

LONG SHOTS

by Michael Daumen (committed hero) for the RPG Geek One Shot Contest, 2015

GUMSHOE is a trademark of Pelgrane Press Ltd and used with permission. Pelgrane Press, Ltd and/or others may redistribute this submission non-commercially. This submission cannot be distributed commercially.

THE HOOK: The LA coroner says a human liver found on the beach belongs to East Coast made man *Benny "C-Note" Cinotelli*. If it was a hit, retaliation and revenge could tear the area apart. This investigation works best for private detectives or *X-Files*-type law enforcement agents in the 1950s, using the GUMSHOE SRD.

THE HORRIBLE TRUTH: C-Note rode an aughisky – a savage faery water-horse – within sight of the ocean and was taken there to his messy death. He had hoped to sponsor the creature as a racehorse and make even more money. His partner, *Ed Nealy*, owed debts the gangster was in town to collect. Nealy is only guilty of not reminding C-Note to stick to the canyons east of his house, and ditching the dead man's car when the horse came back riderless. Having not witnessed anything bad happen, he is in denial that things went down the way they did.

SCENES: Start with the Coroner; proceed as needed. **Cop Talk** notes C-Note was in town.

- The Coroner can provide police documentation and photos of the liver and scene. 1pt **Photography/Geology/Camping** shows the liver was found above the high water mark, with unidentifiable mammalian bite marks that removed it from the body. **Diagnosis/Forensic Pathology** ID'ed it (A- blood type, cirrhosis and the scar from a Dannemora shiv).

- The Crime Scene has been messed up by traffic & weather. **Notice** [leveraged core clue] finds horseshoe prints among the beachgoers' tracks, but riders are common enough here.

- Visit Vallone's Restaurant or Leathers Gym to find out what C-Note was doing in town. Low-level mobsters respond to **Flattery** (1-3; "you live like a king here!"), **Reassurance** (4-5 "talking to me will avoid a lot of grief – or a gang war), or **Intimidation** (6; "your rap sheet is longer than *War and Peace*"). See the side text for sample mobsters if needed.

- C-Note got into town last week, looking good – he had lost a lot of weight.

- [core clue] He was collecting gambling debts run up by Ed Nealy, a rich Easterner with no known address (a 2-pt **Research/Trivia** spend shows he went to Rutgers with movie star *Brandon Best*; he is house-sitting and address can be obtained). There are 3 tracks he might have visited: Santa Anita, Del Mar, & Hollywood Park.

WANTED BY THE FBI

Photograph taken February 15, 1952



Aliases: Tony Battaglia, Paul Colca, Vincent Mastrodicasa, Charles Runfola, Vito Trontone, Joseph Vecchio

General Abilities: Athletics 6, Driving 3, Hand-to-Hand 6, Health 6, Shooting 4, Weapons 6; Add 2 to Athletics, Hand-to-Hand, and Health for a boxer; add 4 to Shooting for a gunman

Hit Threshold: 3 (4 for boxer)

Alertness Modifier: +0

Stealth Modifier: -1

Damage Modifier: -3 (boxing gloves), -2 (fist), -1 (blackjack, knife), +0 (club), +1 (.38 revolver or .45 Tommygun)

- Visit the racetracks to hunt down Nealy

- Del Mar (San Diego) – This would require a day trip on the Californian down the coast. Nealy placed a few bets; a 1-pt **Oral History** spend gets the anecdote that he disliked the track because it was by the seaside. C-Note did not visit this track.

- Santa Anita – [core clue] Nealy maxed his credit here and was given a week to pay (**Forensic Accounting** delivers Nealy's address). C-Note came here for this information as well.


- Hollywood Park – [core clue] Nealy boards the horse here now (named Dalriada). He is waiting on Scottish paperwork before it can race, but it can run time trials (**Forensic Accounting** to find Nealy's address in his application; 2-pt **Photography/Natural History/Biology** reveals that the horse looks odd in pictures). C-Note never came to this track. The Scottish trainer *Archie McNulty* fears the aughisky and

knows its nature (as does anyone making a 2-pt **Occult** spend). He will freely note the horse sweats, and things stick to its hide (also evident to anyone examining it and spending 1-pt of **Natural History/Biology**). McNulty admits his conclusion about Dalriada with a 1-pt **Reassurance** spend ("I'm willing to believe whatever solves this case"). The jockeys are an insular lot and only a 1-pt **Intimidation** spend reveals their joint reluctance to ride the aughisky.

- The Best house is a Spanish-style home. Nealy stays in an outbuilding; there are glimpses of the ocean behind a few hills to the west. **Architecture**: There should be a stable somewhere on the estate (to the east). **Camping** or **Outdoorsman** notes several riding trails around the property. **Bullshit Detector** lets a claim of innocence fly; he is concealing something but hasn't come to grips with what happened. C-Note came by and Nealy convinced him to back his horse and delay collection (a newly-fit C-Note wanted to ride, but came in sight of the ocean). Nealy left the mobster's Bel Air convertible in a canyon (a 1-pt **Cop Talk/Law** spend finds it in the LAPD impound lot but without any useful evidence).

REACTIONS: If things are going slow, the PCs can always get visited by mobsters who are concerned about the unsolved murder, or the aughisky gets away and goes beachcombing. Nealy will invite PCs to watch a time trial, trying to enlist their money like he did with C-Note. Dalriada's times have been and will still be impressive, even if the horse looks a bit off. If things are going bad he tries to arrange Dalriada's escape, slipping away in the ensuing chaos (ideally after the group discovers what they have on their hands). The best climax to the scenario is chasing an aughisky-riding Nealy – especially if he makes a wrong turn in sight of the sea.... Someone with **Cop Talk** knows about the LAPD horse paddock, but at least a 2-point spend of that or **Bureaucracy** is needed to convince the powers that be to board the creature there. Nealy's stats include Athletics 5, Health 6, and Riding 4.

McNulty owns Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*: "The bay or grey horse grazes on the lake-side, and when he is mounted, rushes into the loch and devours the rider, save his liver."



1

DALRIADA

HEALTH

ABERRANCE

12

-

4

Athletics 15

Scuffling 10

COMBAT Bite +2 (vs. riding victim);

Trample +3

SPEND 2 Aberrance to hold a rider fast

& run into the sea, where rider drowns

RIDER adds Riding pool points to chases

STEALTH -2 (clumsy as an ox)

AWARENESS +1 (preternatural senses)

ARMOR +1 (sticky, hairy hide)

ATHLETICS +10 in sight of ocean

STABILITY TEST: 4-points to see

transformation, 6 points if riding