

Call #2, 12:30 p.m.: A Good Buzz

“DocWagon 21, DocWagon 21, respond via emergency traffic to a bracelet removal at 214 Goodwin Way North-East. Bracelet holder is a basic contract 41-year-old human male, known allergy to non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, cyberware installed. Situation unknown, caution advised.”

This call presents the first mention of actual insect spirits, albeit through the ramblings of a hallucinating paranoid overdose victim. Evidence shows that they’re ruthless and fairly intelligent in their actions. It also introduces the idea of bug spray as a weapon.

History

Lone Star Detective Pat Harlin was investigating a spate of disappearances of street-dwellers, and was getting too close for comfort to the truth that they were being kidnapped as summoning hosts by the wasp cult. The hive sent two flesh-form workers and a flesh-form soldier to assassinate him and make it look unsuspicious. They broke into his apartment as he slept (about noon) and, snooping about, discovered his stash of the illegal combat drug kamikaze in his bathroom cabinet, mixed it up into a slap patch, held him down and stuck it to him long enough for the overdose to take effect. Not knowing that removal of a DocWagon™ bracelet triggers an automatic HTR call, they tore it off him so he could die uninterrupted. They removed the evidence and escaped. Detective Harlin’s hard-earned tolerance for the drug, however, allowed him to remain conscious long enough for the team to arrive. The drug’s side-effects of paranoia and hallucinations (along with uncontrolled muscle spasms) nicely compliment the fact that a bunch of insect-men just tried to kill him, and he’s acting absolutely crazy now. He’s managed to locate his Ruger Thunderbolt heavy pistol and some bug spray to defend himself.

Initial Assessment

The team arrive to find the front door of Detective Harlin's apartment closed, and a knock will cause a three-round burst of gunfire to erupt through the door, missing everyone but no doubt causing alarm (a decent roll will recognise the weapon being fired, Lone Star's signature pistol). When the door is breached, Harlin is staggering about, waving his gun at imagined intruders in the kitchen, and dressed in a wife-beater tank top, Tacoma Timberwolves urban brawl team boxer shorts and brown socks, and has an obvious right cyberarm. From time to time his arm, leg or neck will spasm, and he mutters and yells incoherently, the odd word about "giant insects", "bug-men", "in my bedroom", "held me down", "trying to kill me", "stealing the homeless" coming through comprehensibly. He's not sure if the team are really there or not and ignores them except when they take action toward them - then he'll fight back! It's 50\50 as to whether he'll use the gun or the bug spray.

On Scene

The detective's apartment is pretty pokey, with a cramped sitting room\bedroom, a kitchen and a bathroom. The place is lived-in messy but not unusually so. The television is on in the background, showing a naked American Indian man enthusiastically humping a young orc lady (John Bearclaw is: The Lord of the Rings). In the bathroom the medicine cabinet is hanging open and lying on the floor there's a metred-dose inhaler (like asthmatics use), four plain canisters for it with a graphic representing a propellor-driven plane flying out of a rising sun empty beside it (a good roll will identify it as kamikaze, or The Beard can do so automatically because he's an addict) and an empty bottle of DMSO, a chemical which absorbs readily through the skin, carrying with it any chemical mixed with it. This is how the assailants constructed their slap patch. The cabinet contains no hint of psychiatric drugs, thereby indicating no pre-existing psychiatric condition which might have been triggered by, for example, ceasing taking his meds. The kitchen cabinet under the sink is open, with bottles of chemicals strewn about where he dug out the bug spray. There are a number of wasps buzzing about the apartment.

Patient: Detective Pat Harlin

Pat Harlin is a slightly paunchy detective in his early forties. His mousy brown hair is receding and he usually dresses in cheap suits, although now he's unshaven and wearing a tank top, Tacoma Timberwolves urban brawl team boxer shorts and brown socks. His right arm is obvious cyberware.

He has overdosed on the illegal tailored amphetamine combat drug kamikaze, for which he's got a long-running habit. He's suffering paranoid hallucinations and spasms, along with elevated blood pressure, pulse rate and respirations.

Being of altered mental status, it's impossible to get any information from him because he keeps yelling about insect men. The team are obliged to treat him regardless of his refusal because he's not of sound mind. There are clues scattered about his apartment, which will answer many questions if they think to look and do some detective-work.

Signs & Symptoms: "GIANT INSECTS!" Crazy is a sign. So are the spasms. His pupils are dilated.

Allergies: "BUG-MEN! OUT OF THE DARK!" His medical record, available on a PDA uplink, states he's allergic to non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, which are things like Ibuprofen. That's all.

Medications: "BIG EYES! HELD ME DOWN!" His bathroom cabinet holds the clues. He has a kamikaze habit, and has just been administered a lot of it.

Magic: "I SEE THEM! YOU WON'T GET ME!" He's not, as his online record attests.

Modifications: "THEY'RE HERE STILL! IN THE KITCHEN! NO... YES! NO!" There's the obvious arm, and on closer inspection his ears and a datajack.

Pertinent Past History: "TRIED TO KILL ME! AAARRRRRRGGGGHHHHH!" His record shows his only previous DocWagon™ call was as a result of a grazed leg in a gunfight. His cyberarm was fitted before he began his contract with DocWagon™.

Last Oral Intake: "YOU'RE ONE OF 'EM!" A box of sushi by the couch\bed is empty and the soy sauce is still wet. That was his dinner.

Events Leading Up: “THEY’RE STEALING THEM! STEALING THE HOMELESS!” The bathroom cabinet and his crazy-talk might point the team in the right direction.

Respirations: Very fast (tachypnea)

Pulse: Very fast (tachycardia)

Blood pressure: High (hypertension)

Pulse oximetry: 97% - okay

Blood glucose: Within normal limits

If the team can figure out he’s overdosed on kamikaze, the appropriate treatment is to sedate him with a benzodiazapine like Valium. This’ll knock him right out and allow for a look at the heart monitor, which shows a heart dysrhythm, multifocal atrial tachycardia. This can be treated with synchronised cardioversion, hooking up the paddles and shocking the heart back into order. If they don’t figure out it’s kamikaze, the safest bet is to restrain him and treat the dysrhythm, although the spasms will turn to seizures, he’ll lose consciousness and his situation will worsen and he’ll code in transit unless something’s done - fortunately the treatment for seizures is also benzodiazapines, along with a sort of brain-defibrillator to reset its messed-up electrical activity.

Lacking a history, there’s lots of things that could cause an altered mental status - head trauma, non-traumatic brain injury (like a stroke), psychiatric disorder, diabetes, a magical spell, exposure and all sorts of drugs. A failed Assessment will be unsure of what’s causing it, and the player will have to decide for themselves. A botch will choose one of those as most likely and start treating for that. Either way, unless he’s treated for amphetamine overdose things go as described above.

By the way, you don’t humour a crazy person, like pretending you see what they think they see.

Exercising Restraint

It may well come down to combat to treat Harlin. Naturally any damage they do they also have to treat on the house, and the shift supervisor won't like that. There are physical restraints in the truck, and chemical restraints in the jump bag, and a bed-sheet is always useful in the hands of someone who knows how to use it.

It would be appropriate to call in Lone Star if they suspect that this is a crime scene, and to disturb things as little as possible (and document things they do disturb). A Lone Star cop will phone up later and ask some questions about what Harlin said, what he was doing when they got there and so on, and make an off-handed comment about how Harlin was investigating street dweller disappearances.

Load & Go

The most appropriate destination is the nearest DocWagon™ clinic if the nature of the overdose is known, otherwise MCT Public Health is the best-equipped to diagnose. The journey is uneventful.

Response Time

This call is arguably the least important but it'd be a shame to cut it out. Harlin is hyperactive and talking fast, so act him out as such and hopefully the sense of urgency will influence the players. Use die rolls for combat but any others are optional. The important parts are:

- Crazy cop a danger to himself and others
- It's a drug overdose
- Mentions of homeless people being kidnapped
- Wasp theme