



THE DRACULA DOSSIER: DIRECTOR'S HANDBOOK: CARFAX

*Pelgrane Press is currently Kickstarting **The Dracula Dossier** by Kenneth Hite and Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan: an epic improvised campaign for **Night's Black Agents**, the award-winning game of spies vs. vampires. It consists of two books: **Dracula Unredacted**, which restores "lost" sections of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* that reveal the truth behind the fiction; and **The Director's Handbook**. Here's a sneak preview from *The Director's Handbook*.*



Carfax

The unredacted Stoker report points to Plaistow, not the later coverup site Purfleet, as the location of Dracula's former estate at Carfax. In 1894, Plaistow was still on the rural outskirts of London. Now, Plaistow is a neighborhood in the east London Borough of Newham, one of the poorest and most ethnically diverse localities in London. Between 1894 and now, the Blitz demolished much of Plaistow and urban renewal completed the job. Carfax is gone.

Finding the precise site where it stood may be as simple as finding the original maps and directions in Hawkins' effects or spotting the Edom lamplighter keeping watch on the address (Difficulty 5 **Surveillance** test with a 1-point spend of **Tradecraft**). Or it may require weeks of hard, grinding **Research, Accounting, Architecture, Law, and Traffic Analysis** in dusty archives and law offices trying to find a medieval keep with attached chapel and *no* record of a sale after 1893.

Identifying Seward's asylum narrows the search down considerably. If Edom uses Carfax as its secret London prison, getting captured by Edom (*NBA*, p. 115) may be the simplest – if not safest – way to find it.

Carfax is gone, but its cellars and crypts remain, underneath a row of houses and flats on Harcourt Road in a nicer part of Plaistow. Edom keeps all the keys just in case, and installed two secret entrances to subterranean Carfax: one in the London sewer system, and one in a very unattractive basement flat. With a 2-point spend the agents **Notice** the extremely sun-faded and well-thumbed state of that flat's "To Let" sign. When followed up by suitable Interpersonal approaches to neighbors, the agents hear about rats and bad drains and horrid smells from No. 81B.

Another possible avenue for such investigation is the large Iglesia Ni Cristo evangelical church just north and west of the site, on Meath Road. The INC is based in the Philippines, but its Plaistow parishioners, like Plaistow itself, include a wide variety of ethnicities. (Including Romanians, for example, should the Director need to lay another

trail.) The INC is a non-trinitarian sect; the Director decides whether its heterodox Christianity suffices to consecrate its ground against Dracula's spawn. As nonbelievers in transubstantiation, INC communion wafers never become the Body of Christ; as nonbelievers in infant baptism, the INC church has no holy water font.

The East London Cemetery is just across the railroad, about 400 meters from Carfax as the bat flies.

The site of Carfax is quite near the Abbey Mills Pumping Station, the Abbey Road Docklands Light Railway station, and the old Abbey Mills factory (now used by the Masjid-e-Ilyas, a large mosque). It's possible that the misprision "Carfax Abbey" didn't originate solely in the slapdash 1924 script of the stage play *Dracula*, but came from a late in life slip of tongue or pen by Bram Stoker that made it into theatrical gossip.

Cool: Once the agents get into the flat (Difficulty 5 **Infiltration** test), finding the secret entrance to the Carfax cellar is relatively easy (**Architecture**; 1-point spend of **Notice**). The cellars run beneath about a dozen houses; Architecture indicates the complex extends the width of the block, underneath the houses on Holbrook Road also. The chambers vary from an enormous vaulted room the size of a football pitch to tiny oubliettes barely large enough to stand in. They were clearly (**Architecture** or **Archaeology**) dug and expanded piecemeal over the centuries; the oldest is a medieval fieldstone-lined dungeon on the southern end of the complex. They hold random detritus, junk, and rat feces.

Two fairly large rooms dominate the northern end. On the northwest, the stones encompass a deep, dark-looking pond or well. There is no floor, only water; the door leads to slime-covered steps going down into the murk. A concrete tunnel runs out of this room, its lower lip just barely above the surface of the water. Architecture or Archaeology accurately assesses it as a sewer, carrying runoff from the pond southwest. The tunnel is large enough to move along at a crouch, although it is (of course) prime rat country. It takes a 2-point spend of **Urban Survival** to navigate 1.5 km through these sewers to the nearest exit at the Abbey Mills Pumping Station.

The room on the northeast is the crypt of the former Carfax chapel (**Architecture** or **Archaeology**). A 1-point spend of either ability indicates it was enlarged to the west about a century ago, placing the new crypt chamber beneath both the chapel's threshold and the old crossroads for which Carfax was named. These are both traditional burial places for sorcerers, suicides, and vampires (**Occult Studies** or 1-point **Vampirology** spend). The new crypt chamber has fragments of reddish-brown murk embedded in its joints and crevices – not just on the walls, but the floor and ceiling as well. (**Notice** in full light; requires 1-point spend in flashlight light.) Even a cursory examination of the gunk identifies it not as blood but as red paint (**Diagnosis** or **Chemistry** or **Art History**). Further lab analysis (**Art History** or 1-point spend of **Chemistry**) identifies the pigment as red lead (standard in the Victorian era) mixed with caput mortuum ("death's head," a red iron oxide pigment very similar to blood) and vermilion (made from cinnabar, a red mercury ore). This would have been a very expensive paint job; the room would have been the color of arterial blood (see the *Red Room*, p. XX).

The main crypt holds three 15th-century sarcophagi; the Red Room is completely empty.

Warm: When Edom took Carfax away from Dracula in 1894, they had no intention of

giving it back to anyone. Lord Godalming took over the property and held the title deed with Harker's connivance; the 1894 network made Carfax a reunion spot for many years. After the Blitz destroyed Plaistow's surface buildings, Edom (having learned a great deal about operating in secret from its days in the SOE) moved in under cover of the reconstruction to build itself a bolt-hole in east London. The secret complex at Carfax has been Edom's perfect safe house for its own and its secret prison for vampire minions and Renfields – and anyone else troublesome -- since 1947. (Full vampires, if Edom has access to them, reside on the HMS *Proserpine*.) Edom operatives (and special defectors who need to be debriefed outside formal MI6 channels) reside in any of six houses on Harcourt and Holbrook Roads, above the Carfax cellars. Treat these houses as Safe Houses; if they, too, have secret entrances into the vaults, then they, too, have problems with smells and rats.

The head of the Carfax facility is called the “abbot” (and Carfax is “the Abbey” in casual Edom chat). Any Duke of Edom might be on site, in addition to the abbot.

Finding Carfax is obviously easier if the neighbors have more rumors about the “secret branch” and “special polis” in the area, or can describe military types and possibly a Duke of Edom to convincing agents (**Cop Talk**, **Intimidation**, or **Reassurance** seem best, but individual neighbors can vary). To balance that, the Carfax complex becomes more difficult to poke around surreptitiously. In addition to two Edom lamplighters watching Harcourt and Holbrook Roads on the outside, the two-man team in the security station in a Carfax cellar has complete command of the CCTV feeds for the whole area, and Edom knows the streets intimately (treat as blanket +2 Alertness and +1 Stealth modifier for wired-in Edom operatives in Plaistow; Edom takes a net +2 to its Lead in any chase in or through Plaistow). Add Edom reinforcements as needed from the safe houses – the agents might stage an attack, chase, or other disruption to draw a sheltering Edom asset out into the open!

The subterranean Carfax has a number of cells for recalcitrant types, which can contain anyone the Director needs to salt there. The computers in the security station and the “abbot's office” have direct hard lines to Ring, Seward's Asylum, and the HMS *Proserpine* if it exists. Using one of them lowers the Difficulty of **Digital Intrusion** tests against Edom to 6.

In addition, the Carfax facility might include any or all of the following:

- A pack of Manchester ratting terriers, kenneled below or in one of the safe houses with a secret passage; 2-point **Human Terrain** or **Streetwise** spend recognizes that specific breed while casing the neighborhood.
- A fully functional field surgery, with hundreds of units of blood stored in a big fridge, and possibly some Seward Serum handy and syrettes of Blomberg Serum.
- An armory including full Edom rating loadouts, comms gear, and passive UV night-vision optics for 26 men; along with plenty of ammunition, rifle grenades, flash-bangs, and any special anti-vampire weaponry used in the campaign. There are also six modern crossbows racked here.
- Lots of easily negotiable cash (dollars, pounds, euros, Romanian lei) including a stash of Hapsburg gold coins and blank Romanian passports in a strongroom.

- Forgery facilities for the above passports, as well as blanks of various licenses and identity papers for the UK.
- Mirrors everywhere, including mirrored surveillance cameras.
- Crucifixes mounted on walls in every room, in the eye-line of the door.
- Sunlamp (UV/visible light) light bulbs.
- Triple-thickness steel hatch on the well room.
- A functioning, consecrated Catholic chapel in the old crypt.
- A hydroponic greenhouse full of garlic and wild roses, under intense UV grow lights.
- Incredibly powerful fans and ventilators, sucking even the tiniest traces of water vapor or dust out of the air; 1-point spend of **Architecture** or **Mechanics** (investigatively) notes the anomalously large circulators on the roofs.
- A fully soundproofed interrogation suite with all the latest gear, hoods, restraints, and so forth.
- Any sort of spy gear the Director deems likely.
- In a pulpier campaign, one of the safe houses' garages holds an elevator down into a full motorpool including police cars, windowless panel vans with BT logos, and the truck from Ring. This would be the large vaulted chamber noted above; 1-point spend of **Urban Survival** or **Cop Talk** after three days' surveillance notes the anomalous police route that seems to begin on this block.

For the Red Room in a warm Carfax facility, see p. XX.