and how to make the contact. Point out to him that he's spending time on this research, so he shouldn't spend it gathering information that probably won't be useful.

Bethlehem Whitley

From Observation: She's a real peach, red-headed, blue-eyed, about 5'4". She moves gracefully and quietly. When she gets back to Colorado, she dresses in practical boots, Levis, and heavy lumberjack-type shirts, plus a large leather shoulder pouch instead of a purse.

From Gossip: She's 20, unattached in spite of Hank Millburn's best efforts, and very intelligent. She seems to know her business when it comes to mining, and is very good at administering Whitley employees' time. She seems a natural to take over the company when her father retires. Due to her maternal grandfather's stories, she's fascinated with the history of the railroads in the 1800's. According to a popular saying around the camp, she also "rides like an Apache, hits like a hammer, and shoots like a soldier"—all of which is quite true.

From Research: Not much to find. If acquired, her birth certificate will indicate she was born twenty years ago in the main house, delivered by her grandmother. She apparently suffered through ten years of school before quitting in disgust and returning to the family business four years ago.

Notes: She is extremely impulsive, and careless about throwing herself into dangerous situations. She carries in her shoulder pouch a 1912 Mauser pistol given to her by Hank.

Angus Whitley

From Observation: Whitley is a thickset, robust-looking man confined to a wheelchair. He scowls intimidatingly and doesn't seem to be a very humorous individual. His daughter's presence seems to keep him from being too contrary.

From Gossip: Angus suffered a nasty accident about ten years ago; his back was broken when a heavy-laden ore cart hit some rubble on a track, hopped a rail, and fell over on him. He's never entirely recovered emotionally from the incident; he stays in the main house, away from the refinery, and always chafes at being limited to the wheelchair. He's the company's main accountant, but day-to-day operations have now been given over to Bethlehem and foreman Abner Haley. Rumor has it that he was wild as a young'un, supporting himself at various times as a heavyweight boxer, a railroad security man (at which job he met his wife), and professional gambler before returning to the valley upon his father's death in 1910.

From Research: Any records obtainable will corroborate the dates noted above. Stringent research on his background will reveal that he killed two men in a San Francisco barroom brawl in 1909, in self-defense. The fact is apparently not known around the Whitley household.

Notes: Angus is quick-tempered and irascible except when around Bethlehem or his wife. He keeps two .30-06 Springfield rifles in his house, one in his office, one in a locked cabinet by the front door; he's good with them.

Hank Millburn

From Observation: Hank seems to be the archetypal Iowa farmboy, complete with a gangling body, corn-straw hair, and freckles. He's too obviously carrying a torch for Bethlehem; any comments of admiration for the girl made in his presence will irritate him profoundly. He also seems to be a hard-luck kid; nothing much seems to go right for him.

From Gossip: It turns out he's not quite the farmboy he seems, though. He was, once, but he's older than he looks—about thirty-five. In 1916 he left for England

and ended up flying with the British. He's a crackerjack pilot who shot down four German planes, he was a flight instructor in France after the War, and he's a jim-dandy mechanic to boot. Also, poor little Ann Woode seems *so* taken with him, but the big lug has eyes only for Beth . . .

From Research: Henry Millburn seems to have been born in Indiana in 1899, and managed successfully to lie about his age to join the RFC. He was married once, in 1918, to a young Frenchwoman, and returned to the U.S. upon her death in 1920—a fact which does not seem to be known around the camp. He's been working for the Whitleys for four years.

Notes: He's a little withdrawn, and will be polite but not friendly toward any males among the player-characters whom Bethlehem might consider attractive. Due to the recent weird events around camp, he carries a holstered firearm, a Colt 1911 automatic pistol.

Jake Myatt

From Observation: Myatt is a lean, hard-looking man, civil but pretty cold in personality. He speaks slowly, moves slowly, and the miners don't cross him.

From Gossip: Jake is May Myatt Whitley's brother, and is Uncle Jake to Bethlehem. He doesn't do much around the camp, but whenever there's a problem Angus sends Jake in to straighten it out. Evidently, Jake can turn on the charm when he needs to, and when a problem requires him to be hard-boiled he does that pretty well, too. Jake flew with the Army in the Great War, and rumor has it that his experiences changed him from an easy-going individual into the icy man he is now. He doesn't talk about the Army, ever.

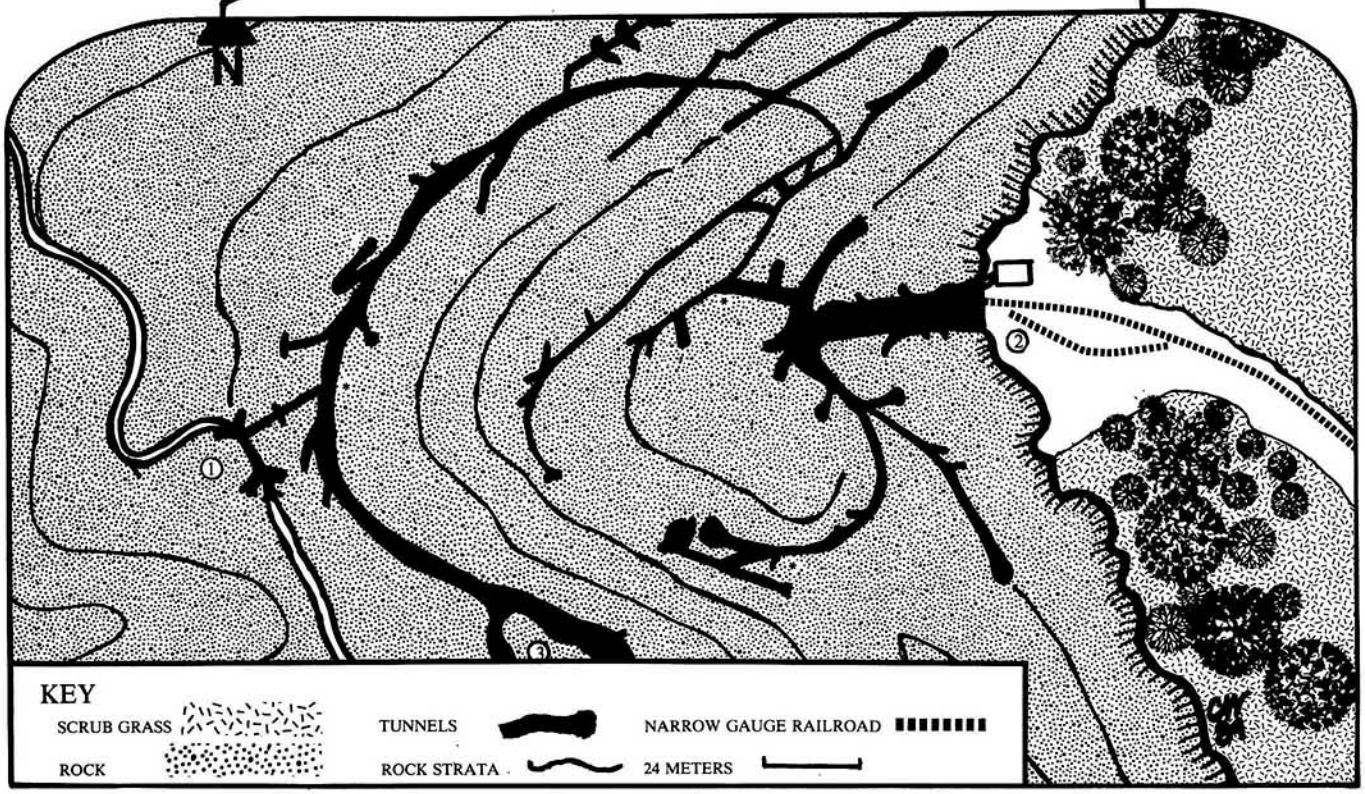
From Research: You can confirm his Army hitch, from 1915-1918. Evidently, from 1918 to about 1925 he worked as an administrator in a London hospital, then returned to the States to join his brother-in-law's company.

Notes: Jake carries no weapons. He can use most any firearm on the site, though, and he knows where Angus keeps his Springfields.

Horace M. Crompton

Horace M. Crompton is a tall, lean man entering middle age. He is inordinately gracious to Bethlehem, and very polite to the player characters. Characters who belong to the Empire Club should know that Crompton was a distinguished infantry captain in the Great War, and was admitted into the club on the strength of that plus the many adventures he had while assembling his collection of businesses in the States. Crompton has a good reputation and impeccable credentials—which should immediately make him suspect in the minds of players who have a tendency to be perverse. If more is needed to round out Crompton's character, the GM should make it obvious to the players that Crompton knows Bethlehem and is interested in her, and that she in turn is flattered by this, though she probably considers him too old for any serious consideration as a

THE GOLD SPIKE II



potential suitor. Crompton will stress that his mills have, as far as he knows, had no strange incidents, but that he will prepare his staff, just in case, when he returns to Colorado later this week. He will not insult his vistors' intelligence by suggesting that the problem is actually a series of unrelated accidents and desertions.

Those are the primary personalities around the camp. Other notables include Abner Haley, the loud, beefy, friendly (when he's not on the job) foreman of the miners; May Myatt Whitley, Bethlehem's mother, diminutive, quiet, and strong-willed; Ida Myatt, widowed mother of May and Jake, who's getting old but is still determined to be "of use around the house"; and Ann Woode, a pretty, dark-haired young woman hired to act as maid to the main house and as a nurse, when necessary, to Ida or Angus. Typically, Ann is enamored of Hank Millburn, but he has his eyes set on Bethlehem.

Following below is a series of events which can take place over the next several days at the mining encampment. With some exceptions, you can pick and choose which events you wish to game in the course of the adventure; enough are presented to provide you with several "chapters" for your gaming novel.

THE GOLD SPIKE II

This map indicates the pattern of mine tunnels closest to the surface, say within 200' of ground level. Wherever a "*" is marked on the map, you'll find a shaft leading down into the lower levels. The indicated areas of the Gold Spike II lie under the same tallish hill which also houses the Condor's lair; planes landing within the lair can make their approach out of sight of the mine by virtue of the hilltop.

The mine has railway tracks leading all through it, and is lit by electric lights powered by the main camp generator.

(1) This is the point at which the new Gold Spike II tunnel intersects the dry underground river tunnel leading to the Condor's lair. The sharpest bend in the tunnel indicates the intersection.

(2) This is the adit, or entrance tunnel, to the Gold Spike II. Immediately north of the adit is the pumphouse, where the pumping equipment is kept; lower levels of the mine have to be regularly pumped dry of accumulating water, which is a nuisance (and sometimes danger) common to most deep mines. Just south of the adit is the pole bearing the power cable from the generator house.

(3) This may be a point of interest on Abner's tour of the mines: This is one of the richer tunnels, and has been widened out to the width of the gold vein here. The integrity of the tunnel is maintained by square-set timbering, a series of cube-shaped wooden affairs which can be stacked upon one another or set side-by-side to keep the tunnel walls and ceiling from collapsing.

(1) If the characters wish to follow up on the pale-faced man who attacked Bethlehem, they may radio Denver and ask the Denver authorities to contact the New York police with a request for information. If the player-characters don't want to do it, or don't remember to do it, Bethlehem will radio the Denver authorities herself. They'll get back some pretty strange stuff: Her assailant must have stolen the ring he was wearing, because its owner died a year ago. The ring was owned by Andrew B. Finster, a University of Colorado student who hailed from Millston, a small settlement less than fifty miles from the Whitley encampment. The coroner's report will show that Finster died of a weak heart.

(2) Also soon after Beth's return, Angus will tell her in the presence of the player-characters that three miners ran off last night. Rumor has it that they saw some pretty weird things outside the barracks window. One of them owned a car, and they drove off at first light this morning. Later that day, the three will return, still looking pale and frightened, but they'll apologize to Bethlehem in the presence of the player-characters for losing their nerve, and return to work. Asked about what they saw to spook them, they'll say there were faces outside the window—spooky, pale faces. These miners appear to be mistrustful of outsiders, and will be polite but fairly uncommunicative and humorless.

(3) Should a character wish to be taken on a tour of the mines, the miners will oblige. Foreman Abner Haley will conduct the tour. The Whitley mines are a network of inclined shafts burrowing into the hillsides just west of the encampment. They're mined in traditional fashion, with explosives and picks, with the gold-bearing ore loaded into small railcars and pushed to the refinery building. Abner will show the character all facets of the mine, from the better-producing shafts to the old shafts that haven't been used since '08. And, if Abner is showing some but not all of the characters the underground sights, an attempt will be made on their lives: As they're touring the distant and abandoned shafts, a stealthy hand will plant several sticks of dynamite on one of the support beams and light the fuse, stealthy feet will patter away, and—boom!—our heroes will be trapped underground to die of suffocation. The explosion is a 12D6 normal energy explosion (thus, the characters had better hope they're more than 12" away so they won't suffer any direct effects from the blast). The explosion will collapse a three-hex length of mine (about twenty feet), and the characters on the wrong side of the cave-in will have only a few hours' supply of air to sustain them.

The GM should therefore subtly guide one or two other characters into some other area of investigation while the tour of the mines is being conducted, thus giving those characters an opportunity some time later to wonder where their friends are. Someone surely saw them going into the mines a few hours ago, and a search party can be initiated, with half of our heroes searching for the other half as the air inside becomes fouler and their modern helmet-lights grow dimmer. . . . Inevitably, the cave-in will be found and digging operations will commence at the rate of one foot per rescuer per hour, with six people being able to work on the debris at any given time. Thus, if there's a large party of rescuers, the victims can be dug out in about three hours. The GM can time the victims' air supply any way he sees fit—have the rescuers find the victims in good condition, or barely conscious, or unconscious—regardless, our heroes will probably feel more personally involved in the case than before.

If you don't want the trapped characters to sit around twiddling their thumbs waiting for a rescue, it couldn't hurt the story-line to have one of the victims pinned beneath a fallen beam. This is a stock genre event which will add some color to the incident and provide the characters inside with a chance to practice their First Aid skills on the injured person.

At any rate, once the rescue has been accomplished, or even as it's being accomplished, a very good Tracking roll (at -1, or at -3 if the area in front of the cave-in has been trampled by rescuing miners) will allow a character to discover the boot-prints of the dynamiter; he's wearing size 9's, but the boots match the type used in this camp, and about a third of the miners wear shoes close to that size.

(4) Any characters who want to (let them come up with the idea; don't suggest it) may borrow the company pickup and drive over to Millston to investigate the young man who died. The drive there takes a couple of hours, the drive back the same, and the investigation should require a couple. If it can be contrived, this is a good place for the other characters to be during the tour of the mines. In Millston, they'll probably want to speak with T. D. Baxter, the coroner hereabouts. Baxter is a weedy, unamused little fellow who looks as if he were grown in a cellar with mushrooms. Yes, he says, he remembers the Finster boy; a shame. Yes, the boy really did have a bad heart. No, an autopsy wasn't necessary; d'you think this is the big city? Natural causes, no autopsy. Buried? He's buried over in the church cemetery. Picture? You want to see a picture of him, ask his folks. Yes, the Finsters. (If asked:) Exhume the body? No. Why? What are askin' all these questions for? Let's see a court order, then maybe we'll think about exhumin' the body. . . .

The boy's folks, Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Finster, will be (wearily) willing to discuss their son's death if the characters mention the fact that his ring turned up on a would-be murderer in the big city. The boy did have a bad heart; just dropped dead one day choppin' a little wood. Ring? That was an expensive school ring, real gold. He was buried with it, they think. Seems to them that he'd gained some weight in the months before his death, and couldn't get the ring off. Picture? Of course. They'll show our heroes a photograph of a beefier look-alike of the man who tried to kill Bethlehem. The Finsters won't believe that he may have performed the murder attempt, naturally, since he's dead. And even were he alive he'd never do anything like that. If asked, they won't cooperate in getting an exhumation order, either.

In fact, to get such an order, our characters will either have to wait several days, until such time as the authorities seem to realize that the assassin bore a remarkable

resemblance to Finster, or have some strings to pull. If a player-character was created to be a friend of the police—if he has a policeman as a friend or a dependent NPC, or perhaps *is* a policeman himself—he may be able to get an order more quickly. If such an order does eventually come through, or if the characters decide to dig up the body illegally (which is an opportunity for the GM to add some mood and mystery to the scenario), they'll—surprise, surprise—find it empty. But that shouldn't happen right away; even assuming that one of the characters does have political pull, it still couldn't happen before late the day after arrival, and if the authorities have to think of doing it themselves, it's going to be days down the line.

(5) Other events through the course of the day can happen as the characters trigger them. Bethlehem would be delighted to show them all over the camp and the house. Hank will be willing to take the characters aloft in one of the company planes to show them an aerial view of the whole Whitley property, but will not yet be willing to take them for a tour over adjoining properties unless there's already been an overt attack on the Whitley camp by its enemies. He won't fly over neighboring properties simply because he considers it rude. If such an attack has occurred, Hank *will* fly over the adjacent properties, beginning with the property to the north, and moving clockwise. For accommodations, the characters will be given guest rooms in the main house, two guests to a room; if there's an odd number of female guests, the odd one out can room with Bethlehem. Even if asked, Angus won't let the characters look at his books (it would be crass, in fact, to ask in the first place); but everyone seems to think the company is in pretty good shape. If a character wants to spend some harrowing moments sneaking down into Angus's study to satisfy his own curiosity, he'll have to find the safe where the books are kept (a sight Perception roll modified by any appropriate Concealment roll). If he locates the safe behind a Remington painting on the wall over the desk, cracking the safe will take a Lockpicking roll. Understanding what's in the books will take a knowledge of finance (i.e. Professional Skill: Accounting, or Professional Skill: Business Management). And if a character succeeds in all this, and doesn't get caught in the act, he'll learn that the general opinion is right: the Whitley Mining Company is in fine shape financially.

(6) At night, there should be at least one eerie scene in which a character rooming in the ground-floor guest room wakes up in the wee hours and sees a pale-faced man walking outside in the moonlight just on the other side of the little stream. If our hero goes out the front door to follow, or goes upstairs to awaken anyone he'll lose sight of the pale man. A roommate, however, if there is one, can be awakened without losing anything. If our hero goes out the window to keep the mysterious fellow in sight, or successfully uses Tracking skill to follow him, he'll ultimately be able to follow him to the mouth of the Gold Spike II, but will probably lose him in the mine. This should be played a creepily as possible, all in moonlight and silence, with the noiseless pale-faced man moving and looking like something more dead than alive. His prints will be size 9

miner's boots, but he isn't one of the miners currently working the mine.

Alternatively, once the characters have followed the pale man into the mine, you can have them ambushed by an entire party of pale men. There will be about three pale men for every player-character, each armed with .45 automatics. One pale man can carry one of the sleep-gas bombs described elsewhere. The purpose of this engagement is not to get the characters captured or killed (though this could happen), but to lead them into an encounter they aren't yet prepared to handle. A moonlight fight in a darkened mine with several pale-faced men under circumstances in which the characters are getting sleepier and sleepier is a losing proposition.

Keeping sight of the pale-faced man while walking across the camp is a difficult task. First, the characters are at a -2 sight Perception roll because it's dark. Additionally, the pale man has Stealth on a 12 or less, so each time he makes his roll it's considerably harder to spot him; the number by which he makes his Stealth roll is a negative modifier to the characters' visual Perception rolls. If the characters are so good that even this isn't enough to slow them down, it could start snowing, for an additional -2. The net result will be that the character(s) will catch a fleeting glimpse of the man, then lose him, then fan out to catch sight of him again, then lose him again, and so on. It should make for a nice, tense scene.

(7) The next day, two more miners will be missing, having run off sometime during the night. Neither of them could have been the pale-faced man; the descriptions don't match. The rumor is that they, too, saw the pale-faced man and decided to leave. Who can blame them? These miners don't come back. Conversation rolls with the other miners can reveal that these two lived in Boulder, and may have returned there. If anyone checks up on it, that's in fact what they've done. This scene is no more than it appears to be, but it does serve to comment on the declining morale among the miners, and can be used by the GM to provide the players with a red herring to folllow.

(8) Another transmission is picked up on the office wireless while the characters are present. If they're not likely to be in the refinery office at any given time, have the message come in while they're walking nearby, and have Abner yell to them to come in and listen. The message: "The Condor granted you time to leave, but instead you've brought in help to try to thwart me. You'll suffer the consequences of that decision. Leave before sundown, or else. This is your final warning!" A successful Radio Operator roll will allow whoever makes it to realize that the signal was weak and very close by, probably coming from somewhere in the valley itself, or in nearby hills. The voice is not recognizable; it's slow and sounds hollow, almost metallic.

(9) Horace Crompton arrives at the mining company in his company plane, which then flies back to his mill, possibly bringing with him any player-characters who had previously chosen to stay in New York. He explains that he was able to distribute his week's workload among his subordinates and return to Colorado even earlier than he'd planned, so that he might be with Bethlehem's family in their time of need. Crompton seems to be determined to help the Whitleys unravel the mystery of the Condor, and he's intelligent, personable, and interested in Beth. Angus will be pleased to see him, even if the player-characters are not, and will welcome him wholeheartedly.

(10) If the information hasn't been picked up on already, a successful Deduction roll or Conversation roll made while questioning Abner the foreman will reveal that one of the first effects of all this Condor scare was that digging in the new shafts in the Gold Spike II was stopped by Bethlehem at Jake's recommendation. This clue can be brought up at just about any time, but should not be waved under the players' noses. If they really behave as detective-type characters should, they'll stumble across it.

(11) The first concrete evidence that the Condor actually exists should occur sometime that day, just before twilight. A steady hum will sound from the north, and within moments of that, player-characters will be able to detect eight dots in the northern sky—biplanes. If anyone has a telescope or binoculars, or if the characters wait until the planes are close enough to look them over, anyone with any knowledge of the Army Air Corps or airplanes will identify them as Boeing PW9's, single-seater biplanes currently in use by the AAC. But these have been painted a dark blue, and have white wing-insignia painted where U.S. markings would normally go. The pilots, when they can be seen, are in blue uniforms with the white-wing motif, and their faces under the aviator helmets are pale. One plane circles off at a safe distance. A telescope or binoculars trained on its pilot will reveal him to be uniformed like the rest, but wearing a full face-mask with a slit for the mouth, and white wings on his forehead above his goggles. Important plot note: Jake Myatt, Hank Millburn, and Horace Crompton should not be around during this event.

These planes intend to strafe the camp—to shoot up the generator, refinery, main house, big barn, small barn, everything. They intend to make three strafing passes, then wheel off an head north—about two minutes' worth of mayhem. However, if the characters want to take Hank's two biplanes aloft, they can engage in a dogfight—always a crowd-pleaser with player-characters. If our heroes are shot down, too bad; the strafing will be accomplished as noted above. If our heroes shoot down four or more of the attacking planes, the rest will wheel off and fly north. If our heroes' planes are capable of following, the plane which was circling off at a distance will continue on; the surviving attackers will engage the player-characters even unto death to give their leader time to get away. If our heroes are shot down at this point, any surviving enemy pilots will wheel off and head north, too, without even taking the opportunity to strafe their downed opponents.

Probable repercussions of the attack: The main generator will be wrecked, requiring hours of repair to become operational again. The radio in the refinery office will have taken a hit and be damaged but fairly easily repaired—it'll take a couple of hours. Jake Myatt will wander out of the Gold Spike II in plain sight of

several miners, apparently unaware that an attack took place. Horace Crompton will show up out of the woods, claiming to have gone for cover in the trees, staying there until things were safe. A couple of hours later, Hank Millburn will stagger in out of the woods with what looks like a bullet wound—a graze across his forehead—and say that he was hit by fire from one of the planes and knocked unconscious. Angus Whitley will be furious, and the player-characters may see in him a bit of the man who killed two brawlers in the barfight in San Francisco. Now that he has definite proof of the Condor's existence, he will decide, rather perversely, that he doesn't want the authorities involved. He can be overruled by the player-characters, since they can radio the authorities themselves once the radio's repaired, but he'll present a convincing case that they need to find out what the Condor game is before the authorities can come blundering into it to mess things up. Further, the GM should stress to the players that this is *their* adventure, not the police's, and that police simply weren't that big a part of hero-pulp adventures.

If the player-characters *did* manage to shoot down one of the planes, a close look at the paint job will reveal it to be a repainted Army plane, and the characters may be able to find its registration numbers. Investigation of those numbers—assuming that a character has some military connections willing to help—will reveal that a couple of years ago an entire squadron of twelve PW9's disappeared from a Los Angeles-area base. The planes lifted off for a routine training run and were never seen again. This plane was one of them. If the pilot was taken, he will be indentified as one of the missing pilots. If captured alive, he will be pale, silent, eerie, and alarmingly resistant to hypnosis and interrogation techniques.

Notes to the GM

What we've done here is to provide a certain number of events which can move the story toward the facts behind the mystery. The only events which really must be played out are 1, 2, 9, and 11. You *should* game out all the ones the player-characters stumble into, and the ones which appeal to you and will move the plot along to your satisfaction. Any other appropriate events and activities which occur to you and which you wish to include are also fine. The important thing with this transitional stage of the adventure is for the plot to progress, for the mystery to deepen, and for the characters to have a good hero-pulp time.

CHAPTER SIX

The Condor Moves In

Here are some facts to use if the characters investigate in peculiar areas:

A medical doctor in the party of player-characters has a chance of noticing what's wrong with the captured pilot if one was captured, or if by some wild chance the assassin in New York was. Hours and hours and successful Professional Skill: Medicine rolls (with Hypnosis and Chemistry as complementary rolls) will reveal that the man has had intensive hypnotic treatment, and that peculiarities in his physical condition—paleness, difficulty in thinking, and absolute obedience to the Condor's orders, among others—result from the use of some depressant drug. Should our medical player-character choose to segregate himself from his fellows for hours and hours, he may be able to concoct an antidote; he'll need to roll his Science: Chemistry skill, modified by the complementary Professional Skill: Medicine roll. If he has no skill with Medicine, a Science: Chemistry roll at -3 may be appropriate, or an Inventor skill, or whatever the GM decides.

Should a player-character investigate the new branch of the Gold Spike II, the one that was closed by Beth and Jake when the troubles started, he has a chance of finding something odd. If it's late in the story, i.e. after the Condor's strafing attack on the camp, he'll find a gust of wind toward the end of the new tunnel. The gust will lead him to an overhead natural shaft which looks like part of an underground stream. If he follows it up into the hill, he should be captured by the Condor's minions and held in the Condor's lair. If he manages to

THE WHITLEY HOUSE

escape, he can lead the rest of the characters to the climax of the story. If the story is not far along, and the character's disappearance would complicate things unnecessarily, distract him: as he's moving toward the end of the tunnel, he hears footsteps behind him, and he and one or more pale men will spot each other at the same time. The pale men will turn and run in an effort to lead the character away from the entrance to their lair. You should be able after this to accelerate the plot to a reasonable point by the time the characters next wish to investigate the shaft.

Should any characters wish to take an aerial reconnaissance of the Whitley valley and surrounding territories, he may. If he can't fly a plane himself, Millburn will now oblige. The most thorough of reconnaissances will turn up no landing strips in the vicinity except those servicing the surrounding companies, and those strips don't have the facilities to service a dozen biplanes. If

THE WHITLEY HOUSE

(1) The front door opens onto a small hallway. Ahead through a doorway is (2), living room. Left is the main staircase upstairs; under this staircase, through a little door, is the staircase to the basement. To the rear of the house along this same hallway is a secondary staircase which on the second floor leads up to the attic.

(2) The living room is characterized by lots of large, sturdy wooden furniture and a homey atmosphere. There's a fireplace on the outside wall, and doorways lead into both the dining room (3) and the kitchen (4).

(3) The dining room has one table with room for about twelve and an appropriate number of chairs. Doors lead into the living room and the kitchen (4).

(4) The kitchen has a large wood-burning stove (the flue leads outside), pantries, two large tables, and an icebox. Usually it also contains May Myatt Whitley as well.

(5) This is Ann Woode's bedroom, pastel and frilly, containing one armoire, a bed, two small tables, a bookcase, and a small cabinet containing first aid supplies—alcohol, bandages, etc.

(6) The bathroom—yes, due to May's insistence the Whitleys have the conveniences of modern plumbing—features one toilet and a bath, which has actual hot water pumped up from the basement boiler and watertank.

(7) The guest bedroom is spartanly furnished with two beds, a table, and two chairs. It commands a good view of places pale men like to walk across in the eerie hours of the night.

(8) Angus's study/office is a small, cramped little room with one desk, filing cabinets, a table, and his one artistic affectation: a genuine Remington painting on the wall over the desk.

(9) Bethlehem's bedroom is a little less delicate than Ann's—it features a bed (or two, if one of the player-characters is rooming with her), an armoire, a couple of bookcases filled with dime novels and railroading paraphernalia, and a Confederate flag (a genuine article inherited from her grandfather) on one wall.

(10) Ida's bedroom is a smaller, cozy room which looks as though it were decorated by a Victorian Englishman—bed, small tables, one large chair, throw rugs, and bric-a-brac everywhere.

(11) The upstairs landing is spacious and features two sofas and a few chairs—it serves as a secondary living area or an emergency bedroom if there is a surplus of guests.

(12) Jake's bedroom, as you might expect, is spartan; he evidently goes in neither for souvenirs nor reading material.

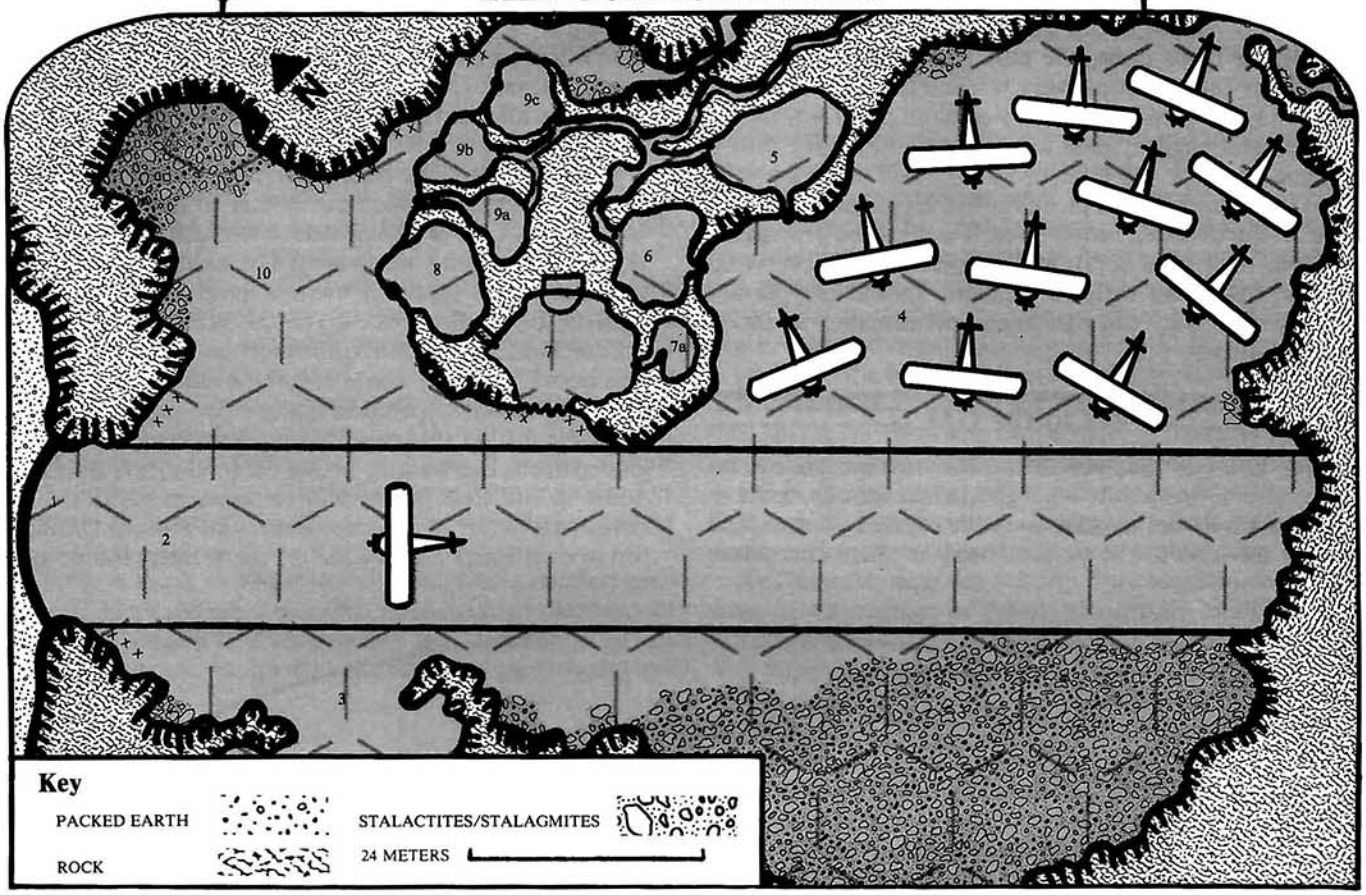
(13) The master bedroom, Angus's and May's, features more her tastes than his, containing as it does lots of throw-rugs and nice oak furniture. It's a reflection of Angus's stubbornness that he didn't opt to move to a downstairs bedroom after his accident; instead, he tenaciously decided to keep on in the master bedroom, and either Hank or Jake must help him up the stairs once per day.

(14) Hank's bedroom is also fairly bare, but does have one bookcase crammed with volumes—books on aeronautics, geography, the Great War, mining, biographies of aces, history, and other topics; about half of the books are in French. A peek through his Bible will reveal a picture of an elfin, pretty dark-haired girl who was his wife in France.

(15) The attic is used only for storage, containing trunks, boxes, crates, and other containers of stuff from the past. Some of the trunks belonged to Tennessee Taylor Whitley, and one will contain his diaries. Also in the attic will be railroading journals kept by Ida's deceased husband John, trunks full of clothes from the 1870's (a little moldy but picturesque), furniture not normally used, etc., none of which has any application to the adventure, but which adds some color.

(16) The basement is mostly empty these days. In years past, Angus kept his office down here, but since the accident that became impractical; he simply walled off a section of the living room and moved his office there. Now in the attic are only the boiler, a largish water tank and pump, a small generator, and the coal-bin.

THE CONDOR'S LAIR



you wish to spice up the reconnaissance flight, have the plane attacked by another of the Boeings—one which appears out of nowhere and attacks directly, as though sent specifically to shoot down our heroes.

Should the characters do intensive investigations into old Taylor Whitley's papers, which are kept in a trunk in the attic, they'll find that he was a semiliterate man who nevertheless kept a diary from 1888 to his death in 1910. Intensive reading of the diaries 1908-1910 will reveal his search for a new vein for the company to mine, plus evidence of his own worsening mental condition—a combination of senility and the onslaught of gold-miner's paranoia. The impression gained from the diaries, however, will be that his last few months were spent searching the near hills almost on the border to the "Tyrell property." A quick questioning of Angus or Ida will indicate that this is the property to the west, now owned by the Crompton Mills.

Should medical characters have noticed a similarity between the assassin and the downed Condor pilot (assuming there is one) or the miners who ran away but came back, pale and tight-lipped, and should this medical character make a successful roll on Professional Skill: Doctor to confirm his suspicions, he will find that those miners are indeed suffering the same malady as the assassin and pilot—they're drugged minions of the Condor, now. However, if the plot is sufficiently advanced that the characters need to be heading toward the climax anyway, this discovery will propel the heroes into the next event below. Similar suspicions about *gasp* Jake Myatt will yield similar results, also propelling the heroes toward the climax if the GM believes the scenario to be sufficiently advanced.

The next item on the Condor's agenda is the capture of everyone in the Whitley camp. During the night, thirty or so of the pale-faced men will surround the camp and the exits from the place. Any heroes out walking late at night will be attacked if they're alone, or even if they're not alone if they try to leave the camp. Naturally, this is done as stealthily as possible, for the real attack is not to take place until later.

In the hours before dawn, the pale-faced men will quietly and effectively start kidnaping people. First, anyone isolated (Abner working in his office, anyone walking around at night, anyone guarding the plane or generator shack, etc.), then larger groups. The pale men kidnap people by the simple expedient of five or six of them stealthily walking within easy shooting range, pointing their guns, and announcing that the victim should surrender quietly or be killed. If you suspect that player-characters may not be kidnapable by these means, or if you just want to simplify your life, give each pale man a sleep-gas bomb from the Condor's armory. Each such bomb does 3D6 of no-defense Stun-only damage every segment, for a total of four segments per character. The gas is invisible and undetectable; holding your breath allows you to escape the effects, and the pale men all know how to hold their breaths when releasing the gas. This is a good way to kidnap all the people sleeping in the barracks and the main house;

simply by placing a few gas bombs near air vents and inside the front door, the pale men can render whole buildings full of people very unconscious.

At any rate, each victim is tied hand and foot, blindfolded and gagged, then carried off and loaded into a wagon or truck. As time progresses and everyone outside the main house is picked off, the pale men will surround the dwelling, enter even if it's locked (for some reason, they have keys), and proceed to grab everyone inside, beginning with the women. Should the player-characters resist, the pale men will threaten to shoot their hostages.

Notes to the GM

It's obvious that you intend for most everyone to be kidnaped at this point. It's a good idea, though, to have one or two heroes manage to evade capture—a standard ace-in-the-hole in the pulps. If any medical characters have managed to boil up a batch of antidote to the pale men's drug, it couldn't hurt for the doctor to have a couple of bottles of the stuff on him. Naturally, the heroes will have all but the best-concealed weapons removed from them.

Once captured, the heroes will be trundled off on the wagons in some direction or another (if any uncaptured hero follows, or if a character has Bump of Direction skill, he'll know it's westward). The unlikely caravan of pale men and captured victims heads into the hilly regions for a mile or so, up to the Whitley/Crompton border, and across into Crompton land, then the procession will roll into a cave mouth normally hidden by a painted sheet-metal boulder facade (see the map of the Condor's lair on this page). The characters will be off-loaded from the wagons in the Main Gallery, dragged down to the Cell Block, and tossed into various cell-caves (the player-characters, Beth, and Horace Crompton in one, Hank and the rest of the Whitley household

Condor's Lair

On page 21 is the map to the lair of the nefarious Condor. The overall complex is lit by electricity coming from a generator in the "hangar" area; fresh air comes in from numerous natural fissures and tunnels in the complex. The map depicts only one small section of the cavern complex (who knows what those tunnels could lead to in subsequent adventures? An underground lake, horrors of the elder gods, the center of the Earth . . .).

The elements of the lair:

(1) This is the entrance, which is concealed at most times (except during plane take-off and landing) by the curved object depicted: a painted construction of sheet metal which looks like natural stone to observers farther away than a few feet.

(2) This is the concrete runway.

(3) This is a section of the complex not used. The stalagmites are still standing and the section is unlit.

(4) This is the "hangar" area, where the dozen biplanes, their bombs, and the complex's generator are kept. Like area (4), the stalagmites of millenia have been pounded flat by minions of the crass Condor.

(5) This is the Armory. The Condor has been stocking up on armaments for his minions. In boxes are .50-cal and .30-cal ammunition for the planes' machine-guns, thirty bolt-action rifles and miscellaneous handguns, a box of 16 potato-masher grenades, three kegs of gunpowder (an 8D6 energy explosion per keg if ignited), three boxes of 100 bottles of Condorite drug, three boxes of 50 bottles of antidote, and whatever else you want to include.

(6) This is a storeroom, containing food, clothing, tools, and equipment.

(7) The Throne Room. This area is separated from the working area by a long curtain. Inside are a throne, a table with a portable wireless which is taken outside for transmissions, and not much else. The Condorite Cave (6a), is where victims are exposed to the Condor's gas.

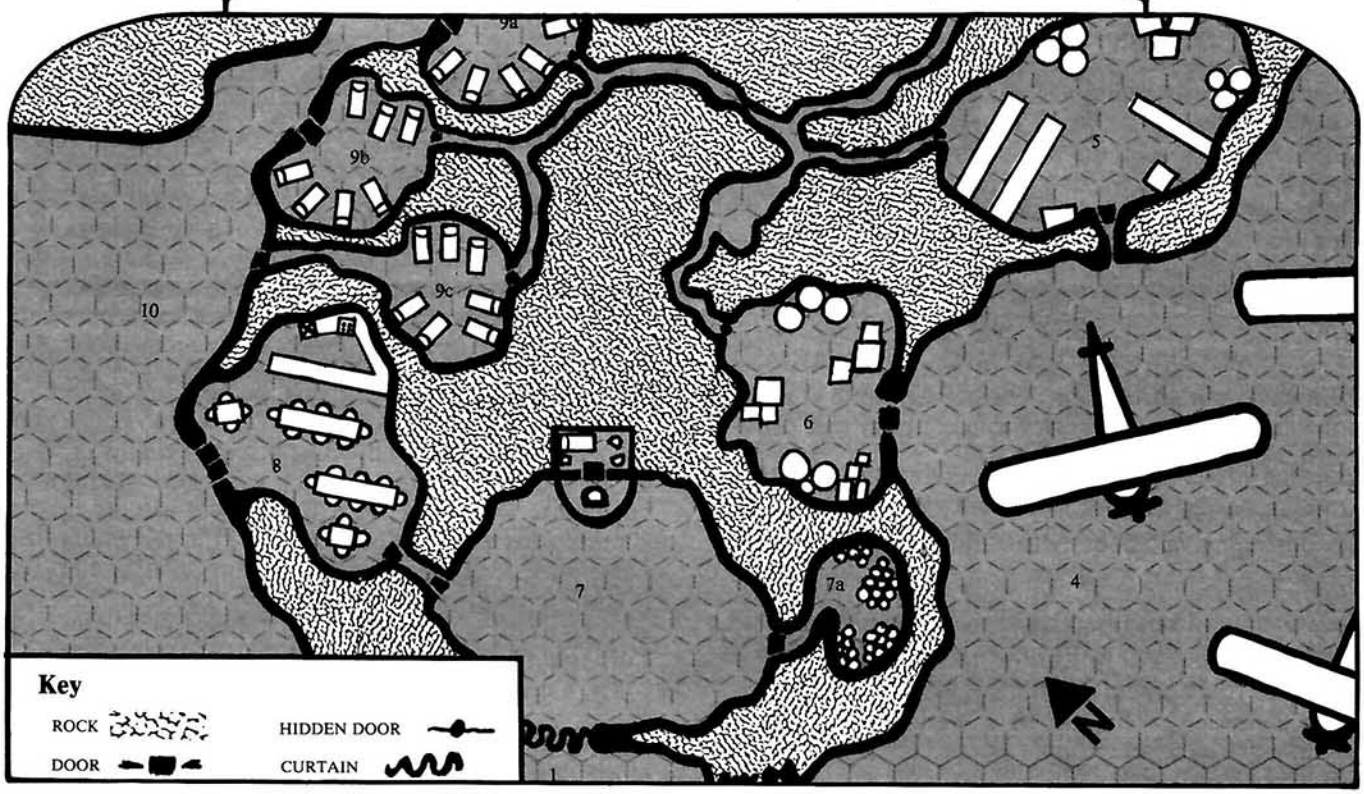
(8) This is the cafeteria for the pale men.

(9) The Cell Block. Three side-by-side caves serve as cells for any prisoners the Condor might take. Heavy doors (DEF 8, BODY 8) have been installed. The player characters will be kept in (a), the rest of the Whitley household in (b), and the miners in (c). As you can see, the little ravine-tunnel reaches each cave and the cave at (5). The tunnel heading northeast leads off to caverns still unexplored.

(10) This area has a rough stone floor—it was once covered with stalagmites, but the steady sledgehammers of years of pale men have reduced it to a relatively flat floor. This is the work area where planes are serviced, and acts as a public address area when the Condor addresses his troops.

Guards—minions of the Condor—are labeled by "x"s on the map. When tired, they sleep on cots in the area south of the runway and west of the stalagmites at (3). There are approximately 60 minions on the site, about 30 of them armed with handguns of varying makes.

THE CONDOR'S LAIR (DETAIL)



in another, and the miners in a third). Gags and blindfolds will be removed, and one person's bonds will be loosened. Then the pale men will leave and the heavy steel door will clang shut. As noted, the captured characters were blindfolded and will probably have no real idea where they are.

Moments later, the door will swing open and the Condor, escorted by an honor guard of about a dozen pale men, enters. "I trust you had a pleasant trip," he'll say in typically villainous fashion. "I thought you had the right to know what this whole enterprise was about before I disposed of the inconvenience of your presence." His voice is flat and metallic, as if he were talking around a half-dollar in his mouth. "This whole enterprise," he continues, "was brought about by two discoveries. First, while overseas I encountered a substance, a drug—call it Condorite. It deadens the will and turns inferior people into superior automotons. I found it in crude form and have been refining it since. Where once my automoton men had to take daily injections of the stuff, now it may be applied weekly in gaseous form.

"Second in my discoveries was this network of caverns beneath the Whitley lands. It was large enough to accomodate hundreds of automoton men! And the main cavern, with a pathway of stalagmites cleared away and new cement flooring put in, made an adequate runway. I began appropriating minions here and there—a squad of Army pilots and planes, some strapping young men from nearby villages, and a coroner who'd swear they died of natural causes. I took some of your own miners, Bethlehem, dear, and so on. But the presence of you Whitleys above began to concern me. One of the gold mines threatened to penetrate into part of the cavern network, and eventually did! We captured and transformed the miners responsible, but I was annoyed, and I determined to scare you away."

At this point, the Condor shakes his head and pauses momentarily. "That, eh, didn't work, so I, eh . . ." His voice trails off. He sounds unsure. "So I must subject the lot of you to Condorite. The mine, eh, will run still, but . . ." He points at Crompton. "You will be first!" The pale men take Crompton away, and the Condor and his minions leave without another word.

This leaves the heroes in an unhappy situation. There are four pale guards posted outside who, being automotons, can't be lured inside with fake fights or noises or mysteries.

If the heroes search the cave they've been placed in, they're likely to find something: About twelve feet up on a wall there's a hole which is, by sheer coincidence, just large enough to accomodate Bethlehem and the smallest player-character. Make 'em search to find it, but let 'em find it eventually. The obvious thing to do is to hoist the character and (perhaps) Beth up to the hole and let them investigate it, hoping for the best.

There's one more discovery to be made in this cave, though the GM may wish to wait until the end of the adventure to reveal it. Along the walls, especially up toward that escape hole, the stone is heavy with gold. A rich, rich vein, as in the Gold Spike III. Taylor Whitley must have found these caverns just before he died, and the secret died with him—until the Condor rediscovered the complex. You can either have the heroes discover this as they're struggling to escape, or have Beth notice it and not say anything about it until it's time for the happy ending (assuming that a happy ending ever comes).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Battle in the Condor's Lair

At this point, you'll have to wing (as it were) the climax to our merry tale. The heroes' options are too numerous for us to predict a likely path and provide advice for that specific one.

Some notes:

Beginning in about fifteen minutes, a set of four guards will come every ten minutes and appropriate a character from the caves, beginning with Beth and moving on to the player-characters. Each character (except Beth) will be taken in turn to the Condorite Cave and exposed to a burst of Condorite gas. Once this has happened, the character will be a minion of the Condor until exposed to an antidote or until the stuff wears off in about two weeks.

The escape tunnel, if found, leads to several caves in the complex. It was once part of an underground stream. It goes to the miners' prison cave, to the armory cave, and to the cell hall in addition to the player-characters' cell. The tunnel also goes up into the hill, but gradually narrows to the point that it can't be traveled by humans (if a player character happens to have a small NPC animal with him, the GM may wish to have the animal take an active part in the scenario by tracing the tunnel to the surface and going for help).

And the truth of the Condor's identity is this: The man in the Condor mask may have been Jake Myatt, but the Condor is actually *Horace Crompton!*

During the years after the War, Myatt worked as an administrator in a London hospital where one of the research staff invented the cruder form of the drug now called Condorite. Sensing the enormous financial potential of the drug, Myatt exposed the inventor to the stuff, then forced him to reveal the formula. Later, the man was forced to kill himself. Myatt returned to the United States to look for a partner greedy and smart enough to exploit the full potential of the drug. He found one in industrialist Horace Crompton, but Crompton was even smarter than Myatt; he exposed Myatt to the drug and has held him in thrall since 1925.

Crompton spent most of his organizational time in the big city, managing his legitimate concerns and more shady operations such as Harmon Imports. When Myatt's call came in that the Whitley mine was getting close to the caverns, Crompton merely told him to deal with it. Myatt, muddled by the drug (as all its victims are) evolved an elaborate and confused plan to scare off the Whitleys, using the Condor identity Crompton had developed for use with his own Master Plan. When Bethlehem left unexpectedly for the big city to talk to Crompton, Myatt decided that he couldn't afford to have her running around, possibly talking to police and private detectives as well, so he dispatched Finster, one of his usual operatives, to track her down—to capture her before she could leave the Denver airport, or to eliminate her wherever he found her. Finster, of course, failed because of the characters' intervention, and Myatt found himself facing a mass of incoming investigators—which is what prompted Crompton to return to Colorado to handle the problem himself.

The Condor's Master Plan is this: Now that Condorite can be delivered in gaseous form, bombs have been built which can turn entire neighborhoods into minions of the Condor. That would be a key to great wealth, indeed, and the plan is moving toward its final stages. Some planes already have Condorite bombs stashed on board.

How will the characters learn all of this?

The logical thing for the characters to do is to free and arm the miners and assault the base. The armory contains a goodly supply of arms and ammunition, plus kegs of gunpowder and crates containing several hundred twelve-ounce bottles of Condorite gas and about half as many bottles of antidote. Characters can, if they think of it, smash open the antidote bottles, filling the cavern complex with it and gradually freeing the pale-faced men from their enthrallment (the gas will take time to spread, and a bit of time to work its cure). Or the characters could simply arm themselves and try to grab the Condor by steath. Since the armory is guarded, they may think to pull the old trick of taking the guards' uniforms in order to walk around in relative safety. The climax to this story can be pretty much anything you and the characters wish it to be—a pitched battle between miners and pale-faced men, a chaotic scene with clouds of antidote and explosions of gunpowder filling the caverns as the pale-faced men run around willy-nilly, some still enthralled, some standing stupefied in the process of recovering, some recovered and trying to find the Condor themselves, etc.

Jake-as-Condor may participate in the battle. If he's shot, that's a good traumatic moment to use to break the hold of the drug on him, at least momentarily, so the heroes can hear the story. If that doesn't work out, he could be found dying in the throne room, his health finally ruined by his years of exposure to Condorite; his death-trauma may free his mind and allow him to spill the story to the heroes (incidentally, he could survive should any medical player-character make a few decent

medical rolls). But while the characters are talking to Myatt, Crompton (now wearing his own Condor outfit) should be escaping in one of the PW9's—one outfitted, naturally enough, with Condorite bombs.

In this way, we can have a climactic dogfight between flying player-characters and the Condor. Should more than one player-character have Plane Transport and than one player-character have Piloting Skill, simply have some of the Condor's flyers in the air, too, for a balanced dogfight. In the event that none of the player-characters flies, state that one of the PW9s in the Main Gallery is actually some other variety of warplane—a random two-seater—and let Hank Millburn do the flying while a player-character does the gunning.

If all else fails, and the player-characters are defeated, captured, enslaved, or there's no other way for them to learn the whole story, the day could still be saved by Bethlehem Whitley. Crompton's one great weakness is his interest in Beth—a king must have his queen, eh? He will under no circumstances diminish her by exposing her to the Condorite gas unless she proves to be completely intractable, and she's too smart not to play along with him. Indeed, if circumstance warrants using this plot-twist, Beth could do such a good job playing up to Crompton that she would appear to the player-characters to have betrayed them in order to save herself from their fate, even appearing melodramatically at Crompton's side in a "Lady Condor" costume when the heroes are being gassed. Crompton, of course, would prefer to give the impression that Bethlehem has been in league with him all along, but Beth is no traitor; she's merely buying time, doing *whatever* is necessary to earn the Condor's trust until she can turn the tables on him.

The GM should be advised that Beth-as-savior is a plot twist that should be used only as a last resort, and then only to give the player-characters a second chance! It should be the player-characters who, two weeks later, after Bethlehem arranges things so they will not be exposed to Condorite again, actually do the work of defeating him. If the Beth-as-savior option *is* used, it should be made *abundantly* clear to the player-characters after she rescues them that Bethlehem was never really in league with the Condor. She saved them, and they should be properly grateful and solicitous, considering the implicit, not-to-be-mentioned price she had to pay during the time she spent waiting for the right moment to make her move. That price, incidentally, should make her properly vicious should she have an opportunity to come face-to-face with Crompton before the adventure is over.

This should round out the important points of the plot of *The Trail of the Gold Spike.* If Crompton escapes with his Condorite, he's sure to show up in a sequel; if Harmon Imports hasn't been exposed, he could resurface in New York with a plan for revenge on the members of the Empire Club who foiled his plan. If he's shot down, as one hopes he will be, there's a happy ending: the Gold Spike III is found, the Whitleys get more money, the heroes get good publicity, and the world spins on in its proper grooves.

You should have an epilog to your adventure novel. Some loose ends to tie up include:

(1) The Condor's Log. It'll turn out that the Condor and Jake kept an operations log in the Lair. This can be discovered and will provide even more tangible proof of the Condor's villainy. It'll reveal some facts the authorities would like to know—the name of the deceased inventor of the drug, the means by which the Condor kidnaped the flight of Army biplanes (he exposed them to a cloud of the gas as they were taking off; the diluted solution did not take effect until the planes were in the air, and he just flew alongside the leader and ordered him to follow to a nearby parcel of rented land. There he finished the Condorite mesmerism process and the planes flew on to Colorado), the fact that Millston coroner Baxter is a pale-faced man, and so are the coroners and officials of many nearby towns, which is where most of the pale-faced men came from, the fact that Jake stopped the digging of the new shaft because it connected with part of the tunnel complex into the Condor's Lair, the fact that it was Jake portraying the Condor during the strafing run on the Whitley company so that Crompton wouldn't be suspected (remember Jake coming out of the Gold Spike II after the dogfight? He merely landed in the Lair, changed into his Jake clothes on the run, and crawled through the rear of the Lair back into the mine), etc.

(2) One thing the log will not detail is the formula for the Condorite drug. Only Crompton had it memorized, and it's not written down anywhere.

(3) Who will Bethlehem choose? If the characters have been operating in true hero-pulp tradition, they'll have been wooing Beth from the word go, all to the intense distaste of Hank. She could choose to accept the attentions of one of the player-characters (perhaps becoming a Dependent NPC if she returns with him to New York), decide to stay with Hank, reject everybody, or even throw her lot in with the dashing (if somewhat demented) Horace Crompton for real. If nothing in the course of the plot suggests an answer to this dilemma—such as one of the player-characters showing faith in her by refusing to believe that Beth could be in league with the Condor even in the face of evidence strongly suggesting it—roll randomly to decide. That's what a lot of the romance resolutions in the pulps read like, anyway.

Notes to the GM

This last chapter, of course, provides the climax to the story. By this point in any adventure, even earlier in most cases, the player-characters will have done things differently enough from your initial conception that you'll be obliged to improvise. *Always* keep your options loose toward the end of an adventure to provide for player inventiveness; if you force them along too many restrictive paths, they're sure to resent it.

CHAPTER EIGHT
Optional Complications

Here are a few things you can do to complicate the story, seasoning it to taste. And here are some things player-characters could do to complicate *your* task as the GM.

(1) If the characters did their own flying in from the big city to the Whitley encampment, and you think the action appropriate, have one of the Condor's flyers attack the plane en route. You don't want to do this if the players are then likely to involve the police; always let them know that this is *their* adventure, not the authorities'.

(2) You can make the adventure eerier by emphasizing the pale men's actions and having more of them be identified as men who are listed as being dead. They are, of course, actually men whom the enthralled coroner delivered into the hands of the Condor. This might lead the characters to believe, at least early on, that they were facing something supernatural. In the pulps, stories which featured supernatural special effects which were later revealed to be perfectly plausible were called "Weird Menace" stories and were a staple of the pulp diet.

(3) You don't have to have Crompton be the real Condor. Myatt may have come back to the States and started his own plans. Hank Millburn could be the actual Condor, having stolen the formula when he joined the Whitleys, and now in the process of building a gigantic empire in an irrational desire to impress Bethlehem and make her his queen. If you can keep the three men out of sight whenever there's action going on in the first parts of the adventure, you'll increase the characters' doubt as to who *is* the Condor. If your players are real pulp aficionados, they'll *know* that the Condor is one of the NPCs hanging around with the group; they'll just have to figure out which one it is. It's even conceivable that *Bethlehem* could be the brains behind the Condor, if not the Condor herself, working with her Uncle Jake to try to take control of the Whitley mines without causing any physical harm to her father. This would require coming up with a good reason for her to go to New York to fake an attempt on her own life (perhaps she had a reason to want to lure Crompton to the scene?).

(4) It's possible that the player-characters could spot Jake right off as a victim of the Condorite drug. If this happens, assume that Crompton has ordered the man to collapse if discovered, and that the collapse triggers the severe health problems his long-term exposure to Condorite has caused. This means that the characters will have to struggle to keep the poor man alive so that they *can* learn something. You should be prepared to improvise to keep the plot moving even with Jake unconscious.

(5) If you've foolishly let a character with Telepathy into the adventure, and said character is using the ability enough that it offends your sense of plotting and gamemastering, you can change the nature of the plot. The Condorite could actually kill its victims, then resurrect them days later as walking dead. The Condor, who was once human, is now a priest of the Elder Gods, and telepathic contact with him (which should come when the character doesn't expect it) will devastate the character temporarily, perhaps resulting in partial amnesia or a temporary telepathic block. In fact, if you want to be perverse anyway, you can use this alternate plotline even if there's no other reason for it than to keep the players from being too cocksure that the case of the Condor is an ordinary one.

(6) If one of the player-characters considers himself a great lover and tries too hard to hit on Bethlehem, the romantic conflict which would ordinarily be merely a background element could erupt into volcanic action, causing the heroes to divide their forces and perhaps work at cross-purposes. This would require careful handling by the GM to make certain that characters are not acting on information gathered by someone else.

As you can see, there are lots of ways to complicate this plot to taste, or to have it complicated by a players' unexpected actions. Just keep things flexible, and you'll be able to deal with anything they're able to do.

How Condorite Works

Condorite is a morphine-based drug which deadens its victims' will against suggestion. This does not mean that its victims are prey to commands given by any person on the street, because the suggestion-susceptibility lasts only a few minutes.

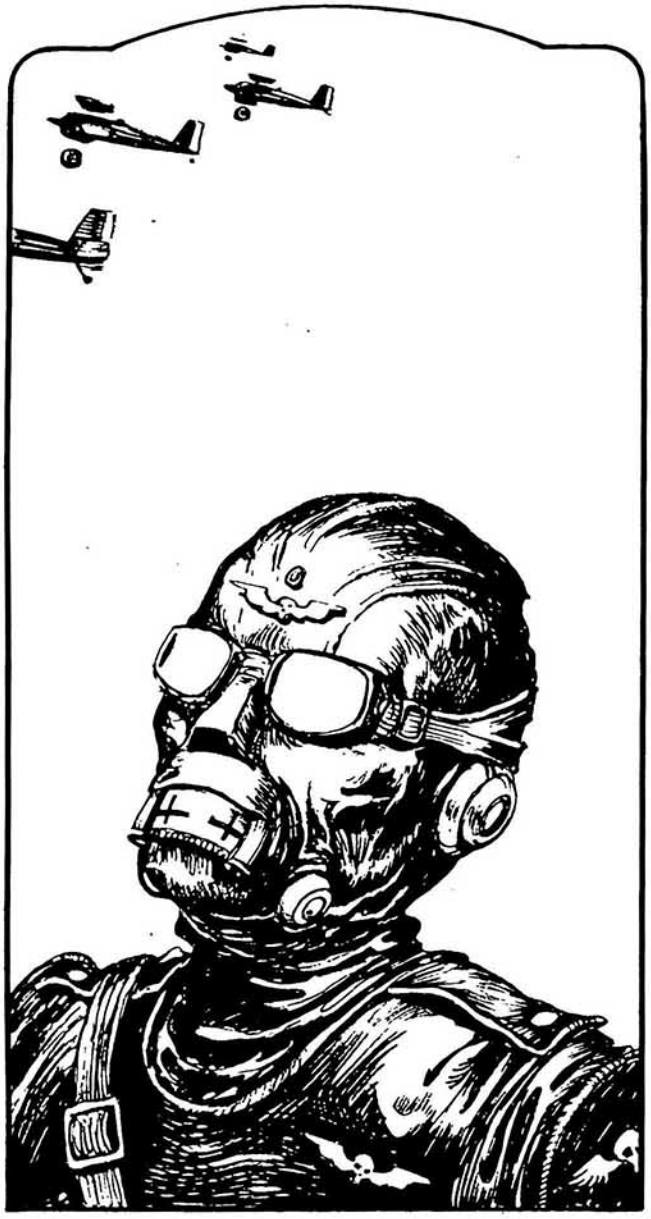
In other words, when a character is exposed to the Condorite drug, for a period of about three minutes he is in a highly susceptible state resembling a hypnotic trance (see the Hypnosis rules in *Justice, Inc.).* Any command given to the victim while he is in this state acts as an automatically successful post-hypnotic suggestion, even unto suggestions of self-destruction. The character does get his normal Ego rolls to disobey a really repellent order, but only after two weeks following his exposure to the drug. Since the Condor reexposes his men to the gas once per week, the point is moot.

After the three minutes is up, the victim's susceptibility wears off, but he is still subject to the suggestions planted in his mind before that time. Thus, commands such as "Obey all of my commands instantly, without question," made while the victim is susceptible, will do pretty much what the Condor wants, because he can now give his men any order his pleases. But orders are obeyed very literally, and if one of the Condor's men misunderstands an order he carries it out unquestioningly until corrected by the Condor or his designated officer, Jake.

The drug has some physiological effects upon its victims, too. It makes them more vulnerable to damage (note that the Condor's men all have Body and Con of 8 instead of the more usual 10). It causes a constant dilation of the pupils, which means that the victims see very well at night, but are uncomfortable in bright light. The effects of the drug on the victims' heart and blood pressure make the victims very pale.

Long-term victims of the drug either adjust to it or die. As the body adjusts, the paleness and emotional changes become much less pronounced, as in Jake. If the body doesn't adjust, death will come in a year or so. If you ever use Condorite in your campaign after *Gold Spike,* use the victim's Con and Body to determine his chances for long-term survival. For each month of exposure, a victim has a 50% chance of losing one pip of Con, and a 50% chance of losing one pip of Body. After ten months, roll 2D6 and subtract that from the smaller characteristic; if the result is zero or less, the victim has failed to adjust, and will continue to lose Con and Body until one of the characteristics reaches zero and he dies; if the result is greater than zero, the victim has adjusted, and will begin regaining Con and Body at the same rate he was losing it until he returns to his original levels.

It is possible to rehypnotise victims of Condorite and break them out of the Condor's control. If a character is endeavoring to Hypnotise a victim using skill vs. skill rolls to break through the Condor's conditioning, figure that the Condor made his Hypnosis roll by 8. If the hypnotising character can equal or better that, he will succeed and wrest the victim's mind away from its conditioning.



A Condorite victim exposed to the antidote will stand around stupidly for about thirty seconds, then begin to act on his own initiative, though he'll be somewhat confused (-3 to all Intelligence and Perception rolls) for a few hours. He'll remember most everything he's done since being exposed to the gas, and will probably resent it rather heatedly.

CHAPTER NINE
Characters

Bethlehem Whitley

VAL	CHA	Cost
10	STR	0
13	DEX	9
13	CON	6
10	BOD	0
18	INT	8
12	EGO	4
10	PRE	0
16	COM	3
4	PD	2
4	ED	1
3	SPD	7
5	REC	0
26	END	0
22	STN	0

CV = 4
PHASES:
4, 8, 12
35 Skills
40 CHA
75 Total pts

Cost	Skills	
3	Concealment	12
5	Stealth	12
2	Pro Skill: Mining	11
2	Pro Skill: Adminis.	11
3	Boxing (3D6 Punch)	
3	Fam. w/Firearms	
2	Piloting	12
5	Riding	13
2	Railroad History	11
3	Radio Operation	11
5	+1 w/Firearms	

50+ **Disadvantages**
1 Distinctive looks (hair, beauty, easily concealable)
6 Hunted 11- by followers of the Condor
2 Hunted 8- by the Condor
11 Reckless (irrational)
5 1D6 Unluck

Carries Mauser 1912, 7.63 cal., +1 OCV, -1/2", 1D6 Damage, D6-1 Stun, STR 7, Shots 8, Size 2, in shoulder pouch.

Condor Followers

VAL	CHA	Cost
8	STR	-2
13	DEX	9
8	CON	-4
8	BOD	-4
8	INT	-2
8	EGO	-4
8	PRE	-2
8	COM	-1
2	PD	0
2	ED	0
2	SPD	-3
4	REC	0
16	END	0
16	STN	0

CV = 4
PHASES:
6, 12

Cost	Skills	
	Pilots	
3	Piloting	12
3	Familiar: Firearms	
2	Pro Skill (varies)	11
2	Area Know (Rockies)	
	Others	
3	Familiar: Firearms	
2	Pro Skill: Mining	11
3	Area Know (Rockies)	11
5	Stealth	13

Everyone Else

VAL	CHA	Cost
8	STR	-2
8	DEX	-6
8	CON	-4
8	BOD	-4
8	INT	-2
8	EGO	-4
8	PRE	-2
8	COM	-1
2	PD	0
2	ED	0
2	SPD	2
4	REC	0
16	END	0
16	STN	0

CV = 3
PHASES:
6, 12

Cost	Skills	
	Abner Haley	
5	Pro Skill: Mining	14
5	Gambling	12
	May Myatt Whitley	
14	Int, Ego, Com all 12	
6	Pro Skill: Cooking	15
	Ann Woode	
3	Paramedic	11
9	Int 10, Ego 10, Com 14	
5	Pro Skill: Housekeeper	14
	T. D. Baxter, coroner	
3	Paramedic	11
3	Forensics	11
3	Pro Skill: Coroner	12

Hank Millburn

VAL	CHA	Cost
13	STR	3
13	DEX	9
12	CON	4
12	BOD	4
15	INT	5
13	EGO	6
10	PRE	0
12	COM	1
4	PD	1
4	ED	2
3	SPD	7
5	REC	0
26	END	0
25	STN	0

Cost	Skills	
9	Piloting	15
5	Fam. w/Firearms, Knives, Bayonet	
4	Fluent French	
3	Mechanics	11

CV = 4
PHASES:
4, 8, 12
21 Skills
42 CHA
63 Total pts

50+ **Disadvantages**
8 Possessive/Loves Beth
5 1D6 Unluck

Carries Colt 1911, .45 cal., -1/3", 1D6+1 Damage, D6 Stun, STR 9, Shots 7, Size 4.

Angus Whitley

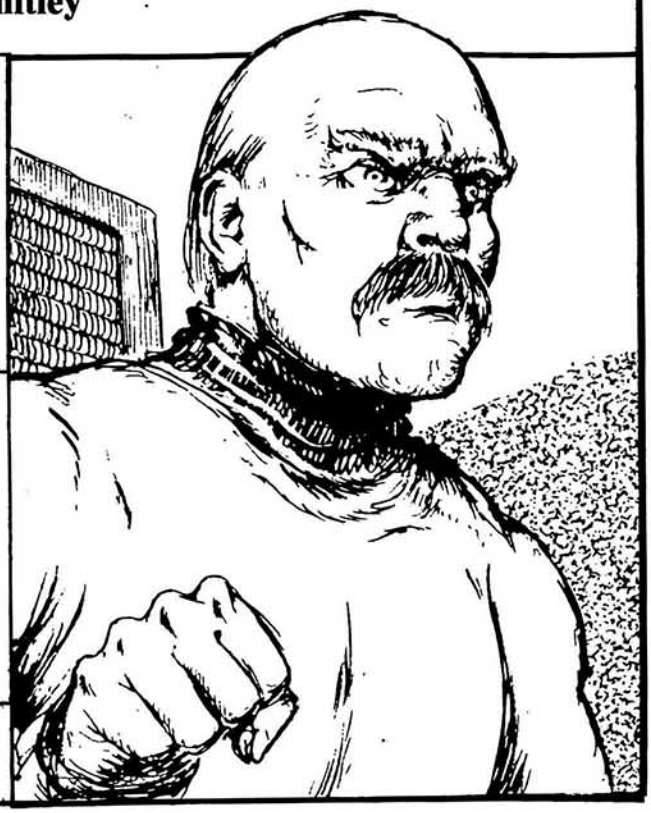
VAL	CHA	Cost
15	STR	5
14	DEX	12
15	CON	10
12	BOD	4
13	INT	3
13	EGO	6
13	PRE	3
10	COM	0
4	PD	1
3	ED	0
3	SPD	6
6	REC	0
30	END	0
28	STN	0

Cost	Skills	
5	Pro Skill: Mining	14
3	Pro Skill: Railroad	12
4	Pro Skill: Business Accounting	13
5	Fam. w/Firearms, Knives	
5	Boxing (4½D6 Punch)	
3	Railroad History	12
10	+2 w/Firearms	
3	Gambling	11

CV = 5
PHASES:
4, 8, 12
38 Skills
50 CHA
88 Total pts

50+ **Disadvantages**
3 Age: 45
8 DNPC (Beth) 14-
6 Hunted 11- by followers of the Condor
2 Hunted 8- by the Condor
8 Stubborn (irrational)
3 Gets highly agitated around heavy moving equipment
8 Crippled; bound to wheelchair w/2" ground move

Carries .30-06 Springfield 1917A1, +1 OCV, -1/5", 2D6+ Damage, D6 Stun, STR 12, Shots 5, Size 13.



Horace Crompton

VAL	CHA	Cost
15	STR	5
14	DEX	12
13	CON	6
10	BOD	0
18	INT	8
13	EGO	6
15	PRE	5
16	COM	3
6	PD	3
5	ED	2
3	SPD	6
6	REC	0
26	END	0
25	STN	0

Cost	Skills	
3	Disguise	13
5	Chemical Analysis	13
5	Driving	13
5	Piloting	13
10	Boxing	
3	Fam. w/Firearms	
19	Hypnosis	15
3	Persuasion	13
8	+1 w/all combat	

CV = 5
PHASES:
4, 8, 12
61 Skills
56 CHA
117 Total pts

75+ **Disadvantages**
3 Age: 40
11 Greedy (irrational)
4 Manipulative (irr.)f
9 Hunted 11- by our heroes
5 Hunted 11- by the Whitleys
10 2D6 Unluck

He carries a Colt 1911A1 automatic pistol (similar in all respects to the one carried by Hank Millburn, but newer and with Parkerized service finish instead of blue finish).

Jake Myatt

VAL	CHA	Cost
10	STR	0
14	DEX	12
13	CON	6
10	BOD	0
18	INT	8
13	EGO	6
18	PRE	8
10	COM	0
4	PD	2
4	ED	1
3	SPD	6
5	REC	0
26	END	0
22	STN	0

Cost	Skills	
7	Piloting	14
5	Fam. w/Firearms, Knives	
5	Persuasion	14
2	Pro Skill: Mining	11

CV = 5
PHASES:
4, 8, 12
19 Skills
49 CHA
68 Total pts

50+ **Disadvantages**
3 Age: 46
11 Greedy (irrational)
4 Conscienceless (irr.)

He carries a Colt 1911A1 automatic pistol (similar in all respects to the one carried by Hank Millburn, but newer and with Parkerized service finish instead of blue finish).

CHAPTER TEN
Game Conversions

Call of Cthulhu Conversions

by Steve Peterson

Generally, *Justice Inc.* characters tend to be much tougher than *Call of Cthulhu* characters. The difference is especially great for beginning characters—a beginning *CoC* character starts with the equivalent of about 20 points in *JI* terms, instead of the 50, 75, or 100 points typical for the *JI* character.

The characters in this adventure have been converted "straight across," and are therefore pretty tough. If you're running the adventure for beginning *CoC* characters, I'd recommend dropping all of the NPC's percentages by 25% to give the players a fighting chance.

The dogfighting system in JI works quite well in *CoC;* just substitute the Pilot Skill roll in *CoC* for the Piloting Skill in JI, and use the Resistance Table. Hypnosis can be simulated by POW vs. POW on the Resistance Table. First, the hypnotist must make his Hypnosis Skill roll to implant any commands in the subject; if the command is complicated or goes against the subject's desires, the Hypnosis Skill roll should be -10% to -50% (Keeper's judgement). If that roll is successful, then use the Resistance Table (POW vs. POW) to see if the subject does what he's told.

Condorite works just as in JI; merely substitute SIZ for CON in the discussion. If you really want to add a Lovecraftian twist to the adventure, make the Condor secretly a minion of Cthulhu who uses sorcery to enslave people (instead of a funny chemical). Of course, you'd probably want to add a few *things* to his cavern stronghold . . .

SKILLS

Beth Whitley: Fist/Punch 75%, Handgun 70%, Rifle 60%, Shotgun 60%, Camouflage 50%, Hide 75%, Move Quietly 75%, Mining 60%, Administration 60%, Drive Auto 75%, Ride 75%, Pilot Aircraft 75%, Railroad History 60%, Radio Operation 60%

Angus Whitley: Fist/Punch 80%, Handgun 80%, Rifle 75%, Shotgun 75%, Knife 70%, Mining 90%, Railroad History 70%, Gambling 60%, Accounting 85%

Hank Millburn: Fist/Punch 60%, Knife 65%, Handgun 60%, Rifle 60%, Shotgun 60%, Mechanical Repair 60%, French 75%, Pilot Aircraft 95%

Jake Myatt: Fist/Punch 65%, Knife 65%, Handgun 65%, Rifle 65%, Shotgun 65%, Mechanical Repair 60%, French 75%, Pilot Aircraft 80%, Fast Talk 90%, Mining 25%

Horace Crompton: Fist/Punch 90%, Handgun 70%, Rifle 70%, Shotgun 70%, Camouflage 80%, Chemistry 70%, Hypnosis 90%, Fast Talk 80%, Pilot Aircraft 80%

Condor Followers

Pilots: Handgun 60%, Pilot Aircraft 70%
Others: Handgun 60%, Hide 70%, Move Quietly 70%, Mining 50%

Normals

Abner Haley: Mining 90%, Gambling 70%
May Whitley: Cooking 95%, Int 12, Pow 12, Cha 12
Ann Woode: First Aid 60%, Housekeeper 90%, Cha 13
T. D. Baxter: First Aid 60%, Diagnose Disease 60%

	Beth Whitley	Angus Whitley	Hank Millburn	Jake Myatt	Horace Crmptn	Condor Fllwrs	Normals
Str	13	15	13	10	15	10	10
Con	13	15	12	13	13	8	10
Siz	12	13	12	10	10	8	10
Int	18	13	15	18	18	10	10
Pow	12	13	13	13	18	10	10
Dex	14	15	14	15	15	12	10
Cha	13	11	11	14	10	10	10
Edu	10	8	10	12	16	var	8
San	60	65	65	65	90	99	50

Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes Conversions

by George Mac Donald

MSPE characters should have no problem fitting into *The Trail of the Gold Spike.* The non-player characters have been converted straight across and should be effective against characters up to and including level 4.

Condorite works just like in *JI,* except that 2nd-level IQ saving rolls should be used whenever Ego rolls are specified. Someone under the effect of Condorite gets an automatic first-level IQ saving roll as a defense against being rehypnotized by someone else.

Long-term effects of Condorite will cause a loss of 1 point of CON every 2 months for 10 months. If the character exceeds his CON on a roll of 2D6 after 10 months, the character will die when his CON reaches zero.

For two characters to dogfight, have them both make first-level DEX Saving Rolls modified by Piloting Skill. The character who makes his roll by the most gets one hit on his opponent. Three hits downs a plane.

	Beth Whitley	Angus Whitley	Hank Millburn	Jake Myatt	Horace Crmptn	Condor Fllwrs	Normals
St	10	15	13	10	15	8	8
IQ	18	13	15	18	18	8	8
LK	10	10	10	10	10	10	8
Con	13	15	12	13	13	8	8
Dex	13	14	13	14	14	13	8
Chr	16	13	12	18	20	8	8
Sp	13	14	13	14	14	8	8

Skills

Beth Whitley: HTHA: +1, MWA: 0, Level: 1, Clip Pistol (2), Revolver (2), Shotgun (2), Rifle (2), Ambush/Silent Move (2), Pugilism (1), Fast Driving (3), Horsemanship (3), Pilot (Prop Planes) (3), O. S. Radio Operator (1), Bureaucracy Mastery (1), O. S. Mining (1), S. I. Railroad History (1)
Carries a Mauser 1912 Pistol, Chart I, Capacity 8, Caliber: 7.63mm., Clip Pistol, Damage: 2+4

Angus Whitley: HTHA: +5, MWA: 0, Level: 1, Clip Pistol (3), Revolver (3), Shotgun (3), Rifle (3), Knife Fighting (1), Pugilism (1), O. S. Mining (4), O. S. Railroading (2), O. S. Accounting (3), S. I. Railroad History (2)
Carries a .30-06 Springfield Rifle, Chart II, Capacity: 5, Caliber: .30-06, Rifle, Damage 9+2

Hank Millburn: HTHA: +2, MWA: 0, Level: 1, Clip Pistol (1), Revolver (1), Shotgun (1), Rifle (1), Pilot (Prop Planes) (4), Fluent in French
Carries a Colt 1911A1 Pistol, Chart I, Capacity: 7, Caliber: .45 ACP, Damage: 4+1

Jake Myatt: HTHA: +2, MWA: 0, Level: 1, Clip Pistol (1), Revolver (1), Shotgun (1), Rifle (1), Knife Fighting (1), Pilot (Prop Planes) (3), O. S. Mining (1)

Horace Crompton: HTHA: +5, MWA: 0, Level: 1, Clip Pistol (2), Revolver (2), Shotgun (2), Rifle (2), Pugilism (1), Pilot (Prop Planes) (3), Disguise (3), Confidence (3), O. S. Hypnosis (5), O. S. Chemical Analysis (2)

Condor Followers

Pilots: HTHA: -2, MWA: 0, Level: 1, Clip Pistol (1), Pilot (Prop Planes) (2)
Others: HTHA: -2, MWA: 0, Level: 1, Clip Pistol (1), Ambush/Silent Movement (3), O. S. Mining (1)
All carry a Colt 1911A1 Pistol, Chart I, Capacity: 7, Caliber: .45 ACP, Damage: 4+1

Normals

Abner Haley: HTHA: -2, MWA: 0, Level: 1, O. S. Mining (4), Gambling (2)
May Myatt Whitley: HTHA: -2, MWA: 0, Level: 1, O. S. Cooking (5)
Ann Woode: HTHA: -2, MWA: 0, Level: 1, Medic (1), O. S. Housekeeper (4)
T. D. Baxter: HTHA: -2, MWA: 0, Level: 1, Medic (1), O. S. Forensics (1), O. S. Coroner (2)

Daredevils Conversions

by George Mac Donald

Daredevils characters should fit right into *The Trail of the Gold Spike.* The non-player characters have been converted straight across and should be effective against beginning or semi-experienced daredevils.

Condorite works just like in *JI,* except that Will AST's act whenever Ego Rolls are specified. Someone under the effect of Condorite gets an automatic Will AST as a defense against being rehypnotised by someone else. Because of the physiological effects of the Condorite, all of the Condor's men are considered Rabble.

Long-term effects of Condorite will cause a loss of 1D3 of Health (and DRT) every 2 months for 10 months. If the character exceeds his Health on a roll of 2D6 after 10 months, he will die when his Health reaches zero.

SKILLS

Beth Whitley: Martial Arts (15/4), Pistol (14), Rifle (12), Stealth (15), Civil Engineering (12), Business (12), Driver (15), Horsemanship (15), Pilot (15), Railroad History (12)

Angus Whitley: Martial Arts (16/4), Pistol (16), Rifle (15), Knife (14/4), Civil Engineering (18), Railroad History (14), Gambling (12), Business (17)

Hank Millburn: Brawling (12/3), Knife (13), Pistol (12), Rifle (12) Mechanic (12), French (15), Pilot (18)

Jake Myatt: Brawling (13/4), Knife (13), Pistol (13), Rifle (13), Mechanic (12), French (15), Pilot (16), Rhetoric (18), Civil Engineering (5)

Horace Crompton: Martial Arts (18/5), Pistol (14), Rifle (14), Chemistry (14), Hypnosis, Rhetoric (16), Pilot (16)

Condor Followers

Pilots: Pistol (12), Pilot (14)
Others: Pistol (12), Stealth (14), Civil Engineering (10)

Normals

Abner Haley: Civil Engineering (18), Gambling (14)
May Myatt Whitley: WT: 14
Ann Woode: First Aid (12)
T. D. Baxter: First Aid (12), Advanced Medical (12), Pathology (12), Forensics (12)

Boeing PW9, Max Speed: 253kph, Accel.: 50, Hand.: 5, DUR: 10, BAR: 10, Range: 624 km., Passengers: 1, Armed with 2 machine guns, 1 Browning .30 caliber and 1 Browning .50 caliber

	Beth Whitley	Angus Whitley	Hank Millburn	Jake Myatt	Horace Crmptn	Condor Fllwrs	Normals
Wt	26	16	20	26	26	8	8
Wl	14	16	16	16	16	8	8
Str	10	20	16	10	20	8	8
Dft	16	18	16	18	18	16	8
Spd	18	19	18	19	19	13	8
Hlh	16	20	14	16	16	8	8
Cda	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
Drt	28	38	30	29	34	8	8

TRAIL OF THE GOLD SPIKE

The beautiful Beth Whitley tells a terrifying tale of danger at the Gold Spike mine. The sinister figure known only as the Condor has forced the closure of half of Whitley Mining through death threats and "unfortunate accidents." But why? What does this have to do with the legend of the lost gold mine or the mysterious pale men seen late at night? What is the Condor's deadly plot?

Battle the insidious Condor from the bowels of the earth to the skies over Colorado! Can you end his reign of midnight terror and rescue the beauteous Beth from his clutches?

The ***Trail of the Gold Spike*** is an action-packed adventure for ***Justice Inc.*** which also includes conversions for ***Call of Cthulhu, Daredevils,*** and ***Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes.***

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