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# ABDUCTED

BY CHARLES RICE

## THE SETUP

Generic adventures are tough to write. You don't know the tastes of the group or the game master. In modern games this is made even tougher because there is no accepted baseline (as there is in fantasy). One group might be seeking things "man was not meant to know" while the other searches for terrorists in the mountains of Afghanistan.

Abducted, an adventure scenario for Modern d20, attempts to wrestle with this problem by presenting a *problem*: the abduction of a little girl. This problem is presented with many possible causes and many possible solutions in the hope that the greatest number of games will find that the scenario fitting their style of play.

## REASONS FOR THE ABDUCTION

The following provide information on the abductor's motivation. Depending on the nature of the campaign some motivations will fit better than others yet none of these motivations will alter the central action of the adventure: the rescue of Molly Cales.

### JEALOUSY

Clinton sees in his "old friend," Sam, everything he could have been. *Should have been*. He should have been the one recruited by the college football programs. He should have been the one with the million-dollar professional contracts, the show endorsements, and the underwear commercials. And he should have been the one elected to the Senate. He outsmarted Sam by gaining his trust and abducting his daughter. After he gets every dime of his friend's



money, he'll prove once and for all which of them is smarter and tougher: by killing her and escaping the country.

### STRICTLY BUSINESS

Sam Cales is about to cast the deciding vote on one of the most sweeping reforms of the military and intelligence communities in the nation's history. This bill will replace the CIA, the FBI, the NSA and the DEA with a single agency with an enormous budget and unprecedented influence. Someone wants to make sure Sam votes a certain way and they have convinced

Clinton, an old war buddy, to help them make sure it happens.

Depending on the nature of the campaign the game master could have the abductors desire Sam vote for or against the bill. If the abductors want to ensure the bill passes they might feel that only a super-agency can defend the country from terrorism or they might have a darker motive: a desire to use the agency to stage a coup of the United States government. If the abductors want to ensure the bill's defeat it might be out of a desire to protect the military from being overshadowed in importance (and budget) by this new agency. The abductors believe that since the new "Intelligence Czar" created by the bill will have the ability to order troop deployments under the guise of counter-terrorism operations that the military will become the pawns of the intelligence community.

## **NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT**

Jessie Dymond is intent on paving the way for his friend, Sam Cales into the Oval Office and he will do anything to ensure that it happens. Even stage the abduction of his own daughter. Jessie and Clinton have concocted a scheme to abduct the girl and draw the national spotlight onto Sam.

Everything will be staged to be as grim as possible. The killer will demand an enormous, almost unaffordable sum of money (in the billions of dollars). Send a bloody knife wrapped in the girl's handkerchief to Sam. All the while Sam will respond with his usual care, concern and resolve, winning the hearts of the nation.

And just when things seem hopeless, the girl will return home, having escaped from her captors with the aid of her loyal bodyguard Clinton Ovellette (who was wounded in their escape) and be reunited with her loving parents, the perfect "Hollywood" ending to the drama.

In this case the adventure will involve a lot of subtle investigation by the players. Jessie and Clinton are

both smart, wily operators skilled at games of deceit. Also Sam, his wife and even Molly are unaware that their suffering is just a stunt engineered by their "loyal" friends to catapult their father into the White House that will make the deception that much harder to ferret out.

## **RITUAL SACRIFICE**

Jessie Dymond is the head of a secret cult in service to a foul demon or elder god. After inducting Clinton Ovellette into his cult, he has arranged the capture of Sam's innocent daughter, who will be ritually sacrificed to his dark god. This will serve two purposes: first as in *National Spotlight* the abduction and subsequent murder of the innocent girl will catapult Sam into the Presidency, but the ritual will also serve to give Jessie control over Sam, giving his cult the ultimate power. The cult's dark god craves blood, and when President Sam Cales plunges America into World War III the ground will be soaked in blood, enough to allow their dark god to walk the Earth in the flesh once again.

## **GETTING THE PCS INVOLVED**

Like the motivation of the abductors, getting the PCs involved will depend on the nature of the campaign and the motivations of the players. The following are some suggestions for getting the PCs engaged in the plot.

## **THE BENEFACITOR**

First seen in Issue #2 of the Dispatch, the Benefactor is the perfect way to get almost any group of heroes involved. This shadowy figure combats government corruption wherever he can and the abduction of the daughter of an honest Senator, whether to influence a vote, rig a Presidential election, or indulge the blood lust of a dark god will attract his attention. If the PCs are already contacts for the Benefactor he will send

them a mysterious message to meet him (it could arrive in their mail, with their morning paper or even be taped to the inside lid of their pizza delivery). When they do he will tell them about the abduction and ask for their help. If the Jealousy or Strictly Business motivations are in play the Benefactor will be aware of the kidnapper's motivation and tell the PCs a little of what's going on. However in the case of National Spotlight or Ritual Sacrifice he will only know that a darker motivation than simple kidnapping is behind Molly's abduction.

## **FRIEND OF THE FAMILY**

The PCs could be friends of Sam's from college (especially PCs of the Athlete occupation- but a brainy PC could have been Sam's math tutor or study partner). If the Jealousy motivation is being used he calls them in because he doesn't completely trust the FBI to handle the situation without killing Clinton. Although Sam abhors what Clinton has done he feels his old friend needs help, not death by a sniper's rifle. If Strictly Business is the motivation Sam doesn't call the FBI, telling the PCs that if they can't locate and rescue his daughter he will sign the bill (or vote no on the bill depending on the kidnappers' demands). If the National Spotlight or Ritual Sacrifice motivations are being used Sam's sixth-sense will tell him something about this situation is not what it seems but he will be unwilling to tell the FBI of his suspicions, allowing them to handle it as a normal kidnapping while the PCs dig deeper and attempt to find the conductor orchestrating this kidnapping.

## **SOLUTIONS**

Like motivations and getting the heroes involved, abduction is a scenario that can be concluded in a multitude of ways. Different methods will be better suited to different groups and some possible suggestions are detailed below.

## VIOLENCE

The simplest solution would be to track down the kidnapper's whereabouts, follow him back to his hideout and attack, securing the release of the Senator's daughter and bringing her kidnapper to justice. Even though this solution involves the straightest path toward victory it will still require the PCs to be on their toes.

How do they track the abductor? Perhaps they use electronic wizardry to trace his call (this will be difficult since Clinton is aware of such methods). Although this will only provide the PCs with a payphone number, they can then stake out that location and then follow Clinton back to his hideout after his next call. Perhaps the PCs conduct the ransom drop and then follow Clinton back to his hideout or perhaps they place an electronic tracking device in the money.

And once the PCs find out where Molly is being held, an assault will have to be conducted carefully to ensure the kidnapper does not kill her out of spite or use her as a shield (even a firefight in another room would endanger her from the crossfire).

## NEGOTIATION

The ultimate solution for a PC with the Negotiator advanced class would be to convince Clinton to return the girl unharmed and turn himself in. Many times kidnappers buckle under the stress if the money is not turned over right away. Clinton is a troubled man with an alcohol addiction and is genuinely wracked with guilt over his actions. Even if the motivation does not allow for a peaceful solution (this will be especially true if Jealousy is the motivation for Clinton) a skilled negotiator could still greatly enhance the chance for success by keeping Clinton on the line, perhaps long enough for a trace of his call to be conducted.

## AFTERMATH

Once the adventure is concluded a number of possible scenarios could spring from this adventure, allowing the effects of abduction to be felt in the campaign for weeks, perhaps months.

### THE ALLY

If the PCs successfully save Molly they will find Sam Cales a most valuable contact. A man of intense loyalty he will aid the characters in the future whenever he can.

### THE FALLEN

If Molly was killed the PCs will have to track down Clinton before he can flee the country. This could involve investigation to determine where he intends to leave and his destination or it could be an action-filled chase through highway traffic.

### SHADOWPLAY

Even if the PCs free Molly they might have some unanswered questions about the adventure they just took part in (this could especially be the case if the National Spotlight or Ritual Sacrifice motivations were used). They might find themselves suspecting Jessie or Clinton's involvement, which could even pit Sam against them since his loyalty will blind him to the involvement of anyone so close to him without ironclad evidence. As the PCs investigate the motivations of the NPCs close to Senator Cales the game master will find the tips in Issue #2 of the dispatch on investigating NPCs to be invaluable.

It is possible that the PCs will be completely in the dark about Jessie's or Clinton's deeper motives if the game master is especially subtle (or the players especially err... unperceptive). The Benefactor could make his presence known at this time and inform the PCs that something darker is afoot (this would be

especially effective if the Benefactor did *not* get the PCs involved in the first place, otherwise the players may feel like the game master is leading them by the nose).

## NPCs

### CLINTON OVELLETTE

Clinton Ovellette always saw himself as the hero of his own personal movie. He knew someday men would write books about him. Captain of the football team. Class President three times. Marine reconnaissance expert with a tour in Desert Storm. An agent of the Secret Service. Upon entering the Secret Service Clinton's story seemed to stall. After repeated attempts to qualify for the Presidential Protection detail he realized he never would make it. He had failed. Not in the eyes of the world, his family or even his superiors. To Clinton this failure to continue his rise toward a heroic destiny gnawed at him. He should be the one to leap in front of the bullets from a Presidential assassin's rifle not guard some worthless Senator desperate to worm his way into the appropriations committee.

Clinton craved excitement. He was addicted to it.

He placed some discreet ads in military and police magazines advertising some very specialized services. After several of these "missions," a man with a very special assignment approached Clinton. One in fact that no one else in the world but him could carry out: abduct the daughter of the man he was supposed to protect. Clinton never bothered to ask how the man had learned who he was or whom he guarded, because this offer was the perfect next chapter to the story of his life. It was the sort of thing people would write books about.

**Clinton Ovellette (Tough Hero 4/Soldier 3/Bodyguard 3)** CR 10; Medium-size humanoid; HD 4d10+8 plus 3d10+6 plus 3d12+6 plus 4; HP 83; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense 26, touch 20, flatfooted 23 (+6 equipment, +3 Dex, +7 class); BAB +7; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d4+0, Combat Martial Arts or 1d6+0 Metal Baton), or +11 ranged (2d6+2, Berretta (93R) +10 ranged (2d6 SITES M9 or 2d8 Sawed-Off Shotgun); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ see below; AL glory hound; SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +2; AP 5; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 14.

**Occupation:** Law Enforcement (Gather Information, Knowledge [Tactics])

**Skills:** Concentration +7, Demolitions +7, Disguise +8, Drive +16, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (Tactics) +6, Listen +4, Pilot +4, Spot +6

**Feats:** Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Alertness, Armor Proficiency (heavy), Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Combat Martial Arts, Double Tap, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Vehicle Expert

**Talents (Tough Hero):** Robust, Second Wind

**Talents (Soldier):** Weapon Focus (Berretta 93R), Weapon Specialization (Berretta 93R)

**Talents (Bodyguard):** Harm's Way, Combat Sense +1

**Possessions:** Wealth +6, 35mm camera (used for casing his potential victims- if the PCs search Clinton's apartment they will find pictures of several men and women who were killed over the past year- there is no suspect for any of the murders- in fact since each of the murders was done in a different way and with a different weapon the authorities are not even aware that the killings are related), Night Vision Goggles, 2 Fake IDs (one under the name Clinton O'malley the other Clark Stalzer), a dozen Zip-tie handcuffs, Bolt Cutter, Disguise Kit, Suppressor (9mm pistol), Berretta 93R (worn in shoulder holster), SITES M9 (worn in ankle holster), Sawed

Off Shotgun (under seat of car if driving, otherwise nearby), 4 clips (Berretta), 4 clips (SITES), one box 50 rounds 9mm ammunition (may be used in either pistol), 2 boxes of 10 12-gauge shotgun shells, Metal Baton, Sap, Tactical Vest

**Quote:** "Ah, the game is afoot."

## SENATOR SAM CALES

In high school no one really noticed Sam Cales. Sure he was the best fullback in the conference, he even set the single season rushing record at a school with a prestigious football history. The team's quarterback and captain, Clinton Ovellette, was the star of the team and his passes, thrown with deadly accuracy, were what led the team to the state championship two years in a row. However the college scouts had noticed Sam. They even considered him better than the team's quarterback for playing at the next level. It turned out for all his accuracy and leadership that Clinton was considered too small to play big time college football.

So while Clinton went to the marines, Sam went to a Midwestern college where football was religion and blossomed into a star. Driven to improve himself he took ballet and judo, adding agility and speed to his strength and power. After a freshman campaign where he almost never saw the field, Sam was changed from fullback to halfback where he became the focal point for the team. A senior season that saw the team win the national championship, with Sam winning the most coveted award in college football propelled him to fame and fortune as a professional. In the professional level Sam's charm, good looks and clean-cut image earned him endorsements, fame and powerful friends. And it turned out that Sam was good with people. He wasn't a genius but that was his charm. He talked in a language ordinary working folks understood and when making deals he knew how to reward his friends and crush his enemies. He was perfect. Soon the rich booster who had backed

his college program was his campaign manager and Sam was running for the vacant Senate seat in the Midwestern state where he was worshipped almost as a god for bringing the championship trophy back home.

When Sam became a Senator he heard that his old friend, Clinton was not doing so well in his job at the Secret Service. It seemed he had developed a drinking problem and his erratic behavior was about to get him drummed out of the agency altogether. Unknown to Clinton, Sam campaigned to have him kept on, demanding the troubled agent be assigned to his own security detail. He believes that he can help his friend overcome his demons.

**Senator Sam Cales (Strong Hero 2/Fast Hero 2/Charismatic Hero 4)** CR 8; Medium-size humanoid; HD 2d8+2 plus 2d8+2 plus 4d6+4; HP 40; Mas 13; Init +2; Spd 35 ft; Defense 22, touch 19, flatfooted 20 (+2 Dex, +7 class, +3 equipment); BAB +5; Grap +9; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2 nonlethal brawl), or +7 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ see below; AL loyal (this applies to anyone who has helped him but especially friends and family); SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +0; AP 4; Rep +9; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14.

**Occupation:** Athlete (Balance, Jump, Tumble)

**Skills:** Balance +8, Climb +7, Escape Artist +5, Jump +10, Knowledge (Current Events) +4, Profession +1, Swim +4, Tumble +7

**Feats:** Acrobatic, Athletic, Brawl, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Renown x2, Windfall, Armor Proficiency (light)

**Talents (Strong Hero):** Extreme Effort

**Talents (Fast Hero):** Increased Speed

**Talents (Charismatic Hero):** Charm, Favor

**Possessions:** Wealth +18, Undercover Vest

**Quote:** "I'm not the smartest man to ever serve in the U.S. Senate, however there are things I know. Things I learned playing football. Things like loyalty,



sacrifice and the ability of a group to be more than each person individually. That's what makes a football team great, and that's what makes America great. God bless America."

## JESSIE DYMOND

Jessie Dymond earned a fortune as the owner of a chain of used-car lots throughout the Midwest. Like most in his state, however, his true passion was football and he did everything he could to make sure his team got the best athletes. He'd supply them with cars (on "loan"), money, and women, whatever it took to get them to commit to the local university.

Even the best salesman lets one slip by on occasion and Sam Cales was one of those. Jessie hadn't even considered him worth paying when he came to the school on his recruiting trip; however, in his sophomore year Jessie noticed the young man, just like everyone else. Jessie could immediately see there was something special about Sam. People didn't just like him; they loved him. For two years Sam refused to take any money from Jessie, but then, his Senior year, Sam's father died of a heart attack. Jessie stepped in and made sure Sam's mother didn't lose her house and the two have been inseparable ever since. Jessie negotiated Sam's first professional contract and made sure Madison Avenue knew what a marketable commodity he was.

When Sam's professional career was over, Jessie had everything in place for him to step into the Senate. Some photos of the old Senator and his mistress were made available to a newspaper reporter just in time to vacate the seat Sam would fill. And after yet another scandal involving a politician the people were ready for an honest man to represent them in Washington; a man like Sam.

Jessie Dymond loves money, power and the lifestyle of a Washington insider. He prefers that people not know who he is and has a real loyalty to Sam (probably the only person in the world he *is* loyal to). Anyone who goes after Sam will have to get through Jessie first and they will find that that fat, balding, cigar-chomping politico as dangerous as a pit bull and willing to lie, cheat and blackmail to make sure Sam's career keeps rising. Jessie has one last ambition, one better than being a millionaire or even the closest advisor to a Senator. Jessie plans to be the White House Chief of Staff for President Sam Cales.

**Jessie Dymond (Charismatic Hero 7)** CR 7; Medium-size humanoid; HD 7d6+0; HP 25; Mas 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 16, touch 13, flatfooted 15 (+1 Dex, +2 class, +3 equipment); BAB +3; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal unarmed strike or by weapon), or +4 ranged (by weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ see below; AL greed, power, Sam Cales; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +3; AP 3; Rep +2; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16.

**Occupation:** Entrepreneur (Bluff, Knowledge [Business])

**Skills:** Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Disguise +5, Gamble +3, Gather Information +15, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +12, Knowledge (Business) +12, Knowledge (Civics) +7, Knowledge (Current Events) +7, Knowledge (Popular Culture) +12, Knowledge (Streetwise) +12, Profession +13

**Feats:** Armor Proficiency (light), Confident, Deceptive, Low Profile, Trustworthy, Windfall, Windfall

**Talents (Charismatic Hero):** Charm, Favor, Captivate, Fast-Talk

**Possessions:** Wealth +25, Undercover Vest

**Quote:** "Boy, you better listen to ole Jessie. My buddy Sam's got this bill he sponsored and he needs it passed. Now what you want? Sam's vote on that new highway bill you got going through? Yeah, I think we can work this out. You're a great negotiator, son, you really had me sweatin' there for a sec. Now listen, you come over to my office in the morning, drop off the details of this bill o' yours and I'll have a box o' Cuban cigars waitin' for ya to boot."

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