



The Ivory Trail is an adventure for the unofficial Hollow Earth Expedition plug-in Old West HEX. The adventure starts out as a Spaghetti Western but towards the climax the heroes will explore an ancient, Indiana-Jonesy underground complex with more cliff hanging than they may care for. The GM may even use the adventure as a starting point for an exploration of the Hollow Earth as the complex could extend deep into the Earth.

The adventure is meant for 2-4 heroes of any Archetype, although a couple of "physical" heroes would be useful as there is some fighting, climbing and jumping.

Although pulpy, there is no magic in this adventure, but it is easily possible to play with the Mythical Old West option. Just make the main adversary, Wes Ribbon, a spellslinger. And his Apache scout Cimino (see Scene 6 What about the Ribbon gang) could be a Dreamwalker or shaman, using Indian magic for tracking or curses.

Plot synopsis

Once upon a time in the Old West, three men robbed a bank and got away with a fortune. But the men started quarreling and finally the two underdogs shot their leader. They took the money and a pair of ivory-handled silver Colts. To avoid suspicion, the two men decides to hide the money and return to their jobs and families, waiting for the right time to fetch their reward. On their flight they stumbled over an ancient artificial cave complex. As the men explored the complex they decided that this would be an excellent place to hide their loot.

These two men, Cole Wright and Buck Thompson, decided that they had to ensure their wives get the money, in case they would die before they could fetch the fortune. They engraved half the clues for finding the money on each of silver revolver's ivory handles, making them sort of a treasure map when combined.

Unfortunately, the leader they thought they'd killed, survived the shooting and is now leading a brutal and infamous robber band called The Black Ribbons. The leader, Wes Ribbon, has started to look for the two traitors for finding out what became of the loot.

This is about the time the heroes get involved. The stage coach they are hired to protect is attacked by members of the Black Ribbon gang. One of the passengers is Cole Wright who gets shot under the attack and dies shortly after. But before he dies, Cole gives the hero his revolver and makes them promise to ensure his wife gets some of the hidden money.

The chase for the money is on! Will the characters find the other revolver before the bandits do, and will they eventually find a fortune hidden...?



Scene 1 – Stage coach ride

“Yeah, sure! Easy money, they said, ridin’ shot gun! Hired for protecting the stage coach designated to Yuma, this ride was supposed to be an easy job! But look at it now, a bunch of black-masked outlaws close in, blazing away with their six guns. On top of it, the driver has taken a bullet and now it’s your responsibility to get the coach to Yuma in one piece. ...with the angry bandits at your tail!”

The adventure starts “in medias res”. The heroes are hired for riding shot gun on a stage coach designated to Yuma. The owners of a small mining company hired some extra protection as they want to send a box of money to the bank in Yuma. When the action starts the coach is under attack from a gang of bandits who obviously are after the money. The money however is just a bonus for the gang, as the real target of their attack is Cole Wright with his silver Colt Army. Anyway, the heroes have no chance of knowing that right now!

When the action starts, the coach driver has just taken a bullet, so one of the heroes has to take the reins. The road is in good condition, not too much debris, but there are some turns and swings. Difficulties for **Drive tests** should be **Average (2)**.

6+ Black Ribbon gang members (Outlaws / Greed)

Style: 0 Health: 4
Body: 2 Charisma: 2 Dexterity: 2
Intelligence: 2 Strength: 2 Willpower: 2
Size: 0 Initiative: 4
Move: 4 Defense: 4
Perception: 4 Stun: 2

Skills:

Brawl 5, Fast-draw 5, Firearms 5, Guts 6, Ride 6,
Stealth 6, Survival 5

Talents / Resources:

-

Flaws:

Outlaw

Weapons:

Winchester carbine .44 (8) 3L Attack: 8L
25/60/120/121+

Colt Peacemaker 3L Attack: 8L 20/40/80/81+

Punch 0N Attack: 5L

These mean bandits are members of the Black Ribbon gang send by their leader, Wes Ribbon. We, however, is not participating in the raid as he does not want to spook Cole, if the attack fails.

All Black Ribbon members wear a black bandana as a trade mark, which they use as mask during the raid.

There are 6 bandits attacking the coach, but if the group of heroes is large than 3, I would recommend to add 2 bandits per additional hero.

If using the chasing rules from Old West HEX, place 2 space markers between the bandits the stage coach; each space equals 20 yards. Bandits who close in to the coach may try to jump on it and fight the heroes in a brawl or melee. Make this exciting!

The black bandanas may give the heroes a clue about who they are dealing with. An appropriate **Knowledge test (Tough 3)** will reveal that these highway men look like members of the Black Ribbon gang, which has terrorised the Southern territories over the last years. With 2 extra successes the heroes will even remember the supposed leader’s name, Wes Ribbon.

A dying man’s wish

There are two general outcomes for this chase; the heroes manage to get away/fend off the bandits, or the stage coach is stopped by the outlaws.

- If the heroes defeat or chase-off the bandits, they will discover that one of the passengers, a fellow in his early fifties called Cole Wright, is shot up pretty bad. A bullet has hit the man in the lower chest causing severe internal bleeding. It is obvious that he has only short time left.
- If bandits hold up the coach, they line up the passengers, take the guns from every one and shoot an elderly man named Cole Wright through the guts with the words: “Best regards from Wes!” Then they take the money box, throw the captured guns down a ledge (except Cole’s silver Colt) and ride off.

When the heroes try to help Cole, they recognize that they cannot do much for him. Dying he will tell them the story as given in the plot synopsis. He will, however, left out the fact that he shot Wes Ribbon. If the heroes ask how Ribbon could possibly know of the guns, Cole confesses coughing and smiling that he might have bragged a little when he was having a good time in a saloon. Anyway, Cole makes the heroes promise to find the money and give it to his wife, Sarah Wright in Phoenix. Let Cole pledge to a hero with an appropriate motivation, like Honour, Duty or such.

If he still has his gun, he will give it to the heroes, explaining that the left grip has half of the clues to find the hidden money carved in it.



His friend Buck Thompson owes the twin gun which has the other part of the clues engraved on the right grip. The guns are described more detailed in scene 6 On the Ivory trail.

Remember, if the heroes did not recognize the gang as indicated above, neither Cole nor the heroes can know at this time that the attack was staged by Wes Ribbon. However, if the heroes mention the gang name, Cole might draw a connection and will warn them about Wes Ribbon. He will beg them to keep his wife and friend safe, urging them to be fast.

If the bandits have taken the gun, Cole will urge the heroes to follow them and win his gun back, before looking for Thompson. He will warn them of Wes Ribbon as described above.

Cole has not seen Thompson for a couple of years, but he remembers that Buck had a small ranch near Tucson, Arizona. With this last information, Cole dies.

The heroes' options depend on if they were robbed or not, and what they want to do:

- If they have defeated the bandits, and want to start the search for the other gun, go to scene 3 "Where is Mr T." Here you find several possible leads the heroes might want to investigate.
- If they got robbed, they should collect their guns and hunt the bandits down. There is not only the gun but also the money they were paid to protect. Go to scene 2 "Hunting bandits".
- The heroes do not care for a dying man's wish and decide not to get involved. In this case, they do not deserve to call themselves heroes! If they do not have Cole's gun, the adventure stops here, otherwise Wes Ribbon will pay a visit sometime in the future....

Alternative beginnings

Some heroes are unlikely to be hired for riding shot gun on a stage coach. In this case, the GM might consider other options to introduce the heroes to the adventure:

- An easy way to involve the heroes is to have them on the coach as passengers for some reason. The first scene would play out almost exactly like described.
- If the GM wants to skip the whole stage coach thing, he could let Cole stumble over the heroes' night camp after being attacked by the Black Ribbon gang. He

got shot up really bad, but managed to get away from the gang with his gun, holding on to his horse until he virtually falls on the heroes' feet. Before he dies he is able to tell his story as described above, but also warns the heroes about Wes Ribbon and his gang. Remember, Cole will try to make the heroes promise to get the money to his wife. Of course, a short time later, some gang members send by Wes show up to get the gun....

Scene 2 – Hunting bandits

The bandits head for the little town of Quarzito – a 3-days ride from the hold-up site - to meet Ribbon and deliver the gun. The first day, the gang rides hard to shake off followers. They will also erase their tracks from time to time and travel on hard soil to make tracking more difficult. But from the second day on, they continue at a more leisure pace.

The heroes must decide whether to take some mounts from the horse team or to travel to the next coach station. The other passengers will of course vote for the last option, but this will cost the heroes half a day in the pursuit.

On the Trail

As mentioned above, the bandits make it difficult for a posse to follow their tracks on the first day of their flight. To stay on the trail, the heroes must make a **Tough (3) Survival roll** every 4 hours. A failure means they loose 4 hours, searching for tracks. After the first day the difficulty drops to **Average (2)** as the bandits continue in a more casual way.

If the heroes keep pressing the pursuit, let them catch up with bandits on the evening at the second day. On an **Average (2) Perception test**, the heroes will see smoke of the bandit's night camp and can sneak up to ambush them. If unsuccessful, a sentry will see the approaching heroes and will set up an ambush by themselves.

The gang will fight to the death, but if the heroes somehow manage to catch some alive, the bandits will keep their mouths shut.

The GM should avoid that Wes Ribbon and the heroes meet that early during the adventure, even if the bandits make it to Quarzito. In that case, it becomes much harder for the heroes to win the gun back! But if the heroes hurry enough, let them catch the bandits, before that happens!



Scene 3 – Where is Mr T.

“So, you have an ivory-handled gun, part of a treasure map in fact, given a promise and a couple of names! Now, the question is where to begin!”

This scene contains possible encounters and opportunities for finding clues of the whereabouts of Buck Thompson.

Of course, Ribbon will soon find out about the heroes and send people to deal with them. There could be attempted theft of open robbery, or even both. Some possible encounters with the Black Ribbon gang are given below.

The heroes will travel a lot around to gather clues of Buck’s whereabouts; the GM should feel free to have some independent encounters on the trail. The Encounter table in the Old West HEX plug-in provides some ideas for encounters and complications while travelling over land. For an overview over the area see appendix A.

Thompson farm (clue/encounter)

Cole told the heroes about Thompson’s farm near Tucson. A good place to start the search for the other gun would be there. See also appendix A for a nut-shell description of Tucson.

It should not be a problem to ask around in Tucson for finding the Thompson farm. Many locals, like the town marshal, shop owners and some cantina owners, can give a way description. As Mrs Thomson is an active member of the local church, the heroes may even ask the deacon for directions.

If the GM thinks, proper citizens would not give that kind of information to any rag-tag group of drifters, he may ask for **Diplomacy, Investigation or even Intimidation rolls.**

When the heroes approach the Thompson farm, everyone who makes an **Average (2) Perception** roll will see that the Thompsons already have some visitors. A couple of mean and dusty outlaws are pushing a woman around between them. If the heroes make the roll, they have discovered the outlaws in time to possibly surprise them. If the roll was unsuccessful, the bandits see the heroes approaching. The outlaws are members of the Black Ribbon gang, send by Wes to find Buck Thompson and the other gun. An **Easy (1) Perception roll** reveals the all the men are wearing black bandanas, just as the bandits who ambushed the coach. If the heroes do not know about the Black ribbon gang

already, they might begin to suspect something now...

If the outlaws see the heroes coming down the road, they throw the woman down and fan out to expect them. The outlaws will ask the heroes to sod off and mind their own business, or else...

The odds are that the heroes do not comply, so make ready for a Stare down! There are as many outlaws as heroes, use the stats from Scene 1. The outlaws have only their six-guns at hand, as their rifles are out of range in their scabbards. The heroes may dismount before the stare down, remember, there is a -2 penalty on fighting from horse back!

The outlaws will fight to the bitter end in an open shot-out. If ambushed, they will try to retreat when more than half of them are down.

After the heroes defeated the bandits, Jessica Thompson will thank them for their help. She is somewhat shaken from what just happened, but if asked calmly, the heroes get to know the following things:

- The bandits arrived just before the heroes and started asking about Thompson and his silver gun. As Jessica though this suspicious, she did not reply, upon which the outlaws started to manhandle her. Then the heroes arrived...
- Buck Thompson left the farm about two weeks ago to meet Cole Wright. Buck told Jessica, if Cole showed while he was gone, she should tell Cole that Buck waits for him in Yuma. Jessica does not know what this meeting is about although she suspected Cole owes Buck some money which the Thompsons need desperately, as their farm is not going too well and they might be forced to sell the place.
- Jessica has not heard of Buck since he left.
- Jessica does not know about the outlaw past of her husband, the significance of the silver gun or the treasure. She does, however, suspect that Buck not always has been an honest farmer.

Jessica Thompson is a down-to-earth woman in her early forties. After a while she will calm down and ask questions herself, as she wants to know what this is all about. If the heroes tell about the gang and the treasure, she will ask



them to find her husband and protect him from the outlaws while searching for the money. If asked what she is going to do, she will just say that she “will be out of sight for a while. Buck will know what that means!”

If the heroes managed to catch some gang members alive, it will be difficult to extract any information from them. On a **Tough (3) Intimidation roll** the bandits will confirm to be members of the Black Ribbon gang. Each additional success will reveal one of the following things (of course only if asked about):

- 1 additional success: Their boss, Wes Ribbon, send them...
- 2 additional successes: ...to get a silver gun from Thompson.
- 3 additional successes: They were supposed to meet him in Yuma to deliver the gun.

The wife is Wright (clue)

The heroes could decide to find Cole’s wife in Phoenix and ask her about Buck Thompson. See appendix A for a nut-shell description of Phoenix.

It should not be too difficult to find the Wright family, the town is quite small. Most buildings look very new, many are still unpainted. When entering Main Street with its new store fronts, the heroes cannot miss a large sign reading “Wrights General Store”. If they are asking around for Wright, most people will think the heroes want to equip themselves and send them directly to the general store.

The store is open during the day, Mrs Wright and an assistant attending the customers. If the heroes arrive after 7:00pm, Mrs Wright has lock up and gone home. Successful use of **Investigation** or **Diplomacy skills** will reveal the Wright’s home address.

When the heroes enter the general store, they will see a group of ladies standing by the counter deeply engaged in conversation. A huge, brawny guy with an apron, obviously the helping hand in the store is carrying around some heavy goods. As soon as they become aware of the heroes, the ladies will stop chatting and stare at them. After a short, but awkward silence, one of them will approach the heroes. The lady introduces herself as Lydia Wright and asks what she can do for them, all under the watchful looks of the other people in the store. Especially the brawny guy, Gus Stanton, will watch the heroes suspiciously.

The heroes will be quite surprised to find Lydia Wright to be a young beauty, about halve the age of Cole. Friendly and charming, Lydia is Phoenix’ main rumour-monger as many of the local ladies step by the store to share gossip. This way Lydia has some control over the gossip to prevent any ill-meant comments on her unusual marriage.

The heroes might not want to talk to Mrs Wright in front of her customers, in which case she asks them to follow her into the store room in the back. Gus, who is Lydia’s not-too-smart big brother, will linger at the open door to keep an eye on the heroes. If told about her husband’s fate, Lydia will be devastated. She truly loved Cole, so the news will let her burst into tears. When this happens, Gus will storm in, suspecting some foul play by the heroes. Depending on the heroes, the situation may escalate into a brawl (use the Black smith template from the Old West HEX plug-in for Gus) if the heroes cannot convince him fast, as Lydia will need some minutes before she has gathered herself enough to stop Gus. After this incident, Lydia asks Gus to close the store for the day and invite the heroes to her home at the edge of town to talk undisturbed.

While Lydia is preparing a hot meal for her guests, the heroes may ask questions. She will not join the dinner but keeps herself occupied with all sort of host duties (seeing to that everyone has enough to eat and drink and the like). Some time during the dinner, Gus will also show up, apologizing for his behaviour (if he actually attacked some one).

Lydia can give the following information if asked about the topics:

- Buck Thompson came by about 2 weeks ago to see Cole, who was on a business trip then.
- Buck could not wait for Cole, so he told Lydia that Cole should try to meet Buck in Yuma as soon as possible.
- Lydia has no idea of her husband’s earlier “career” as bank robber. Confronted with it, she will not believe this without a proof.

If the heroes tell about the treasure, Lydia still is too upset to care very much, but Gus will be all ears. He will ask all kinds of questions about the treasure, may be so much that the heroes begin to feel a little uncomfortable. Gus has no connection to Wes Ribbon and his gang; he is

just excited about the prospect of big money. But the heroes might get the wrong impression. Gus on the other hand does not trust the heroes too much about delivering the money as promised (if the heroes told the complete story).

If the heroes warn Mrs Wright about the Black Ribbon gang, it is Gus again who responds, insuring the heroes that he will not let anything happen to his sister. He does not want some of the heroes to stay and watch over Lydia, so he makes sure the heroes do not feel obliged to do so.

If Gus acts that way due to pride (“I can handle to watch my sister!”) or if he has secret plans about following the heroes on their search, just to make things more complicated, is up to the GM.

Rumours in Yuma (clue)

At some time the heroes will arrive in Yuma (see appendix A for a nut-shell description), searching for Thompson or even Wes Ribbon. There several leads and encounters which may help them to find Buck Thompson:

Newspaper

If the heroes purchase the local newspaper, they will find an article about a failed bank robbery a couple of days ago. The article praises the local police for catching the robbers without any loss of life, and give dates about the up-coming trial. It also lists the names of the robbers, of which one is a certain Buck Thompson. The heroes might want to check out the prison at the Marshal’s office!

If the heroes are stumbling about without a clue about what to do, the GM can use the newspaper to put them on the track again. Maybe a newspaper boy is announcing the particular article, or people discuss the up-coming trial in a coffee-house.

Local rumours: Thompson

The heroes might want to roam saloons and cantinas to find Thompson. Most people have heard about the bank robbery (see above), but not all know the names of the bandits. Let the heroes make an **Average (2) Streetwise roll** per day to see if a person has heard about Thompson’s involvement in the robbery.

Looking for Ribbon

If the heroes managed to interrogate the Ribbon gang members at the Thompson farm, they might have heard that Wes Ribbon is in Yuma.

This is not entirely correct, as he hides out in the small village beside Fort Yuma on the other bank of the Colorado River.

To get this information, the heroes must ask the right people in the seedier side of town, and those who know may not be willing to tell about it fearing Ribbon’s revenge. But if the heroes make an **Impossible (6) Streetwise roll**, they actually get the name of the cantina where Ribbon hides, a joint called Rosalita’s. See **Confronting Ribbon** below.

If the heroes fail the Streetwise roll by 3 or more, Wes gets to know that someone is looking for him in Yuma. He will send a couple of gunslingers to get rid of the nosey heroes. The GM decides how these thugs will approach the heroes: an open duel, back shooting at night or setting up a trap in a back alley.

Confronting Ribbon

If the heroes find out where Ribbon is, they may decide to confront or eliminate him. If they seek out the Rosalita’s cantina they will find an adobe structure which houses a large cantina on the main floor and several rooms-to-rent on the second. The main clientele are day workers, low ranking soldier and travellers with a small purse, a perfect mix of people for outlaws to blend in.

Remember, the heroes do not know what Wes Ribbon looks like, and he is not so stupid to wear his black bandana openly or use his real name in town. Chance is that he will recognize the heroes before they can nail him (either because a companion tells him or because they ask about him). He will try to get away while his gang members cover him. Wes is a wanted outlaw, so he will not risk a shoot-out which could arouse attention.

The GM should let Wes get away to make the adventure climax more memorable, but if the heroes come up with a really good plan, they should earn the satisfaction of defeating/catching Wes Ribbon. In that case, the GM can use Ned Hollander, Ribbon’s ruthless lieutenant, who now is not only driven by greed but also by revenge! Use the same stats as for Ribbon (given in scene 8).

Marshal office

Whether they found out about Thompson being in jail or just because they want to talk to the local peace officer, the heroes will find Thompson and his fellow bank robbers in the custody of the town marshal. Go to scene 4.



Possible encounters:

The GM may throw in any encounter he may seem fit to spice up the time in town:

- Black Ribbon gang members may recognize the heroes and start a fight.
- A young gunfighter wants to boost his reputation and challenges the heroes' most renown gunslinger to a duel at high noon. Or may be an old enemy comes to cause trouble for the heroes.
- A little boy picks the pockets of the heroes, relieving them of the silver gun. The resulting chase leads the heroes to a run-down saloon owned by the father of the boy, who does not like strangers accusing his boy of thievery. The local customers are clearly on the side of the saloon owner. The heroes should tread lightly or they may end in the cell next to Thompson or worse!

Scene 4 – He's in the jailhouse now

"Here you are, searching all over Yuma for Buck Thompson and he is right under your nose, detained in jail. Let's hope the marshal is a reasonable fellow..."

The jail is a quite new brick-stone building attached to the marshal's office. When the heroes enter, Marshal Gus Caruthers and one of his deputies, Jacob Munz, are inside the office, doing paper work and drinking coffee.

Caruthers will want to know why the heroes would like to talk to Thompson. The heroes can tell the truth or lie about their true aims. An **Easy (1) Streetwise roll** will make it quite clear that Marshal Caruthers does not care, but expects a little "visit fee", about \$5. The heroes have to leave their guns in the office, of cause.

Meeting Thompson

Munz will lead the heroes into the jail, where he calls for Thompson to step to the bars. Munz points out some chairs the heroes might use while talking to Thompson. The deputy will then step back to allow a private conversation, but will keep an eye on the group.

Thompson is curious about the heroes and will ask what this is about. The heroes can answer anyway they wish, but an honest answer will serve them best as Thompson wants them to find the money for the wives' sake.

If they earned Buck Thompson's trust and ask the right questions, the heroes can get the following information:

- *"Why did you rob the bank?"*

The Thompson farm does not so well, and Buck is deeply in debt to a cattle baron in Tucson, who now demands pay-back or the Thompson farm as compensation. Buck tried to contact Cole Wright to retrieve the money, but when he could not, he lost his head and rounded up some old "friends" to get money another way. The bank job was too rushed; the heroes know the rest of the story.

- *"Where is the treasure?"*

Hidden in a strange cave in the Superstitious Mountains. Buck does not remember the exact location, that's what the guns are for.

- *"What about the strange cave?"*

One night, when Buck and Cole were camping after they took the money from Ribbon, they accidentally found the entrance of a cave in a cliff side. Around the cave entrance there were old paintings, probably made by natives. As they were curious, they went into the cave to explore it. After a few meters the cave looked worked on, the tunnel became more smooth and regular, but long forgotten and unused. There were several chambers which contain some hindrances (or traps) which Wes and Cole made it through. After a couple of those chambers, the two of them decided to place the money in this strange cave. They made some notes about how to get by the traps (noted on the gun handles) on their way out. They added several clues on the gun handles to find the cave entrance again, when needed.

Buck recalls the cave as a creepy place and has no idea about its purpose. He and Cole did not explore the whole complex; they just crossed the first couple of chambers. The GM should not give away too much to keep the tension, as Buck does not recall every thing. It is some years ago since he has been there, so he recalls more impressions than facts.

- *"Where is the gun?"*

The marshal took all guns, what did you expect?

- *"How does Ribbon know of the silver guns?"*

Buck will be surprised as he still thinks Ribbon dead. If the heroes have no idea why, Buck will tell them the story as described in the Plot synopsis.



Getting the gun!

Thompson does not have the gun, as the law men disarmed the bank robbers. This means that the heroes actually have no need to talk to Buck at all, as the person they have to ask about the silver gun is Marshal Caruthers. The heroes do not even come with a plausible story of why they need the gun, as long as they pay, as an **Average (2) Streetwise roll** will reveal. But all they can pay for is information about the gun, as Caruthers has sold it to a rich European traveller – “*a Count Brashtash, or something like that!*”

The named Count was very interested in getting a real desperado’s gun, that it was a silver one made it even more interesting. Caruthers can tell with satisfaction that he got a good price. If the heroes inquire about where to find the Count, the marshal will tell them that he was staying at the Grand hotel, but is supposed to leave Yuma with the train to the west coast today. If they hurry, the heroes will just make it to the station in time!

Scene 5 – 3:10 from Yuma

The GM should give the impression that the heroes really must hurry to get onto the train. They have to buy tickets first (the cheapest costs \$2, \$4 if they want to take their horses on the stable car), but they should make it on the train in time. The GM should not allow the heroes to get to the Count before the train leaves Yuma!

Finding the Count!

It is not too difficult to find out in which car the Count travels, as he has a rented a whole Pullman car for his journey to the west coast. However, it is not so easy to get an audience. First, the heroes must get past the mail car which is guarded by two surly fellows of the mail service (no connections to the Count, just the standard precautions). The guards, however, are otherwise quite relaxed as there is no large amount of money in the safe. An **Average (2) Diplomacy roll** and \$2 or a bottle of booze will get the heroes past the mail car. After that, the heroes will have to persuade one of the Counts service men to let them speak to him. This requires a **Tough (3) Diplomacy or Intimidate roll**, a good, adventurous story why the heroes want to see the Count lowers the difficulty at GM discretion.

The proposition

The Count is a jolly fellow who is delighted by the thought of genuine westerners seeking him out for help. His reaction depends on who the heroes are and what they tell the Count.

The best for the heroes would be to tell the truth of the quest as the Count gets even more excited at the prospect of adventure. But even though he already has decided for himself to give the heroes what they need, he will demand a price. Not a monetary one (the Count is richer than most Americans), but something more valuable!

Count Bartasž is eager to compete with gunfighters and gamblers. The price he demands is a little competition of some sort. The winner of the competition will get the gun. If the heroes told him about their treasure hunt, the count is so intrigued that he will allow the heroes to make a copy of the handle, even if they lose the contest.

The competition depends on the impression the heroes give Count Bartasž about themselves:

- **Gambler:** The Count wants to play Poker with real Westerners. This could be a simple, opposed **Gambling roll**, or a played-out match using the Gambling rules from the Old West HEX supplement.
- **Gunslinger:** The Count loves dime novels about heroic gunslingers whipping out their six shooters fast as a lightning to protect a lady’s honour. He proposes a Fast shooting contest on cans on top of the train roof. This is handled like a timed duel (see Old West HEX); each contestant has 4 cans to shoot down. The one who finishes first, wins. Hitting a can on the top of a train wagon has a -4 penalty.
- **Cowboy:** The Count has learned the art of throwing a lariat. He’d like to compete with a real cowboy on top of the train roof. The contestants must succeed in catching a deer’s head (a hunting trophy). They throw alternately, until one contestant succeeds and one fails. The penalty for the **Throwing roll** is -4.
- **Stout hero:** The Count likes to have a drinking contest with hard liquor.



The contestants can drink a shot per Body rating without ill effect. For every shot taken after that, the drinker must make a **Body roll**, the difficulty is the number of drinks minus the body rating. If someone fails this roll, he passes out.

- **Strong hero:** The Count wants to show off his strength in an arm wrestling contest. Each contestant receives 3 counters, which represents how close their hand is to the table. The contestants make an **opposed Strength roll**. For each success the winner can take 1 counter from the loser and adds them to his own. The contestant, who loses all counters, loses the contest.
- **Native hero:** The Count wants to compete with a brave in tomahawk throwing on top of the train. The servants of the count set up a target (a serving board with target rings painted on it). Each contestant has three attempts. The penalty for throwing on top of a train is -4. Count the successes of each contestant; the highest total of the 3 throws determines the winner. Losing or winning the Count insists also on smoking a calumet with the Brave hero.
- **Reporter:** The Count would love to have a picture of himself accompanied by real Westerner (the heroes). To make a quality picture the hero must have the appropriate equipment and an **Average (2) Art: Photography roll**.

The contests should be fun, as the Count is competitive, but can lose honourably, admiring the skill of his adversary. Even if the heroes lose the contest, they still may be allowed to have a look at the gun, making notes of the clues. Especially, if the Count enjoyed himself during the contest!

Count Thomas Bartasz
(Noble tourist / Honour)

Style: 0 Health: 4
 Body: 3 Charisma: 4 Dexterity: 3
 Intelligence: 2 Strength: 4 Willpower: 2
 Size: 0 Initiative: 5
 Move: 7 Defense: 6
 Perception: 4 Stun: 3

Skills:

Athletics 7, Brawl 5, Fast-draw 5, Firearms 6, Guts 6, Gambling 5, Melee 8, Ride 7

Talents / Resources:

Wealthy 3

Flaws:

Naive

Weapons:

Cane rapier 2L Attack: 10L

Punch 0N Attack: 5L

The Count is an impressive figure in his early forties, but with the fitness of a man half his age. He always dresses in expensive, immaculate clothes suiting the occasion. In the wild the Count will wear tailored outdoor clothing with a newly acquired Stetson, on society parties he will wear the Hussar uniform of his regiment back home.

A theft interrupted

When the heroes follow the count's servant into the freight car to fetch the gun, they surprise Lonny McAvoy and his gang of thugs in stealing the gun (stats see below). Lonny orders his thugs to cover his retreat to the stable car, hoping to reach his horse and get off the train.

The bandits will open fire to force the heroes to take cover and give them time to fall back. As soon as they get out of the transport wagon, the bandits will turn and run towards the stable car.

The GM should make this encounter as exciting as possible, fighting and running in and on a train, trying to catch an outlaw without losing the gun or hurting anyone not involved (the heroes should be careful when shooting in a crowded passenger car). Maybe The Bull engages the heroes in a brawl to buy Lonny some time. Or the panicking passengers shut the doors to their car, so the pursuit continues on the roof of the train. The GM should install a -2 penalty on any action on the roof. Jumping from roof to roof is an **Average (2) Athletics or Easy (1) Acrobatics roll**.



Lonny McAvoy**(Conman / Survival)**

Style: 0 Health: 4
 Body: 2 Charisma: 3 Dexterity: 3
 Intelligence: 2 Strength: 2 Willpower: 2
 Size: 0 Initiative: 5
 Move: 4 Defense: 5
 Perception: 4 Stun: 2

Skills:

Con 6, Firearms4, Larceny (Lock-picking) 5 (7), Ride 6

Talents / Resources:**Flaws:**

Yellow

Weapons:

S&W M1 (5) 1L Attack: 6L 10/20/40/41+

Punch ON Attack: 2N

Lonny McAvoy is a little weasel of a man. Known in certain circles as a crack lock pick, Lonny usually makes his living as a con artist. Ribbon hired Lonny and the Bull to fetch the silver gun in the Count's possession.

Gerald "The Bull" Flint**(Fist fighter / Duty)**

Style: 0 Health: 7
 Body: 4 Charisma: 2 Dexterity: 2
 Intelligence: 2 Strength: 4 Willpower: 2
 Size: 1 Initiative: 4
 Move: 6 Defense: 5
 Perception: 4 Stun: 5

Skills:

Athletic 6, Brawl 8, Guts , Ride 4

Talents / Resources:

Brawny, Iron jaw, Knock-out blow 2*

Flaws:

Illiterate

Weapons:

Punch ON Attack: 11N

The Bull is Lonny's muscle. Ever since, Lonny helped him to get away from his humiliating carnival boxing job, he has been devoted to Lonny. The Bull does not use weapons but relies on his brutish size and power, using his fists (*+2 for stunning an opponent).

2-4 Black Ribbon gang members**(Outlaws / Greed)**

Style: 0 Health: 4
 Body: 2 Charisma: 2 Dexterity: 2
 Intelligence: 2 Strength: 2 Willpower: 2
 Size: 0 Initiative: 4
 Move: 4 Defense: 4
 Perception: 4 Stun: 2

Skills:

Brawl 5, Fast-draw 5, Firearms 5, Guts 6, Ride 6

Talents / Resources:**Flaws:**

Outlaw

Weapons:

Remington Frontier .44 3L Attack: 8L 15/30/60/61+

Punch ON Attack: 5L

Wes Ribbon sent these men with Lonny as back-up, and to ensure the conman and his friend keep their end of the trade. The GM should adjust the number to the prowess of the heroes.

The Train

For floor (and roof) plans of the train, see appendix B. The sequence of cars is as follows:

1. **Engine:** The working space of the train conductor and the stoker. Neither man is too anxious to become a hero, so any order at gun point will be followed.
2. **Stable car:** The bandits will try to reach their horses in the stable car. One of them will force the engine crew to slow down the train to leave it with their horses. If the heroes did not bring along their own horses, they should try to stop the bandits in this or the second silver gun will be hard to retrieve.
3. **Passenger car:** The passenger cars are stuffed with travellers, men women and children, and baggage. Running in the aisles is difficult and only cold-hearted heroes risk gun fire in the cramped space. Note that the floor plan of the train show only 2 passenger cars for space reasons!
4. **Passenger car:** as above.
5. **Passenger car:** as above.
6. **Freight car:** This is the place where the heroes surprise Lonny and his thugs, as most of the Counts souvenirs, among them the silver gun, are here stored in crates.
7. **Mail car:** The mail car is occupied by two men of the post service. If stats are needed use the Guard archetype from p.62, Old West HEX and replace the shotgun with a Winchester carbine.
8. **Private car:** The private quarters of the Count contain much more comfort than the average traveller is accustomed to; from a small kitchen, a cosy seat group, dinner table and desk there even is a private toilet. There are six beds in the car, but only four are occupied by the Count, his cook and the two man-servants.
9. **Caboose:** This is the living and working place of the train's brake man and assistant.

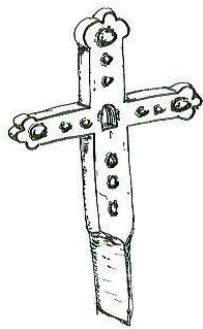


Right handle clues

II. Pedro Garcia Jiminez holds the key in holy ground.

The second clue becomes quite obvious (I hope) as the heroes come to Maricopa. The “holy ground” is of course the cemetery at the Old Spanish church.

The heroes might already suspect that they should look for a grave with the name Pedro Garcia Jiminez on it. When they find it, an **Average (2) Investigation or Perception roll** will reveal that some there is a small depression right beside the grave stone as if someone dug a hole there and filled it up again. If the heroes start to dig, they find a decorated silver cross of about 8 inches length wrapped in clothing. A closer look will show that the cross is not as valuable as it first looks. It is neither made of pure silver, nor are the stones real gems, rather quite cheap glass fakes. One stone, in the intersection of the cross, is obviously missing as someone drilled a hole through the cross. The shape of the hole looks like a doorway with a rounded top. Another peculiar feature of the cross is its foot which is filed into triangular profile for the last 2 inches.



This cross is the “key” mentioned in the clue, the heroes will need it later to locate the entrance of the treasure’s hiding place.

The heroes might not understand the meaning of this clue at once, but may want to talk to someone who knows the town. They will be sent to the local padre Francesco Salazar. The padre does know his local history. If the heroes mention Pedro Garcia Jiminez, the padre recalls the man as a local farmer who died over 15 years ago and who was buried in this cemetery. The names of Thompson or Wright mean nothing to the padre, although

he might have heard the usual rumours about the black Ribbon gang.

IV. Aim with the key from the tip of the Finger of God.

The heroes are supposed to find a rock formation known as “El Dedo del Dios” or the Finger of God. If a hero makes a **Tough (3) Knowledge or Intelligence roll**, he has heard about this terrain feature. The GM may reduce the difficulty for heroes with more specific skills or appropriate backgrounds (hailing from Arizona or even the area). Otherwise, they may consult maps of the area (no such a thing in Maricopa, but Phoenix has a land office with the right maps) or ask around. On an **Average (2) Diplomacy, Investigation or Streetwise roll** the heroes will find some one who knows the Finger of God if they are in Maricopa. Increase the Difficulty by 1-2, depending on where the heroes ask for the Finger of God. Generally, the farther away from the mountains the less likely it is to find someone who knows the place.

When the heroes approach the Finger of God, they need little imagination for why this formation is called that way. The rocks look like a fist with the index finger pointing to the sky. The heroes may reason that they have to climb up the rock spire (“tip of the finger”) to find the next clue. The spire forming the pointing finger is about 12 yards high. An **extended Tough (3) Athletics roll (5 successes)** are required to reach the top of the spire. If a hero does not get at least 1 success in a roll he falls down (1L damage per 3yards), unless he has some precautions in place, like a securing rope or something similar, to avoid a fall.

On top of the spire, the heroes find that someone has carved a circle about 1 foot in diameter into the rock. In the middle of the circle is a small hole, triangular in shape. Hopefully, the heroes thought of bringing the cross (the key) up with them, as it fits perfect into the hole, standing upright. When aiming through the hole in the cross, the heroes look at a cliff side about 400 yards away. An **Easy (1) Perception roll** will reveal an opening in the cliff, partly hidden by some brush, at the exact place the cross is aiming at. Go to Scene 7 “Into the dark”.



VI.



The symbol indicates the right passage in the Turning room (see Scene 7). A hero with an appropriate background or Knowledge skill might recognize the symbol (see Scene 7 “The Turning room” for more information).

VIII: “Altar pit”

Cole and Buck called the depression in front of a sacrifice stone the altar pit (see Scene 7 the Fuming hall) This is the place where they put the bags with the money.

What about the Ribbon gang?

After he lost the other gun to the heroes, Wes Ribbon decides to let them do the hard work and just snatch the money from them after they found it. Ribbon sends two men after the heroes to shadow them and see where they are heading, while he will follow these scouts with the rest of the gang at a safe distance, only to strike fast when the heroes have found the money.

The two men following the heroes are a renegade Apache scout named Cimino and an experienced tracker named Joe Quinn. The scouts are very proficient to stay out of sight, but if the heroes explicitly announce to watch their back, let them make a Perception roll against the Stealth of the scouts, who should gain some bonuses to their roll. On a success, the heroes will know that someone is following them. But even if they see their followers, the heroes might suspect just an Indian raiding party as Cimino obviously is Apache. The scouts will avoid the heroes when approached.

Author’s note: In case you wonder why two bank robbers make such an effort to hide some money; I just like the idea of a treasure map, following clues from step to step towards the goal. Maybe Thompson is very fond of dime novels and convinced Wright to do it that way. Anyway, if you think the treasure hunt is too pulpy or silly, just make it shorter. There is no need to hide the money in an old cave complex for the sake of the adventure, but it certainly makes it more fun in my opinion!

Scene 7 – Into the dark

“You suddenly remember some Apache stories about a hole leading down into the lower world which is located in the Superstition Mountains. Winds blowing from the hole are supposed to be the cause of severe dust storms. It is just a story, but somehow this hole in the cliff side gives you a chill!”

After locating the entrance to the cave the heroes must find a way to reach it. The cliff side is about 40 yards high; the hole is about 3 yards below the top rim. Luckily, the heroes can ride around the cliff side and get upon it from the southeastern slopes of the hills. This will take about one hour. The GM may ask for **Ride rolls** as the slopes are quite steep now and then.

The entrance

On top of the cliff the heroes will search the cliff’s edge to find the opening. They may be surprised to find a narrow path from the cliff top down to the opening. The path looks artificial but erosion and brush growth has made it almost unrecognizable. The path is too narrow for horses, so these have to stay behind. There is enough brush and rocks on the cliff top to secure them there.

To climb down the path an **Easy (1) Athletics or Acrobatics (Balance) roll** is required. A failure results in 1N damage and a high pulse (do not kill of the heroes now by letting them fall off the cliff, there are enough more dramatic chances for that later!).

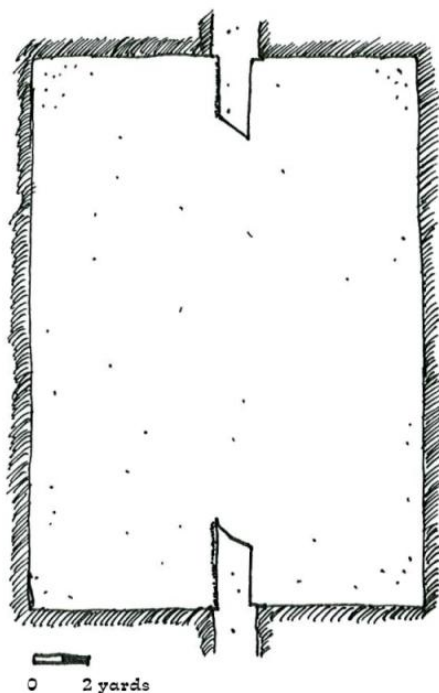
The entrance is weathered enough pass as a natural opening, but closer inspection will reveal that it was artificially enlarged to about 2 yards in width and 4 yards in height. There are some old paintings around the entrance similar in style to paintings of the local tribes. The meaning however is not obvious, only a **Hard (3) Knowledge (Indian customs) roll** will reveal that the markings might be a warning!

An unlit hallway of the same dimensions as the entrance opening leads down into the cliff; the heroes will need some kind of illumination. The first few yards of the hallway are as weathered as the entrance, but after a while it is obvious that it was hewn into the surrounding rock. The

hallway seems to lead straight downwards, as there are regular, but wide steps. On a **Hard (4) Perception roll** the heroes will also catch a faint sulfur smell coming up from the hallway. Superstitious heroes might compare walking down the hallway with descending to hell!

The Quick sand chamber

After following the hallway for about 50 yards, it opens up and the heroes enter a large chamber. The walls of the chamber are smooth rock and about 5 yards high, the ceiling is slightly domed. The floor is covered with sand; and a walkway, protruding barely ½ inch from the sand, leads from the entrance several yards towards the middle of the chamber where it suddenly stops. When standing at the end of this walkway the torch light (or other light source the heroes have with them) reveals another walkway beginning about 15 yards away from the first one, disappearing into the dark. See map below, appendix C contains a GM map.



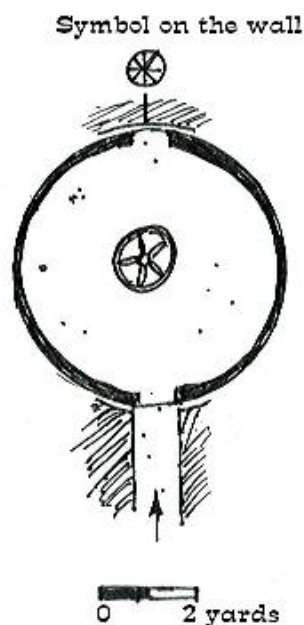
If one of the heroes steps onto the sand, he will sick rapidly (3 rounds until the unfortunate disappears). Only a **Tough (3) Strength roll** will get him out of the sand. If more than one person is trying to pull out the unfortunate, use the highest Strength, but reduce the Difficulty by 1 per additional helper (minimum Easy 1).

There is only quick sand between the two obvious walkways; the only way to cross the chamber and avoid the quick sand is to follow a path hidden about 1 foot under the sand. Clue V shows this hidden path as a dashed line. The hidden path is about 2 ft. wide, so there is not much margin to step wrong. Anyway, it is possible to probe the path by using a stick or something similar. Using just your own feet is difficult as the hidden path lies quite deep and one can easily get off balance when probing the wrong place (**Average (2) Acrobatics or Agility roll**).

After crossing the quick sand the heroes can leave the chamber through another doorway similar to the one they came from.

The Turning room

After a 10 yards long hallway the heroes enter another room. This one is round, about 6 yards in diameter. Opposite to the heroes' entrance, there is another doorway, but it seems that this one is blocked by a stone wall with a symbol carved in it. See the map below, which shows the room as it appears when the heroes enter (the GM map is in appendix C):



In the middle of the room there is a large wheel, which will turn the whole room around its mid axis if the heroes use it. In this case their entrance will disappear as the room turns clockwise away from it. After a short while an

opening will appear in the other doorway. Above it there is the following symbol carved into the stone:



If the heroes continue to turn the wheel they will come over a second and a third opening. The second one has with the following symbol above it:



The third opening shows this symbol:



If the heroes continue turning, the room now has moved by 180 degrees, effectively standing in the same position as they entered. Anyway, the room will rotate back into its starting position 10 minutes after it was moved for the last time, regardless of its present position.

The symbols are similar to those used by some tribes of the South West. Heroes of such a tribe may recognize the symbols with an **Easy (1) Intelligence roll**; other heroes will need an appropriate **Knowledge skill (Difficulty Hard (3))** to know the symbols. Additional successes grant the hero a little more information about their meaning as given below:



Water: change, blessing, but also hazard




Wheel: completeness, return




Mountain range: destination




Cactus: desert, thirst

The heroes have to decide which way they want to follow. As indicated by clue VI, the way marked with the mountain range  is the right one and leads to their destination. If the heroes choose this way they can follow the hallway for a couple of yards before it turns to

the left. Right after the turn there is a turning wheel on the wall, which can be used to rotate the Turning room for accessing it (remember, the room will automatically return to its starting position after about 10 minutes). After another few yards the hallway leads to the Pitfall chamber (see below). The sulfur smell has become a little stronger, recognizable by making an **Average (2) Perception roll**.

If the heroes choose the opening with the water symbol , they enter a trap. Following the hallway, the heroes will step onto a trap door which simply gives away and the unfortunate drop some 20 yards down into a deep cavern lake. It is possible to cling to the rough walls but the water is ice cold and any light has probably been extinguished by the drop. This makes the climb up **Very Hard (5)**; **5 successes of an Extended Athletics roll** are necessary to reach the trapdoor. Any failure means the hero falls back into the water. Remember, the Turning room resets itself after about 10 minutes, blocking the exit, so the climb is under time pressure. If they stay in the water, however, the cold will kill them quite fast.

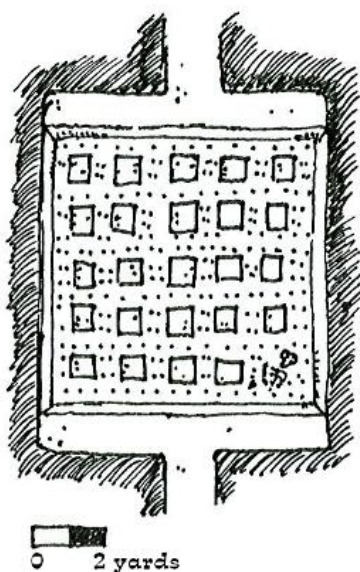
The way marked by the cactus  is another false lead. By activating a stepping stone (indicated on the GM map in appendix C), the Turning room will instantly rotate back into its starting position, blocking the way out of the false hallway. If the heroes do not have any crowbars or other tools with which they can work on the Turning room to rotate it back, they have no way of getting out and eventually die of thirst.

The Pitfall chamber

The heroes enter a chamber which is divided by a large pit, about 8 yards wide. The pit is about 5 yards deep; the bottom of the pit is covered with long, sharp stone spikes. The obvious way to cross the pit is to jump on top of clay pillars protruding from the pit. There are 5 rows of them which 5 pillars each. The heroes will recognize that not all pillars may carry their weight: the first pillar from the right in the first row has collapsed when someone stepped on it! The impaled skeleton in the pit tells tales!

The majority of the pillars are just hollow clay structures which will not support the weight of a

grown man, not to speak of a full-grown man jumping on one. But one pillar in each row is made of stone covered with clay, thus able to support a man's weight easily. There is no way of knowing just by looking, as the stone pillars appear identical to the clay pillars. Luckily, the heroes have clue VII from the gun handle. The numbers indicate the save stone pillar for each row, counted from the left. All the heroes have to do is to jump upon the save pillars to cross the pit. Each jump requires an **Average (2) Athletics or Acrobatics roll**. A failure means that the hero did not manage to land on top of the pillar, but now clings to its top. Another **Average (2) Athletics roll** is necessary to climb up. This roll can be repeated until the hero manages to climb up or he rolls a Critical failure. Falling into the pit will cause 8L damage (passive defense only). Having a security rope stretched over the pit after the first crossing, reduces the Difficulty for the tests to **Easy (1)**.



If the heroes come up with some other good plan to cross the pit, the GM should allow it. The walls however are smooth and seamless, thus not suitable for free-climbing! On the other hand, the stone is soft enough to hammer in spikes on which one can climb and secure ropes.

After crossing the pit, the heroes can proceed down the next hallway, which descends somewhat steeper than the others before. The sulfur smell now is easily recognizable (**Easy (1) Perception roll**). A slight gush of warm wind every now and then seems to come up from

where ever the hallway leads to. After about 80 yards the heroes enter the Fuming hall.

The Fuming hall

The Fuming hall is a large, mostly natural cave. The hall is the origin of the sulfur stench; the floor of the hall is scattered by muddy patches which belch out sulfuric gasses. These fumes are combustible; any open flame or gun fired within 1-2 yards will ignite the fumes and cause an explosive combustion 2 yards in radius. Every person caught in the explosion radius takes 5L damage (passive defense only), easily inflammable materials may catch fire. A rift in the ceiling of the hall causes ventilation which thins out these gasses enough to prevent the entire hall from blowing up.

There are two stairways leading down from the entrance to the floor of the hall. The hall floor is rather smooth but dusty, with exception of the fuming, bubbling mud patches; every now and then there is a small rock formation varying in height between 4 to 9 feet, some reaching up to the ceiling about 15 yards high. On the other end of the hall there is another pair of stairways leading up to some sort of balcony, 4 yards above the floor.

If the heroes climb up the balcony they will find another doorway and some kind of sacrifice stone with a small pit in front of it. Right beside the doorway there is a pile of what seems to be ancient torches. The doorway itself leads into a natural cave system which continues deeper and deeper into the rock. Superstitious Indian heroes will not wander down these caves without a very good reason as they suspect Evil spirits and demons might live in these caves. The premonition of something evil will be reinforced by taking a look at the sacrifice stone which indeed is the altar mentioned in the last clue. The stone is stained dark, probably by blood spilled in rituals long forgotten. A narrow drain leading from the stone to the pit was probably designed to lead the blood from the sacrifice stone into the pit. The GM should reward Style points for superstitious or faithful characters that are repelled by this obviously evil place and act accordingly.

Nevertheless, if one of the heroes dares to reach into the pit, he will find a saddlebag and two money bags 2 feet down on its bottom. The

saddlebag contains the money Wes, Cole and Buck robbed once. The exact amount should be determined by the GM. It should be enough to be tempting, but not unreasonable much. Remember, most people in the Old West earn not much more than \$30-\$40 a month. I would suggest something between \$ 10 000 and \$50 000, mostly in dollar bills and gold coins.

Just when the heroes find their prize, slapping their backs and start to celebrate, a rifle shot booms and a bullet whistles past their heads. It seems the bad guys have arrived (see scene 8)!

***Author's note:** I left the origin and purpose of the complex open by intention. The GM can use it in further adventures as he seems fit. Maybe it is a way down to the Hollow Earth and once was guarded by some priests of a long lost culture; maybe the traps were made to keep creatures from coming up to the surface world. Or the cave system is the prison of some powerful evil spirit which was contained by ancient blood rituals, and now the heroes have unwillingly broken some kind of a seal. A more mundane (but nevertheless pulpy) explanation could be that the complex was made by some Meso-American Indians who were exiled a long time ago and who set themselves up as overlords of the local tribes, rules by terror and fear..., until a revolt wiped them out!*

By the way, the opening text of this scene is based on an actual Apache legend!

Scene 8 – Finale

“Dammit! Just when you thought, you got it; the bad guys start to swarm all over you! It looks like you have to shoot it out, as the only other option is getting lost in the caves behind you!”

Wes Ribbon and his gang followed the heroes through the complex, arriving just in time to see the heroes lifting up the money. Wes has enough of messing around and closes in to kill the heroes and retrieve the money. The bandits will spread out to attack from two sides, using rocks for cover. It seems that the heroes have to make a stand on the balcony. Stats for Wes Ribbon, Cimino and Joe Quinn are given below. For the rest of the gang use the stats from Scene 1, but only half of the bandits are equipped with their rifles, the rest has only six guns at hand. The GM should adjust the number of gang members to the condition of the heroes; without the clues the gang may have lost some members on their way

in. A good number of thugs would be one or two per hero in addition to Wes, Cimino and Joe.

The Fuming hall offers plenty of opportunity for heroic and break-neck action. The heroes might have found out about the fuming patches, and could use them to hurt the bandits. Remember, that firing a gun close to a patch causes an explosion. And the bandits are not aware of that fact! Forcing the bandits close to patches could easily turn the tide in favour to the heroes.

The heroes might also use fire-arrows, throw torches from the pile found beside the doorway, or other flammable items to ignite the mud patches.

The GM should make this an exciting and hard battle. The heroes will be pressed as bandits try to reach the balcony over both stairways. There should be enough heroics and desperate measures during the fight. Maybe the explosions cause the hall to partially cave in, or the ground tears open in large gaps, releasing even more gas! A collapsing complex will result in a panic as everyone wants to get out.

The Aftermath

When the gun smoke (or dust) settles, the heroes might have won a great prize. If they are true heroes they will keep their word and deliver the money to the wives of Thompson and Wright, in which case they will be awarded a percentage. I leave it to the GM to decide how much money the heroes will get. If they decide to keep the money, so be it. Reduce the EP reward accordingly. However, if it becomes known that the heroes have this much money, there will be people who would like to relieve them of it. Maybe Gus Stanton, Lydia Wright's brother wants to get the money and punish the heroes for breaking their word!

There are several hooks in this adventure which may lead to new trials for the heroes:

- Jessica Thompson could hire the heroes to get her husband out of jail (she now has the money to pay for it).
- The Thompsons owe money to a cattle baron who would like to buy up their land for a dumping price, but now when Jessica is able to pay, he might rely on other means to get the land.
- The Count returns to the West and likes to hire the heroes as guides for a buffalo hunt into Indian country. Something the local tribes are not too fond of.



- One hero might decide to become involved in a romance with Lydia Wright, as she is an attractive (and rich) woman. But there are a couple of obstacles besides gaining the lady's favour. Neither Gus nor a local hothead, Jeremy Saunders, who has seen his chance on Jessica, is too enthusiastic about this.
- The cave complex, if still intact, waits for further exploration (see author's notes in the last scene).

Wes Ribbon

(Outlaw / Revenge and Greed)

Style: 0 Health: 7
Body: 4 Charisma: 2 Dexterity: 4
Intelligence: 2 Strength: 3 Willpower: 3
 Size: 0 Initiative: 6
 Move: 7 Defense: 8
 Perception: 5 Stun: 4

Skills:

Brawl 7, Fast-draw 8, Firearms (Pistols) 10 (11) Guts 8, Intimidate 7

Talents / Resources:

Hip-shooter

Flaws:

-

Weapons:

Colt Peacemaker (6) 3L Attack: 14L 20/40/80/81+
 Punch 0N Attack: 7

Born to rich parents back East, he never was one for the tea parties, rather roaming the seedier sides of the town. When he killed a man over a prostitute, he decides head West, rather facing the wrath of his parents (people like the Ribbons do not get hanged, they have the necessary money).

Never having learned a useful craft and being used to money, he soon resorted on robbery, theft and murder. Still wearing stylish dresses – unless disguise is necessary - Wes Ribbon has long forgotten eastern pleasantries. After the shooting with Buck and Cole, Wes was pretty bad hurt, and it took him a long time to recover. He still has a slight limp when he walks. During his recovery, Wes was imagine what he would do to Buck and Cole, but over the year his greed has overgone his hate for the two men. He now is more obsessed to get the money!

Cimino

(Apache renegade / Greed)

Style: 0 Health: 5
Body: 3 Charisma: 2 Dexterity: 3
Intelligence: 3 Strength: 2 Willpower: 2
 Size: 0 Initiative: 5
 Move: 5 Defense: 6
 Perception: 5 Stun: 2

Skills:

Athletics 7, Brawl 4, Firearms 7, Guts 6, Melee 7, Survival (Tracking) 6(8), Knowledge: Trail 7, Ride 6, Stealth 8

Talents / Resources:

Alertness

Flaws:

Outsider, Wanted

Weapons:

Henry rifle (9) 3L Attack: 10L 25/50/100/101+
 Bowie knife 1L Attack: 8L
 Punch 0N Attack: 4L

After being expelled from his tribe for murder, Cimino hired himself out as a scout, sometimes robbing his customers and leaving them to die if the opportunity arose and the gain was obvious. He encountered Wes Ribbon a couple of years ago, and seeing the opportunity to live as he likes, he became part of the gang.

Cimino is a good shoot, but he excels in close combat using his vicious knife.

Joe Quinn

(Desperado / Greed)

Style: 0 Health: 5
Body: 3 Charisma: 1 Dexterity: 2
Intelligence: 2 Strength: 2 Willpower: 2
 Size: 0 Initiative: 4
 Move: 4 Defense: 5
 Perception: 4 Stun: 3

Skills:

Brawl 6, Firearms 6, Gambling 3, Guts 6, Intimidate 6, Survival 7, Knowledge: Hide-outs 6, Stealth 8

Talents / Resources:

Cold-blooded

Flaws:

Wanted

Weapons:

Colt Army 60 (6) 3L Attack: 9L 15/30/60/61+
 Shot gun (2) 3L Attack: 6L 20/40/80/81+
 Punch 0N Attack: 6L

Joe Quinn is a misanthrope, keeping mostly for himself out in the wilderness. His lust for gambling, however, necessarily leads him often enough back to town. As he is a better tracker than gambler, Quinn finds himself more often than not in trouble with debtors. His new affiliation to the Ribbon gang, however, eases that problem at the same time as it keeps the money coming!



Experience rewards

Every GM will have his own ideas of how fast the heroes should advance so the following experience rewards are mere suggestions:

Group experience

- 1 EP Repel the coach robbers.
- 1 EP Promising Cole Wright to help.
- 1 EP Contest with the Count.
- 2 EP Getting Thompson's silver gun.
- 3 EP Using the clues on the handles to find the treasure.
- 3 EP Defeating Wes Ribbon and his gang.
- 4 EP Delivering the treasure as promised.
- +1 EP per additional and challenging encounter, at GM's discretion (e.g. saving Mrs Thompson from the outlaws).

Individual experience

- 1 EP For exceptional good role-playing (once per session).
- +1 EP extra reward for heroes who personally contested with the Count.

Appendices

A. Town descriptions

The following section gives the GM some ideas how to describe some of the towns with their distinctive flair. These are just suggestions of cause, so feel free to make up your own town.

Phoenix

Lying in an abandoned river valley, Phoenix is a rare sight in the South West. The little, tranquil town is surrounded by lush and fertile farms and plantations. The first white settlers rebuild an ancient canal system which provides the area with water. Most of farmers who live outside the town limits on their farms and pumpkin plantations consider themselves the "old guard", while those who build the town of Phoenix are considered the "newcomers". Most of these newcomers are business people, who set up a little town to provide the surrounding farms with anything needed.

Main Street runs along one of the main canals; with a town square at the intersection with another canal. Among the 20 or so new buildings there 3 ancient adobe ruins. Whether these ruins were dwellings of the original builders of the canal system or served another purpose is not known. Who these ancient people were, is also a mystery, but they had good architectural knowledge. Most people shun the ruins, which are haunted if one believes the local gossip. Most citizens of Phoenix will readily tell of strange lights they have seen in the dead of the night within some of the ancient buildings.

Tucson

The first European settlers in the area of Tucson were Spanish monks, later the Spanish build a walled fortification nearby. Both structures are still part of the town. Today the church of the monastery is still in use; Padre Hernandez takes care of the catholic citizens of Tucson. The fort is base for a company of U.S. cavalry as well as the Sherriff's office and forms the centre of the town. The main street runs from the market place in front of the fort's main port about 200 yards down to the Phoenix-Tombstone road. Most buildings near the fort are adobe structures, with most inhabitants of Mexican heritage. There are a couple of cantinas and shops along the main road as well as the workshop of Juan-Pedro Valadero a renowned gunsmith of famous skill. Further down Main Street newer wooden buildings take over, most notable the Grand Hotel, the Trinity Presbyterian church and the Rose and Lion theatre.

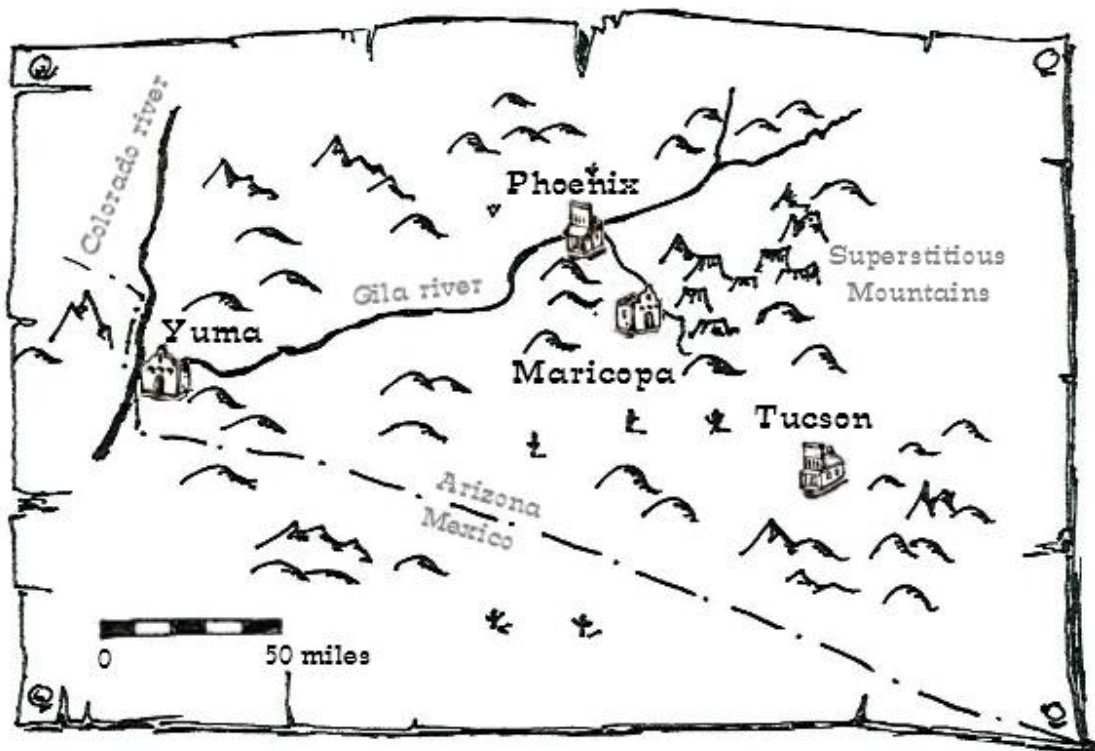
Yuma

Yuma began its rise as an outpost, as the Army build a fort at a fordable place on the Eastern bank of the Colorado River. The rail road company has yet to build a bridge over the Colorado, thus the station on the West bank of the river is the easternmost railroad connection coming from the Pacific coast. To cross the Colorado, travellers can use the steam ferry or the ford near Fort Yuma..

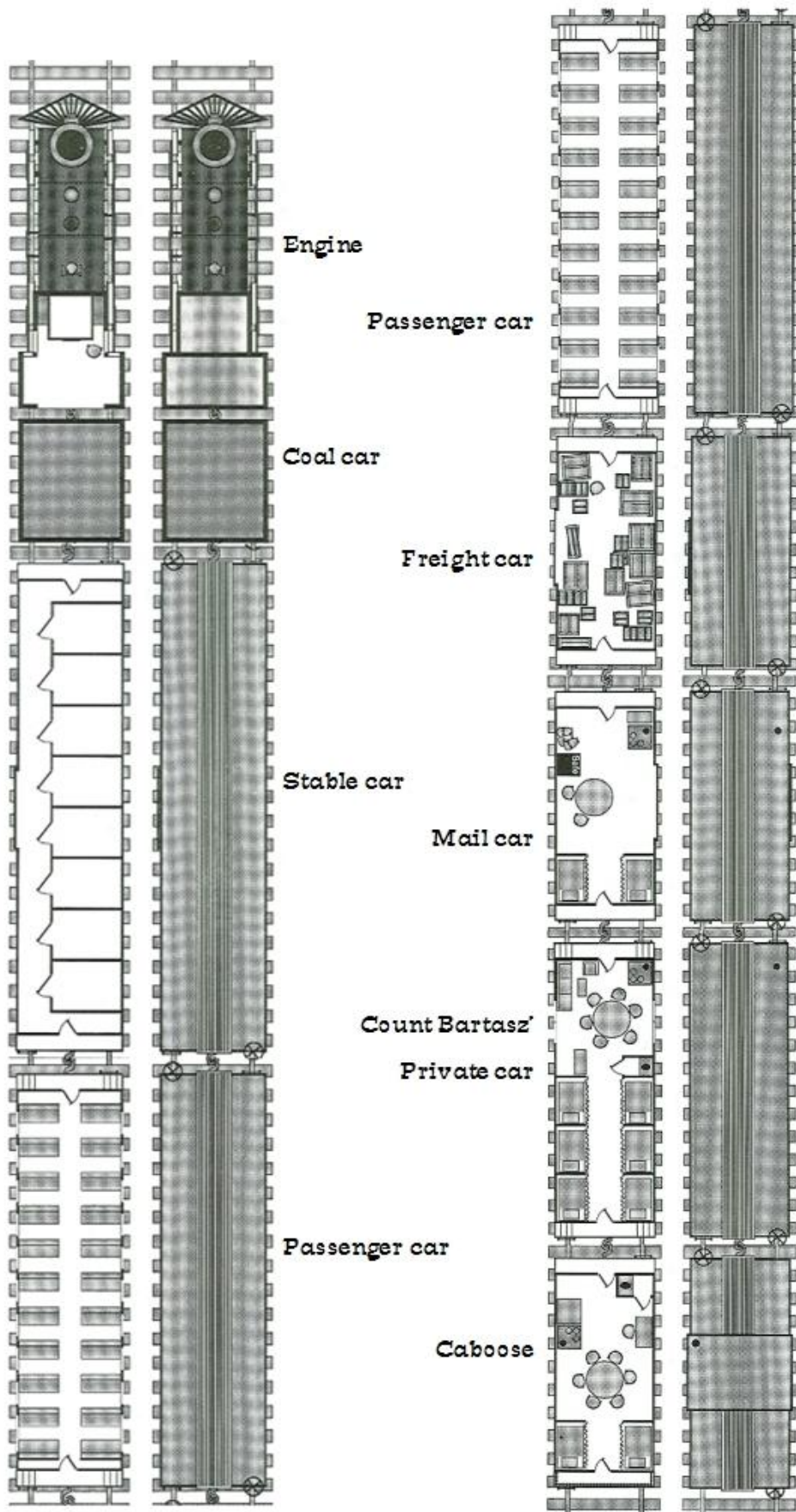
Directly opposite Fort Yuma on the Eastern bank of the Colorado river, stands Yuma itself, a collection of older adobe houses and newer wooden buildings. Here, and at Fort Yuma, are located government storehouses, shops, corrals, etc., as is the grand depot for all the posts in Arizona. Yuma is a considerable business center as many roads come together here. At the steam boat docks wares are shipped up and down the river; the new train station is the Eastern-most connection to the cities of California.

The weary traveller may find any type of accommodation, from common rooms in a Mexican cantina to fancier hotels in the newer part of town.

Area map

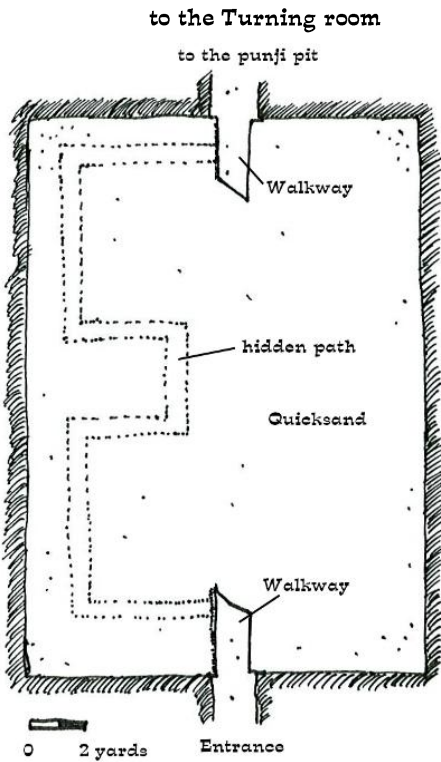


B. The Train

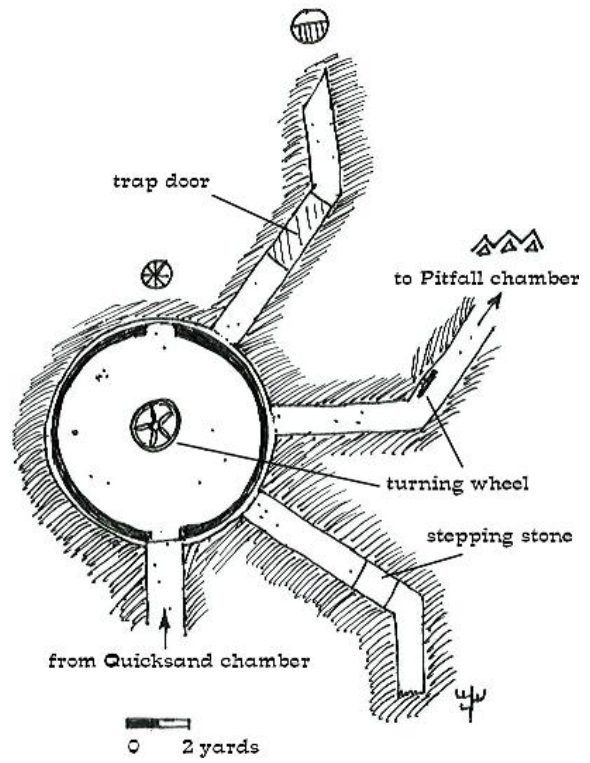


Appendix C

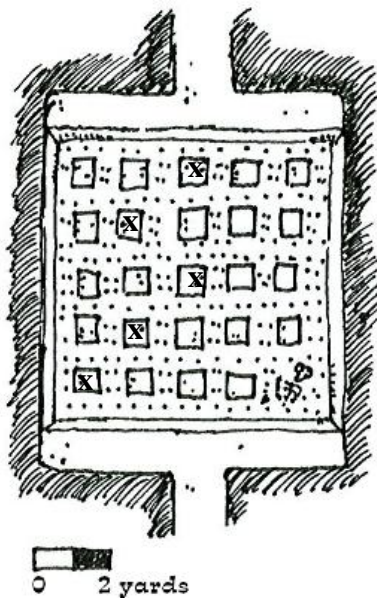
Floor plans



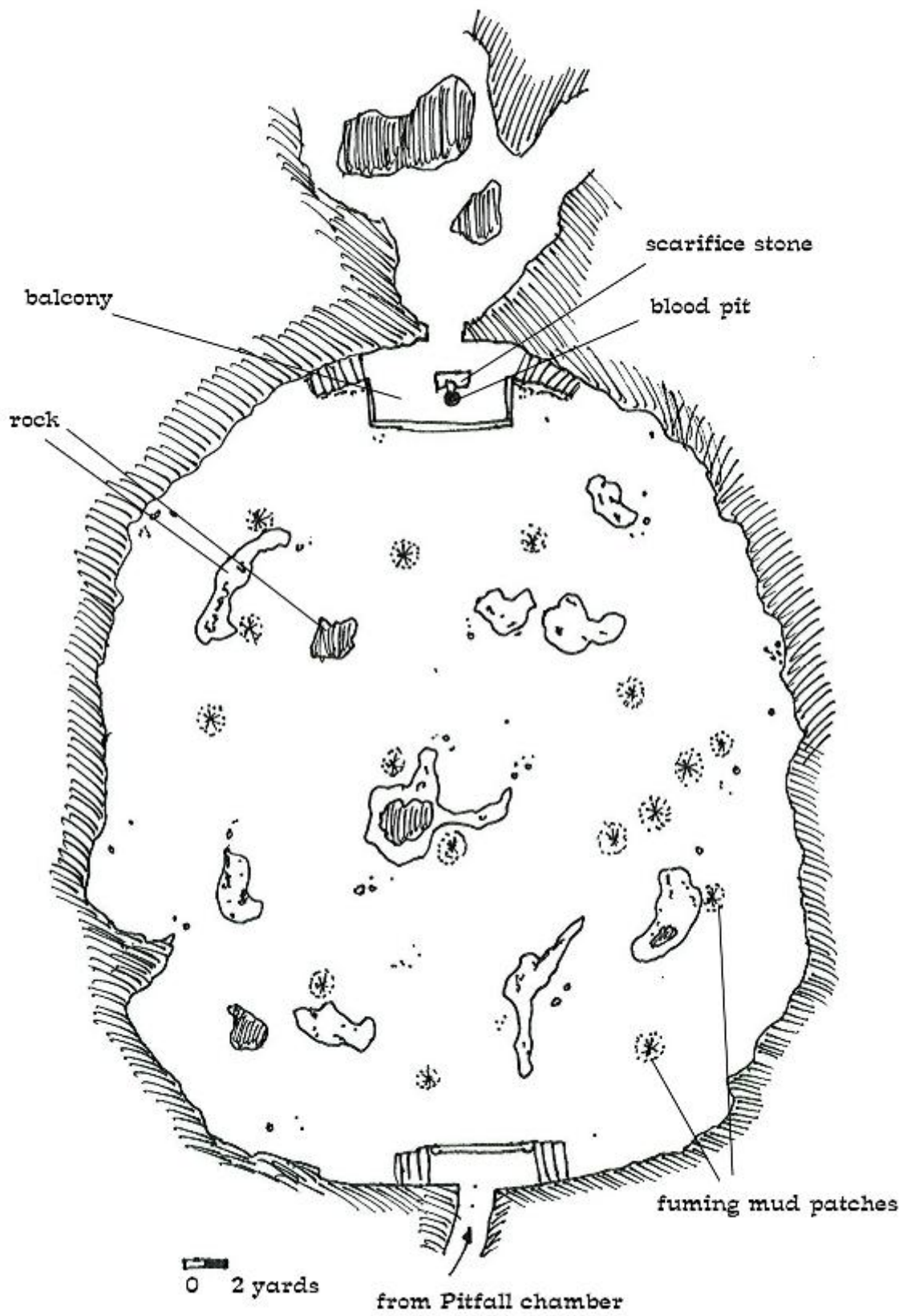
Quicksand chamber



Turning room



Pitfall chamber



Fuming Hall