



Requires the use of the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



"Howdy" from 12 to Midnight

From all of us here at **12 to Midnight**, welcome to *Modern Dispatch*. In case you are not familiar with us, we are a Texas-based RPG publisher specializing in modern horror. You might not normally think "Texas" and "horror" go together, but we are pretty sure you will change your mind after spending some time in Pinebox.

That's Pinebox, Texas. It is a nice little rural community smack-dab in east Texas. There is a university nearby, a Pine forest called the Big Thicket, and a mess of beautiful wildflowers every Spring. Unfortunately, it is also the epicenter of a whole lot of bad mojo. We're talking dark magic, serial killers, haunted buildings—the whole ball of wax.

If you want to learn more about Pinebox, just visit our website at 12tomidnight.com. You can start using the free campaign setting on our site right now, then watch it continue to grow right here in the pages of *Modern Dispatch*. Of course, Pinebox is *our* setting but all the material in these pages can just as easily be dropped into *yours*.

Each issue published by 12 to Midnight includes unique characters we call Pinebox Personalities. Even if you do not use the characters themselves, each description is also loaded with enough adventure ideas to keep you gaming for months. The same is true for the next section, Pinebox Places. That is where we feature the description, adventure ideas, and map(s) for each building. Finally, we wrap up with a short "sidetrek" style adventure using material from the other sections.

If you have any ideas for future issues or want to comment on what you read here, please feel free to drop by our forums at 12tomidnight.com.

Pinebox Personalities

Morten Decourt (aka Michael Anthony Luca)



Mort is a middle-aged man whose dark hair is sprinkled with white and combed over his ever-growing bald spot. His athletic build is obvious, though the girth of his belly speaks of his love of pizza and beer. He speaks with a Chicagoan-Italian accent, though he dresses in western shirts, a thick belt and cowboy belt buckle, blue jeans, and handcrafted, snakeskin boots.

Character Profile

(May 2, 1963- Present)

Morten, (also called Mort, or Morty) came to Pinebox twelve years ago and fell in love with Texas and the "cowboy" way of life. Mort wanted to create a business that would combine his two great loves: Pizza and Rodeo. Mort purchased several acres of land and a large ranching barn just west of Highway 96. He converted the barn into a restaurant by adding a floor, tables, a kitchen, and restrooms. Thus the Pizza Barn was created. The Pizza Barn soon became one of the most celebrated restaurants in East Texas and is "the" hangout for the college crowd on the weekend. Morty loves the city of Pinebox and the Pizza Barn and he has become one of the most renowned and beloved citizens of the area.

Mort owns a large two-story house north of Pinebox near Hwy. 96, and he remains a bachelor without any other family in the area.

Secrets

Mort is actually protected by the US government's witness protection program, and his real name is Michael Anthony Luca. He was a product of the "Patch" in Chicago, one of the toughest neighborhoods in the nation, and soon joined his brothers serving the Romano crime syndicate. He performed many petty

crimes and scores until he and his gang of toughs pulled off a large diamond heist in St. Louis. This score made him a favorite of Manny Romano, and he soon found himself a high-ranking lieutenant in the Mafia.

In 1977, the FBI caught Michael during a drug bust in Miami. Facing life in prison for the resulting shootout, he quickly made a deal. For immunity and a place in the witness protection program, he would give up all the dirt he knew on the Romano family. In 1979 he testified in a New York Federal court, and this testimony resulted in Manny and fifteen others (including Larry the Bull and Marko the Knife) earning prison sentences ranging from life to ten years. The Mafia placed a million dollar contract on his life, and Michael went into the witness protection program under name Edgardo Phillipe.

Unfortunately, Edgardo was discovered in Albuquerque, New Mexico where his new wife, Lillian was killed. He escaped the assassins and the government relocated him with the identity of Morton DeCourt. His new address was Pinebox, Texas. He received money for funding a business, and after a year in the community he opened the Pizza Barn.



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12 TO MIDNIGHT



RPG
OBJECTS



ADAMANT
ENTERTAINMENT



RONIN
ARTS

Morten is plagued by dreams of his young wife, and terrified that the Mafia might find him. He refuses to have his picture taken, despite many newspaper articles about his successful business venture. Mort does enjoy meeting people and is truly a reformed criminal.

Morten Decourt

CR 2; Male Human Fast Ordinary 2/Smart Ordinary 1/Charismatic Ordinary 1; Medium Humanoid (6'0"); Age: 42; Eyes: Brown; Hair: Thinning, Dark sprinkled with gray; Skin: Light Olive; Build: Athletic Beer Belly; 2d8+1d6+1d6+4; 22 hp; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex); touch 16; flat-footed 14; Base +1/+1; Atk Strike, Unarmed +2 melee (1d6); Colt M1911 +3 ranged (2d6, 30 ft.); Baseball Bat +1 melee (1d6); SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 15.

Skills: Balance +2, Craft (Mechanical) +8, Drive +7, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Knowledge (Streetwise) +10, Move Silently +7, Ride +2, Read/Write Language, Speak Language, Forgery +11, Computer Use +3, Craft +3, Craft (Electronic) +5, Craft (Structural) +5, Craft (Visual Art) +3, Craft (Writing) +3, Demolitions +4, Disable Device +4, Investigate +6, Knowledge (Business) +5, Navigate +3, Research +3, Search +7, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +2, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +4, Perform (Act) +2, Perform (Dance) +2, Perform (Keyboards) +2, Perform (Percussion Instruments) +2, Perform (Sing) +2, Perform (Stand-Up) +3, Perform (Stringed Instruments) +2, Perform (Wind Instruments) +2.
Languages: Speak English, Read/Write English.

Feats: Brawl, Meticulous (+2 bonus on Forgery and Search checks), Personal Firearms Proficiency (Use personal firearms at no penalty), Attentive (+2 bonus on Investigate and Sense Motive checks).

Possessions: Colt M1911, Box magazine (×5), Holster, Concealed Carry, Baseball Bat.

Character Speak:

"Howdy. How you doin'?"

"Welcome to my barn! What can we get youse?"

"We gots pop, beer, vino, anything youse desire!"

"Who do ya think ya are, anyways?"

"Dance, have fun! Drink! Spend a few bucks!"

GM Ideas:

- A local reporter, Trey Ramirez, discovered that Morten is in the Witness Protection Program, but does not know Morten's true identity. Trey is content to blackmail Morten for free pizza, beer, and occasional monetary tributes. Morten is angry but afraid to report Trey to the government, as he truly loves Pinebox and has no wish to start over again. So he pays Trey whatever he asks. The team may be hired by Morten to investigate Trey, or by Trey to investigate Morten. They may simply notice Trey visiting with Morten at the Pizza Barn and see an angry Morten pass an envelope to Trey. What they do with this information could make Morten a friend for life, or an enemy.
- One of the team members is hired as a weekend "bouncer". This could lead to interesting times and is a great way to introduce new GM characters. One night a group of "vampyres" (regular people who dress goth and wish they were real vampires), comes into the club and begin causing trouble. However, one of the posers is in fact a *real* vampire, and the Pizza Barn is in trouble!
- In the early hours of Saturday morning as the Barn is closing, four masked men enter with shotguns and rob the establishment. The team members witness the robbery, and if they get involved may

be heroes. They may get hurt, if not killed, as these guys are armed and they mean business. The safe contains over \$12,000, and Morten tries to give them everything they want, as he wants to protect his working crew and any patrons present in the establishment.

- A serial killer, James Henry Martell, has made the Pizza Barn his favorite hangout. His good looks and friendly personality provide him with access to his targets. He either meets them at the Barn or follows them home. Once he abducts a victim, James takes them out to the Indian Mounds, where he kills them. He has struck four times now, and the team is present when he selects a new victim. If a female character is in the group, she is his target; otherwise he has chosen another customer at the Barn.
- Marko the Knife has recently been released from prison and given a lead regarding his old "friend." Now he has come to Pinebox seeking Michael. If Marko finds him, he attempts to murder Mort with his trademark sharpened "Rambo" blade. The team may be hired to find "Michael" by Marko, or may be present when Marko makes his move to kill Michael.

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Jerry Leroy McGovern

Jerry is a large man with small brown eyes, a straight Roman nose, and a strong chin. His dirty blond hair is a bit long in the back, but well kempt. He usually wears a sports coat over a western shirt, slacks and boots. He wears one ring on each hand-- a wedding band on his left, and a class of 1982 East Texas University ring on his right. He wears too much Old Spice cologne and the smell often lingers wherever he has been.

Character Profile

(December 1, 1959- Present)

Jerry is well educated, holding a Master's degree in Business Administration and Finance from East Texas University. He is currently the Vice-President of Lending for the State Bank of Pinebox. This position enables Jerry to know many personal details and secrets of the Pinebox elite. He is an upstanding member of the community who is the primary officer for the Children's Network of Pinebox, a community service project designed to provide underprivileged children with hearty meals, tutoring services, and after school programs.

Jerry keeps physically fit, and is an avid hunter and target shooter. He is an expert shot with a bow, rifle, and pistol and runs seven miles every day. He and his wife Janet have a teenage son, James Leroy, in high school, and a daughter, Mary Ann, in college at ETU.

Secrets

Jerry is a member of the Texas National Militia (TNM), a white supremacy group with a separatist agenda. Although he carries the token title of Captain, he believes he should be leading the group instead of Red McCoy. Jerry believes that Red is losing his sanity, as his leader sometimes rambles about private meetings with Robert E. Lee.

Jerry is extremely racist despite his education. Often he uses his position at the bank to gather personal information on his enemies and deny loans to minorities, while simultaneously working diligently to help those he considers "pure and admirable."

As Captain of the TNM, Jerry commands followers who can help him in a variety of situations. Jerry is a cold and calculating enemy whose carefully planned methods rarely fail.

Recently, his twin brother Kerry was involved in an unsuccessful murder attempt on the steps of the Pinebox City Hall (See Modern Dispatch #26). Jerry is angry with his brother, fearing that Kerry's failure might disrupt Jerry's position in the TNM. Regardless, Jerry plots revenge against Manuel Travis.

Character Speak:

"Welcome to the State Bank of Pinebox. What can I help you folks with today?"

"We must separate the wheat from the chaff."

"I'm sorry, but you are a risk this bank can't afford."

"My brother may be a dumb redneck, but he's still my brother, and blood is thicker than water."

"We've worked too hard to quit now."

Jerry McGovern

CR 1½; Male Human Charismatic Ordinary 2/Smart Ordinary 1; Medium Humanoid (6'4"); Age: 23; Eyes: Brown; Hair: Long in back, Black; Skin: Pale; Build: Large not fat; 2d6+1d6+3; 15 hp; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11; touch 11; flat-footed 11; Base +1/+1; Atk Strike, Unarmed +1 melee (1d3); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +9, Craft (Visual Art) +2, Craft (Writing) +6, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +3 (Bluff: +2 when acting

in character), Gather Information +9, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Business) +11, Knowledge (Civics) +8, Knowledge (Current Events) +5, Knowledge (Popular Culture) +8, Perform (Act) +3, Perform (Dance) +3, Perform (Keyboards) +3, Perform (Percussion Instruments) +3, Perform (Sing) +3, Perform (Stand-Up) +3, Perform (Stringed Instruments) +3, Perform (Wind Instruments) +3, Profession +7, Read/Write Language, Speak Language, Computer Use +3, Craft +2, Craft (Structural) +2, Forgery +3, Navigate +3, Research +4, Search +3. **Languages:** Speak English, Read/Write English.

Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency (Use personal firearms at no penalty), Renown (Increased reputation), Educated: Knowledge (Business), Knowledge (Popular Culture) (+2 bonus on Knowledge skills).

GM Ideas:

- Jerry has targeted a local African American storeowner, Marcus Whatley, for intimidation. The TNM wants Marcus to leave Pinebox. The owner is not only a prominent businessman, but a civil rights activist and devoted enemy of all racist groups. Jerry has a detailed file on the storeowner and uses this information to doggedly harass Whatley. Whatley hires the team to investigate the TNM and protect his family while keeping his store intact.
- A white, clean-cut hero is approached and befriended by Jerry. Eventually Jerry attempts to recruit him into the TNM. A refusal transforms Jerry into an enemy, since he fears that the hero now knows too much.
- While hunting with several members of the TNM, Jerry crosses paths with the heroes. This could be a friendly exchange or a very intense one, based on the characters' racial profiles or previous involvement with the TNM and Jerry. A bunch of drunk hunters meeting adversaries deep in the woods...yeah, could be trouble!

Pinebox Places

The Pizza Barn.....

206 Highway 96

The Pizza Barn is a favorite Pinebox hangout. "The Barn" is known for its live bands, dancing, and deep-dish pizzas. This oversized, converted barn follows the classic look, painted red with white trim. A huge sign bearing the pizza joint's name hangs from the loft. Two barn-size doors slide open to reveal a spacious waiting area, which opens onto a central hallway leading into the restaurant. Music, live or from the jukebox, resonates throughout the building, and is accompanied by the smell of freshly cooked pizza and various Italian dishes and sauces.

Continuing straight ahead you enter the main dining room. There is an order counter to your right, and a billiard room to the far left. Many tables cover the floor, with a small dance floor and stage area. ETU Ravens posters cover the walls and several large television sets mounted high on the walls play sports and music video channels. The local music drowns out any sound from the televisions.

The Pizza Barn is owned and operated by Morten Decourt, a son of Chicago

who now makes his home in Pinebox, Texas. Morten purchased the barn and surrounding land on the west side of Hwy. 96. Here he created a festive restaurant, bar, and dance hall in an effort to combine his two greatest loves—pizza and the cowboy lifestyle.

Although two assistant managers share some of the duties, Morty remains hands-on with his restaurant and can be found therein most nights. He makes a point of greeting

customers personally, and although he does not like contemporary music, he hires live bands for every weekend rotation (Thursday-Saturday night).

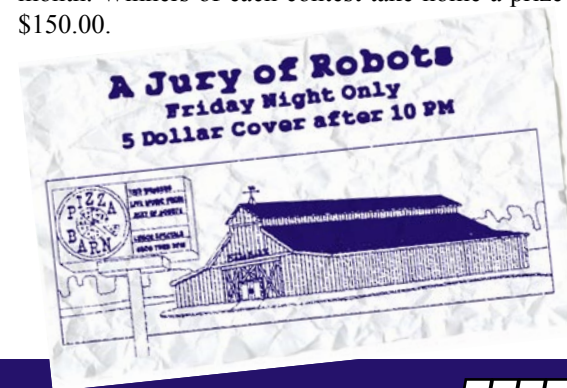
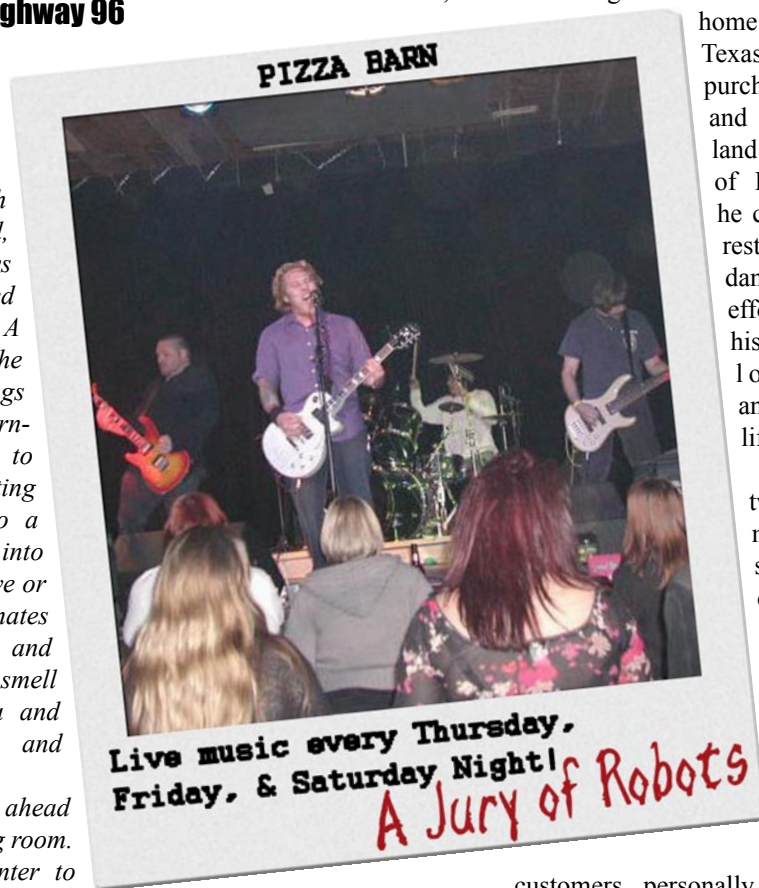
The pizza is generally served Chicago style, thick and rich. He keeps most domestic beers on tap, though he discounts local Texas beers. The Pizza Barn has

its own house specialty of barbeque pizza, which has developed a loyal following of fans who sometimes drive from all over Texas and Louisiana to eat this delicacy.

"The Barn" caters to the families of Pinebox and the college crowd, opening at 10 a.m. and closing at midnight, except for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday when it shuts the doors at two in the morning.

The arcade room holds various arcade games, but the starring attraction in the center of the room is a mechanical bull nicknamed "Diablo". This ride can be attempted at several settings: Ladies (DC 10), Gentlemen (DC 12), Cowgirls (DC 14), Cowboys (DC 16), and Rodeo (DC 20). To remain on the bull the full eight seconds, heroes must pass a *Ride* check at the appropriate DC level. Once a month the Pizza Barn holds a mechanical rodeo, and participants pay an entry fee of \$25.00. The winner receives \$100.00, a large pizza, and a pitcher of beer. Second and third places also pay out depending on the number of entrants.

The Pizza Barn also sponsors a genuine mini rodeo behind the building the first weekend of every month. Prizes are awarded for bull riding, calf roping, barrel racing and bronco busting. Participants must be eighteen years of age or older, sign a waiver, and pay an entry fee of \$25.00. The bulls, horses and gear are provided, and two professional rodeo clowns work for Mort that weekend, usually held at the first of the month. Winners of each contest take home a prize of \$150.00.



Pizza Barn GM Ideas

- Bill Szvensky, a 24 year-old professional rodeo cowboy, has returned to Pinebox to discover that his girlfriend, Celeste, has taken a new boyfriend, Alan. Alan is a defensive lineman for the Ravens. Her friend says Celeste is playing one boyfriend off the other for her own amusement. She also says that Celeste is arranging for the two to “bump into” one another in front of the Pizza Barn.
- Two years ago, Rodeo Queen and barrel racer Macie Lynn Driver was abducted at the end of the monthly rodeo. Her body was never recovered and the police never made an arrest, but some gossips whisper that two local cowboys, James Thomas and Wayne Rogers, were responsible. Last year on the anniversary of the rodeo, several people swore they heard someone behind the Pizza Barn, racing a horse around the barrels. Despite a barrel having been knocked over and still rolling back and forth, nobody was found in the arena. Macie’s friends plan to be there this year to see if she appears.
- Someone who looks a lot like Macie shows up every so often in the Pizza Barn and attempts to pick up a man. When successful, she suggests they go “park” at a secluded spot eight miles outside of town but disappears once inside the man’s vehicle. Could it really be Macie Lynn, or is it someone or something else?
- A local cowboy named Johnny MacBerry is often found in the Barn, using it as an office for meeting those in need of “special merchandise.” He has a reputation for getting *anything*, as long as you are willing to pay for it.
- Something’s not right about Mort. Occasionally two men in suits visit him in the back of the restaurant. Some folks believe these visitors are criminals, others swear they are F.B.I. agents.

Adventure

Just a Few Questions

Just a Few Questions is the second encounter in the adventure arc that began with *On the Steps of City Hall* in *Modern Dispatch* #26. These encounters are presented in a serial format for the Pinebox campaign setting, but with alternate leads and hooks for use in other modern-world campaigns.

Introduction & Background

Despite the defeat of the Confederacy nearly 140 years ago, some stubborn Southerners long for a day in which the South rises again. Others do more than idly dream. One such radical group is the Texas National Militia (TNM) (see the *Red McCoy* profile from *Modern Dispatch* 26 and look for a full organization profile in *Modern Dispatch* #34). If your campaign takes place anywhere other than the American South, you can easily change the TNM to fit any of the white supremacy groups found around the world.

In last month’s issue, the TNM tried to assassinate a member of the Pinebox City Council, but accidentally shot a local television reporter instead. Authorities (and the heroes) had no problem establishing “who done it”--Kerry McGovern’s face was caught on film for several seconds.

Follow-up

Depending on what transpired, the assassin Kerry McGovern is now either dead, incarcerated, or hiding out from the authorities. Regardless of Kerry’s current disposition, the characters should know of his involvement from the television footage of the assassination attempt. The two pressing questions at this time are “why?” and “who was the real target?”

With Kerry unavailable for questioning, the investigation must turn to other sources of information. A *Gather Information* check (DC 14, law enforcement heroes get +4 on the roll) reveals that Kerry’s parents

are dead and his drinking buddies aren’t talking. However, he has an older brother-- Jerry McGovern (see *Pinebox Personalities* section), who is an officer at a local bank.

Alternate Hooks

If you plan on running this mini-adventure independently from the previous one, the heroes may have been investigating Kerry McGovern for an unrelated crime, to question him on information only he possessed, or possibly to buy a rare or illegal item. Now that they have arrived in Pinebox a day too late, the heroes must look to alternate sources. Any kind of investigation (*Gather Information*) uncovers Kerry’s brother, Jerry, as a likely source of information.

Locating Jerry

Jerry McGovern is a hard person to reach. His brother’s errant assassination attempt brought unwanted exposure to the family. At the suggestion of his superiors at the bank, Jerry is staying at home until the dust settles. In the meantime his personal secretary, Leslie Ahearn, covers for him at the bank. Leslie is loyal to her boss and she has no knowledge of his involvement with the TNM. She visits his home at least twice a day, dropping off reports and documents that require his signature.

Whether the heroes call the bank or visit in person, they have to go through Leslie. If the characters go to the bank in person, read the following:

A huge woman waddles toward you. A triple chin folds and unfolds with each step. Thick salt and pepper strands of hair are held in a bun by a pair of red chopsticks. Despite her obesity, the dark suit she wears provides Leslie with a very business-like manner. She stops and you notice the jowls of her cheeks hang down even with the second fold of her chin.

"What kin ah do fer you," she speaks with a thick Texas drawl. Her tone wheezes and whines.

Leslie Ahearn

Leslie likes her job and considers Jerry's privacy to be sacrosanct. She believes her boss should not be punished for having a thug as a brother. Heroes who attempt to intimidate her or poke fun at her obesity meet the bank security officer, who escorts them off premises. If the team acts civil, Leslie may feel inclined to answer a few questions. Consider her to have an indifferent attitude to those she meets. It changes to unfriendly the moment she feels insulted or belittled. This woman has very thin skin. Some answers she might provide are:

"You from the papers? Mr. McGovern don't got time for an interview."

"Mr. McGovern's personal life and family ain't got nothing to do with you getting a loan."

"Jerry McGovern don't want the likes of y'all traipsing around his property. That's why y'all don't find his number in the phone book."

"Well, he's the best boss a professional woman could ever hope to work for."

"If you really need to see him, Ah can make an appointment for y'all next week. Ah'm confident that Mr. McGovern shall return by then."

"Y'all fixin' to get me in trouble. Jerry likes to go to the Pizza Barn. He's there most every Friday night. Could be those cute college girls got his attention."

Have some fun with this encounter. This is a chance to roleplay instead of roll-play. Of course if they wish to roll-play, then a *Gather Information* (DC 20) check

leads them to the Pizza Barn on Saturday, or they could just have gone there for pizza and the live band, **A Jury of Robots**.

Pizza Barn

Friday nights are busy at "The Barn" as the college crowd comes to listen to the bands and drink affordable beer. The Pizza Barn has been known to not check IDs too closely, much to the pleasure of underage drinkers. The heroes are walking into a place that is crowded and loud. Tonight's band comes from Dallas. They call themselves "A Jury of Robots" and their style includes bass riffs and driving beats that make casual conversations difficult.

The later the team arrives, the greater distance from the front doors they must park. A few people loiter and gossip in the parking lot, paying no attention to the heroes. Read the following as they enter:

The doors open and the music almost knocks you off your feet. You push through the crowd as you proceed to down a hallway. It opens to a mad scene where four musicians jump up and down while wailing on guitars and screaming into microphones. Behind them a young Hispanic male with spiky dark hair rhythmically attacks the drums. ETU students brave the crowded dance floor as the music drives them on.

A cowboy sucks in on his beer-belly as he squeezes through the crowd. He smiles at you, though his brown eyes quickly assess each of you.

"Yo! How youse doin'?" Da cover's six bucks, but da first beer's a freebie. Good luck finding a table, but if ya order a pizza I'll get youse one, some kinda way." The words all come out in a shout.

The characters have been greeted by Morten Decourt, the owner of the Pizza Barn. The minute he saw the characters, he smelled trouble. Being a cautious businessman, Mort had to check things out for himself. Most importantly, he wants to be sure that any threats entering his establishment are not directed at him (see **Pinebox Personalities** for more details).

If the team asks about Jerry McGovern, Morty experiences a sense of relief. So much so that he does not think twice about pointing the heroes in the right direction. He takes their drink order and promises to send it their way.

Whether the heroes find McGovern through Morty, a waitress, or by recognizing the physical similarity to his brother, read or summarize the following as the characters approach:

Squeezing through the crowd, you make your way toward McGovern's table. A man sits there, all alone. His head rocks back and forth following the beat of the band. Chills go down your neck as you get closer. Kerry McGovern here? His eyes meet yours, and then he rolls them as if "not again."

What the characters may not realize is that Jerry McGovern is Kerry's older twin. If the characters sought him out at the bank, Leslie Ahearn warned her boss to expect them. Consequently, he prepared for this meeting by ordering several younger TNM members to mingle in the crowd as backup. If McGovern is not forewarned, he can find a few TNM toughs partying it up in the Pizza Barn crowd after he finishes speaking with the characters. Read or summarize the following to make introductions:

Jerry stands up and shouts over the music, "I seen that look a hundred times. Y'all think I'm Kerry, don't you? I'm Kerry's older, handsomer brother Jerry. My brother has been making my life hell, just because he was two minutes slower than me."

He extends his hand for shaking to the closest hero. Shaking hands or offering to shake hands with a hero marks the team member and his associates. Jerry McGovern's thugs pick a fight with the characters once Jerry leaves their presence. However, McGovern first consents to sit with the team for a short while, at least long enough for the heroes' drinks to arrive. Jerry does not provide any useful information. He tries to keep the conversation locked on music and tonight's

band, “A Jury of Robots.” If the characters press him about his brother, he says, “My brother’s no good white trash. I got the good blood and he got the bad. I never did understand what was running through that fool head of his, and I don’t *want* to know.” After a bit, he points at his empty beer glass and excuses himself to go to the restroom.

Once he leaves, give the players and opportunity to *Spot* (DC 12) McGovern’s unusual beer coaster. It is a fancy envelope with McGovern’s name written in gold calligraphy. Inside is a printed invitation to a charity party being held at the Mayor’s house the next (Saturday) evening. It appears that someone has been using the invitation as a doodling pad. One such doodle included the words “Die already you old coot!!!” beside the Mayor’s name.

Bar Fight!

At about the time the characters make this discovery (or fail to do so) McGovern’s associates move in. Select several Thugs from the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* book. They are provided in the *Supporting Characters* section of **Chapter 8: Friends and Foes**. They come in three different levels. Use what provides the best challenge for your characters.

The TNM members do their best to provoke an attack or find any provocation to themselves attack. They act like rednecks and attack with fists, but if the characters strike back, they grab beer bottles or even pull out a knife. They do not intend to kill the characters, just beat them unconscious. The real trick to this fight is how the crowd reacts. The crowd panics, which creates six *mobs* (see special mob rules below) trying to flee

for the exits. In their rush, they could inadvertently knock down and possibly crush someone. Heroes may have to protect others while simultaneously fighting the thugs.

As was his plan all along, Jerry disappears during the chaos. Having sent the heroes a message, he spends the remainder of the night at the TNM compound until he can ascertain whether or not the heroes give up.



Investigation

Should the characters decide to pay a visit to McGovern’s home, they find a much different scene than the one at his younger twin’s home. Since Jerry socializes with bank colleagues and customers, he is cautious about leaving white supremacist propaganda lying around. In fact, considering the subsequent hoopla raised by the local TV station over his brother’s reading habits (see *Modern Dispatch* #26), Jerry just removed the few the racist pamphlets and flyers he had kept in the house. Unfortunately for him, he never took the trash to the dump. Heroes who carefully *Search* (DC 20) may find these pamphlets in the trash. Each of them appears to be from an organization called the Texas National Militia. Although the propaganda seems to indicate that the organization is in East Texas, it does not provide membership or contact information.

What Now?

Although this encounter was built to complement *On the Steps of City Hall*, you can easily adapt this encounter for your own campaign. Nothing is more fun than a good old fashioned bar room brawl. Use it in your campaign when heroes step on the wrong toes. To see what happens in Pinebox, follow the official adventure arc in 12 to Midnight’s future issues of *Modern Dispatch*. Next month we provide the skinny on the Texas National Militia and a surprising encounter at the Mayor’s charity party. In the meantime, drop by our forums at www.12tomidnight.com and let us know what you think. Also be sure to check out www.ajuryofrobots.com. These guys are awesome and worth hearing. We want to write adventure material you can use!

New d20 Mechanic

Mob Rules

A mob is a group of Small, Medium or Large creatures that acts as a single creature. Mobs include herds of domesticated animals, pod of whales, mass of congregated humans, and any other conglomeration of creatures that tends to move as a solid mass.

A mob has the characteristics of its original type, except as noted here.

A mob has a single pool of Hit Dice and hit points, a single initiative modifier, a single speed, and a single Defense. The mob makes saving throws as a single creature. A single mob occupies an area determined by the creature's size. Small and Medium creatures in a mob cover a ten foot by ten foot space, while Large creatures occupy a fifteen foot by fifteen foot area. Mobs reach into adjacent squares. To attack, the mob must be adjacent to an opponent's fighting space. Violent mobs provoke an attack of opportunity while moving as normal. It does not occupy the same fighting space as its opponent. A mob cannot move through squares occupied by enemies and vice versa, however the mob's normal attack is to overrun an opponent. Mobs cannot make ranged attacks. A mob can move through openings or portals large enough for its component creatures. Larger mobs are represented by multiple mobs.

Species Traits

Mobs have the following traits:

Mob: Mobs are not subject to critical hits or flanking. A mob takes half damage from ballistic, slashing, and piercing weapons. It is immune to any spell or effect that targets a specific number of creatures (including single-target spells such as *disintegrate*) except for mind-affecting effects. A mob takes a -10 penalty on saving throws against spells or effects that affect an

area, such as many evocation spells or grenade-like weapons. If the area effect attack does not allow a saving throw, the mob takes double damage instead.

A mob that fails a Fortitude save against massive damage disperses and does not reform.

Mobs do not make standard melee attacks. Instead, they overrun any creature who blocks their movement. A mob may overrun any opponent that is of the next size category or smaller of the mob's base creature. The mob makes one overrun attempt for each opponent contacted. A mob can attempt to overrun an opponent when starting its movement from an adjacent square (i.e. it is not required to move 10 feet first).

The target then chooses either to **avoid** the mob or to **block** the mob. If the opponent chooses to avoid the mob, he must make pass a Dexterity check (DC 15). (The mob is a concerted mass that fully occupies any square that it enters, making it unable to ignore or avoid characters currently occupying the square.)

An opponent that fails to avoid the mob is **buffeted** or **trampled**. A mob damages opponents (or itself) with buffeting damage. Damage is determined by size. Small creatures deal 1d6 damage, Medium creatures cause 1d8 damage, and Large creatures inflict 1d10 damage. Trampling damage is double the buffeting damage for bipeds and triple for quadrupeds, except creatures that have a natural trample attack do double their normal damage instead.

A buffeted opponent must attempt to move out of the way of the mob. This is a free 5' move and does not incur an attack of opportunity. If he successfully moves out of the path of the mob, it continues moving as normal. If the character cannot clear the mob's path, then they are automatically buffeted again and incur damage from the mob. If the mob has remaining movement the buffeted character can take another 5' move to escape the mob. If he cannot extricate himself, this process continues until the character escapes the mob, the mob uses all of its movement, or the character is knocked out or killed.

If the opponent attempts to block the mob, make a trip attack against that individual. If the mob succeeds in tripping the character, the mob tramples the opponent and can continue movement as normal. It may make additional overrun attacks as opponents block its way. Mobs are considered one category size larger when determining the modifiers for a trip attack. If the character is trampled he falls prone in the square.

When mobs collide, the attacked mob may not avoid the moving mob, thus it must choose to block. When the attacking mob succeeds in tripping the opposing mob, the losing mob is buffeted and moves back one square. The attacking mob may occupy that square and attempt to overrun the shoved mob again. This may continue until the attacking mob is blocked, changes directions, or runs out of movement.

If the mob fails and is tripped in turn, the mob does not enter the target's square. The mob receives self inflicted buffeting damage when tripped but does not go prone.

Some mobs also have acid, poison, blood drain, or other special attacks in addition to normal damage. A mob's attacks are nonmagical unless the mob's description states otherwise. Damage reduction sufficient to reduce a mob attack's damage to 0, incorporeality, or other special abilities may make a creature immune (or at least resistant) to damage from the mob. Mobs cannot attempt trip (except against blocking creatures) or grapple checks, nor can they be tripped or grappled themselves.

Mobs do not threaten creatures in adjacent squares and do not make attacks of opportunity.

Leader (Ex): Most mobs have the Intelligence of a single member of the mob. Mobs follow the leader in all actions. A mob uses the leader's Intelligence score and is susceptible to mind-affecting spells as if it was a single intelligent creature.

Panic (Ex): Sometimes a mob forms due to extenuating circumstances. Frightened cattle stampede as a herd, a fire in a night club incites the

crowded patrons to flee. The encounter or GM must determine when panic ensues. A panicked mob moves at double speed. When its movement into a square is successfully blocked, it attempts to move around the block. Panicked mobs never move back toward the source of their panic and stop until their next round. A panicked mob that cannot move at least one square during a round must incur buffeting damage upon itself.

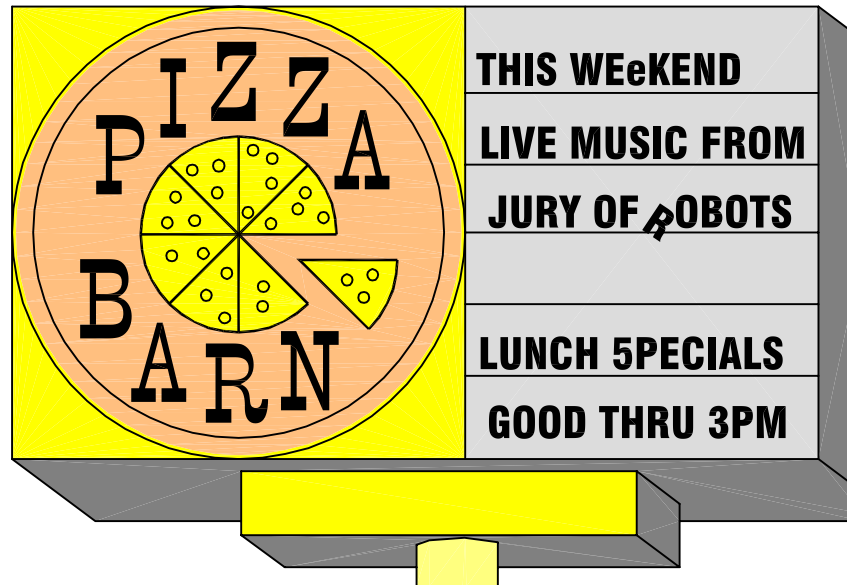
Human Mob CR 3; Large-size human; HD 4d8; hp 20; Mas 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (-1 size); BAB +0; Grap -; Atk +0 melee (1d8, buffet); Full Atk +0 melee (1d8, buffet); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA overrun; SQ leader, panic AL any; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: None.
















Feats: None.

ROOM KEY

A = Main Entrance
 B = Waiting Area
 C = Billboards
 D = Ordering Area
 E = Cashier's Station
 F = Order Pick-Up
 G = Dance Floor
 H = Emergency Exit
 I = Men's Bathroom
 J = Women's Bathroom
 K = Pay Phones
 L = Video Game Room
 M = Billiard Room
 N = Storage Room
 O = Mechanical Room
 P = Receiving Area
 Q = Freezer
 R = Cooler
 S = Dry Storage
 T = Beer Cooler
 U = Dish Washing Area
 V = Janitor's Closet
 W = Storage Room
 X = Manager's Office
 Y = Salad/Desert Preparation Area
 Z = Cooking Area
 AA = Pizza Cooking Area
 BB = Food Preparation Area
 CC = Order Assembly Area
 DD = Mechanical Bull



MAP SYMBOLS

	Sink		Dining Table
	Toilet		Chair
	Door		Filing Cabinet
	Pay Phone		Dining Booth
	Trash Can		Hay Bale
	Video Game		Table
			Mechanical Bull
			Office Desk
			Billiard Table



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THE PIZZA BARN - MAP KEY

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