



DEAD LANDS NOIR



**HIS BROTHER'S
KEEPER**

PINNACLE
ENTERTAINMENT GROUP





HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER

An Adventure for *Deadlands Noir*

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HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER

His Brother's Keeper is an adventure for *Deadlands Noir*, set in 1930s New Orleans. It takes the heroes from the Garden District's posh mansions to the edge of the bayous and back again. It contains a mix of investigation and combat, and is suitable for characters of all Ranks, although the Marshal may want to toughen up the foes for Veteran or higher characters.

ILL-GOTTEN GAINS

William White is a man with a problem. For years, he believed he could handle that problem by throwing money at it, and up until now, he was right. Unfortunately for him, a new player has entered an old game and changed the rules.

rites of succession

Fifteen years ago, William's father, Alastair, married well, to a wealthy widow. The widow, Penelope Adams had a son of her own, eight-year-old Timothy. William was 15 at the time of the marriage.

Penelope didn't become a wealthy woman by being a fool, though. She suspected Alastair's main interest was more in her money than her, so she crafted her will so that her entire estate would pass to her son, Timothy, in the event of her death. She made no secret of this at the time, and Alastair wasn't particularly distressed. After all, he was several years older than Penelope and content to live out his remaining years as a kept husband.

William, however, was incensed by being effectively cut out of any inheritance, save whatever pittance his father might pass on. Worse, Alastair became enamored of young Timothy, who was both personable and a prodigy in nearly every endeavor he undertook. William's dissatisfaction grew quickly, and when he came of age at 18, he decided to secure his future at the expense of the rest of his family.

The young man contacted members of the Red Sect and cut a deal. In return for a fair chunk of change, they would rub out his father, stepmother, and stepbrother in one fell swoop. This would make William the sole heir to Penelope's estate regardless of her will.

Using their dark rites, the cultists arranged for the family to fall victim to a horrible automobile accident. Their vehicle crashed into a swamp outside the city. William had conveniently remained at home that day. Alastair and Penelope's corpses were found near the wreckage, and the authorities agreed 11-year-old Timothy's body was doubtlessly sunk somewhere into the mire of the swamp.

William settled into his ill-gotten wealth quickly, finding the high life much to his liking. He bought himself the finest education in the city and is now a well-to-do, if somewhat untalented, attorney. To shore up his rapidly dwindling fortune, he married into further money when he walked Eleanor Marchand down the aisle 10 years ago.

The couple also has a son of their own, Malcolm, who coincidentally turned eight this year.

NO BAD DEED

Unfortunately for William, he discovered too late that the Red Sect isn't one to let go of a fish once they've hooked it. Once he graduated law school, the cult reminded William that he was still under their thumb. After all, he had hired them to commit murder.

The Red Sect began extorting him in exchange for their silence. Now he's making nearly monthly payments to ensure he doesn't find himself in a courtroom as a defendant. Combined with his bills from law school, lavish lifestyle, and generally poor performance as an attorney, William would be struggling to make ends meet if not for his wife's own considerable fortune.

Worse, it turns out the Red Sect wasn't entirely straightforward in dealing with William in the first place. Instead of ensuring the entire family drowned, they kept Timothy alive to serve as a sacrifice to one of their dark patrons. Black magic has a price, after all.

Truth be told, William wouldn't have minded had he known — except for the fact that the sacrifice didn't result in Timothy's death. Instead, the boy was given to one of the evil spirits the cult reveres. That being transformed into a horrific mix of human and alligator — a *letiche*.

Now Timothy has found his way back to the Crescent City.

THE HUNT BEGINS

It's possible a private investigator in the group has at one time done business with William and recognizes his name. However, it's Eleanor, not her husband, who contacts the heroes with an urgent job offer. She doesn't care to discuss the details on the phone, but insists the investigators come immediately to her home.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Eleanor meets the group at the White family home in the Garden District, which is also the scene of the crime. Eleanor answers the door herself and leads the investigators to an antechamber just off the main hall. As the investigators enter, pooled bloodstains in the main hall are apparent.

Once they're inside, Eleanor gives the heroes the straight dope. Last night, Malcolm was kidnapped in a particularly brutal attack that left the family butler, Franklin Lucas, dead. She and William had gone out for the night to a social event at another well-to-do family's mansion in the Garden District and weren't home when the crime occurred. No one else was in the house at the time.

- **Eleanor White:** Use the Citizen profile in *Deadlands Noir*, with the Filthy Rich Edge.

THE COVER UP

William is smart enough to know he couldn't keep a murder off the books, so he involved the police as far as Franklin's murder. He convinced his wife to back his story that the butler was killed during a robbery, but omitted the part where it was his child that was stolen.

He told Eleanor he fears the kidnappers may kill Malcolm if they think the authorities are involved. It's also his excuse for not calling the investigators himself. Eleanor, however, isn't one to sit on her hands.

Although Eleanor doesn't know it, William is certain the Red Sect is behind the abduction and plans to use

THE OFFICIAL STORY

Any shamus with Connections in the NOPD can get a look at the police report. The report notes that the intruder forced entry through the rear door to the kitchen. Apparently a crowbar was used to pry the door open, as deep scoring was found on the door and frame.

Franklin was found in the main hall, near the stairway to the second floor. He suffered several incision wounds and lacerations, mostly on his back. The cause of death is uncertain, but assumed to be related to crushing and slashing wounds on and around his head and neck.

If they don't have access to the police records, the heroes have to rely on Eleanor's memory and their own examination of the scene. Their client provides an accurate description of the scene, but can't provide specific medical details.

the boy to pressure him for more money. He's afraid his past crimes will come to light if anyone digs too deeply into the matter. Still, even he is clueless as to the actual culprit.

So far there has been no ransom note or any other contact regarding the kidnapping. Eleanor is unaware of any enemies other than those any rich, successful persons might have. She is willing to pay the investigators any vaguely reasonable amount. Although she presents a very strong front, her son is missing and she's very afraid for his safety.

She gives the detectives unfettered access to the house, the servants, and anything else they ask.

THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

A fair amount of bloodstains and barely coagulated puddles remain in the entry hall as the Whites would normally rely on Franklin to handle such cleaning matters, and Eleanor has only just begun making arrangements.

A search of the house finds the damaged rear door rather easily. The door itself is a hefty oak affair, but whoever forced it eventually cracked the frame at the striker plate. There are a three odd gouges in the door frame, to the right of the knob. Success on a Smarts roll highlights the fact that the gouges are uniformly spaced, more or less. (They resulted from the *letiche*'s claws, before it forced the door with its shoulder).

Combing the grounds finds the wrought-iron gate to the rear of the property has been forced open. An alleyway runs parallel to the street in front of the house and separates the backyards of the mansions on the next block. There is a sewer manhole about halfway down the block, but unless the heroes specifically search for one at this point, they don't make note of it.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

If asked, Eleanor tells the investigators the Whites employ three full-time employees and one part-time. Only Franklin actually resided at the mansion, though.

The butler was the only employee home at the time of the crime. He has a room in the mansion adjoining the kitchen. It is neatly kept, if austere, and holds nothing of interest to the heroes.

The family cook, Gerard Arnot, does not live at the mansion and had the night off, thanks to the party the couple attended. He is very fond of Malcolm and makes an obvious effort to help the heroes in any way possible, but has nothing of value to offer.

There is a gardener, Albert Fornier, but he works only part-time — about three days a week. Yesterday was his day off. Albert has little interaction with the family, but did occasionally see the boy outside playing on the lawn. His only comment is that he seems like a nice kid and he hopes nothing bad happened to him, "Like that Lindbergh baby."

The Whites also employ a driver, Ralph Jameson. When the investigators first arrive, Ralph is not present. Eleanor explains that her husband had a vital, work-related errand to run this morning and will be back shortly.

- **Gerard Arnot and Albert Fornier:** Use the Citizen profile in *Deadlands Noir*.

JOYRIDE

After the investigators have had time to fully examine the house and question anyone there they want, William White's car pulls into the drive. The driver, Ralph, and William White get out. William becomes very upset when he discovers Eleanor has hired the snoops to find their child. He rants briefly before storming off inside.

DRIVING MR. WHITE

Ralph adds little to what the characters already know — at least initially. He was waiting at the party last night when the crime occurred and knows nothing more beyond that. If the group asks about Mr. White's morning errand, he is obviously evasive and says only that it was related to one of his clients. Success on a Notice roll tells a hero he is very uncomfortable and nervous about his answer, though.

Confronting the driver directly doesn't have much success, but he is worried about Malcolm's safety and fears he may be withholding vital information. A character using Persuasion can make an attempt to convince Ralph to spill the beans.

On a success, Ralph admits he drove Mr. White to an old house out in the Lower Ninth. Mr. White went to the door of the house, which looked abandoned. He pounded on the door for a good minute before storming back to the car and leaving.

With a raise, he adds it wasn't the first time he'd been out that way. Mr. White goes out there every couple of months or so with a briefcase. Although Ralph doesn't know what was in the briefcase, the way Mr. White carried it made him think it was something valuable, maybe even money. When he returned from the house, the briefcase was always empty. Mr. White did not have a briefcase with him on the visit today.

This is a fairly important clue. If the shamuses don't catch onto Ralph's reticence or fail to convince him to open up, the chauffeur tracks them down later in their investigation. His concern for Malcolm's safety eventually overcomes his misplaced loyalty to William White. Of course, before he does, the investigators may have wasted time and money following up other false leads...

- **Ralph Jameson:** Use the Citizen profile in *Deadlands Noir*, adding Agility d8, Driving d8 and the Ace Edge.

FOLLOW THE MONEY

If the investigators talk to Eleanor about William's activities, she is receptive. She's been married to the man long enough to know he's more than a little shady. In fact, the child is the only reason she's remained with him.

Eleanor grants them access to her own financial records. It is immediately obvious that William relies on her fortune to remain solvent. Digging further into the family's accounts requires an Investigation roll. On a success, the character discovers William has been hiding payouts of \$2,000 every two months or so.

Regardless of the evidence, William does *not* own up to the extortion racket. If completely cornered, he claims to have a gambling problem. He went out to see if his creditors had taken his son to hold him ransom, but they didn't have him.

- **William White:** Use the Citizen profile in *Deadlands Noir*.

CANVASSING THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The investigators may want to interview neighbors. William is opposed to this, as he fears it will draw undue attention to the crime. He's also worried about his own reputation, but he never directly says so. Eleanor is supportive of the tactic, but after William's protests she asks the characters to "be discreet" in their approach.

It doesn't take long to learn none of the neighbors saw anything the night of the attack. A quick observation of the street on which the White's mansion sits makes it immediately obvious why. Most of the mansions are surrounded by lush gardens, hedges, or walls, all of which are marvelous at preserving privacy — and obstructing views of adjacent properties.

A successful Streetwise roll lets a shamus locate a resident who was walking their dog around the time of the attack. The witness saw absolutely nothing out of the ordinary on the main street. No strange cars, no one carrying a struggling child, no blood-covered abomination out of someone's worst nightmare.

- **Neighbors:** Use the Citizen profile in *Deadlands Noir*.

URBAN LEGENDS

It's possible the heroes decide to look for similar crimes. If so, **Hitting the Books** (see *Deadlands Noir*) in one of the numerous newspaper morgues does turn up some matches. Although searchers find no other kidnappings recently, they do find that other murder victims with wounds similar to those on Franklin have been found over the past few weeks. In most cases, the authorities attributed the deaths to animal — probably alligator — attacks. The majority of these attacks occurred near the docks, Bayou St. John, and outskirts, often involving hoboes and drifters.

A couple of more recent incidents, however, took place far from any large waterways. One occurred in the Central Business District and one in Warehouse District. A sherlock who plots out the deaths on a map by date can see the crimes have generally progressed from the east side of the city toward the Garden District.

There's no apparent link between most of the victims, other than many were street people or out late at night. Visiting the scene of each, however, discovers each was near a waterway, with the exception of the last two. A Notice roll at a -2 spots a sewer entry within half a block of both these scenes, unless the heroes specifically state they're looking for such — in which case they automatically find it.

HITTING THE COBBLESTONES

If the characters decide to do a little **Legwork** (see *Deadlands Noir*) and look for witnesses or information other than what's been reported in the local rags, they eventually find Dauphin, the Rat King (see *Deadlands Noir*). He tells them that no one has seen whatever is responsible for people disappearing, but confirms that more disappearances have occurred than have made the papers. Several tramps living around the docks have gone missing over the last few weeks.

He also tells them a lot of his other friends have disappeared as well, with most of them vanishing from the Garden District. Any further questioning into which "friends" he means quickly reveals he's talking about sewer rats. That's because the letiche has been snacking on the critters — when it runs out of other meat sources, at any rate.

RED HANDED

Following up on Ralph's information leads the party to a fair-sized but dilapidated plantation house on the edge of the Lower Ninth. At first glance it appears unoccupied. There are no residences close by and none that have line of sight due to significant undergrowth and trees around the property's edge.

Canvassing the locals requires a simple Streetwise roll. With a success, the party discovers the neighbors — all poor farmers — believe the house to be "hainted" and stay away. A raise on the Streetwise roll turns up that occasionally people are seen coming and going from the house, but the neighbors believe them to be *bokkors* seeking to raise the dead.

SOGGY BOTTOM ABATTOIR

The grounds are largely flooded, as there is a drainage system outflow nearby. It's also where the letiche entered the sewers. Should the heroes scout around the grounds, allow a Tracking roll or Notice (-4). A success finds a strange set of tracks that look almost like those of an alligator leading to and from the drainage outflow. A raise on the Tracking roll (but not Notice) tells the sharp-eyed woodsman the creature that made the tracks was apparently walking on its hind legs, as there are no front prints.

Inside, it's the scene of a massacre, with numerous people literally ripped apart. The grisly scene calls for a Fear check versus nausea. Anyone examining the bodies can tell the victims died from numerous slashing and puncture wounds. The sleuth can make a Knowledge (Medicine) or Healing roll (-2) to determine the injuries were likely inflicted by some sort of animal, with a raise telling them it was an alligator or similar beast.

Digging through the rest of the house turns up all sorts of strange charms, chalk drawings, candles, and other oddities. A Knowledge (Occult) roll identifies the items as all associated with voodoo rituals, usually of the *petro* variety — the type associated with the Red Sect. An investigator with the Voodoo skill realizes this without any need for a roll.

RED-HANDED!

After the group has time to look around the house, another group of Red Sect cultists arrive on the scene. The group that lairs here hasn't been heard from in a week. Seeing the investigators, they initially assume the heroes are responsible for the slaughter and attack.

The bokkor uses the *zombie* power to raise three dead cultists. (If the detectives haven't encountered zombies before, you can require Fear checks when the mutilated bodies begin to rise.) He then uses *confusion* against any heroes who move against him directly, but otherwise relies on the cultists and undead to do the fighting. The investigators can use **Patter** (see *Deadlands Noir*) to try to talk their way out of the fight.

The cult leader quickly realizes that the characters aren't likely responsible, as well as who the actual culprit probably is. Still, he's willing to press his advantage as long as he can. Once more than half his minions are Incapacitated or all his Power Points are depleted, he calls off the attack.

The bokkor offers to make a deal, trading information for his group's release — or just his, if the detectives play hardball. If they agree, he gives them the sordid details about White, his deal with the Red Sect, and the letiche. Should the interlopers not have made contact with Dauphin by this time, the bokkor may also hint the creature is likely to favor damp, dark, and even subterranean areas for its lair.

 **Bokkor (1):** Use the Bokkor profile in *Deadlands Noir*.

- **Red Sect Cultists (1 per hero):** Use the Cultist profile in *Deadlands Noir*. They're armed with knives and various small hand weapons (Str+d4).
- **Reanimated Cultists (3):** Use the Zombie profile in *Savage Worlds*. They wield knives and various small hand weapons (Str+d4).

BOWELS OF THE CITY

Sewers aren't commonplace in New Orleans, thanks to the fact many spots in the city have a minus sign in front of the number of feet for their elevation. The Garden District is one of the higher areas, but even it's barely a yard above sea level. Still, thanks to pumping stations installed by Hellstromme Industries, the Crescent City has several below-ground sewer pipes large enough to

comfortably allow a man — or man-sized alligator — to move around inside.

There are at least three ways your investigators can make the link to the sewers: Dauphin, the Red Sect bokkor, or by visiting the scene of some of the other attacks. If they fail to make the connection, give them a Notice check to spot the sewer manhole cover near the White mansion during one of their visits.

Inside the sewers, the main pipes are around six feet in diameter in most places. These are what the letiche uses to move about unseen. Secondary pipes average three feet in diameter, big enough to squirm through assuming you're not adverse to getting a face full of stench, while tertiary pipes are seldom larger than a foot.

Standing water and sewage outflow sits in the bottom of most main and secondary pipes, averaging between six inches and a foot in depth. The water isn't deep enough to count as difficult terrain, but any characters attempting to run in the sewers must make an Agility roll or slip on the slime coating the pipes and fall prone, suffering a level of Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises.

FOLLOWING A WATERLOGGED TRAIL

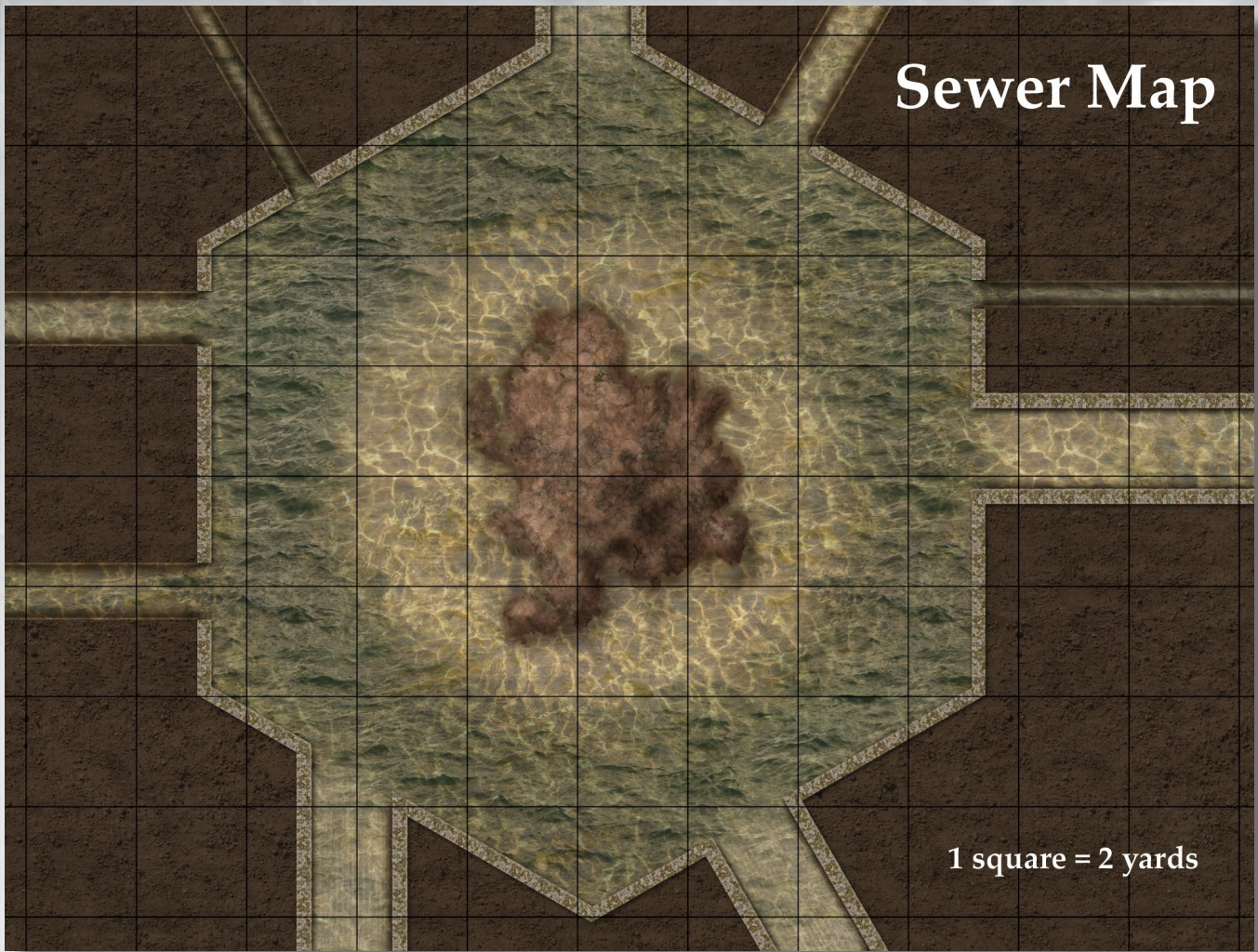
Finding the letiche in the sewers of New Orleans is a tall order. If the group has spoken with Dauphin, they probably narrow their search down to tunnels in the Irish Channel. A single group can cover the likely spots in that section of the sewers in a day's trudging through sewage.

Another method is to try to follow the monster's trail through the sewers from the entry nearest the White's mansion. The water and sewage in the pipes makes finding its route an almost impossible proposition. Two consecutive successes on a Tracking roll (-2) are necessary to trail it back to its lair in the Irish Channel. Other investigators can assist in this attempt with cooperative rolls as usual.

Without either of those two leads to go on, the sleuths can study the New Orleans map and attempt to figure out a pattern to the monster's attacks. How successful they are is up to your discretion, Marshal. While the letiche did start on the outskirts and near waterways, and the most recent attacks have occurred in the general area of the Garden District, it is also clever enough to know better than to prey on victims too close to its lair.

If your detectives are still stumped, you can drop more clues to point them in the right direction. A drunken witness near the Bucket o' Blood may spot the creature slipping into a drain, but find no one believes him. The letiche may have needed to sate its hunger on another victim, this time closer to its lair as it feared leaving Malcolm alone too long. Perhaps

Sewer Map



another victim, unknown until now, washes into an intake valve, jamming it — and also allowing the heroes to plot the route of flow back to the creature's hideout.

CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS?

The letiche can be reasoned with to a degree. A fast-talking shamus can attempt a Patter attempt to convince it to let Malcolm go. Intimidation and Taunt attempts are at -4, but a character who plays on the child's helplessness and knows the history of the creature well enough to tie it to Malcolm's plight gets a +2 bonus. With five successes, the creature withdraws into the sewers and eventually flees back into the bayous.

SHOWDOWN IN THE SEWERS

The letiche is holed up in a confluence of pipes under the Irish Channel. It occasionally brings victims back to the chamber to soften in the water, much like its four-legged counterparts do. Some of those bodies have reanimated as bloats, which lurk under the murky water that fills the bottom of the chamber.

The chamber floor slopes downward from the edges to a depth of about two feet near the center. Movement through the deeper water *does* count as difficult terrain. In the center of the chamber, mud and runoff has accumulated to form a small island. Malcolm sits on the island, terrified of the horrors around him.

The bloats attack once the heroes move into the room. They fight to the death once animated, regardless of the actions of the letiche.

The letiche initially stays near Malcolm, but fights ferociously if attacked. Likewise, if the rescuers attempt to reach Malcolm, it attacks as well. Once it sustains three wounds, the creature tries to retreat into the sewer. If the heroes allow it to do so, it returns to the bayous to nurse its wounds while planning its next attempt at revenge.

 **Letiche (1):** Use the Letiche profile in *Deadlands Noir*.

- **Bloats (1 per hero):** Use the Bloat profile in *Deadlands Noir*.
- **Malcolm White:** Use the Citizen profile in *Deadlands Noir*.

AFTERMATH

If the heroes succeed in rescuing Malcolm, Eleanor pays their usual fee, all expenses, and tacks on a \$1,000 bonus. Furthermore, she provides excellent word-of-mouth promotion among her many, very wealthy friends. Should they fail, she pays their fee and expenses, but offers neither bonus nor recommendations.

Should the shamuses tell her what they learned about William's past, she wastes no time in beginning divorce proceedings, as well as legal action to restrict his access to her wealth. William's law firm quickly teeters on bankruptcy, and the man becomes a social pariah, at least in respectable circles. Whether he becomes a vengeful thorn in the investigators' sides or merely a pathetic object lesson depends entirely on what works best for your campaign.

