



"ROGUES AND POLITICIANS"

Introduction

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I began running "Rogues and Politicians" in AD 2002, but my [Continuum](#) group never finished it. The campaign was cancelled, and the scenario was never completed.

Here is the scenario as I prepared it for that campaign. It is designed for novice spanners, but can be used for either novice or experienced players. It makes the most sense if the novices haven't thoroughly explored the corner yet (or why haven't they run into Tommy yet?).

This document is not a carefully-detailed adventure; it requires much embellishment by the Game Master. I have not, for instance, provided details of the corner or the chronies. There are some unexplained references in this scenario that assume you're familiar with central Long Island. These references can be changed to any generic locations that apply. Just about any late twentieth or early twenty-first century corner would do, really.

If you have any suggestions to refine this scenario, please [send](#) them to me.

Summary

[Jong Cho](#) learns that Senator Thomas Mayer is a key instigator of World War III, in which Cho's family and friends are all killed. Cho wishes to kill Mayer as a baby, but he learns that little Tommy lives the first few years of his life in the novice corner "Styx." Cho attempts to use the arrival of [Helmut Fliengner](#), a rogue spanner from 1840s Austria, as a smokescreen for his actions.

Start

Monday, August 19, 1991 at 15:00 EDT in the back yard of "Styx" (the characters' corner) in Port Jefferson, New York (the corner exists from July 1 1985 to July 7, 2005).

The chronies have gathered at Styx for a friendly barbeque. There are burgers, hot dogs, ziti, potato chips, soda, cake, ice-cream, and whatever else the chronies want. Play out this scene for a bit.

Someone will discover (the hard way) that what looks like a whipped cream topping on the cake is actually shaving cream!

Hunter, the spanners' mentor, is a bit put off by this, but she knew something strange was going to happen today (she knows from a dossier that Tommy arrives today and that the novices meet Helmut at the same time, but she doesn't know about each of Helmut's pranks specifically; she guesses that this is Helmut's doing, but holds that information unavailable until the PCs meet him). She asks the corner to find out who put the shaving cream on the cake. She also says she's going to make another cake, and asks someone to get some real whipped cream (she specifies Cool Whip).

Hunter declares a rendezvous one minute Up.

Opening moves

Who put the shaving cream on the cake?

The PCs will probably try to backtrack the age of the cake and check for signs of tampering.

Hunter mixes and bakes the cake the same day (1991-08-19) from 9:00 to 10:00. She leaves it on the counter to cool.

Helmut spans into the pantry at 10:30 with the idea of sneaking over to the cake and substituting the shaving cream (he's carrying a can of it). He'll peek around first to see if anyone's watching. If the PCs are there, each of them may roll Observation vs. Helmut's Stealth (untrained 2 + 2 for mostly hidden = untrained 4).

Whether or not they see him, Helmut will arrange a distraction. He will slipshank an

elder: the elder will span outside on the deck to annoy a spanner's pet, break something and scream, or whatever else seems like a good distraction. If this attracts all of the PCs, Helmut spans over to the cake and performs the switch.

If any PCs keep watching the cake, then Helmut will try another distracting tactic: he will span behind each of the watching spanners simultaneously (making elder and junior Helmut's) and cover the eyes of each one. Each PC rolls a competitive Quick roll against Helmut: failure means his eyes are covered for the first "combat stage"; success means he gets a glimpse of Helmut. However, to keep watching the cake at all costs (if anyone asks to do this), the PC must next succeed in a competitive Body roll to keep oriented right.

If none of these things lets Helmut place the whipped cream, Helmut figures out that the watchdog spanners know about his plan, and he gives up. The observing PCs now gain 1 point of frag until they add some whipped cream themselves!

Buy whipped cream

Helmut originally gets the shaving-cream-on-cake idea when he follows the PCs to the store as they go to buy the whipped cream.

He follows them into the store and watches them just long enough to watch them pick up the tub of Cool Whip. Then he spans away and plans his little joke.

Helmut returns to the store in a broom closet about three minutes Down (or far enough to be out of sight of his junior and the novices) and goes to the Cool Whip. He now has with him a small plastic box. This box contains an electrical "hydrogen bomb" (spark converts water to hydrogen and oxygen, pressure builds up). He turns it on and slips it into the container of Cool Whip that he saw the PCs take. Then he spans back to the exact moment and location he left the first time, to watch the fun as the Cool Whip explodes all over the PC.

This is what will happen to oblivious PCs, anyway. Each gets an Observation roll vs. Helmut's Stalking roll (untrained 2) to notice someone following them. If they see him, he'll quickly walk away and try to escape, even risking a minor violation of the Fourth Maxim if necessary.

If Helmut is spotted, he'll keep watching until one of the PCs reaches for the Cool Whip; then he'll set his plan into motion.

The PCs will hear Helmut's laughter, but he'll be gone by the time they get to his hiding spot. They might try going Down a few seconds to where their juniors won't see so they can see Helmut, but they won't be able to catch him.

I'll stay here, thanks

Someone always wants to stay and do nothing. Not this time! The moment Hunter leaves to bake her cake (she returns in one minute), Helmut douses the lazy spanners with water.

Helmut watches the barbeque from various vantage points (and anyone who finds a way to spot him will also see Hunter's elder watching *him*), and thinks up his water plan. He sees Hunter leave, then spans Down about 10 seconds to an out-of-sight nook by the deck where a garden hose is attached to a spigot. The moment Hunter leaves, he turns on the water and sprays the chronies, laughing. He then spans away.

It is easy to span behind Helmut to get a look at him and not be seen by juniors, but if the PCs affect Helmut in any way, even by getting his attention, every person at the barbeque at that moment gets 1 point of frag!

When Hunter returns and sees all the water, she'll be astonished. If the PCs don't think to identify Helmut, she'll do it herself (and does anyway).

Gathering information

Who is this guy?

The PCs will no doubt ask Hunter who this prankster is. If they can describe him, she'll be able to explain: Helmut Fliengner is a visitor from 1840s Austria, and is known for his practical jokes. She says he doesn't frag anyone, he just humiliates them. She does *not* tell them that he lives in their locality and that he becomes a friend of the corner (she keeps that information unavailable).

If they cannot describe him, Hunter will seem to know who it is, will blink out for a

moment, then reappear and tell them it's Helmut.

Hunter tells the novices that they need to find Helmut and get him to settle down and behave himself.

Doing research

If they prefer, the PCs can try other means of identifying Helmut. Or they can ignore him. It doesn't really matter: Helmut is the unwitting distraction set up by Jong Cho. They can track down his residence in the locality (though they probably won't directly run into any elder Helmut's yet), they can try police fingerprints (useless), etc. This is the really hard way of doing things though!

Middle Game

Further Pranks

If, during the course of spanning around, a situation arises which Helmut would find particularly appealing for a practical joke, by all means take it! As long as they can't directly confront Helmut yet, let it happen.

Key Event: Tommy's arrival

When the spanners are all gathered together for their next rendezvous on 1991-08-19 (and arrange that this should happen if they try to set up a rendezvous on some other date), Tommy will arrive at the doorstep of Styx, and the spanner who drops him off spans away. Here is the likely span of events leading up to this:

6:17 AM

Cho arrives at the orphanage to kill Tommy. Attempt fails after a Time Combat. Keep the PCs away from this for now—they may end up being the Time Combatants!

6:50 AM

Midwife spanner takes Tommy away from orphanage in Mount Sinai.

7:00 AM

Midwife spanner drives to Port Jefferson, where she waits with the baby in a closed law consultant's shop. She is guarded by six Span Twos.

Level

Midwife spanner drops Tommy off at Styx.

The Midwife spanner is Samantha Winfield. She is well-protected: any attempts to stop her from delivering Tommy are foiled by many spanners of the Midwives fraternity, who watch the entire delivery process very carefully. However, the spanners *may* talk to Samantha. She will only tell them that the boy's name is Thomas Mayer, that he's an orphan, and that he lives in Styx from 1991-08-19 to 1995-12-02. Absolutely no other information is available.

Samantha Winfield

Span 2 **Frag** 0

Body 3 **Mind** 4 **Quick** 4

Era Pisces **Society** United States

Fraternity Midwives

Locality Long Island, AD 2000s

Skills: Unarmed Combat (Karate) J5; Acumen (Child Care) [M] M7; Medicine (First Aid) M7; Drive (Car) A5; Stealth (Evasion) A5; Swindle (Fast Talk) J6

Possessions: Tommy and his car seat; first aid kit (in car); drives a 1989 Chevy station wagon

The PCs will only get to talk to Samantha if they try to find out who left the baby. Otherwise, their only information will be the note left on the baby's car seat (no basket!):

“Thomas Mayer. Until 1995-12-02.”

Look! Up in the sky!

After the corner takes in Tommy (they can refuse to do this, but they’ll soon discover him living at the corner, so they’ll have to take him back!), and all discussion has occurred, the chronies may do whatever they wish. They may have their own business to take care of. They may want to go exploring around the corner. They may want to research Tommy. Let them do what they want to do. They should probably remember to arrange another rendezvous!

Pick a spanner or group of spanners. It should be the one that has the least to do. These PCs see a startling sight: up in the sky an airplane trailing a banner passes. The banner reads, “Wie spät ist es, Styx?” (“What time is it, Styx?” in German).

Helmut has seen airplanes advertising during visits to the beach, and he thinks it’s a wonderful way to get a spanner’s attention. He goes to MacArthur airport on 1991-08-16 at 12:30 and pays for the advertisement to run on the day (and time) the chronies see it. (If they see it Down from 1991-08-16, then Helmut places the ad even further Down; just adjust the date.)

The chronies may track Helmut down by asking the advertising company who placed the ad. They’ll be able to tell them when the ad was placed, and they’ll be able to describe Helmut, but they don’t know who he is (they just run advertisements). The ad agency may require some persuasion to get them to discuss a customer.

Endgame

Frag!

The chronies may want to go find Helmut as he places the advertisement, but before they do, the chronies all suddenly get 1 point of frag! (Or, if they’re not seeking Helmut, they get it when the action is about to die down.) This is caused by Jong Cho: he spans to 1991-08-19 at 6:17 AM and attempts to strangle Tommy in his crib at the orphanage. Time Combat has begun! The chronies are caught by surprise, so they do not get to act on the First Sweep.

Sweep 1: Jong Cho’s span

Direction

Down

When

1991-08-19 at 6:17 AM

Where & What

Mount Sinai Children’s Ranch, Hit & Run: Strangle Tommy

Duration

3 minutes

If they wish to use their Sweeps in Time Combat to track down Helmut, that’s their business.

Time Combat strategies

Cho is very careful: he knows how the Continuum works, and he also knows that the Continuum knows how important Tommy is. He has already set up the distraction of Helmut; he hopes that Helmut’s presence and practical jokes will confuse the spanners and make them waste sweeps tracking him down.

Cho wants to frag them again: if he can deliver that second point of frag, then the Time Combat is over and he will be able to back off and hide for a while, as the corner tries to figure out what happened. However, fragging a second time isn’t quite so easy, as he’s not very familiar with the Ages of the spanners. Therefore, after the first Hit & Run, his next task will be to go Up and Oracle “one of the people I just fragged,” with the question “Where and when is he?” With this information, his next job is to Measure the spanner at that level, to make sure he is fragged, as well as to look for opportunities to further frag

him. (Cho won't do anything that frags himself, but other possibilities will present themselves depending on what the spanners do.)

Cho is being very careful and methodical, trusting in the corner's confusion regarding Helmut. The scenario may be too hard if Cho takes a more clever approach, such as planting a Cobweb. If, after the above Stratagems have been performed, the chronies still have not found Cho, he will try to win the Time Combat by the most expedient means (he will be emboldened by the lack of counterattack by the corner).

Victory conditions

The players succeed in the scenario if they defeat Cho in Time Combat without harming Helmut. If Helmut is fragged, the scenario is not over until they fix his frag! (If they don't, an elder Helmut will come to them and demand a fix.)

If the players win at Time Combat but Helmut is seriously hurt or killed, the game is a draw. Helmut is in their Yets whether they know it or not. They will start encountering Helmut hanging around the corner, and sooner or later they will feel the frag caused by the injury or death that must be prevented.

If the players lose Time Combat, they fail the scenario. They must now find a way to fix their frag without changing any events targeted during the Time Combat. This will have to be the subject of another day's adventure! If they hurt or injure Helmut, they still must rectify the problem as described in the preceding paragraph.

Likely span of events

This is a list of events that are likely to occur during this adventure. It is not necessary to do all of them; as the characters are working out one problem, keep the list handy to be ready for their next course of action.

- Barbeque. Discover the shaving cream. 1991-08-19 at 15:00
- Investigate shaving cream by backtracking cake. Maybe get a glimpse of Helmut.
- Buy whipped cream. Explosion!
- Helmut douses barbeque loungers with water.
- Asking Hunter about Helmut.
- Tommy's arrival. Possibly going to meet Samantha Winfield.
- Time Combat with Jong Cho.
- Confronting Helmut.

Helmut Fliengner—practical joker and lovable pain in the neck

Span	2	Frag	0	Age	about 30 years
Body	5	Mind	5	Quick	4
Benefit	Extraordinary Beauty				
Era	Pisces		Society	Austria	
Locality	1840s Austria		Fraternity	none	
Corner	currently none				

Skills: Melee Weapon (Rapier) A6; Unarmed Combat (Brawling) J7; Firearms (Pistols) M8; English J7; Swindle (Seduction) M7

Possessions: Khaki pants, mostly unbuttoned green shirt, good shoes (his attempt at a debonair look on this level); cash; jewelry (necklace, rings). Carries a rapier when he's expecting trouble, though he doesn't show this off in public. Carries a concealed pistol, a late twentieth century model.

Helmut is the third son of a rich Austrian merchant. Having no interest in the family business or in the priesthood, Helmut drifted from activity to activity in search of his calling. His bright mind, charming looks, and charismatic manner gave him the potential to succeed at anything, but his flighty, fickle mind allowed him no rest.

When Helmut joined the Continuum, he quickly picked up on the spanner life and soon

found his corner to be boring. His chronies didn't seem to appreciate his crazy sense of humor. He left them to learn about life farther Up, after hearing about some bizarre elements of 1990s popular culture.

Helmut is wily and irreverent. He also tends to bend the Maxims, but he never actually breaks them. He's a party animal, as dangerous to have around as he is fun.

Jong Cho—narcissist, survivor of World War III

Span	2	Frag	1	Age	26 years
Body	5	Mind	4	Quick	5
Benefit	Sharp Reflexes				
Era	Aquarius		Society	South Korea	
Locality	South Korea, AD 2040s		Fraternity	none	
Skills: Melee Weapon (Club) J7; Thrown Weapon (Knife) J7; Unarmed Combat (Kung-Fu) M8; Bureaucracy (US Politics) M7; Computer (Early Aquarian) J6; History (World War III) J6; History (Life of Thomas Mayer) J6; English J6; Survival (War Zones) M7; Stealth (Stalking) M8; Art (Electronic Music) M8					
Possessions: Throwing knife. Pistol (early Aquarian model). Pants and T-shirt. Cash, credit cards.					

Jong Cho has lived with the horrible knowledge of World War III for years of Age, as well as the deaths of his friends and family. He can finally stand it no longer, and has come Down to kill the man he believes plays a vital role, Senator Thomas Mayer, when he's still a baby.

Cho researches the life of Thomas Mayer for a very long time before taking any action. He learns the following:

- Born 1991-08-01.
- Fire at home in Yaphank, 1991-08-10. Parents killed.
- Kidnapped by aunt, who later denies everything. 1991-08-19
- Aunt caught in Texas, child found at her home. 1994-12-02
- Adopted 1995-02-27 by a family in Texas.

Cho's first attempt on the life of Thomas Mayer was at the fire at Yaphank. He tries to kill the baby then, but is stopped in Time Combat with the Continuum. (Maybe these are the chronies' elders?)

Next, Cho spends some time watching baby Tommy's progress Up from the fire, and learns that he is taken, for reasons unknown, to Styx. He realizes that Tommy's aunt doesn't take him at all.

Cho approaches Helmut (whom he has seen around Styx) at a point in Helmut's Age when he has arrived in Port Jefferson for the first time. He convinces Helmut that it would be fun to play pranks on the corner around August 19, 1991. Thus begins the scenario.

Before the war and before being Invited, Cho is a musician in a contemporary music group.

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[David Trimboli](#) | [Index](#)