

## 36 MOTORPSYCHO

### Introduction

In a town dying because the main artery of the motorway had by-passed it decades ago, a man in a blue checked shirt with a black duffel bag slung over one shoulder sauntered through a carpark, looking from vehicle to vehicle. He stopped by a car that looked like it would do just fine, glanced around, and ripped off the passenger side wing mirror.

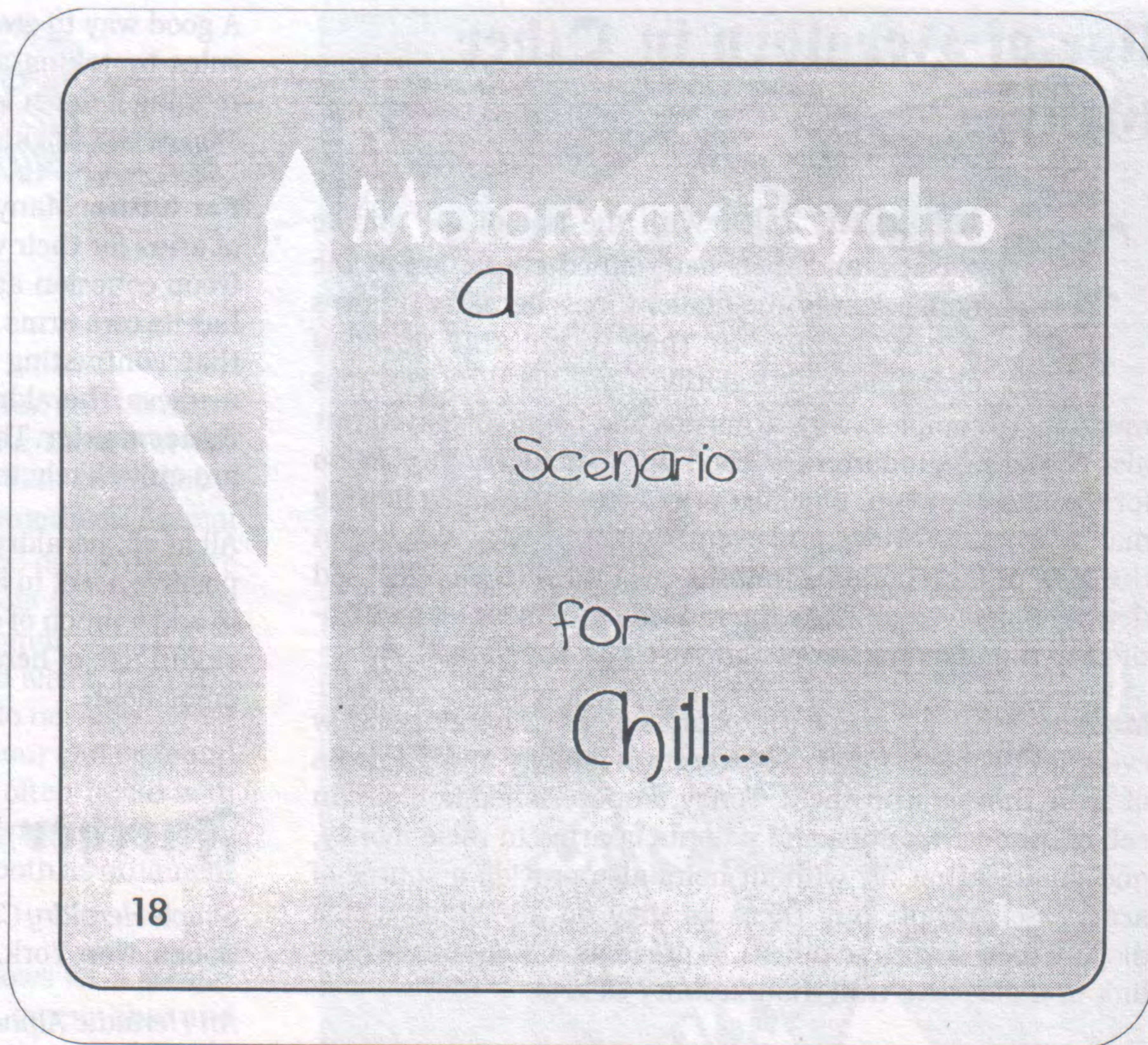
He dropped it in his duffel bag, checking to make sure all his equipment was there. He reached in and took out a toffee, then strode toward his motorcycle, chewing contentedly. Today's game was going to be good. He could feel it in his blood.

A few miles further north, cars sounded their horns at him in irritation as he ran across the central reservation. On the hard shoulder of the southbound carriageway he dropped the wing mirror. Chewing toffees and chuckling occasionally as his jaws worked, he continued north, systematically vandalising the emergency phone boxes as he went.

About fifty miles north of the anonymous town where his preparations for the game began, the man in the blue checked shirt parked his motorcycle at a motorway service station, and strolled north up the southbound carriageway. It started to drizzle, but he chewed his toffees and grinned into the greyness.

This is a short Chill adventure designed for a few hours play, possibly as a filler between episodes in an ongoing campaign. It is suited to a small group of no more people than could fill a reasonably-sized car; four or five. It is after the style of the movie *The Hitcher*, placed in a contemporary British setting. A significant element of the horror lies in the fact that isolation is not a key factor. The victims are surrounded by other people, drivers, members of the public, and yet the terror still happens. It is horror in the broad light of day, with no comforting darkness to hide it. The PCs can scream for help, but will anyone be willing to help them?

What is worse, there is absolutely no reason why the maniac involved should pick on them. He is not a personal enemy of any of them, he is not an agent of any antagonistic group, such as the Unknown - he is a lone flare of random



insanity. His victimisation of the PCs is impersonal, arbitrary, and incomprehensible. This is far more disturbing than something that fits in with the PCs' view of an understandable and ultimately rational world. Because it ain't.



### 1. "We're on the highway to hell"

Tell your players:

"The M6, just south of Crewe, on a wet late Sunday afternoon.

"Most of you have still got hangovers. There was a concert last night, and the party afterwards lasted until about 8am. Or it could have been 10. It's sort of hard to tell. You stayed over at the house of a mutual friend, and are now on your way back home."

(At this point the GM needs to make note of the following:

Who is driving.

The fact that the PCs' car has a car-phone, for which they will undoubtedly be very grateful, but ultimately they will wish had never been invented.

Whether any of the PCs has any drugs or illegal possessions. This will make them think twice about approaching the police.)

"There is a radio show especially for motorists, which provides traffic and weather information, and also a phone-in feature. Between records you hear from an annoyed trucker in Leicestershire who wants that prat in the blue Vauxhall to stop weaving between lanes and get out of his bloody way, and a lady on the A47 who has broken down and wants to know if there are any strong mechanics who can help her with her piston cylinder. The weather report then informs those heading south, as you are, that they are likely to encounter worse weather north of Warrington.

"Another breakdown calls in to the radio show.

"Yeah, Geoff? I've been stuck here waiting for the AA by junction 28 for an hour now. Could I ask you to play something?"

"Of course. What do you want to hear?"



"How about AC/DC? Highway to Hell?"

"You got it.' Then Bonn Scott starts rearing up the airwaves.

"You drive on for another ten minutes.

"A truck with a big Toshiba sign on the side overtakes you on the left side, sidles into your lane, and promptly slows right down (causing the driver to make an easy drive roll). A hand appears out of the driver's window, and a cigarette flicks out, back, and disintegrates into sparks off your right wing. (It's not a serious encounter, but it illustrates the kind of lunacy you can expect on the motorway.)

"Then a weird call comes over the radio show.

"Hello?"

"Go ahead, you're on the air.'

"What?"

"I said you're on. What's your name?"

"Is this a radio show?"

"Yes, it's the Geoffrey Day Motorway Show.'

"There's a pause. 'Did I phone you before?"

"I don't know. Look, if you're not calling about anything..."

"No! Uh, I mean yes. I want a song! Uh, how about (scrabbling sounds in the background), how about something by AC/DC?"

"Anything in particular?"

"Anything.'

"Okay.'

"More classic seventies metal starts pounding out of the speakers. You are currently at junction 29, and about half an hour later junction 28 slips past in the gathering drizzle, when you see a car on the hard shoulder. It's empty and the driver's door is open."

If the PCs stop to check out the car, perception rolls may reveal the following:

LOW - a strong doggy smell and a hairy blanket on the back seat. The car is registered in the name of Peter Connors, a businessman from Scotland. The vehicle has a space where a car-phone



ANDREW HEPWORTH

should be, but no phone. The radio is on, tuned to the radio show.

MEDIUM- Lots of AC/DC cassettes in the glove compartment. The floor is littered with toffee wrappers.

HIGH- A tracking skill is required to see that it looks like the car skidded onto the hard shoulder. There are other scuff marks in the gravel from the driver's door leading around the front of the car to the motorway verge, where the tracks are lost.

CRITICAL- A bloodstained rag in the door pocket. The blood is still tacky.

The driver has been dragged down the verge (which requires a HARD climb roll to negotiate in the wet weather), and into a dense hedgerow 100 yards from the motorway. This information is to satisfy the GM's curiosity - don't let the players find the body. Ever heard of suspense?

"Ten minutes further down the road you see a hitch-hiker huddled against the rain, one thumb jerked toward the motorway, the other hand holding a leash on the end of which is a black spaniel looking sodden and utterly pissed off. The hitch-hiker has a blue checked shirt and a black duffel bag. It is illegal to hitch-hike on the motorway."



## 2. If they pick him up

He is enthusiastically grateful, babbling about 'how it really is pissing down, and he didn't think he was going to get a lift at all and he's only travelling to the next services and he can pay for petrol if you like.' He reaches into his duffel bag and brings out a packet.

"Anyone for a toffee?"

He claims to be Peter Connors, that his car broke down and he's trying to find the nearest RAC depot (PCs should make PCN rolls; a colossal success or an eidetic memory reveals that this contradicts what Connors actually said on the radio about waiting for the AA).



## 38 MOTORPSYCHO

Checking the name on the spaniel's collar will reveal her name to be Spritzer. Spritz is all over the place, sticking her nose out of windows, into the PCs groins, licking their faces and generally being a pain. The smell of wet dog in an enclosed car is something better left to the imagination.

Eventually there's a lull in the conversation.

Suddenly he says "You been driving long? Because I could take over if you wanted a rest. Honestly. You know you look kind of tired. It can be really dangerous, driving when you're tired. Especially in this weather. Go on, have a rest, I'll take over. I'm a really good driver, haven't had a single accident ever. You don't believe me, do you? Look, I'll show you..." and he grabs the steering wheel.

Each turn, the driver must make a driving roll at -20. If they fail, anyone else attempting to do anything must first pass a general DEX roll as the car swerves from side to side.

Anyone attempting to grab the psycho does so at +20 because of being in such close quarters, and opposed STR rolls are made to pull him off the steering wheel.

The odds are heavily weighted in the PCs' favour, and presumably once they win they'll throw him out. He just stands there in the rain, watching them leave.



### 3. If they don't pick him up

A few minutes later a car passes by, and PCN rolls are needed to spot a black spaniel grinning out of the back window.



### 4. The weather worsens

"Road-works pile up, and the traffic slows to a crawl. It's still daylight, but visibility is reduced by the rain. Out of the grey-ness ahead emerges the blurred silhouette of a person, which gradually resolves into the hitch-hiker from before. He has no dog with him now.

"He is walking between the crawling traffic, glancing at the cars to either side,

heading straight for you."

(If they previously picked him up and then threw him out, skip this little speech:)

Hey, listen, could I possibly hitch a ride? I mean it isn't far, only to the next exit, only about five miles away. I've got money, I can pay", he proodcues a large roll of cash. "Look, its really wet out here, I'm catching my death, do us a favor, please? Come on, please? I mean what, do you think I'm dangerous? I'm not dagerous! Shit, I'm just wet and cold and all I'm asking for is someone to show a little humanity and do us a favour! So let me in! Come on! For pity's sake, LET ME IN!"

He starts thumping and kicking the car. If any of the PCs get out to deal with him, he pulls a large knife. At this stage his aim is not to kill all the PCs, but to inflict damage and get away fast. After all the game has hardly yet begun.

In any event, he walks around to the passenger side of the car and proceeds to literally kick the wing mirror off. He puts it in his duffel bag and, with a ironic wave to the PCs, disappears back into the greyness.

Should the PCs, in a fit of suicidal irrationality, actually give him a lift, run point 2 and then go straight to 5.



### Motorway services

Twelve miles further on, signs point to the off-ramp of a motorway service station. By this time the PCs should welcome a break in their journey. They may be in slight shock from their incident with the maniac, and with the shock comes its associated symptoms of tiredness and hunger. If they look like they're going to be difficult and drive right past, mention that someone





needs the toilet badly. If they're *determined* to make trouble on this, well, it looks like they're suddenly quite low on fuel. Surprise. Smile at the PCs sweetly, until they get the point that this is supposed to be a *plot device*.

Here things can get tricky. The maniac hitched a ride with another driver and has managed to get to the services ahead of the PCs - but not by much. The driver wasn't planning on stopping, so he had to walk the last hundred yards or so, and only just got off the road as the PCs' car went past. Here he plans to sabotage their car in such a way that it breaks down away from easily available help, but in order to do so there must be nobody in the car. That's the tricky bit.

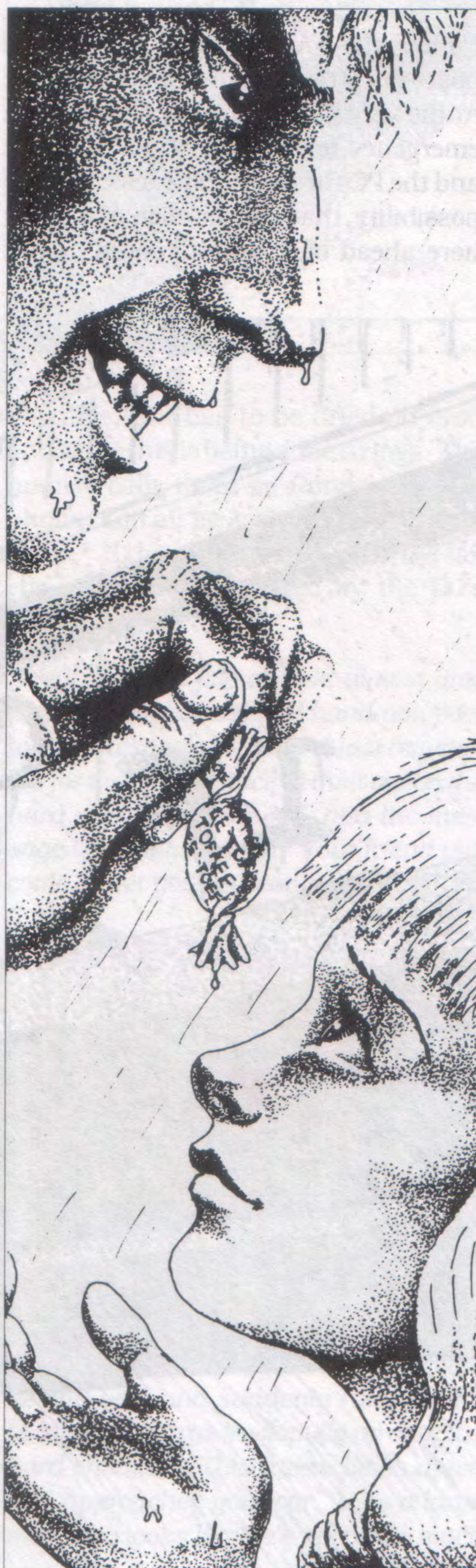
Knowing the way players think (and they can get so devious, can't they?), it is quite likely that paranoia will have set in and they've left someone in the car either for safety or to guard it. In which case - good. They're scared already.

There are lots of families who have stopped at these services. Parents with tired and hungry children, who demand money for the videogames, get themselves locked in the toilets, and even get lost in the carpark. *Especially* get lost in the carpark. There are lots of strange people around these places, and nasty things can happen to little boys and girls who stray from their parents' sides.

Any PCs who stayed in the car make PCN rolls, but the results are immaterial because it is a foregone conclusion that they will notice a man in a blue checked shirt dragging a small child into the bushes by the side of the car park. There is a wide stretch of vegetation between the service and the motorway; landscaping to hide the concrete and asphalt from the eyes of resting travellers, but which now serves to conceal more sinister activities.

If there is only one PC impress upon them that there is no time to go for help - in that time the child could be assaulted or even killed. When the maniac sees the PC coming, he stabs the child and leaves it screaming in pain and terror, then vanishes into the bushes. The PC's first reaction will almost always be to render first aid to the bleeding youngster. While they do this, the maniac slips around behind the car.

If there are two or more PCs continue as above, but you will have to deal with the eventuality that they will split up. Obviously someone will continue to aid the child. Anyone who tries to follow the maniac must make appropriate PCN rolls, and even if they find him, his combat skills are such that they will undoubtedly be defeated. He isn't interested in killing them, just getting them out of the way until he gets to the car. Try to guide events to this course, but naturally don't make things too unfair. If they come out of this realizing that they are up against an adversary who is both clever and deadly, all to the



ANDREW HEPWORTH

good. If there is a third PC to contend with, mention that there is always a police presence at these services which could help them. SPLIT 'EM UP!

The PCs are not likely to have locked the doors if they left in a hurry, but even if they did, an accomplished car-thief can pick a door lock in just under ten seconds. Once inside, he steals the car phone and makes a mental note of the number before bagging it. He pops the hood and crosses to the engine, taking out a small hammer and a metal hole-punch from his black duffel bag, and puts a hole in one of the radiator pipes. He closes the hood, shuts the door and walks quickly back to the service station. All of this should take no more than thirty seconds. He's practised.

Back in the service station, he goes to the mens' toilets and changes, leaving his black duffel bag in the cubicle and bolting it from the outside. (It is possible - you just fasten the latch and climb over the partition.) With a black permanent marker he scrawls graffiti messages on the inside of all the cubicle doors, and then goes to the buffet, buys a nice hot cup of tea, and settles back to watch the fun and games.

If he used the child as a diversion, then the PCs will most likely be kept busy for the next hour or so dealing with the police, making statements and so forth. The police presence increases as they cordon off the landscaped area for later examination by the CID, and start questioning members of the public. The child and its distraught parents are taken to hospital, and eventually the PCs are able to get something to eat. They are hyped up, keyed and sharp-focused after the adrenaline surge, and the police recommend that they take a break to calm down before they resume their journey.

Obviously, if the psycho had no need of the child then none of the above pertains, but the following occurs in any case.

- Someone goes to the bathroom: on the inside of the cubicle door is a message scrawled in wide, mad black pen strokes. It reads "You will die screaming." Whoever sees this should make a WPR roll, or lose d10 WPR.
- Everyone in the main dining area: a H-level PCN roll is required to



## 44 MOTORPSYCHO

see the psycho sitting with his cup of tea. What they do about this is anyone's guess, but if they call the police the psycho will merely show them to his motorcycle and claim to be an innocent traveller. They can't prove otherwise.



### 6. "On the road again"

*"Heading south again, it is now early evening, and the rain has settled in heavy and persistent. Other vehicles hiss past, throwing up clouds of water from the road. The glow from their red tail-lights fractures the rain on your windscreen, spilling down the glass like drops of blood. The windscreen wipers whine and thud hypnotically."*

Everybody makes general PCN checks; they see lying on the hard shoulder a wing mirror of the same colour as their car. If they miss it, the next one is so obvious that it requires no perception roll to see - sprayed across an overpass is a message in back paint: "Catch me if you can!" Faced with the inexplicable (and false) conclusion that the maniac has somehow got ahead of them, everyone must make WPR rolls or lose d10 WPR.

The psycho is in fact following them at a distance on his motorcycle.



### 7. Siege

About fifteen miles from the service station, a little red light begins to blink on the dashboard. It is the engine temperature indicator, and apparently the engine is beginning to overheat. A few minutes later wisps of smoke start to drift out of the ventilation grills. If they carry on any further, smoke appears from under the edges of the hood, a smell of burning insulation fills the

car, and the engine begins to make an unhealthy clunking sound. They have no choice but to pull over onto the hard shoulder.

The maniac parks his motorcycle out of sight some distance behind their car, and continues on foot through the vegetation which borders the motorway.

To diagnose the problem with the engine requires an L-level success with any kind of mechanical skill. Immediate repair is impossible; the hole can be plugged by a number of improvisational means, and there is rain to refill the radiator, but it will take nearly an hour to cool down enough to be operable.

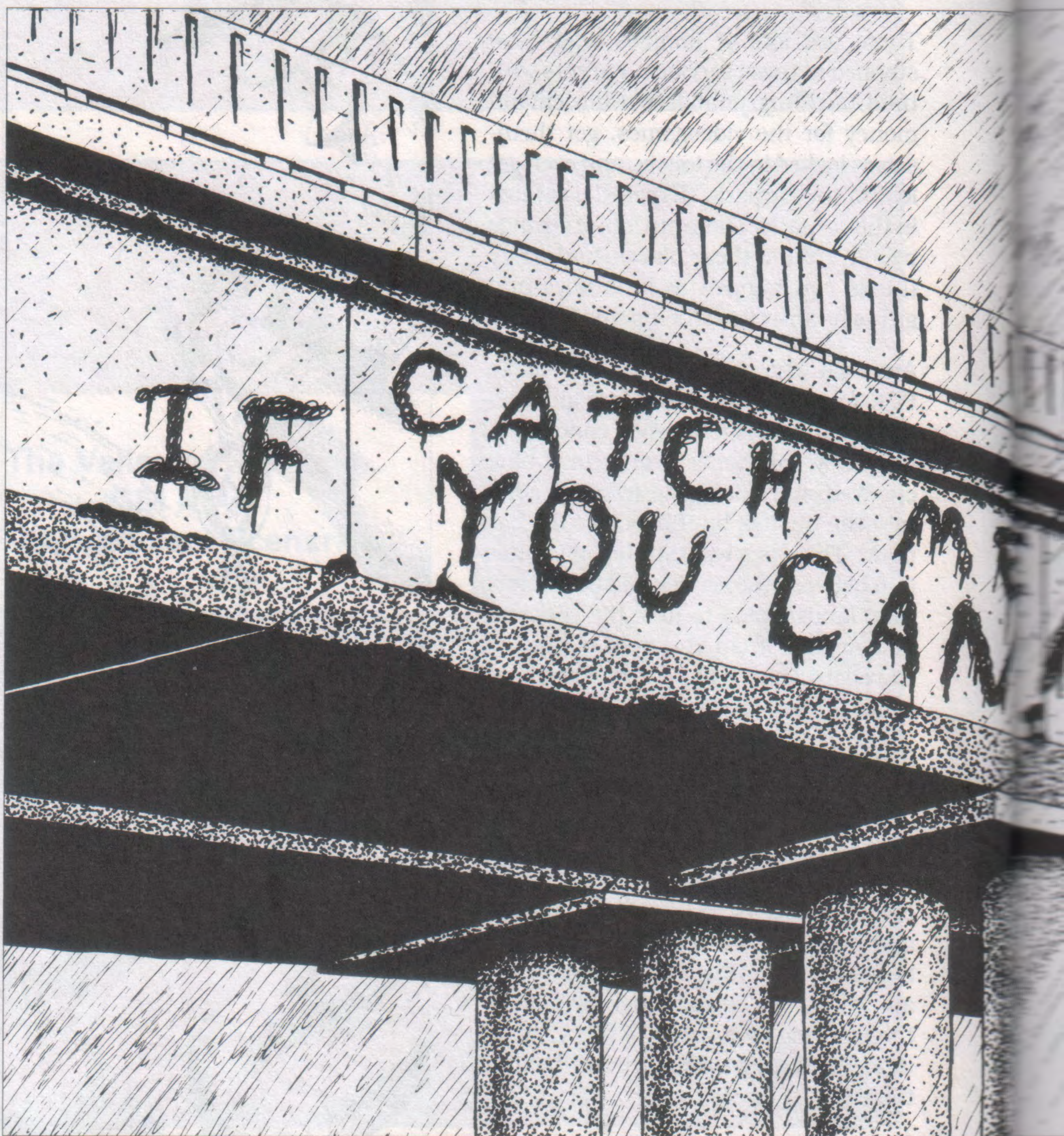
Calling the AA, the RAC, or even the police is a little difficult without a phone. At the very limit of the headlights is an emergency telephone box. Between it and the PCs lies rain, darkness, and the possibility that the maniac has been here ahead of them and could be out

there now, waiting. Beyond the hard shoulder the landscape slopes upward, covered thickly in bushes and small trees. Anyone could be hiding up there, perfectly concealed.

What the PCs do now is largely a matter of playing it by ear, but here are some suggestions for possible courses of action:

One or two characters go for the phone: in true B-movie fashion, the suicidal characters decide to head off on their own. Let them get to the phone box and discover that it has been vandalised, and that there's a toffee wrapper there. Observing this calls for a WPR check, failure resulting in a loss of 2d10 WPR. Regardless of their next course of action, they are faced with a maniac standing between them and the car, rain trickling from the point of his knife and madness in his eyes. If their companions run to help, it will take two rounds to reach them.

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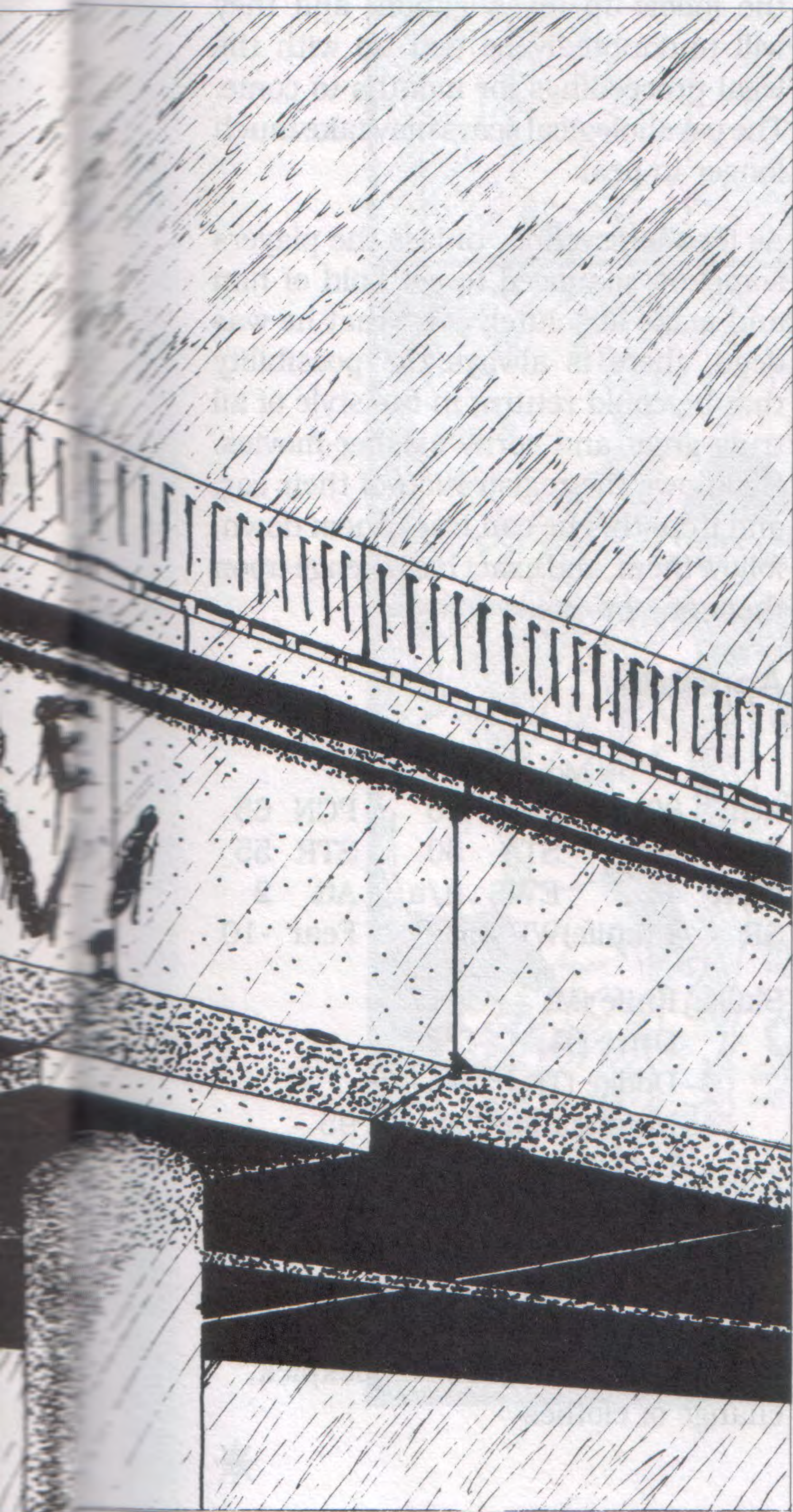
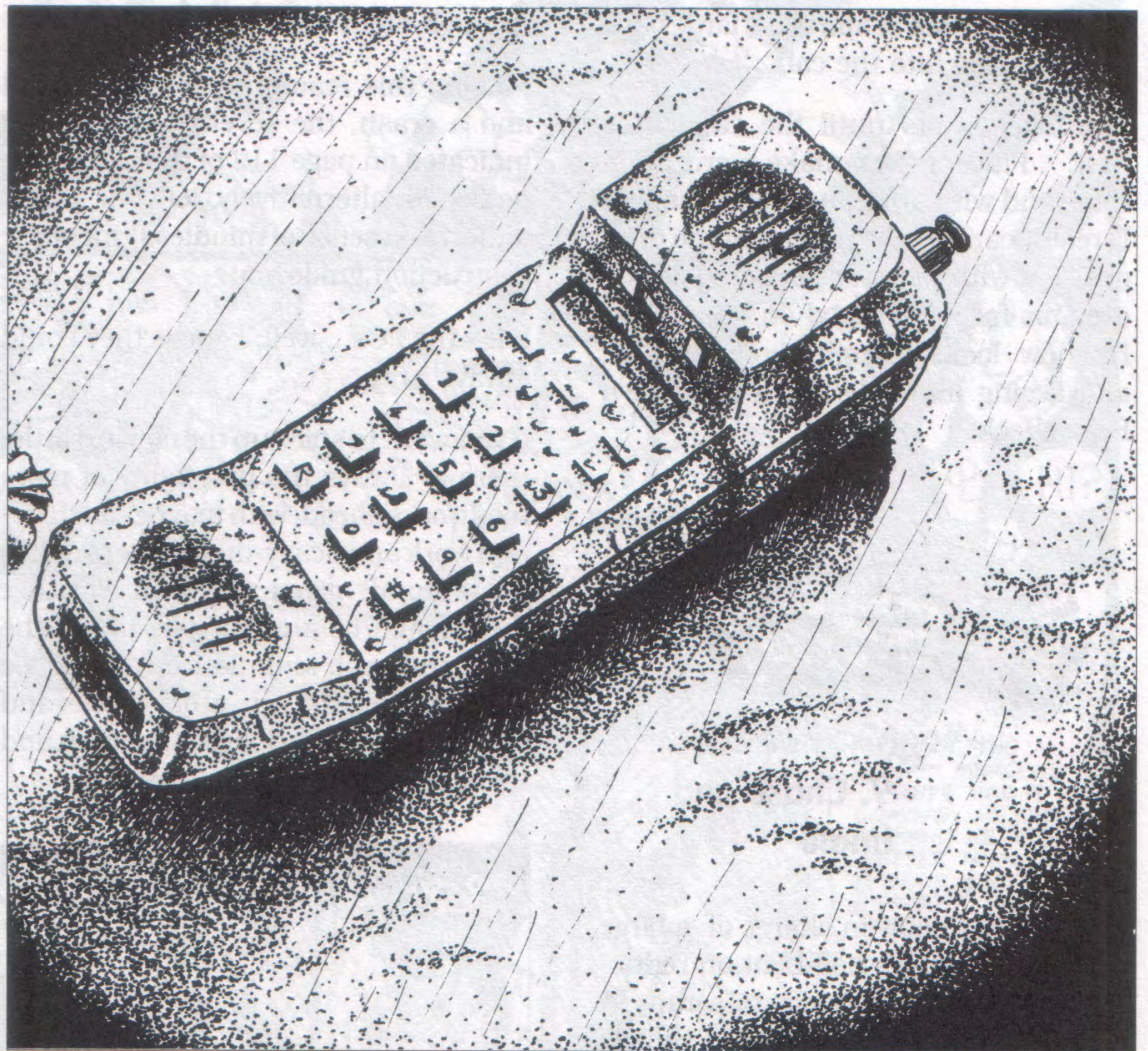


One person is left in the car: the maniac attacks them, smashing through the rear window.

Everybody stays in the car: wimps. Smart, but wimps. A few menacing tactics, designed to wear down their willpower; walking brazenly up to the car and producing from his bag the dog's head, which he then places on the hood; jumping up and down on the roof, caving it in on the PCs' heads; pretending to make a call from the box and holding it up as if to say "It's for you"... the possibilities are endless.

The only set piece of action is as follows. It can occur whenever the PCs are back in the safety of their car:

The psycho walks back onto the hard shoulder and places their car-phone on the ground just in front of the car, then goes back to the bushes. If anyone wants to retrieve it, they must first make a general WPR check. It is still



operable, but has to be dried off first, and while this is being done it rings. The maniac calls them on Connor's stolen phone, and all he says is "Turn on your radio." If they do this they hear the tail end of a record followed by the DJ's voice.

*"It's just about five o'clock, almost time for me to go, but before I hand you over to the newsdesk, here's one last request. It's for the people stuck in their car on the hard shoulder of the M6, and the message is to just stay put. Your friend will come to get you as soon as he can."*



### 8. Samaritan trucker

*"Headlights appear in your rear-view mirror. The maniac stares into the gloom behind you, and suddenly runs for the bushes as a large truck pulls up onto the hard shoulder. The driver climbs down and approaches your car. He's a large man who looks like he's spent too much*

*time in trucker's diners, with tattoos peeping out from the cuffs of his waterproof. To your incredible surprise and delight he taps on the window and asks if you need any help. Maybe there are some vestiges of goodness and altruism in human nature after all."*

Now what self-respecting party is going to turn down assistance like this?

But, of course, there's a catch. There always is. 'Goodness and altruism' be damned - this is a horror game.

As the players describe their predicament to the trucker, who listens at first with scepticism and then mounting unease as he sees the evidence with his own eyes, the maniac stealthily creeps into the cab of the truck under cover of darkness. There are no perception rolls to notice this. The trucker does what he can for the engine, restores it to some sort of working order, and then heads back to his truck, telling the PCs that he will call the police on his CB radio. The



## 46 MOTORPSYCHO

last they ever see of him is his large back disappearing into the cab.

The truck waits until the car leaves first. Players can make perception rolls, and with anything better than an L-result can see the psycho in the driver's seat with wet hair plastered darkly over his face and blood on one cheek. He now looks completely homicidal, and seeing him calls for a full blown Fear check.



### 9. Chase and finale

The psycho is now in charge of a large semi-trailer and is hell-bent on reducing the PCs and their car to scrap. A road-battle with such a huge vehicle would reduce the nerves of the hardest driver to twitching shreds.

Excellent rules for resolving car chases can be found in the *Chill Companion* (p.109), but if you don't have access to a copy then the following guidelines may be useful.

The psycho and the driver of the PCs' car each make an opposed driving roll, the difference between the two rolls yielding the results as follows:

*Success levels are equal:* both vehicles retain their relative positions, with neither gaining the advantage.

*One level difference:* the winner may accelerate for this round.

*Two levels of difference (an L and a H, or an M and a C):* the winner may either put a good deal of distance between the two vehicles, or pull up close. (e.g.: The psycho wins this and draws up alongside the car. The truck's passenger door opens and the body of the trucker is pushed out onto the car, prompting the driver to make first a fear check and then a driving roll to retain control.)

*Three levels of difference (one party gets an L, the other gets a C):* either the psycho can ram the car, or the PCs can escape momentarily by weaving between traffic. The truck simply piles

through other vehicles in pursuit.

*Failure:* this results in loss of control and a crash, the severity of which is indicated on page 112 of the *Chill Companion*, or alternatively, let your imagination and sense of mindless cinematic destruction guide you.

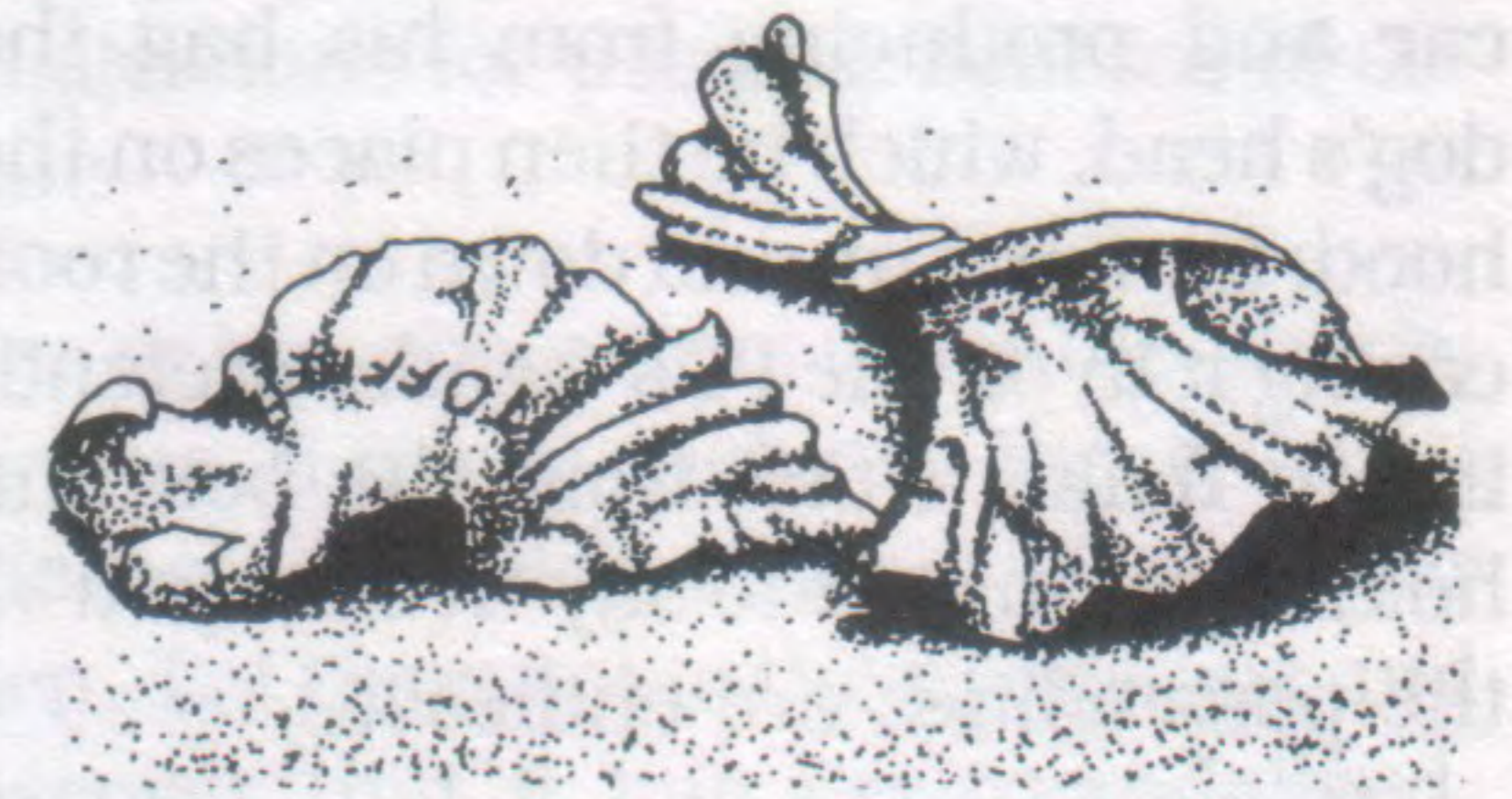
If it's the PCs... well, I guess they could always pray.

If you want to spice up the chase a little, there is always the possibility of more roadworks ahead, with maybe construction work and heavy-duty diggers roaming around; given the poor weather there could be a minor pile-up on the motorway with ambulances and police cars to join in the fun; other trucks and cars are useful for dodging between and using as cover.

ANDREW HEPWORTH



Eventually, the police WILL become involved, but exactly how soon they manage to put a stop to the carnage depends on whether they too can outride the psycho. Even if the PCs stop for a police patrol, there is no way that the psycho will.



### 10. Aftermath

Assuming anybody survives, they are given medical attention as necessary, and immediately arrested for reckless driving. However, their explanations are easily corroborated, and they are eventually set free after making statements. The police will want full details of everybody's names and addresses for the follow-up investigation, and they will undoubtedly be tied up with the legal proceedings for months to come. The psychological scars may take much longer to heal.

As for the psycho... unless the players somehow managed to get hold of him and make absolutely sure that he was dead, there is always the possibility that he could return, in the style of all truly great and corny slasher-movies. He knows the registration of their car, and from this he can track them down, follow them, and exact his revenge upon them one by one...

### Appendix

THE MOTORWAY PSYCHO					
AGL	80	DEX	50	PCN	65
PER	45	STA	50	STR	55
WPR	45	EWS	n/a	Att	2
SR	4 (knife)	WB	35	Fear	-10

Skills:	Knife (M)	117
	Drive (T)	72
	Dodge (T)	75
	Intimidation (M)	95
	Lockpicking (S)	72
	Stealth (T)	102

Equipment: Motorcycle  
Duffel bag containing:  
large carving knife, hammer, hole-punch, black marker pen, lockpick, change of clothes

