

Chickens in the Mist

by T.C. Largent

 **12 to Midnight, Inc.**
tell yourself it's just a game



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By T.C. Largent

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Author's Introduction

I grew up in rural East Texas and I've had my fair share of experiences with livestock.

Don't misconstrue what I'm saying: I am no agricultural specialist, nor do I consider myself a cowboy. I definitely ain't a farmer. But I do have a little background with animals and, while my experience is somewhat limited, it has made a big impression on me and my life.

When I was a kid, there were very few full-time farmers or ranchers around where I lived, but just about every family had some sort of agricultural enterprise running on the side. Backyard gardens were very common and almost every family had a few head of cattle grazing in their pasture or a few hogs in a feed lot somewhere. And of course, a lot of folks raised chickens.

I'll get to the chickens later...

First, let me say that I generally get along quite well with animals. When I was growing up, my family always had twenty or thirty head of cattle around. No, it wasn't the Ponderosa, but it was sufficient to give me a basic background with livestock. I like cattle and they always seemed to like me. Of course, I'm sure that a lot of their affection stemmed from the fact that I was the one who fed them in the winter, but hey, either way, they seemed to like me. Sure, I'd get kicked by one every now and then, but those occurrences were few and far between, and usually occurred as a result of my own stupidity or inattention. It was all in good fun, and hey, I could always kick 'em back.

The same holds true for horses. I've never had any problems with horses. Or with hogs. Or dogs, for that matter. Heck, even my neighbor's pit bull seems to appreciate my company from time to time. And this general goodwill doesn't seem to be limited to mammals, either. My family raised bees for several years when I was a kid and during that time I helped to rob a lot of hives (without the benefit of a protective bee suit, thank you very much) and never sustaining a single sting. So I guess that even the bees like me, or at least they don't hate me.

Unfortunately, that doesn't hold true for all animals. For some reason, all forms of poultry seem to despise me. I don't know why, but it's true. To my great shame I have, on occasion, been chased (or even physically attacked) by roosters, ducks, geese, swans, and the occasional guinea fowl. I even had a combative run-in with a very irritated peacock once. I realize that I am biased, but in my experience, birds just seem to be really, really, really mean and spiteful creatures. Especially chickens.

Of course, most of my first-hand experience with poultry is limited to chickens. When I was in grade-school, my family kept chickens for egg production. As the oldest kid in the family, it was my responsibility to collect the eggs. In other words, it was my responsibility to get pecked repeatedly on a daily basis as I retrieved the eggs from the irate birds' nests. I can't really begrudge them that. Defending your nest is, I suppose, an honorable thing.

Pound for pound, our chickens were vicious little killing machines. When I got in from school in the afternoons, I would usually let them out of their pen so that they could roam around freely in our yard and out in the pasture and in the woods to forage for food. Generally speaking, they would attempt to eat anything and everything that even remotely looked like food.

Which meant basically that they would try to eat anything that would fit into their mouths. In addition to the usual small insects and lizards you would imagine them to eat, I've also seen them eat such exotic things as scorpions and small snakes. Don't get me wrong, there are a lot of animals that eat chickens, but chickens can hold their own when it comes to eating things that are smaller than them.

I guess you could say that my misgivings towards chickens began at a young age. One of my earliest memories is of the time when I (as a very curious three year old) got a little too close to the "territory" of our neighbor's rooster. This resulted in me being chased, run-down, and spurred by the enraged little demonic avian fiend. Needless to say, it made a big impression on me.

Yeah, yeah, I know what you're thinking. You're saying "but it's just a little chicken". Well, yeah, but you're probably looking at it from a grown adult's perspective. A fully grown or adolescent human really has very little to fear from being attacked by a seven pound bird. However, when you're a little kid standing less than three feet tall, that little chicken looks a whole lot bigger and scarier. I guess it's all just a matter of perspective. Nobody is afraid of being locked in cage with a four pound house cat, even if the cat is hungry. That's because house cats are little and cute and cuddly. On the other hand, nobody in their right mind would ever want to be locked in a cage with a 500 pound tiger, especially if it's hungry. That's because the outcome would be very lopsided and not at all in the human's favor. House cats terrorize mice, tigers terrorize humans. It's all just a matter of scale.

In the late 1980's, a new fad broke out in Texas: emu farming. It was a concept that never really amounted to much, but for a while there, lots of folks were raising emus. For those of you who don't know, an emu is a six foot tall flightless bird from Australia that looks (in my opinion) like a cross between a really big chicken and a buzzard. I have heard that they are very gentle creatures, but I can't verify that because I don't really have any first hand experience with them myself. For obvious reasons, I never had any desire to go visit an emu farm. Dealing with chickens was bad enough when they were 18 inches tall, I had no desire to run into a farm full of six feet tall chicken-zillas. And I suppose that that is what gave me the idea for this scenario.

Anyway, this is my first attempt at creating a modern horror adventure. Ed, Trey, Jerry and Preston seemed to think that the idea had potential, so Ed and I spent one Saturday afternoon hashing out how to make it work. At first it was just way too deadly and had too many encounters, but we scaled them back and I'm proud of the results. I really appreciate all the help and input from the play-testers and everyone at 12 to Midnight. I had a whole lot of fun creating this and I hope that you'll have a lot of fun playing it!

Section 0: Introduction

0.1: Introduction

Everyone always knew that something was a little bit “off” with Artie and Charlie O’Connor (also known as the O’Connor Twins). Although unquestionably bright, neither boy ever seemed to have a bit of common sense to go with their natural intelligence.

The O’Connor brothers own and operate a small chicken farm in the hinterlands of Golan County Texas. Unbeknownst to most citizens, the brothers also run an illegal cockfighting operation on the side. Unfortunately, the high-class attendees of these illegal matches have become somewhat jaded towards the normal brand of bloodsport, which has caused the brothers to seek out more exotic match-ups. In this case, the matches have progressed to fighting giant carnivorous mutant chickens in a great bloodletting of claws, beaks, and feathers.

This adventure is presented in an easy format for the GM to customize for his individual campaign as he sees fit. The thrust of the game is to lead the characters into searching the O’Connor homestead for clues, leading ultimately to a running battle along the back roads of Golan County with the enraged, giant, mutant chickens!

0.2: Ranks

Chickens in the Mist is a modern horror adventure written for four Novice level heroes. Upon the successful completion of this adventure, the heroes should receive two experience points. The team should have at least one hero who carries a gun of some type, if not, include a .12 gauge shotgun in Artie’s truck slid under the seat. If the team is overpowered or overmatched simply reduce the number of chickens in each encounter, or if they are having too easy of a time increase the total numbers of chickens, or include an extra Strain C bird.

0.3: Play Notes

This adventure makes use of 12 to Midnight’s *Fear Effects* rules: however, those rules are not required to play and enjoy the game. If *Fear Effects* is used, become familiar both with those rules and the contents of this adventure. If you are not using *Fear*

Effects, simply make a *Guts* check and use the Fear table provided in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook. The scenario presented here cannot possibly anticipate all of the possible character actions, but aims to present enough background and source material for you to react accordingly when the players inevitably go “off the map.” Keep your players in mind and make notes of scenes where they may derail the action, then consider your possible responses.

0.4: Setting the Mood

Chickens in the Mist is a funny, yet horrific adventure meant to invoke peals of laughter, one-liners, and yet a sense of foreboding and possible character deaths. Using props or controlling the gaming environment may enhance the mood in parts of this adventure. Many players also enjoy lowering the lights or playing by candlelight. Others enjoy listening to spooky music played softly in the background. For *Chickens* we recommend any 1960s to early 1980s Country



“Howdy” from 12 to Midnight

From all of us here at **12 to Midnight**, welcome to *Midnight Tales*. 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 *Midnight Tales*. Of course, Pinebox is *our* setting but all the material in these pages can just as easily be dropped into *yours*.

music, though Southern Rock also works very well. If you can acquire the Mexican song “La Cucaracha” sans singing, it is a great and enjoyable experience to play it when the team inevitably wrecks the truck into the woods and the driver lays onto the horn. When experimenting with these ideas, make sure to get input from the players—after all, they are your “audience.”

0.5: GM Background

0.5a: Artie's Story

Artie (the lazier of the two siblings) went to college and eventually earned a degree in poultry science. After graduation he drifted from job to job before marrying a local girl and settling down on her father's chicken farm. In the late 1990s the mysterious deaths of his wife and in-laws in a tragic fireworks accident left him as the sole proprietor of the chicken farming operation, which he has continued to run in a lack-luster fashion to the present day. Honest farming is able to provide him with a modest living, but Artie

finds it almost impossible to live within the boundaries of law and order. Craving excitement, Artie has become infatuated with blood sports, especially illegal cockfighting. He originally spent a large part of his leisure time traveling to clandestine fighting pits to gamble on the birds. Eventually, he decided to raise his own fighting roosters and try his luck on the front lines. His high intelligence aided him greatly in this effort, and over time he was very successful at selecting exceptional roosters, and even bred his own strain of champions. Five years ago he attended a match and realized that several of the attendees were businessmen from Pinebox. He rationalized that it would give him far more leisure time if he could set up a gaming pit at his own residence, and redirect the local cockfighting aficionados to his home instead. Thus began his clandestine cockfighting operation.

Thus far, Artie has managed to avoid conflict with local law enforcement by limiting the attendance of his “private matches” to individuals in the upper levels of local government and high society. These movers and shakers have a great facility in directing legal attention away from the little farm out in the woods, allowing Artie a large degree of freedom.

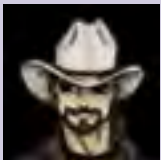
0.5b: Charlie's Story

From an early age it was very apparent that Charlie O'Connor was blessed with a genius level intellect, but cursed with an almost complete lack of common sense. He completed college with advanced degrees in genetics and biology, and then landed a job with Grendel-Faust Enterprises, a prestigious bioengineering firm. Unfortunately, Charlie's social ineptness and lack of common sense combined to stop his advancement within the company. He has been with the company for almost a decade, during which time he has repeatedly run afoul of his superiors and blundered through endless faux pas with his colleagues. As a result he has been relegated to a lowly technical position in the bowels of the company.

Due to strict hiring and firing policies, his superiors thought that it would be far easier to demote him to a lowly position and wait for him to quit rather than go through the extensive paper work and legal procedures necessary to simply fire him. However, clueless as ever, Charlie has not yet figured out that his demotion is a thinly veiled invitation to leave. So instead of resigning with dignity, he works day-in

Your 12 to Midnight Guides

Jackson Green



Jackson believes in the paranormal and has extensively investigated hauntings and ghostly activities. He offers advice and background information.

“It's a poultry conspiracy, man.”

Lance Carson



Lance is a skeptic, but open to the possibility of a world beyond the one we see. He offers advice on dealing with players who go “off the map.”

“Chickens? Are you serious?”

Professor Glen MacLanahan



The professor is an expert researcher and investigator. He offers aid regarding the use of skills and mechanics of the game.

“Have you seen the size of those chickens?”

and day-out as a glorified lab technician. As a result, he is completely bored by his job, and chafes at the monotonous tasks assigned to him. Recently he has begun to feel persecuted and unappreciated. This has spurred within him a desire to enrich himself at the expense of the company.

His lowly position does grant him broad access to various research and development projects at the company. Of particular interest to him is a project euphemistically named "Turkey Sandwich." Project Turkey Sandwich is a research project conducted by Grendel-Faust Enterprises to study turkeys, chickens, emus, and other large birds in the hope of using gene-splicing technology to engineer a new breed of domesticated fowl for food production. The overall goal is to develop a chicken or turkey the size of an ostrich in order to help wipe out world hunger. To date, the company's research has yielded many interesting combinations, but few of the offspring generated have actually proved to be viable outside of the laboratory. Spurred by his discontent with the company, Charlie took it upon himself to 'liberate' a sizeable quantity of manufactured eggs, falsifying the company ledgers to make it appear as if they had been destroyed. It was originally his intention to deliver the eggs to his brother to boost bird sales. Of course, it never crossed his mind that these were experimental and had been confined to a lab for sound reasons, especially since the birds' potential impact on the natural environment and their ability to serve as a viable food source have never been evaluated. For his own part, Artie saw the opportunity to cash in on the blood sport by introducing his clientele to some truly unique matches.

0.5c: The Death Matches

Artie's illegal cockfighting operation has thus far escaped the notice of law enforcement because he limits attendance to select members of local society. They enjoy the feeling of indulging in the taboo and illegal practice of cock fighting, and keep the matches strictly secret in order to protect themselves and their reputation. The fact that they are all fairly wealthy, and reward Artie with cash, also strengthens the relationship. However, attendance was beginning to flag as the regular attendees were becoming bored by the same old spectacle. So when Charlie began to bring in the lab specimens, Artie immediately saw

the potential to add a completely new wrinkle to the old operation.

With the help of Charlie, Artie reconfigured his breeding facility to hatch the eggs obtained from Grendel-Faust. A staggering number of the birds died shortly after hatching due to severe mutations. Many of the birds grew so much muscle mass that their bones were unable to accommodate the strain and shattered when they moved. The majority of the birds died as the unnatural hormones and chemicals running through their veins slowly poisoned their internal organs. However, the experimentation eventually yielded three distinct strains of super chickens that lived long enough to compete in the pits (whom Charlie has euphemistically named Strains A, B, and C).

All of these large mutant chickens are truly ferocious sights to behold. The mutated birds of Strain A are approximately three feet tall and weigh up to sixty pounds. Those of Strain B are slightly larger, averaging around four feet tall and weighing in around one hundred pounds. Inexplicably, Strain C birds are truly colossal, reaching heights of up to eight feet and weighing in excess of five hundred pounds. Many times the size of regular domesticated birds, these super chickens are heavily muscled, carnivorous killing machines. The mutations have granted them reinforced bones and beaks, supplemented by oversized and well developed claws. From a distance they resemble a cross between an ostrich and an eagle.

Their mutated physiques are quite impressive, but ultimately very inefficient with regard to caloric usage. The birds are constantly hungry and require enormous amounts of food in order to remain active. In addition, the mutated hormones and chemicals running through their veins are ultimately fatal to the creatures, causing them to develop horrible open wounds and cancerous growths throughout their bodies. These sores results in the animals having a stench that smells like a grotesque combination between a slaughterhouse and a paper-mill. Although Grendel-Faust Enterprises had hoped to breed them for food sources, these mutated birds are completely inedible. These chickens eat anything except each other. To Artie's dismay, they are also uniformly sterile, which effectively prevents him from breeding future generations of these birds.

Chickens in the Mist

Now grown to maturity, the surviving birds are costing the brother's a fortune to feed and care for. Since there is no possibility of breeding a new generation from the sterile creatures, Artie has decided to send them all to the pits in death fights hoping to recoup some of his expenses by offering his clientele a cockfighting experience that they will never forget.

0.5d: Today's Story

Artie has planned an entire day of death matches and invited his elite clientele to attend. As noted above, he operates a chicken farm for his day-to-day activities, and to cover his clandestine cockfighting operation. The chicken farm itself is located along the county road at the front of his property. His home, his bird-breeding shed, and his fighting pit are located at the back of his property, and are surrounded by a dense thicket of trees and brush. The only way to that area is via his private road. The road itself is heavily rutted and in very poor condition. In rainy weather it becomes an endless trail of mud holes and washouts, impervious to all but the hardest of four-wheel drive vehicles.

Rather than improving the road-way, Artie prefers that it remain in this rough condition. Having long since equipped himself with a heavy duty off road vehicle, Artie's standard procedure is to have his high-class clientele park their vehicles at the chicken farm, at which point he picks them up and chauffeurs them to the fighting pit. In this manner he completely controls all access to his own private domain.

Charlie is a terrible driver, so Artie followed his usual procedure and drove down to the chicken farm to pick up the arriving spectators and ferry them to the pit house. This left Charlie in charge of placing the birds in their holding cells in preparation for the coming competition. Unfortunately, clueless Charlie forgot to lock the cage doors and one of the largest Strain C birds escaped. The enraged bird mauled Charlie to death, and then wrecked all the holding pens in a successful

effort to escape. In so doing, the remaining birds were also freed. The ravenous birds immediately devoured what was left of Charlie and then scattered into the woods to forage for more food. A sizeable number of the birds followed the road back to the chicken farm where they encountered Artie, at which point they killed and devoured him as well. From that point, they then broke into the chicken houses and killed and devoured hundreds of the normal broiler hens housed therein. The remaining birds scoured the woods, ravenously devouring every available insect, reptile, and mammal they could catch.

It was at this point that a thunderstorm passed over the area and heavy rain began falling. The birds retreated into the woods to wait out the rain. When the characters arrive, the birds have split up and are

roosting in the thicket, letting the rain cool the burning sores and boils on their skins. However, as they rest their hunger grows. Beware, for they have tasted human flesh, and found it to their liking. They desire more, and wouldn't a hero make for a tasty morsel?

0.6: Synopsis of Chickens in the Mist

Short Version

The team investigates illegal cockfighting activities in Golan County. They encounter signs of a chicken slaughter and perhaps more. Eventually they discover the truth and must face the Chicken Run as they seek to escape giant, mutant, fighting chickens.

Long Version

Four friends gather one Saturday morning to investigate illegal cockfighting activities in Golan County. They are led by East Texas University

reporter Danielle (Dannie) Martin who believes several Golan County politicians have been attending these illegal events and wants the story. She has convinced her friends to accompany her to the reputed site of the fights, the O'Conner chicken farm.

Jimmy (Bo) Williams, a Freshman Animal Science major and local hunter has agreed to come along and is driving Dannie's car. Dannie's best friend, Sara

What is Fear Effects?



Fear Effects is 12 to Midnight's own set of add-on horror rules. These rules do not require the use of a sanity

score. Instead, they rely on a saving throw called a Horror check. You will see references to three different kinds of Horror checks mentioned in this adventure: *minor spooks*, *medium shocks*, and *great frights*.

If you aren't using *Fear Effects*, be sure to check it out. It makes any mediocre game great, and any great game (such as those by 12 to Midnight) even better. However, if you still are not convinced to run this adventure using the *Fear Effects* rules, then just ignore comments in the adventure about *minor spooks*, *medium shocks*, or *great frights* and use a normal Fear check.

Anne Black, a Freshman Physical Education major and devoted martial artist has also agreed to come along. Finally, they are accompanied by Preston Edward Blakemore III (Trey), another Freshman at ETU studying computer programming and a devoted gamer. The day of the investigation is a very rainy and wet one as a great thunderstorm has unleashed its full fury on Golan County the past two hours.



The Big Thicket

The Big Thicket of East Texas is one of the last remaining jungle-like regions of North America. Its dense undergrowth is so thick in places that it cannot be penetrated without a sharp machete or hatchet. Every deer season, many hunters find themselves lost within its confines. In East Texas it is often said, "Stay within 20 feet of the road or you'll get lost—and you may never be found again!"

The Thicket is primarily made up of tall pines, ancient oaks, and a few beech trees. The understory is a tangle of vines, small bushes, and thorns. This forest is home to coyotes, black bears, many species of birds, and the legendary panther. Native American tribes, such as the Caddo, once made their homes deep in the Thicket. Though two hundred years ago the forest covered a majority of East Texas, today it only covers a few counties, including the southern reaches of Golan County.

In the 1800s, many bushwhackers, outlaws, and renegade Native Americans made the Thicket their home and sanctuary. During the 1920s, bootleggers hid their alcohol stills deep in the reaches of the Thicket along its natural creek beds. Today, murders are commonplace and human remains are found by hunters on a fairly regular basis, though these remains are generally half eaten by wild animals and rarely identifiable. Ancient Native American burial mounds, rotting cabins, and old barns are found deep within the forest, overgrown with the weeds and thorn bushes of a hundred years' growth.

Today, biking and hiking trails have been cut through many parts of the Big Thicket, which is now protected by both state and national governments. The fall and winter see many hunters enter its dark interior seeking deer, ducks, squirrels, geese, turkeys, and wild razorback hogs. Several large camping areas are available for those who wish to keep the amenities of civilization close at hand, but others prefer to hike into the forest and create their own campground.

The chickens of our tale begin roosting deep in the Thicket and only awaken to begin foraging once the rain stops. Any shooting taking place in the woods invokes a Dim penalty as well as Medium Cover for a total of -3 to shoot at a chicken or other target.

On the way to the O'Connor farm Dannie realizes that all the homesteads they pass on the dirt road generally have trucks in the front yard, but they are consistently meeting nice cars driving the other direction on the muddy road. She begins taking pictures and recognizes one of the Pinebox City Councilmen, Manuel Travis, in one of the cars.

They arrive at the O'Connor Chicken Farm and are surprised to discover the chicken houses have been seemingly attacked by a predator and there are feathers and pieces of chickens scattered about the area.

Bo investigates an old four-wheeled drive truck and is shocked to discover the windows have been bashed in and there is a distinct pinkish hue to rain water pooling below the bench seat of the cab. The engine is still running and the keys have a key ring depicting two fighting roosters.

Trey and Sara investigate the chicken houses and realize that whatever killed all the chickens made large scratches on the door frame as it busted in the door.

Dannie looks over the new model sports car parked on the gravel lot and begins taking pictures of the area. She considers having Bo open the car up, but decides against it. Sara wonders if anyone may have been hurt and suggests they follow the muddy road to the O'Connor home deeper in the woods.

Bo states that the road is pretty muddy and washed out and suggests they take the four-wheeled drive pickup truck. Bo drives and Dannie sits next to him as Sara and Trey sit in the bed of the truck, now thoroughly soaked from the driving rain. Bo carefully makes his way through several washed out areas and manages to drive all the way down the winding road through the forest to the O'Connor home.

They investigate the home and discover the back door has been bashed open and the refrigerator has been pushed onto its side and the kitchen gone through for every bit of food it had once contained. There are muddy tracks all over the kitchen floor and leading into other parts of the house. Bo is excited and scared when he realizes one of the tracks apparently had been made by a giant chicken, though no one else believes him. He takes a shotgun from the home and loads it, just in case. The phone works, but Dannie requests that they not call anyone yet, until they know what has been going on.

Chickens in the Mist

Trey investigates a computer and discovers many files regarding chicken fighting and illegal bets which he loads to his flashcard. Sara discovers two paychecks from Grendel-Faust Enterprises and a search for the company on the internet reveals that they are a bioengineering firm specializing in farm animals.

The team exits the home as the rain begins to slow. They follow a trail down to another smaller chicken house and discover the fighting pit, huge cages, and an incubator. The cages were ripped open and in one there is blood on the floor and various human bones and clothing. Sara discovers a wet, bulbous blob underneath the incubator and as she pulls it out she realizes it is a human eye. She freaks and steps on it, squishing it out of existence.

The team decides to get out of here and get help from the authorities, though they are afraid the Sheriff might try to pin this stuff on them. As they return to the house and the truck, they discover several large, Strain A birds in the front yard between them and the truck. A fight ensues, as Sara kicks one's head off, Trey kills one with a shovel, and Bo kills two more with his shotgun.

They jump into the truck and head back down the muddy road. Bo drives like a "bat out of Hell" wanting to get out of there. Unfortunately as he turns the first corner he spies four strain B chickens and decides to run them over. He loses control of the vehicle and crashes into the woods. He and Dannie are wounded in the cab of the truck, as Trey and Sara are thrown from the truck and collide into the woods taking massive damage.

The chickens move in for the kill.

Bo is shaken and wounded, and lies upon the horn of the truck, as the horn sounds out the tune of "La Cucaracha," his friends are attacked and killed by the gigantic mutant chickens! Eventually the entire party is slain in a total party kill. (These events actually happened at Origins 2007 as Joe Unger, playing the part of Bo, caused the entire party to be killed fighting the giant mutant chickens.)

0.7: Plot Hooks

The GM may utilize several possible plot hooks to bring the characters to the O'Connor Farm. Some are briefly described following:

- *Employment by Grendel-Faust Enterprises*

— An unscheduled inventorying of lab specimens has turned up a conflict between the books and the research department's actual stock of experimental embryos. Further scrutiny has led the department heads to conclude that Charlie O'Connor is the culprit. Unfortunately, O'Connor has taken an extended vacation back to his hometown and is currently out of reach. Concerned about the possible legal and ethical repercussions (as well as bad publicity) that could erupt from the samples being loosed beyond the laboratory, the company has hired the characters to investigate O'Connor and recover the stolen merchandise if possible.

- *Investigation* — Characters who work for law enforcement could be called to inspect the site for illegal gaming operation and/or investigations of animal cruelty. They could also be hired by an animal protection group to investigate reports of cockfighting in Golan County.
- *Reporters* — Characters who work for news agencies could be exploring a lead that corrupt local officials and otherwise upstanding members of society are involved in a secret illegal gambling operation. Rumors are that they use their power and prestige to deflect local law enforcement from delving too deeply into the illicit operations. A tip directs the characters to the O'Connor farm.

Section 1: The Bock...er... Plot Thickens

1.1: What Happened?

Earlier today, Artie drove his truck to the front of his property to wait for the spectators to arrive. His intention was to ferry them back to the farm for a day of death matches. He was waiting in his truck and listening to the radio when Charlie inadvertently freed the mutated chickens. The ravenous birds immediately dispersed to forage for food, and many ended up following the roadway to the chicken farm. The first thing they encountered was Artie's truck. The largest of the birds scented Artie inside and immediately attacked, busting in the windows, and dragging him out. They then picked Artie apart and devoured him, leaving the scattered remains of his body concealed in the woods to the east of the truck. Those remains were further picked over by some of the smaller birds.

The remainder of the birds broke into the feed shed and the chicken houses, tearing the buildings apart and eating the contents. Sated for the moment, the birds drifted back into the woods to roost and rest. The rains cooled their feverish and postulated skin, and so for now they are content. They remain deep within the thicket until the rains end.

1.2: Driving to the Farm

Thunderstorms are moving through the area by the time that the characters head out to the O'Connor farm. Heavy rain falls steadily, the winds gust to twenty miles per hour, and the sky is overcast. Intermittent flashes of lightning slash across the sky and the road ditches are flowing full of rainwater runoff. The thunderstorm's rain clouds and the rural location combine to keep any cell phones from working.

Journeying to the O'Connor farm requires that the characters follow a small county road for five miles through the densely wooded countryside. The county road is gravel topped and in very good condition. However, it is so narrow that when two cars going opposite directions meet, one must stop and allow the other to pass or risk both vehicles sliding into the road ditches.

On the way in, the characters occasionally pass houses with pick-up trucks and tractors parked in the front yards. It is obvious that the locals prefer trucks to



any other modes of transportation. It may strike the heroes as strange when they begin to meet expensive luxury cars that are headed in the other direction. In actuality, what has happened is that the various match spectators had arrived at the O'Connor farm expecting to be picked up by Artie. They arrived to find wrecked chicken houses and Artie's empty truck with busted-out windows. No sign of Artie was found.

The appointed time came and went with no sign of Artie, and the nervous spectators began leaving the farm in ones and twos. Should the characters manage to flag down or otherwise stop any of these vehicles, they discover that the occupants are prominent local citizens who appear to be very short tempered and distraught. They avoid directly answering any questions as to what they are doing in this area, but their evasiveness alone should be enough to let the heroes know that something is afoot.

1.3: At the Gate

The O'Connor property is easily located, with its driveway being marked by a large white mailbox with the legend "O'Connor Chicken Farm" written in large black letters above the address. It is also the only driveway encountered for a while, as the nearest neighbor is located at least a mile away.

The chicken farm itself is screened from the roadway by a thin strand of trees, and the driveway is equipped with a heavy-duty steel gate. The gate is normally secured with a chain and deadbolt lock. However, Artie left the gate open today so that his clientele would have access to the site.

After traversing the short gravel driveway through the woods, the characters arrive in a large clearing equipped with two chicken houses, a well house, a feed shed, and a gravel parking area. A muddy dirt road leads away from the site to the north. A red sports car is parked on the gravel parking area and a large truck is parked, idling near the muddy road to the north.

The rain is still falling heavily as the heroes arrive at the site, and there appears to be many white feathers and pieces of cloth scattered around the clearing. Closer examination reveals that many pieces of bones (some still have meat on them) and chicken feet litter

the area. The bones and meat obviously come from chickens, and a rough estimate places the original number of birds in the hundreds, if not thousands. The bones appear to be jaggedly broken or crushed. The pieces of cloth are revealed to be empty chicken feed sacks, most of which have large rips torn in them. The rainfall has obliterated any tracks in the area.

1.4: Chicken Houses

The chicken houses are each 10 yards (5") wide and 34 yards (16") long. The buildings are constructed of wood and tin. Large fans are located at the ends of the buildings to circulate air inside, and small elevated water tanks are located at the western end of the buildings. Closer examination of the buildings reveal that the doors have been busted down from the outside. A successful *Notice* check reveals the wood around the door frame suffered large scratches with the wood being gored by sharp objects (talons).

The interior of each house is equipped with feed and water troughs, and the floors are covered with chicken litter. Incongruously, bits and pieces of slaughtered chickens lie scattered throughout.

Characters with a rural background immediately realize that something has gotten into the chicken house and slaughtered hundreds of chickens. There is no real indication of what may have happened to their bodies. The roof keeps out the rain, but only chicken tracks are apparent in the interior of the houses. Another successful *Tracking* check (-1) reveals an obscured set of tracks that is the size of a human foot, but is obviously a chicken track.

1.5: Feed Shed

This shed is approximately 6 yards (3") by 6 yards (3") square and constructed of wood with a tin roof. It is apparent that the roof of the shed has caved in. Closer examination of the shed reveals that the door has been busted off its hinges. Rain falls freely into the interior and the shed is completely empty. Several of the two-by-four wooden roof joists have been broken and the tin from the roof is bent inward.

1.6: Well House

This small 4 yards (2") by 4 yards (2") building is constructed of brick with a tin roof. Casual observation of the building's exterior reveals that it has no windows, but is equipped with several large vents near the roof. The door to the building house is intact and unlocked.

Inspection of the interior reveals a concrete floor, fuse box, water-well head, and electric pump. Pipes extend from the wellhead to the pump, and then run underground in the direction of the chicken houses. A *Knowledge (Engineering or similar skill)* or a *Common Knowledge* check (-2) reveals that the pumps are wired to level sensors on the tanks, so that water can be pumped from the well to the tanks as needed.

1.7: Red Sports Car

A red sports car is parked on the gravelled area at the southeastern end of the clearing. It is new and very flashy. It is also locked.

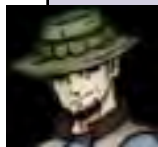
The car belongs to Charlie, who parked it here because it is completely incapable of traversing the dirt roadway to the O'Connor house. If the car is broken into, the characters find Charlie's lab coat and a Grendel-Faust Enterprises employee id card in the glove compartment. The trunk contains several books on poultry breeding and genetics.

1.8: Truck

Artie's truck is parked near the muddy dirt road located on the north end of the clearing. The truck is parked next to a large homemade wooden sign that bears the legend: "*This Way to The O'Connor House! Mi Casa Es Su Casa!*" followed by a large arrow pointing down the dirt road. Oddly enough, the large pine tree immediately behind the sign has a store-bought manufactured metal sign nailed to it that bears the legend: "*POSTED: NO TRESPASSING.*"

The dirt road is the private access way to the O'Connor house and fighting arena. It is practically impassible to normal vehicles during rainy weather such as this. To this end, Artie's truck is a jacked-up four-wheel drive with a large bed and winch attached to the front bumper.

Give Them a Chance!



If the team did not bring any weapons with them, you might want to include a shotgun, rifle, or pistol beneath the seat of the truck. Or let them sweat and watch them run away like....um...chickens later on in the adventure.

From a distance it is apparent that the vehicle's engine is running, the windshield wipers are still going, and that the driver's side door is ajar. Closer inspection reveals that the front windshield is cracked and that the side windows are completely busted inward. The seats are wet from the rain falling in, but the water pooling in the floorboard has a distinctly pinkish tinge to it. Artie's truck key is still in the ignition of the vehicle (obviously). Also attached to the key ring are three other keys: one to the front gate's padlock, one to Artie's house, and one to the door of the fighting pit. Also attached to the key ring is a brass icon about an inch in diameter that depicts two roosters fighting.

1.9: Artie's Personal Effects

The large bird carried Artie far out into the dense woods where he could be eaten without the other birds having access. The heavy downpour makes it impossible for the characters to follow the birds' trail. At the end of the adventure after the rain has abated, it is possible (GM's choice) that the characters may be able to find the body, as circling buzzards indicate its location. At the present time, Artie's body is not immediately obvious. However, if the characters search the tree line, they notice several saplings have been broken off at the area indicated on the map. A *Notice* check (-1) in this area reveals scraps of clothing from a man's shirt and blue jeans. A *Notice* check (-4) indicates that a character has found his billfold, which contains two hundred dollars and Artie's driver license.

1.10: Going In

The dirt road is the easiest path to the O'Connors house. Trekking through the woods is very difficult, especially if the characters don't know the destination before hand. As indicated on the area map, the attached map tiles are intended to be utilized with miniatures as set pieces for the chase scenes during the escape. However, the trip going in should not necessarily get bogged down in excessive detail. It is recommended that the GM describe the winding roadway in general details on the way in. Perhaps having the characters make a few driving checks to determine if they get stuck in the mud or not. This gives the characters a feel for the roadway and the time involved to get a vehicle un-stuck.

The easiest way in would be for the characters to take Artie's truck. The vehicle is equipped with four-wheel drive and has an electric winch on the reinforced front bumper. The winch can greatly aid in extracting the vehicle from mud holes (in the event that the heroes become stuck). Driving at slow, careful speeds do not require *Driving* checks.

The trip in is completely safe for the characters, as no encounters occur with the mutated birds until after the rainfall stops. This adventure is timed so that the rainfall only stops after the characters have reached the O'Connor house. The encounters marked on the map should occur only when the players leave, and at the GM's discretion.

Down and Dirty Driving in Chickens in the Mist



You can take the time to calculate speed and such throughout the adventure, but I recommend a much more Fast, Furious, Fun way to do it. Simply ask the driver of the vehicle if he is going to drive at a very safe and slow speed, or a normal speed, or like a "bat out of Hell?" A safe speed would only require a normal **Driving** check and would only go out of control on a critical failure following other applicable modifiers. A normal speed truly is not safe in these muddy conditions and would require the **Driving** check be made at a -2 plus any other applicable modifiers. A hero driving like a "bat out of Hell" suffers a -4 plus any other applicable modifiers on his **Driving** checks. There is more on this in Section 4.0: Appendices.

Section 2: At the Homestead

The private road ends in a clearing with a large covered shed, log cabin, and well house dominating the center. A foot trail is apparent leading into the woods to the south of the site. The rain should begin to decrease in its intensity as the characters arrive in the clearing, going from a heavy downpour to a light rain.

2.1: Log Cabin

The O'Connor house is square in shape. It consists of two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen, and one bathroom. The front door is locked, but the door to the kitchen has been bashed in. Upon entering the kitchen, the heroes immediately notice that the refrigerator lies open and on its side in the middle of the room. Similarly, the cabinets and pantries have also been ransacked. Empty food bags and broken dishes lie scattered around the room. Unopened cans of food and potted meat lie scattered around the room.

A *Tracking* check (-1) allows a hero to find a large chicken track in the muddy tracks of the house. The realization that if this is indeed a chicken track, the chicken must be HUGE, causes a *minor spook* check.

Each bedroom is furnished with a queen sized bed, chest-of-drawers, closet, and two night tables. Artie's is very messy, with dirty clothes strewn across the floor. The walls are adorned with a large painting of a rooster on black velvet, as well as several framed pictures of Artie holding fighting roosters (past non-mutated champions of normal breeds). Charlie's room is immaculate, but two old pay-stubs from Grendel-Faust lay on the chest-of-drawers. A quick search of either room reveals the closets and chest-of-drawers are full of men's clothing.

A search of the rest of the house reveals a computer in the living room. An *Investigation* check of the computer reveals extensive files on cockfighting and should give the heroes a good insight to how much of a cock-fighting enthusiast Artie was. A check with a

raise reveals detailed files on Artie's breeding of fighting roosters. A check with two or more raises reveals incriminating evidence that the O'Connor brothers have obtained contraband from Grendel-Faust Enterprises, and hints of a big break-through that they have made utilizing it.

A gun rack in the living room also contains a .12 gauge pump action shot-gun, a .30-.30 hunting rifle with scope, and 12 rounds of ammunition for each. If the characters are light on weapons, the GM might consider adding more guns or ammunition here for the characters use.

2.2: Shed

The large shed is used as a garage for Artie's truck, but is currently occupied by a large tractor with the right rear tire removed. The flattened tire is leaning against the wall next to two full gallon jars of gasoline and diesel fuel.

The shed also houses several hand tools such as shovels, axes, sledgehammers, and post-hole diggers. A welding machine is located at the back of the shed along with a small stack of thick metal bars. Several welding rod boxes are on the shelves, but all are empty.

2.3: Pump House

The interior is the same as that listed for the chicken farm, except that the well pumps water to the house's bathroom, kitchen, and outdoor water faucets on demand.

2.4: Artie's Playground

The foot trail leads to yet another clearing containing Artie's chicken breeding house and the attached building that houses his fighting pit. The rain now decreases to a light drizzle as the characters enter the clearing, and ends completely a few rounds later with the sun coming out.

We Call the Police



If the team decides to contact the police allow them a **Common Knowledge** check to know that the local Sheriff of Golan County is Butch Anderson and he has been known to railroad cases against college students so that his job is made easier. If they do contact the authorities, it takes approximately twenty minutes for a squad car to arrive. Have the chickens gather around the house. It could be *Apocalypse Now* as the giant, mutant chickens move in for lunch. Can the team hold out until help arrives? And will one Sheriff's deputy be enough to save them? Heh, we'll see. Also, the team might decide to leave without going down the path and discovering the fight pit. That's okay too. The rain has stopped when the team leaves the home, and the chickens are hunting. Cock-a-doodle-do!

Several homemade metal cages are apparent in the clearing; most of the cages are rather small but a notable amount measure at least one yard by one yard. They have all been broken into and some feathers and chicken pieces can be seen littering the chicken-yard. These feathers are green or red in color, and many are obviously the tail feathers from roosters. A *Notice* check reveals that several feathers are too large to be from a normal rooster.

2.5: Fighting Pit

This large metal building is approximately 16 yards (8") by 16 yards (8") square and painted a bright blue. A new wing has been added to the main building, consisting of a 10 yards (5") wide and 34 yards (16") long area constructed of unpainted plywood with a bright new tin roof. There are several windows on the main building, each equipped with an air-conditioning window unit. The only entrance to either building is located in the front of the main blue building, and door has been knocked off its hinges and now hangs askew.

A circular area dominates the center of the main building approximately 6 yards (3") in diameter and is contained in a welded cage constructed of thick iron bars. Access to the interior of this makeshift cage is via a heavy-duty steel gate, which is also equipped with a pad lock and chain. The floor of the caged area is covered with sand. Lawn chairs have been placed around the exterior of the cage in a rough semi-circle. A door to the east of the fighting ring leads to the breeding facilities housed in the new wing. That door has also been knocked askew.

The caged area is the pit in which the roosters normally fight while the spectators sit in the lawn chairs and watch in air-conditioned comfort. The fighting ring originally consisted of a small wooded wall, however, Artie found it necessary to replace it with heavy-duty iron bars to keep the vicious mutated chickens from escaping and/or attacking the spectators. Unfortunately, it didn't occur to him that he might also need to install a barred "run-way" from the chicken's cages to the pit as well. Had he done so, Charlie might not have become a meal!



2.6: Breeding Building

The interior door opens into the breeding building. This was originally a much smaller building where Artie kept his (normal) roosters caged up for training and breeding purposes. The building's close proximity to the fighting ring also provided him with easy access to replacement roosters during the matches.

Once he began raising the mutated birds, Artie found it necessary to move all of his normal roosters to homemade cages outside of the building in order to make room for his newly hatched mutated birds. As time passed, this building was greatly expanded to accommodate larger cages for the biggest birds. A section was also set aside to house the industrial-sized incubator used to hatch the eggs obtained from Grendel-Faust. Large homemade metal cages now line both walls of the building forming a narrow

walkway to the back where the incubator is located. Ominously, all of the cage doors are open, most having been bashed in from the front, but some being bashed open from the inside. The cages increase in size as one moves towards the back of the building. The last few cages are 4 yards (2") by 4 yards square. Allow the heroes to make *Notice* checks. If successful they discover a small-wet, bulbous mass just underneath one of the cages. It can't be seen easily due to the wooden bottom of the cage, but it can easily be reached by hand. Upon pulling it out, the heroes see that it is the remains of a human eyeball, plucked from Charlie's head by one of the mutated chickens, fought over, and it fell before either of the chickens could eat it. This requires a *medium shock* check if using 12 to Midnight's *Fear Effects* ruleset.

The final cage is the only one in which the door hasn't been bashed in, it hangs open and swings outward into the walkway. There are bones and fleshy remains in a pool of blood in this cage. A *Knowledge (Medicine)* or similar *skill* check reveals the bones are human, but scattered and broken. This is all that remains of Charlie's body. His billfold (containing his driver's license, a few dollars, and a gas card), and key ring (containing the keys to the red sports car, keys to the O'Connor house, and several keys to the Grendel-Faust building) are easily found on the floor. A dog leash and collar also lie on the floor.

Chickens in the Mist

The O'Connors assumed that they could just put a leash on the birds and lead them to the ring to fight. In order to save time, Charlie decided to take the first (and largest) bird back himself. It killed him as soon as he stepped inside the cage. Several other birds, maddened by the smell of blood, broke out of their cages. In turn, they bashed in the other cages to fight with the remaining birds. The fights were short-lived as hunger took over, and the flesh of the mutated birds is so vile that they won't even eat themselves. Soon after, they broke out and devoured the normal roosters caged in front (freeing the mutated chickens in the outside cages in the process). They then split up to forage, some going to the O'Connor house, some following the road and finding Artie and the front chicken farm. All of the birds are now resting in the woods. But the rain has ended, and they are hungry again.

GM Note

The numeric encounters on the area map are intended to take place after the rain ends and the characters are on their way out of the O'Connor property. Unbeknownst to the team, there are dozens of mutated chickens hidden in the woods throughout the O'Connor property.

Section 3: Chicken Run

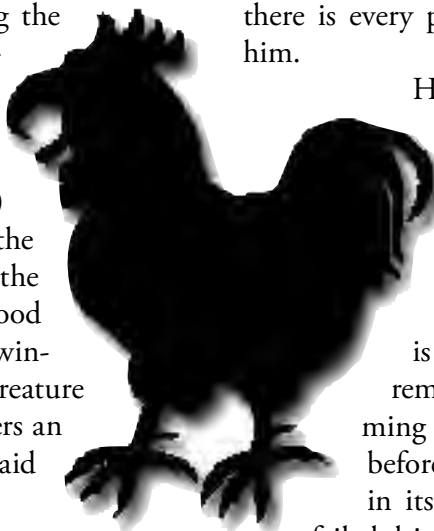
Note that these scheduled encounters and roadway obstacles are entirely up to the discretion of the GM. Add more if the party can handle it, or remove some if it seems to be too much.

3.1: Attack on the Path (Encounter 1)

The birds are beginning to become more active now that the rain has stopped. As the characters are walking along the footpath back from the fighting pit, a flock of eight Strain A birds come charging out of the woods toward them. The path is approximately 2 yards (1") wide, causing the players to walk single-file. At this point, four birds enter the trail in front of the heroes. Simultaneously, four other birds enter the trail to the rear of the party. They attack the foremost and hindmost characters, respectively.

3.2: Get off my truck! (Encounter 2)

Immediately after the rain, a flock of four Strain B birds came out of the woods and began scrounging through the house again. Assuming the characters came in a vehicle, it is probably parked in this area. If the characters took Artie's truck, then two of the birds are in the cab (the side windshields had been busted out in the earlier attack) tearing chunks out of the upholstery. If the characters came in a different vehicle, the birds are poking around it as well. If any food was left in a vehicle, the birds bust out windows in order to get inside. Any living creature left in a vehicle (human or animal) suffers an immediate attack. The birds are not afraid to throw themselves into windows.



3.3: There's Chickens Waiting to Cross the Road (Encounter 3)

Four Strain B birds are foraging on the side of the roadway between the ditch and wooded areas. The birds charge immediately if the characters are on foot. If they are in a vehicle, the birds wait to see if the driver becomes stuck in the mud holes. If the heroes' vehicle becomes stuck, the birds immediately

attack them, going for anybody in the open bed of the truck first, and then trying to bust through windows to access passengers in the vehicle's interior. If the vehicle doesn't get stuck, then the birds jump in behind the vehicle and give chase, following the same priority of attack.

3.4: A Game of Chicken (Encounter 4)

As the characters come around the curve, they notice a solitary Strain C bird standing in the roadway. If the characters are afoot, he immediately charges and attacks.

If the characters are in a vehicle, he maintains his position in the middle of the roadway. If the heroes stop the vehicle and attack him with missile weapons, he immediately charges the vehicle, otherwise the bird flaps his wings, puffs out his chest, and struts about, keeping eye contact with the driver at all times (as if mocking him). The bird is playing a game of "chicken" with the vehicle. If the characters charge toward him he does not dodge out of the way and there is every possibility that the collision will kill him.

However, the bird has been standing immediately in front of a washout.

A driver intent on ramming the bird must make a *Notice* check (-1) to see the bad spot in the roadway (or the GM may have the driver make an *Smarts* check if there is a possibility the character would have remembered its location). Drivers ramming the bird at speed are not able to stop before encountering the washout. As noted in its description, damage results from a failed driving check to jump the obstacle.

3.5: More Chickens! (Encounter 5)

Four Strain A birds and two Strain Bs are milling around in this curb, foraging on the periphery of the woods for food. They immediately attack any vehicle or pedestrians they see. Note: If a crash occurred in Encounter 4, the birds hear the noise and come a-runnin'. They arrive at the crash scene five rounds later.

3.6: A Flight of Chickens (Encounter 6)

A large sweet gum tree grows in the bend of this road, and its branches stretch far out over the roadway. Six Strain A birds are roosting therein. They immediately jump down and attack any vehicle or pedestrians passing beneath them. They are especially eager to jump into an open bed of a truck.

3.7: Did Ya' See the Size of those Chickens? (Encounter 7)

The final gauntlet. As the characters come around the final curve, they see two Strain C birds standing in the midst of the roadway. The first bird fixates on the driver of a vehicle (assuming the characters are not afoot), and immediately makes it his goal to devour him. This basically takes the form of the bird trying to dive through the front windshield after him (which, given his sheer size, may just be possible). The second bird will flank a vehicle, trying to snag a passenger. The birds simply charge and attack if the characters are on foot.

Section 4.0: Appendices

As indicated on the attached area map, the trip back out of the O'Connor property is not nearly as uneventful as going in. The mutated chickens are much more active now that the rain has ended, and they are on the prowl for new prey. There are specific encounters specified on the area map, but the GM should feel free to add more if situations warrant it.

4.1: Artie O'Connor's Truck

The sections below assume that the characters have appropriated Artie O'Connor's truck to travel to and from the main house. The truck has a standard transmission and is equipped with a four-wheel drive, has (home-made) reinforced front and rear bumpers, and a winch. Two normal-sized characters can easily sit in the cab, although three can be squeezed in with some discomfort.

The bed of the pick-up is almost 4 yards (2") wide and about 6 yards (3") long. It can accommodate four normal-sized characters with ease, and up to eight with some discomfort. For game purposes, assume that two or more characters crammed into a standard 1" square suffer a cumulative -1 to all *Fighting*, *Shooting*, and any other physical skill checks- other than *Driving* checks.

Collisions cause damage to the vehicle. Characters in the cab of the truck wearing seatbelts suffer ½ the total damage dice rounded down, and are protected by air bags that subtract one additional die, while characters in the bed of the truck suffer the full damage of the collision. All characters in the bed may attempt to jump clear for half damage and this is an Agility check. If the check is successful with a raise, no damage is suffered.

Acc/Top Speed: 20/40; **Toughness** 14 (3); **Crew** 1+2; **Cost:** \$20,000

Notes: Has winch, seat belts for 3, and two airbags. The horn sounds the tune of "La Cuckaracha."

4.2: Gun Fun

Gun	Range	Dmg	ROF	Wt	Shots
.12 gauge pump action shotgun	12/24/48	1-3d6	1	8	Shots 6; +2 <i>Shooting</i>
.30-.30 rifle w/scope*	24/48/96	2d8	1	8	5; AP 2

* Scope adds +2 if user does not move

4.3: Movement and Collision Notes

Action	Modifier
Driving in Reverse	-2 Handling
Driving on Muddy Road	-2 Handling
Driving at Safe Speed	1d6 damage
Driving at Normal Speed	3d6 damage
Driving like a "bat out of Hell"	5d6 damage
Firing from Truck	Unstable Platform penalty -2

* Anyone wearing their seatbelts (3 of them in the cab of the truck) take ½ damage from collisions. The airbags reduce the total dice of damage by one.

For more details on movement, maneuvering, and collision damage see Savage Worlds rulebook.

In game terms, consider Artie's truck to be a modified Ford F-150 XL pick-up as referenced above.

4.4: Getting Stuck in the Mud

It is highly likely that the vehicle or vehicles driven by the characters end up getting stuck at least once during this adventure. Modify the Out of Control Vehicular Table of the core rulebook as follows:

2d6	Effect
2	Roll Over
3	Stuck in mud. No further movement possible.
4	Spin
5	Skid
6	Stuck in mud.
7	Stuck in mud.
8	Spin
9	Skid
10	Slip
11	Stuck in mud.
12	Collision

When this occurs, the vehicle can be liberated from the mud in two possible ways:

4.4a: Get Out and Push

The most common method for getting a vehicle out of the mud is for all available passengers to get out and push. This requires at least one person to stay in the vehicle in the driver's seat. The pushers apply muscle power to the vehicle, hopefully moving it either forward or backward to a position where the vehicle can gain some traction, at which point the driver should be able to drive out. Characters pushing the vehicle may each make Strength checks individually, or aid

another as usual. Pushing a vehicle out of a small mud hole requires a Strength check (-1). Pushing a vehicle out of a large mud hole or ditch requires a Strength check (-2). Pushing a vehicle out of a washout requires a Strength check (-4).

4.4b: Use a Winch

Artie O'Connor's truck is equipped with a winch on the front bumper. The winch allowed Artie to pull himself out of the mud without any other person's help. It takes a full round to deploy the winch, after which time a character must drag the winch's steel cable to a nearby tree or other stable feature and attach it via its hook. The driver can then activate the winch, which pulls the vehicle in the direction of the cable at a speed of 4 yards (2") per round. It then takes a full round to unhook and rewind the cable. Alternately, the winch can also be used to pull other vehicles out of the mud, assuming that Artie's truck is properly braced.

4.5: Roadway Checks

The attached map tiles are intended to help the GM flesh out encounters along the roadway, and are to be utilized as 6 yards by 6 yards (3" x 3") instead of the normal 1" by 1". Note the road and buildings of the map are not of the same scale, however the buildings conform to standard scale. Characters on foot stand at a great disadvantage when it comes to running from and fighting the mutated birds. However, those in vehicles face some obstacles as well.

During the best of times the private roadway is nothing more than a poorly maintained dirt road. However, due to the heavy rainfall, the roadway is now a morass of mud, interspersed with holes and washouts. The roadway is very narrow and built to only accommodate one vehicle at a time. It generally runs along the ridgeline of the O'Connor property, and as a result there are several gullies and small creeks located to the north and south of the roadway. Those features are also indicated on the attached site map, but are located some distance off of the main roadway. Should the heroes venture out into these areas, they find that the creeks are swelled with storm water runoff, and are practically impossible to ford on foot. Due to the slipperiness and general poor condition of the roadway, traveling at speeds greater than slow and safe is not recommended. *Driving*

checks are made normally for vehicles traveling at safe and slow speeds with a -2 for the muddy roads. If driving at a normal speed the check is made at a -4 (Speed -2, muddy conditions -2). If attempting to drive like a "bat out of Hell" the check suffers a -6 (Speed -4, muddy conditions -2). Vehicles that are not equipped with four-wheel drives, also suffer an additional -2 circumstance bonus to their driving checks.

The muddy roadways count as a "slippery" surface, so characters moving on foot across the roadways must make *Agility* checks as normal for each round of movement.

4.5a: Straight Section of Roadway

The narrowness of the roadway prohibits many stunts or maneuvers that a character might perform on a larger road. Unless complicated by a mud hole or washout hazard, the straight sections of the roadway can be traversed without a driving check while traveling at slow and safe speeds. Traveling at speeds higher than that require the driver to make a *Driving* check (-4 or -6) to traverse each straight roadway section. Failure indicates that the driver has lost control of the vehicle and must check the Out of Control chart.

Normally, rolling a 12 on the Out of Control table indicates that the vehicle flips. On this roadway, the deep ditches usually preclude this unless said vehicle is traveling faster than normal. For this particular roadway, while traveling at or below normal speeds, a 12 result on the Out of Control table indicates that the driver lost control and slams the vehicle directly into the opposite bank of the ditch, which basically counts as a collision. The damages are as follows: 1d6 for slow, 3d6 for normal, and 5d6 for "bat out of Hell" speed.

4.5b: Roadway Curves

The curves of the roadway are especially treacherous to vehicles. Passing the curve requires the driver to make a *Driving* check (-2 additional modifier) or go Out of Control.

Note that critical failures on a *Driving* check indicates that the driver lost control of the vehicle and was unable to make the turn. In this case the team's car collides head-on into trees and suffers damage as

Chickens in the Mist

follows: 2d6 for slow, 4d6 for normal, and 6d6 for “bat out of Hell” speed (big trees don’t move and do more damage in a collision, but we are fudging a bit here as accidents at this point may be very deadly anyway).

4.5c: Small Mud Holes

These are very deep potholes that have become quite treacherous over time. The driver can choose to avoid these holes completely by dodging or straddling it, which requires a *Driving* check, with failure indicating that the vehicle goes Out of Control. If the driver chooses to pass through the small mud hole, a *Driving* check (with an additional -1 modifier) is required to avoid getting stuck automatically (but prevents a check on the Out of Control table unless moving at greater than slow and safe speed. Then check for Out of Control and the vehicle is also stuck in the mud afterwards.

4.5d: Large Mud Holes

These started out as potholes, but repeated driving has turned them into monstrosities. Tire tracks and ruts are very evident near these holes, and it is apparent that vehicles get stuck here quite often. These features are too large for a normal vehicle to avoid. A *Driving* check (-2 additional modifier) is required when passing through these features to avoid getting stuck automatically (but prevents a check on the Out of Control table unless moving at greater than slow and safe speed. Then check for Out of Control and the vehicle is also stuck in the mud afterwards.

4.5e: Wash-Outs

Dead leaves and sticks clutter the ditches at these locations and have formed a natural dam, causing the water to overflow from the ditch and run across the roadway. The rushing water has carved out a gully across the roadway that is up to 6 yards across and at least a ½ a yard deep. The slopes of the gully are steep and the bottom is filled with mud.

The driver can choose to jump the washout. This requires a *Driving* check made at a minimum of normal speed to accomplish. Failure results in collision damage (see Roadway Curves above) and the vehicle being automatically stuck. Alternately, the driver may attempt to ford the washout, which requires that movement speed be reduced to slow and safe and a

successful *Driving* check be made at an additional -2. Failure indicates the vehicle is stuck.

4.5f: Wooded Areas

The private roadway runs through a densely wooded area. Approximately 12 years ago, Artie had the forested sections of the property clear-cut and sold off the timber to raise money for his house renovations, and for the construction of his fighting pen. Immediately afterwards, he had those areas replanted with pine seedlings. It was his intention to re-harvest the area after a few decades for added revenue. However, his innate laziness soon got the better of him, and he has applied no effort to upkeep of the newly forested areas. As a result, all of the wooded areas indicated on the map are occupied by dense pine thicket, with extremely thick underbrush and briars.

When passing through these densely wooded areas, creatures that are size small or less find their normal movement rates halved as a result of the dense undergrowth. Creatures that are normal sized or larger have their movement rate reduced to 2” per round.

Characters can utilize machetes (or other cutting implements) to clear trails through these areas. A hero can only clear a trail at a maximum speed of 2 yards (1”) per round, but all subsequent travel through the trail can be made at normal traveling speed by any character (or creature). Each wooded square is assumed to provide Medium cover (-2), and two to four squares distance results in Heavy (-4) cover. Chickens hiding in the woods also receive a Dim modifier when being shot at.

Section 5: Bestiary

All of the modified chickens are short-lived, as the same mutations that give them their great size and strength also combine to poison their system. If the characters do not kill them, all of the remaining mutated chickens die within three weeks (not without leaving a trail of destruction in their wake).

The birds are afflicted with malignant cancerous growths throughout their bodies. Although their feathers provide some degree of cover, close inspection reveals that they are afflicted with nasty puss ridden sores over their body. Without exception, all of the mutated birds have a horrible stench about them.

In addition, the meat of the mutated chickens is extremely foul tasting, so much so that no normal animal will eat it. The birds themselves do not cannibalize each other, no matter how bad their hunger becomes. Any character foolish enough to try to eat the flesh of a mutated chicken (raw or cooked) must make a Vigor check or become physically ill for the next 1d4 days, suffering -2 to all to hit, damage, and skill checks (this can be cumulative with the illness caused by the horrible odor of the creatures).

Strain A Mutated Chickens

Statistics

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: *Fighting* d6, *Notice* d6, *Stealth* d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str +d4
- **Claw:** Str +d6. These mutated chickens may make one claw or one bite attack per round, unless it makes a Pounce attack (see below).
- **Fearless:** Plagued by constant pain and ravenous hunger, these birds are absolutely fearless when pursuing an opponent. The attack until their death or the death of the target. They never suffer from Fear Effects and may not be *Intimidated*.
- **Hardy:** If Shaken, further Shaken results do not cause a wound.
- **Pounce:** These fighting chickens may move up to 6" then pounce 1d6" further, flapping

their wings to semi-glide into an opponent. This attack gives the chicken a +2 to attack and damage, and it may make both claws and a bite attack at no penalty. However the Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action.

- **Size -1*:** Creatures of this size normally suffer a -1 to Toughness, but the increased mass of their muscles and skeletal structure negates this modifier.
- **Stench:** Any character within 3" of a mutated chicken must make a Vigor check or become Shaken. Once the character recovers from Shaken he is acclimated to the smell and is unaffected for the duration of that encounter. Other encounters require another Vigor check at a +1 cumulative modifier until the modifier reaches +3, at which point the character is forever immune to the mutated chicken stench.

Description

These are the smallest of the O'Connor's mutated birds. They are small creatures, averaging about three feet in height and weighing in at about 60 pounds. Their mutations have given them an extraordinary amount of extra muscle and body mass, and increased the toughness of their skeletal structure. Accordingly, they are much tougher and stronger than normally expected for a creature their size. The mutations have also altered their beaks and claws, making them more reminiscent of a bird of prey than a domesticated fowl.

They are also craftier than the average chicken and have adopted pack-type hunting traits, often working as a team, charging & flanking to pull down larger game. When encountered, they are usually running in a "flock" of 2-8 birds.

Strain B Mutated Chickens

Statistics

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: *Fighting* d8, *Notice* d6, *Stealth* d4

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str +d4
- **Claw:** Str +d6. These mutated chickens may make one claw or one bite attack per round, unless it makes a Pounce attack (see below).
- **Fearless:** Plagued by constant pain and ravenous hunger, these birds are absolutely fearless when pursuing an opponent. The attack until their death or the death of the target. They never suffer from Fear Effects and may not be *Intimidated*.
- **Hardy:** If Shaken, further Shaken results do not cause a wound.
- **Pounce:** These fighting chickens may move up to 8" then pounce 1d8" further, flapping their wings to semi-glide into an opponent. This attacks gives the chicken a +2 to attack and damage, and it may make both claws and a bite attack at no penalty. However the Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action.
- **Stench:** Any character within 3" of a mutated chicken must make a Vigor check or become Shaken. Once the character recovers from Shaken he is acclimated to the smell and is unaffected for the duration of that encounter. Other encounters require another Vigor check at a +1 cumulative modifier until the modifier reaches +3, at which point the character is forever immune to the mutated chicken stench.
- **Tough:** The increased muscle and skeletal mass of these mutated chickens provides an additional +1 to Toughness.

Description

These medium sized creatures average around four to four and a half feet tall and weigh around 100 pounds. Their musculature, skeletal structure, and skin have also been increased phenomenally due to their mutations. Their beaks and claws are quite lethal. They have taken to running in flocks of 1-4 birds.

Strain C Mutated Chickens

Statistics

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d12

Skills: *Fighting* d8, *Notice* d6

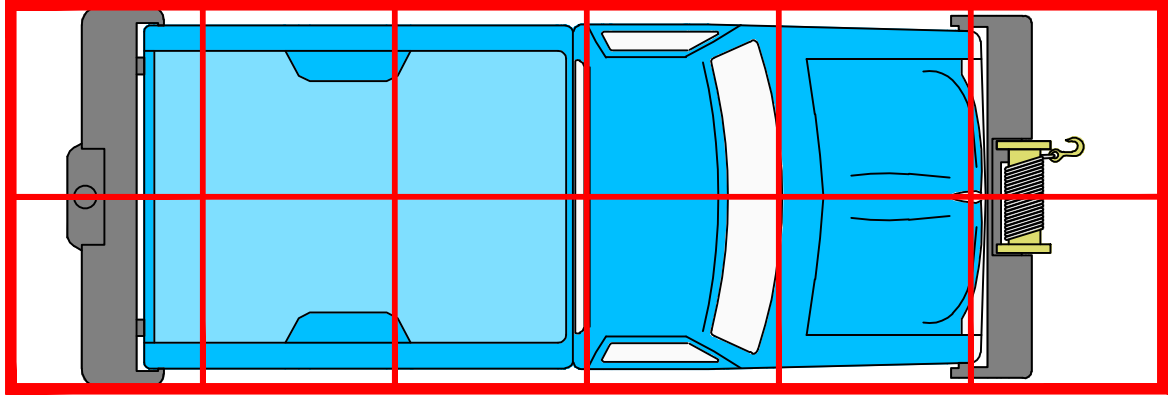
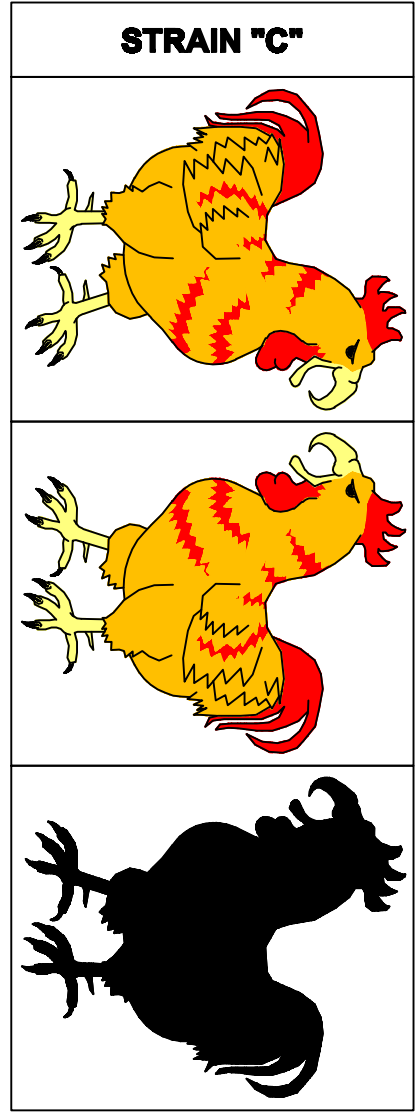
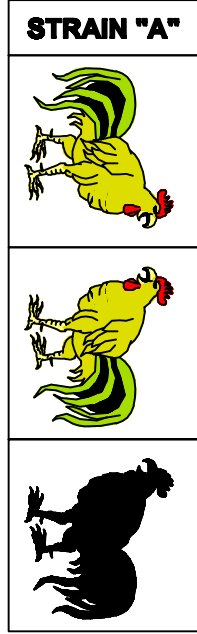
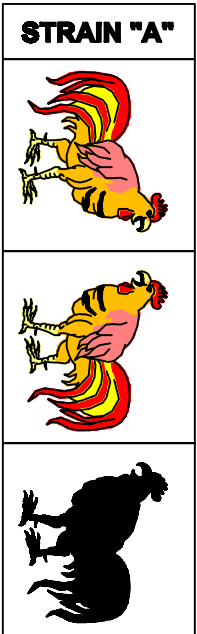
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str +d4
- **Claw:** Str +d6. These mutated chickens may make one claw or one bite attack per round, unless it makes a Pounce attack (see below).
- **Fearless:** Plagued by constant pain and ravenous hunger, these birds are absolutely fearless when pursuing an opponent. The attack until their death or the death of the target. They never suffer from Fear Effects and may not be *Intimidated*.
- **Hardy:** If Shaken, further Shaken results do not cause a wound.
- **Pounce:** These fighting chickens may move up to 8" then pounce 1d10" further, flapping their wings to semi-glide into an opponent. This attacks gives the chicken a +2 to attack and damage, and it may make both claws and a bite attack at no penalty. However the Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action.
- **Size +3**
- **Stench:** Any character within 3" of a mutated chicken must make a Vigor check or become Shaken. Once the character recovers from Shaken he is acclimated to the smell and is unaffected for the duration of that encounter. Other encounters require another Vigor check at a +1 cumulative modifier until the modifier reaches +3, at which point the character is forever immune to the mutated chicken stench.
- **Sweep:** These birds may attack all adjacent foes at -2.

Description

These are the largest of O'Connor's mutated birds. They are truly large, reaching heights of eight feet and weighing in excess of five hundred pounds. They are usually solitary, but have been known to congregate with flocks of the smaller Strain A or B chickens.



ARTIE'S TRUCK