

FOR QUEEN & COUNTRY

Footprints in Ash

By Rob Edwards

Introduction

Welcome to For Queen and Country! This module is the first mission in the first season of the campaign, and introduces some of the characters, situations and concepts that will run through the campaign. This mission is intended to be played first in the season, and is aimed at first level agents, recently recruited into the NIA.

The National Intelligence Agency (NIA) is an arm of the British Intelligence Service that specialises in cross-department collaboration. It is tasked with handling both foreign and domestic threats, in partnership with established security services. Its main remit is to deal with counter-terrorism and counter-espionage, but it also gathers intelligence for other departments on serious crime, illegal arms, people trafficking and the drugs trade.

Synopsis

Footprints in Ash follows the standard 'For Queen and Country' module format, and is divided into an introduction, 4 scenes, and an epilogue.

Two days before the action begins, the British Security Services detained a number of suspects connected to a planned spate of London bombings. While a number of the people arrested are important to this campaign of terror, the most senior members of this particular terror cell are still at large, and operations continue to attempt to track them down.

In an operation of this size, even the NIA needs help and it has moved up recruitment to second a number of temporary agents onto the investigation. These low level investigators, the players' characters, are initially being brought in to deal with the simpler leg work, in the first instance, watching and then snatching a very minor Fixer.

What NIA London Central has not realised is that part of the evidence they seized during this operation is connected to a much bigger threat. One of many items sat on shelves awaiting cataloguing is much more significant than anyone at the NIA yet knows.

The terrorist leaders have called upon the services of a mercenary demolitions expert, one Gordon Patrick, who is willing to break into the NIA headquarters, and destroy the evidence, along with anyone currently in the building. Patrick mounts a daring, but somewhat rushed infiltration, enters NIA headquarters, make it to just outside the evidence room, plants a device and is even able to get away untagged.

The device explodes, taking out NIA London Central, leaving the players' agents unsupported in their simple surveillance. Moreover, as the closest agents to the scene, they are about to get commandeered into the search to find Gordon Patrick.

Opening Sequence

The agents are on a simple watch-and-snatch op, to monitor a meeting between two suspected terrorists in a London pub. One man, Tom Hickman, is a fixer peripherally connected with the NIA's main investigation. He's here to meet with a mercenary Ben Church, but Church is here only as a professional courtesy and has no intention of getting involved. The NIA are particularly interested in Hickman: although he is a very small cog, it is possible he can lead them upwards. The agents are to record the meeting and then pick up Hickman without alerting Church.

Unfortunately the plan is blown when communications to the office break down and an explosion some distance off puts Church on alert and spooks Hickman enough that he runs. Without recourse to their Control, the agents must try and salvage what they can.

The scene ends with the agents being bleeped and summoned back to the ruins of their office.

Mission Briefing

The agents meet Department Chief John Hamilton in the ruins of what had been their NIA office. Hamilton puts them to work with a very specific brief: try to determine who was responsible for the explosion and if possible why this happened and where the bomber is now. If the agents are able to intercept the bomber, they are to capture him so he can be interrogated properly.

Scene 1

The Investigation

The NIA office is a mess, but Patrick's plan was thrown together at short notice and though audacious was hardly flawless. If the agents are thorough and careful, there are a number of clues which can allow them to piece together what happened and even who.

The agents may or may not discover or realise that Patrick's plan required help from the inside. Quite who that help was is not readily discoverable in the course of this mission.

Scene 2

Known Associates

With Patrick identified, the agents can now see about locating him. With no solid leads, possibly the easiest approach is to talk to his known associates and relatives. The agents can break down a few doors and knock a few heads together, but most of Patrick's cronies are unaware of his operation at the NIA.

Patrick's daughter, although also unaware of his recent activities, is an obvious potential lead. Indeed Patrick has sent some men to extract her before the NIA can pick her up and interrogate her. In a piece of serendipity, the agents arrive just after Patrick's minions, and a fight ensues.

Several of Patrick's goons know exactly where he will be, but also know that without the correct signal at the correct time, Patrick is likely to flee.

Scene 3

The chase

Gordon Patrick makes a run for it, and the agents are in hot pursuit. They need to close him down fast, before he can make the coast or summon up re-enforcements.

Scene 4

The showdown

The agents track, chase and hopefully capture Gordon Patrick

Aftermath

The agents' secondment is made more permanent, as John Hamilton takes them on in the new Central London office to replace the one Patrick destroyed

Opening Sequence

You may wish to start by letting the players give each other names and descriptions of their characters. There's no need for long histories at this point as, even in character, the agents have only just met. Make a note for yourself what sort of classes you've got around the table; it will make things go more smoothly in Encounter 1.

Read the following to the players.

As the van crawls slowly along London's Oxford Street, there is at last a little time for something resembling a briefing. Agent Jordan's voice comes through clearly on your earpieces.

"Right then lads and lasses, sorry for the delay, and welcome to the NIA. We'll have time for proper intros later, but so you know, I'm Alex Jordan, Control for this little operation.

"Wouldn't normally put you straight out there on day one, but after all, you're seconded to us because we're swamped, so it shouldn't be a surprise that we need you now, and I do mean *now* – this is a bit more last minute than we'd like.

"In a little under ten minutes, one Tom Hickman and one Ben Church will be meeting in the Black Horse to have a bit of a cosy chat about blowing up tube trains. This all connects up to an on-going investigation – more on that later – so we don't expect any surprises during this chat, but just to be sure, we want the conversation monitored and recorded.

"Once they go their separate ways, we need you to pick up Hickman, preferably without Church knowing about it. They're both small fish, but Hickman is tied in already so he may know something useful. Or not.

"This op is to be discrete ... so if you're carrying, leave it in the van. I don't want anybody pulling guns on Oxford Street on a Saturday afternoon, okay?

"Now, say hi to your new colleagues, and get yourself sorted. There's some basic floor plans if you want to do some planning before you get there, but you now have a little over ... oh ...eight minutes before the scheduled meet, and either or both could be early, so get a move on."

If it helps imagine Alex, he's probably leaning back on a swivel chair, chewing gum and slowly rocking as he talks, laid-back and casual, but professional when it matters. A likeable sort as far as Controls go, which is kind of a shame really considering what's about to happen.

Pass the players the floor plans to the Black Horse, **handout #1** and the short list of bugging equipment they have available to them for recording the conversation, which is also on **handout #1**. Make a point of noting the time now – and make sure the players know you've done it too. They have very little time to get themselves sorted before events over-take them.

Let the players talk and plan but as they do so, keep an eye on your watch/timer.

+ 3 minutes: The van deposits the agents near the Black Horse. It's a small-ish pub just off Oxford Street, about half way between Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Circus tube stations. It's a cold Saturday afternoon in late January, and already starting to get dark.

Even so, Oxford Street is teeming. The pub is about half full already, mostly tourists, and a few shoppers taking a break. Three tables are still empty when the agents arrive.

+ 6 minutes: Ben Church arrives at the pub. If there is an empty table (the agents might think to deploy themselves such that Church has limited choices of table), he will get a drink and sit by himself. If there is no free table, he will get his drink and stand by the bar, although he won't look happy about it.

The agents may want to use the next few minutes setting themselves up, covering exits, or generally getting settled – four minutes should be enough to achieve this, but if the team dawdle, Hickman could arrive before they are fully in position. Mind you, If the agents are all ready for the off, no need to drum your fingers for four minutes real time to pass!

+10 minutes: (Incidentally, at this point the van that dropped the agents off returns to the NIA office about now, and the driver manages to get inside in time for the next bit). Hickman arrives, a couple of minutes late. Make sure you know exactly where all agents are situated then read:

Alex's voice comes over the comm. "We have Hickman on CCTV, he's just crossing the road to you now. He looks a bit anxious as far as I can tell on this crappy image. Try not to make him bolt."

Hickman enters the pub through the front door. He pauses in the doorway and looks carefully around.

Hickman uses the stats for a standard character, giving him Alertness +2. Roll it against any Disguise/Bluff/Hide rolls the players' agents want to use to avoid being spotted. If he doesn't spot any of the agents, he will head to the bar, if any of the agents do get spotted, he will dither a little longer in the doorway. In either case, almost immediately, events elsewhere impinge.

"Well here goes lads," say Alex "I hope you checked the batteries in your recorder, because..."

BOOM!!!

The pub's windows rattle, the drinkers all start in surprise. There is a sudden loud painful screech from your comms, and Hickman yelps. A look of panic crosses his face and he turns to run.

Quite what happens now depends on where the players are stationed, and what they want to do. The agents can get no response at all from Control, as poor old Alex Jordan just died.

The meeting will not happen now, so any plans for monitoring/recording that are somewhat superfluous. If the agents still want to take Hickman or Church, they can.

Church will make for the side door, trying to be casual about it in the confusion, but if the agents corner or confront him, he will surrender without a fight. He's not done anything wrong (recently) and knows nothing about the case or the explosion. The agents can simply let Church go if they wish; at no point have they been asked to pull him in.

Hickman meanwhile, simply runs. In fact, he knows nothing about the explosion but was nervous already, and he's just panicked. If there are agents stationed outside, taking him (or Church) might simply involve making a grab him as he runs past, otherwise you might need

to improvise a foot chase. Keep it quick, but not perfunctory. Use the stats in the back of the mod for them. Remember, their brief did ask for Hickman to be brought in, so the agents should make some attempt to capture him.

Agents might possibly be curious about the source of the explosion. They can make Listen checks to figure direction and distance DC 10 will let them know it was big and within two miles of them, roughly south east of their position. That is suspiciously close to where the agents were bundled into a van about half an hour ago.

Once the agents have dealt with Hickman and Church, in whatever way they see fit, and possibly once they've tried to contact Control by other means, their pagers will all sound, summoning them back to NIA London Central office.

Assuming the agents respond to their bleeps, they should head for the Mission Briefing.

Mission Briefing

It will take the agents a little over twenty minutes to get back to the office. In which time, the police have established a cordon, and all the walking survivors have been quietly moved away. The police have been issued a hold order and are a bit frustrated that they are not being allowed to do much more than direct traffic and see off the curious. John Hamilton is on the scene, and handling the situation until his default investigators (the agents) get back.

Read the following to the players.

Night has fully fallen by the time you get back to the NIA building, and a cold drizzle has started. There is no question now as to the origin of the explosion – the NIA building is blackened and still smoking. A police cordon has been thrown up to keep the few onlookers at bay. Most of the small crowd seem to be from the media, and even as you arrive, another news van pulls up.

In the centre of the cordon, a police sergeant is trying to argue with another man, who is not rising to the bait. When he notices your approach, the man nods you through the cordon, and leaves the sergeant spluttering behind him.

The man is in his late fifties, stocky, with wiry grey hair. He's dressed simply, but the suit and overcoat are both well made and expensive.

"I'm John Hamilton," he says in a soft voice that carries no further than you "I've been assigned to find out what happened here, and you've been assigned to me." He takes out an NIA badge and shows it to you, long enough to let you study it. His left hand, holding the badge, is missing two fingers and is badly scarred from an old wound.

"So there is no mistake about this, your secondment continues, I'm stuck with you, and you with me, but our priorities have changed. We're to find out who did this, how, and if possible any particular whys we can find. And then we are going to find this person and put them in a dark box for a long time while we ask them some rather pointed questions."

Pause for breath, and let the players add any words of encouragement. Hamilton will lead them into the building, to meet up with two of his permanent staff who have already begun the investigation.

Hamilton is important to both this mission and the campaign overall. Take some time with him, so the players get a feel for who he is. To help, here's a potted summary of John Hamilton:

Hamilton is in his late fifties, and was a field agent until an explosion took most of his left hand. Scrupulously polite, he rarely raises his voice – in fact he tends to grow quieter when he gets angry. More than one person has made the mistake of seeing Hamilton as a relic. Although he is always happy to share a suitably sanitised anecdote from the golden age of espionage, he has always sought to excel in everything he does and keeps a very close eye on changing technology and politics.

Mid-late fifties, solid build, still fit. Wiry grey hair, brown eyes. Injured left hand.

When you're ready, continue:

Inside the building, the main structure seems intact, but furniture, equipment, and people lie shredded, blackened and smouldering in the ruins. The air is thick with smoke and dust, and the smell is unpleasant.

Two people, a man and a woman, are already working among the ruins, and Hamilton calls them over.

“I am going to make this briefing quick and simple. If they have an ounce of sense, whoever did this is on the way out of the country. If they are gone already, we may never catch them, or worse, the collar may end up with Six, so I'm not willing to assume that. We are operating under the assumption that whoever did this is still in the country and that we can find and grab them before they leave.

“That means we go over every inch of this mess until we find that *thing*, whatever it is, that will point us along this bastard's trail, understood?”

He gestures to the man “This is Doctor Jim Baker, he's a medic and pathologist, he can help you with the bodies if you need it.”

Hamilton gestures to the woman “And this is Beverley Lloyd. We've worked together before, and she has a special knack with machines. You find something you can't fix, ask her.

“Now, the rest of you, who are you and what use are you going to be to me today?”

While Hamilton, Lloyd or Baker will now answer any questions the agents have (see below) Hamilton is more interested in simply getting the agents to work. He may get to know the agents better in the future, but right now, all he's interested in is what the agents can do for him right now.

For full information on the flow of the investigation, see Encounter 1, but Hamilton has some fairly strict ideas about what he wants people doing.

- Any Faces, or people who claim to be talky-types will be sent back out into the rain to try and talk to witnesses.
- Any medically trained agents will be assigned to Baker to help look for survivors
- Anybody technical, or computer whizzes will be set to try to extract information from security cameras or computers

- Anybody particularly good at searching (which does include any 1st Level Snoops at the table with the Flawless Search class ability) will be set to turning the place over, looking for blast patterns and how this happened.
- Any soldiers or wheelmen who don't claim any other skills will be assigned to help lift and carry things. Don't worry, both get a chance to do their things later.

The agents don't have to stick with the positions Hamilton gives them, but he does want to cover as many angles simultaneously as he can.

By the way, both Baker and Lloyd will be recurring NPCs during the campaign. Don't force the agents to interact with these characters, but if they do, here are their summaries.

Beverley Lloyd

Lloyd is astonishingly bright. She is an alumna from Durham University, where she earned a doctorate in mechanical engineering. Her team keeps the agency's machines and vehicles running, but she can mostly be found in the R&D labs, where she splits her time between building what can only be described as 'gadgets' and indulging her forensics hobby.

Late twenties, slightly overweight. Frizzy blond hair, blue eyes. Distinctive freckle pattern on neck.

Dr Jim Baker

Graduated from Cambridge University in Medical Science, postgraduate studies included '*Gunshot and Explosion Injuries - Characteristics, Outcomes, and Implications for Care*' and '*Disorders of Extreme Stress following Combat-related Trauma*'. Jim is a consummate professional, with a calm manner, soft voice and the ability to diffuse tense situations very easily. He has immense integrity and is passionate about maintaining the health and mental well-being of his field agent colleagues. Jim also has background experience as a field medic for the Armed Forces, and spent a number of years working for the Red Cross.

Late thirties, slim build. Black hair and blue eyes. No distinguishing features.

Threat level

The mission is Code: Red, but very few resources are available at the moment.

Deniable or Official

This mission is Deniable. While the NIA is admitting to the explosion, it can hardly ignore it with the news crews outside, officially the building damaged was not connected to the NIA and right or wrong, the Government feels it politically inappropriate to admit that terrorists were able to successfully strike such an important target.

Hamilton will make it clear that he wants no noise on this. Once the agents begin to follow up clues outside the bomb site, they are not to call attention to themselves.

Gearing up

For Encounter 1 the agents do not get a chance to gear up, although they can use any personal equipment they might own. There will be an opportunity to gear up from a limited stock at the end of Encounter 1.

Briefing Q&A

“Any survivors?”

Dr Baker will field this question. “The blast seems to be have been confined to the ground floor and central office areas. The few staff working in other areas are shaken but otherwise fine.

“Here in the blast area, I’ve found none so far. In one way we were lucky, as most of the staff were in the field when it happened; unfortunately those that were here were too close to the explosion. I’m still looking though, and if you’ll excuse me, I need to get back to it.”

“Can we talk to the survivors?”

Hamilton: “For the moment, that side of the investigation is being run elsewhere. Rest assured, they will be thoroughly debriefed and we will be told anything relevant from their statements. We need to concentrate on the physical evidence and the local area.”

“What about the surviving field staff, can’t they be brought back to help?”

Hamilton will shake his head. “They are on operations too important to disrupt right now.”

If (and only if) pushed on this point, Hamilton will add: “Even if they weren’t we couldn’t run this investigation with staff from an office that has clearly been infiltrated at some level. We are all close to the scene, and not directly connected, so for now, we get the job.”

“Infiltrated?” or “Might the bomber have had inside help?”

Hamilton pauses a long time before reluctantly answering this. “Nobody just walks into an NIA office without some help from the inside. Who that help was, and what that person knew about what they were letting happen ... if you find anything let me know, but I expect *that* investigation will take longer than we have. Our first priority is the bomber or bombers themselves.”

Scene 1 The Investigation

Once the agents are clear on their objectives, Hamilton leaves them to it. He takes himself to a reasonably unscathed office on the first floor, and begins political fire fighting, calling in favours, and generally dealing with big picture problems.

The agents should have several possibilities in front of them, and are likely to have assigned roles in the investigation. If they want to reassign tasks amongst themselves, the only result will be a rueful shake of the head from Beverley Lloyd.

Set the scene for your players, paraphrasing the following.

Although it does appear that the explosion has left the building structurally sound, the blast has ripped through this area with considerable force. The open-plan office that served as the operations centre is strewn with rubble and destroyed equipment. Bodies lie amongst the ruins, and the smell of the smoke in the air is laced with the scent of blood and burnt flesh.

Baker has already cleared one corner of the office for use as an impromptu morgue. He goes about his grisly task thoroughly but with careful respect. Lloyd meanwhile has begun cataloguing the state of the equipment to see what can be salvaged.

GC information

The most important thing about this scene is to make sure that everybody has something to do. The agents should be able to piece together some of what happened if they are thorough and careful. Don't let this descend into an exercise in dice rolls, make sure to give each aspect some screen time and enough details to keep things interesting. Try and run all aspects of the investigation in parallel.

The witnesses

While the witnesses inside the building have been escorted away for debriefing, there are people outside the building worth talking to, some of whom can provide the first piece of the puzzle. There are several people that the agents can get useful information from, listed below.

Note: Hamilton will have made it totally clear that under no circumstances should the agents confirm they are agents, that the NIA had an office in the building, or indeed that the explosion was anything other than an accident. Formal press briefings will be held shortly, but the agents are NOT to start advertising their presence.

Police Constable Paul Tyson: PC Tyson was only a few streets away from the explosion when it happened and was first on the scene. He begins resentful and Unfriendly (as per the disposition table on p271 of the Spycraft book) to the team just because nobody is telling the police anything at the moment, and all they get to do is stand in the rain and keep people away. Play this resentment, if the agent responds with understanding and a few hints, then Tyson can be made Neutral. A little more friendly chat and a Diplomacy check (DC 15 if Tyson has been made "Neutral", requires a 23 if he is still Unfriendly) will reveal the following:

- Tyson remembered seeing an American couple taking photos of London buses in the area shortly before the explosion
- He remembers noticing a blond man, early forties, who had been in the area for some time before the explosion. The man had not been acting suspiciously, but

Tyson had noticed him walking around the area for about an hour before the explosion.

Larry and Mary Jackson: If the agents have not been pointed to the Jacksons by PC Tyson, it requires a Gather Info DC 15 to even realise that these people are on the scene. American tourists in town to visit their second cousins (on their mother's side, this whole trip has been like a dream come true, except the explosion, which they hadn't really expected in London of all places, it really is quite terrible, but of course they're willing to help if they can, it really is a terrible thing...) they were snapping street life on their digital camera (it's not the same as a real camera, is it, but it's so convenient, isn't it, oh yes, so convenient!) just before the explosion. They have no idea if they have anything useful on their photos, but if asked, will be happy to share the photos with the agents.

- From this, the agents can get one photo which has a useful partial image. It shows a blond man in his forties leaving the NIA building shortly before the explosion. A Surveillance DC 15 check will let the agents analyse the photo – five minutes will be enough to pull up the image and confirm the man is not on the staff files for this NIA office. If the agents have already got the name Gordon Patrick on their suspects list, this will be enough to place him at the scene.
- A DC 25 and an hour cross-checking the photo against mug shots, if the agents have not found Patrick's name. This is one of three ways that Patrick could eventually be identified. This DC drops to 20 if the agents have the image of Patrick from the security cameras to cross check against.

BBC London's Floria Cheng: Floria is an up-and-coming correspondent for the London local news, keen to break into the nationals. She figures one big story should do it and is looking for an angle on this. If she notices the agents asking around (and she will unless the agents are being particularly circumspect about their investigations) she will approach the agents directly. She is willing to trade some information, a name in fact, she has for the story about what is happening here. The agents could rely on the truth to get her to open up, and this will work, but goes counter to Hamilton's instructions. If the agents construct some plausible lies for the events – and Cheng will press them on details, so the agents will need to think on their feet – they can trade the name for their lie.

- The Bluff DC of this will vary on how good the lie is – assign a DC between 15 and 25. If they make it, Cheng will tell them that she saw a man that she thought she recognise in the area, Gordon Patrick. She recognised him for a piece she did on domestic mercenaries.
- The agents could simply threaten Cheng for the information. They can threaten physically (Intimidate with Strength as the key attribute DC 15) or with more esoteric threats to her job, getting her in trouble with her bosses etc (Intimidate with Charisma as its attribute DC 22). If they use force, make a note of it in the Event Feedback form.

The victims

Most of the people in the office area are dead. The agents will stumble across Alex Jordan's body in the very centre of the room. Searching through the bodies is a grim task, and at first glance there appear to be no survivors. However, call for a couple of First Aid checks, DC 15. If the agent makes the second roll, they will find the last survivor in the room.

The woman has shrapnel embedded up the left of her body, and is bleeding out – unconscious and dying. She is on death's door, and a simple stabilisation roll is not sufficient to get her stable and talking.

- First, when the agent discovers her, she needs help instantly, and there's not even time to call Dr Baker over. A First Aid DC 15 again is required to keep her from dying

- take a leaf from your favourite hospital drama for the scene, with desperate CPR and cries of “No! Don’t you die on me, don’t you die on me!”
- Another DC 20 First Aid – Dr Baker will have arrived by now and automatically grants the agent an assist for +2 – will ensure she survives to be hospitalised. If the agents make this roll, her eyes will flutter open, and the agents can talk to her.
- They can ask her for anything she can give them that might help, she will look lost, confused and in anguish, but will manage to rasp out “Budapest”. This is a reference to Patrick’s most notorious previous job in Budapest. The analyst recognised Patrick too late, but in her confused state is unable to place his name.

The security equipment

The security systems in the blast area are all destroyed beyond repair, but other systems outside the immediate blast area are less damaged. In fact the department security office has come away mostly unscathed, and if the agents break down the door (Break DC normally very high, but the blast weakened it enough to make it DC 14 – one solid thump should do it).

Some of the systems did short out and a DC 15 Electronics roll will be required. This should get access to internal and external security systems, including the ever-popular security camera network. Don’t expect CCTV to be the answer to all agent woes in FQC, but on this occasion, in a high security area where they can get access to appropriate clearance, the cameras are useful.

A quick Surveillance check, DC 15, will be enough to go through the basic camera footage to get a feel for what happened. The blast itself originated in an area of corridor just beyond main operations, opposite the evidence storeroom. If the agents make DC 20 on this Surveillance roll, they should also notice that the evidence storeroom door was flagged as open at the time of the explosion.

A second Surveillance check, DC 15 will turn up a few frames of a man acting suspiciously shortly before the explosion. The most suspicious thing about him is that he does not appear often on the cameras. If the agents made a DC 20 on this roll, they will get one good shot of him, and confirm that he is not on the employment record at this office.

On this evidence alone, a DC 25 Surveillance roll is necessary to identify Patrick. This DC drops to 20 if the agents also have a copy of the Jacksons’ holiday snaps.

The computers

As with the security systems, any computers in the blast area are completely beyond hope, but some of the other systems are salvageable. Once the systems can be restored, and an uplink re-established, it makes the job of processing information from the other areas faster and easier.

A Computers DC 15 check will get a sufficient lash-up going, this will give a +2 equipment bonus on Surveillance checks to analyse the Jackson’s photos, or the security camera footage. If any agents have their own laptops to add to the mix, this bonus rises to +3.

It will also let them begin pattern matching in the database – references to Budapest, or the blast cap will point to Patrick. It’s a DC 25 Search check to identify Patrick from either one of these clues, but it drops to DC 20 if both clues are available. In either case, the agent can benefit from the above equipment bonus.

The blast pattern

Anybody trying to determine the exact nature of the explosion can make a Search roll to determine the flash point (if not already determined from the security footage). This is DC 12, characters with the Flawless Search class ability need not roll. They can determine that the explosion began from a relatively small device planted near the evidence store. A Demolitions check, DC 12 will confirm that this was a professional job but somebody who really knew what they were doing. It is also clear that the bomber did not die in the explosion – in fact there was nobody within ten feet of the device when it detonated.

It is also clear that the concussion wave hit the contents of the evidence store badly. The door must have been open, as everything in the room has been obliterated. In fact, if the agent makes a DC 20 Demolitions roll, they will realise that there must have been a secondary device planted specifically in the evidence room.

If the agents look for any remains of the device itself, they will find nothing but fragments. A fingertip Search (DC 20 or again a Flawless Search) will however find two larger fragments of the trigger mechanism. Although there is not enough to trace a maker's mark, it is clear that the device was sophisticated enough to limit the field of search a little. It is the same timer and blast cap device that Patrick used in Budapest, so if the agents have both of these elements, they can get Patrick's name on a DC 20 search of the database. If the agents only have the blast cap fragments, the DC is 25.

Troubleshooting

To progress to the next scene, the agents need to determine who it is they are looking for. There are three ways that the agents can get the information for themselves:

- By analysing the photos from the American tourists and/or the footage from the office security cameras.
- By trading information with the reporter Floria Cheng or brow beating her.
- By looking at the blast caps and/or searching on the Budapest clue.

Encourage use of action dice on some of these rolls if it looks like the agents are flailing. In the last extreme, you could have Hamilton come by the name when he gets reports from the other NIA agents being debriefed elsewhere. However do NOT use this unless the agents have exhausted every other possibility.

Ending the Scene

“So,” says Hamilton “we have a name. I will put his name and face on the wire and see if he gets sloppy, but that’s not a tactic we can rely on. We don’t know where Patrick is, but we have a list of Known Associates, I suggest you go out there and shake some trees.

“I want this man found and found quickly. You are authorised to use deadly force to protect yourselves, and I’ll get Lloyd to open the weapons locker. But let me be very clear on this: I want Patrick alive and able to talk. I know this man by reputation, this is not a grudge hit, he was paid to do it, and we need to find his masters.

“Go to it.”

Give the agents the briefing on Gordon Patrick (handout #2) and let them discuss their options.

Gearing up

Lloyd will open the undamaged equipment lockers for the agents to gear up at this point. They may gear up as normal, but may only choose equipment that falls into the following categories:

- Only guns available are standard issue handguns.
- No gadgets, other than vehicles, are available

Scene 2 Known Associates

The agents know who they are looking for, and know that they have a limited time frame to find him. The wiler players might do a bit of meta-thinking here and go straight to Patrick's daughter – this can be justified in character too, since there's no denying his daughter might provide leverage in a negotiation. Patrick is aware of this too, and has sent some of his men to go collect his daughter. Once the agents go looking for Patrick's daughter we get us some action.

If the agents aren't so callous and the players aren't so meta-gamey, they might go shake some trees in the form of Patrick's lackeys first. If so, run the agents through Scene 2A. When the agents head to the daughter, go to 2B. Try to avoid the agents splitting up, as this will make the encounter at Patrick's daughter's house much much scarier.

Remember for both of these scenes it is the middle of a cold wet January night. The rain is coming down harder now, and anyone outside for any length of time will be drenched to the skin.

Scene 2A: Montage

If the agents go in search of Patrick's goons, have them make a Gather Info check (describe a few rougher pubs and seedier nightclubs as the venues for the investigation).

- If the agents don't make DC 15, they will get to break a few heads and find that there's no sign of Patrick's people anywhere.
- DC 15 and higher will let them know that rumour has it Patrick started calling in markers two days ago, and that all his men started vanishing shortly afterwards
- DC 25 and the agents will hear rumours that Patrick himself has a place in Kent. That's probably where he's gathered his men

Scene 2B: Patrick's Daughter

Anne Patrick lives with her boyfriend David Baker, in a pastoral lifestyle far removed from Gordon Patrick's. Anne has disowned her father and refuses to have anything to do with him, while Patrick for his part generally swears off jobs in Britain to avoid what's just about to happen.

Baker is a lock keeper in Middlesex, and his cottage sits in the centre of a double lock, with canal on either side. Patrick's men are just a little ahead of the agents, and have already broken into the house and captured Anne. Baker was shot in the struggle, and is unconscious in the house. Patrick's men are about to leave when the agents arrive – they have a van stationed nearby, and are in contact with their driver over their own headset comms.

Read:

Anne Patrick lives in a run-down cottage on the Grand Union Canal – or more precisely *in* it. The cottage sits on a spit of land in the middle of a double lock. The night is dark, and the rain falling even stronger than before, bring visibility to near zero.

Suddenly though, the cottage’s security light blinks on, and illuminates three men attempting to drag a young woman towards the canal. The woman is clearly terrified, and though the rain drowns out her cries, you can see she is screaming at the top of her lungs.

Unless the agents state otherwise, assume they are approaching from the road (on the right of the map). Patrick’s men are stationed on both sides of the canal. There are four men who have just left the cottage, three others on the far bank, and two stationed on the same side as the canal.

Hazards

It is likely, nay, expected, that a fight will begin at this point. The weather effects mean that during this fight all Spot, Listen, Search and Hurling weapon rolls are at -4.

The security light (which essentially includes the central island only) plays merry heck with visibility:

- Anyone in the dark firing at a target in the light does so at no penalty.
- Anyone in the dark gets a +2 concealment bonus to defence against anyone else in the dark
- Anyone in the dark gets a +4 concealment bonus to defence against anyone firing from within the light

Crossing the lock-gates to get to the island requires a Balance check DC 15 (+5 if the crosser is moving at full speed).

Tactics

The four men on the island will continue to take Anne towards the roadside lock until they are aware of an attack. As soon as that happens, they will instead head for cover back in the cottage (if unmolested, they will then try to leave out the cottage back door and head for the opposite bank).

The two on the roadside bank are on look-out and will roll Spot checks to try to spot the agents. Their spot check (including rain penalties) tops out at -2 though. As soon as the first shot is fired, they will return fire at the agents.

As soon as the men on the far bank are aware of the problem, one of them will immediately bolt for the car they have stashed on this side of the canal. He will not take part in this fight, and if (hopefully when) the thugs lose, he will gun the car and make a break for it, heralding the start of Encounter 3.

Finishing the fight

If the agents kill two of the four thugs holding the girl, and the thug’s initiative comes around again before the other two can be finished off, read:

“Stop!” shouts the man over the sound of the rain “You let us go, the girl gets to live.” He pulls Anne Patrick to him, keeping her in front of him.

His companion hisses at him “You can’t kill Patrick’s daughter!”

The first man levels his pistol at him and shoots him dead.

“Now, let me go!” he shouts again.

Don’t make a big deal of this, but it’s a nice moment to see what your agents are made of. The agents can negotiate a deal, with suitable role playing and a decent Diplomacy check, attempt to Bluff or Intimidate him, or simply go for the hero shot. If the hero just wants to shoot the thug, he is effectively Defence 17, plus any darkness penalties. If the hero makes the hit, the thug will go down instantly. If the hero misses, but does hit Defence 10, they have hit Anne instead. Be sure to record this on the Event Summary.

If the agents are more efficient and kill the group of thugs before the above boxed text gets to trigger, no matter. We can go straight to Encounter 3 and the gunning of the engine.

Troubleshooting

If somehow the agents get the complete drop on Patrick’s men, you will need to arrange for a tenth man to already be stationed in the thug’s getaway car. Otherwise this should proceed smoothly – even if the agents fail to rescue Anne, they can still go in to pursuit mode for Encounter 3.

Encounter 3 The Chase

You may need to paraphrase the following if the thugs get away with the girl, or if the last thugs surrender. Adjust the following to suit circumstances:

The last of the men falls in a heap, as the sound of the last shot echoes off the building. Anne Patrick staggers to her feet, sobbing, caught between fear and anger. “What the fuck is going on? This is about my bloody father isn’t it?”

Then, over the sound of the rain, you hear an engine violently, and the squeal of a racing start from across the other side of the canal.

The agents don’t have much chance to decide what they’re doing here. If they dither about their decision too long, the escaping thug will be long gone.

- The agents may decide they don’t need to tidy up the loose ends, and let the last thug get away – see “Talking to Anne” and “Talking to the thugs” below
- They may decide to immediately head for their own vehicles and give chase, see “Start your Engines!”
- They may decide to split the team and try and do both.

Talking to Anne

Once Anne has recovered from the shock (a First Aid DC 10, getting her in out of the rain and maybe some hot sweet tea will help with that), her first thought will be for her boyfriend lying upstairs on the bedroom floor. A quick check will confirm he is not seriously injured, but an ambulance would probably be a good idea to deal with possible concussion.

After that, any half-decent Diplomacy roll will get her talking about her father. Paraphrase:

“Look, when I was younger, I idolised my dad, what girl doesn’t. He always had some new story about the strange places he’d visited. He’d always bring me a present. IT

wasn't until I was older that I began to realise that his visits always coincided with something getting blown up.

"We started rowing, all the time, I couldn't make him see that what he was doing was monstrous, for a while I thought, you know I could change him. But I've studied some Psychology since then, and I think he is Psychotic, clinically, I mean. He has no empathy at all for his victims, just sees the job, the challenge.

"Eventually, I called the police, turned him in. We haven't spoken since. On some level, in his own way I think he still cares for me, but I don't want anything to do with him. Every time he crosses my life, everything goes to shit.

"What's he done this time?"

Anne hasn't sent the news since the explosion in London and has no idea about the bombing or where her father is. She will be suitably grateful for the agents' intervention, but really wants nothing more to do with her father.

If the agents manage a really impressive Diplomacy roll, DC 27 (it will probably require action dice, because don't allow more than one agent to assist on this roll or Anne will feel like she's being badgered). she can be persuaded to come with the agents to the showdown in Encounter 4. While it's true she might be able to help influence her father, the agents will be seriously risking Anne's life in doing so.

Talking to the thugs

The thugs are Patrick's hired muscle, called in only a couple of days ago to help cover his retreat. They all know where Patrick is holed up (DC 15 Intimidate to get the location of Patrick's Kent hideaway, a run down barn he's co-opted) and can tell the agents if pressed that they can expect Patrick and four others, his inner coterie waiting for them (DC 20 Intimidate). Either of these DCs can be lowered by 5 if the agents convince the thugs they will let them go free for the information (agent Bluff vs thug's Interaction skill).

The thugs can then be cable-tied and await the tender mercies of the police, or a clean-up squad if the agents want to call one in.

The Chase

Assuming the agents give chase at best speed, they need to run back to their vehicle(s) and fire them up. Call for Drive rolls, the more impressive the roll, the louder you should describe the screeching of tires. They can pull their cards out and on to the main road.

Still need to actually write this chase!

The phone call

Before the agents reach the final encounter, they will receive a phone call from Hamilton back in HQ. He doesn't bear good news.

"I can't talk long, so no debate on this. I have a friend tells me that Five are running their own investigation on Patrick at the moment, and they've only just deigned to let us know. They're sending their own team to pick him up, and they're only about thirty minutes behind you. They've known where he is all along.

"You get to him first. We clear our own messes in the NIA, and besides, I don't think Five have quite the same goals in mind.

“Get to Patrick, and take him alive.”

>click<

Troubleshooting

The important part of this scene is learning Patrick’s current location. Ensure this information gets to the agents, either by interrogating the prisoners, or in extremis Hamilton can find out from his contact in Five.

It is important to know if the agents stopped the escaping car. If they did not, Patrick and his coterie are on much higher alert when the agents do eventually reach him.

Encounter 4 The Showdown

The approach

Patrick is a bomber, and demo expert. He has mined the approaches to his hideaway to catch the unwary. Although he has not mined the main road, anybody approaching indirectly might get a nasty surprise.

If the agents’ approach crosses an X on the map, they may trigger the trap. If the agents are not specifically looking for booby traps, have them make a Spot roll DC 20 before triggering a bomb. If the agents are specifically looking, making this a Search DC 15.

Once the agents are aware of a given bomb, simply stepping carefully over the tripwire is enough to negate it.

If the agents are unlucky enough to trigger the bomb, anyone in the immediate area takes 3d6 damage (Ref save for half, DC 14), and the henchmen will become immediately aware of the agents.

The fire fight

There’s no great science to this fight. Patrick has kept his most loyal henchmen with him on the farm, and they will fight to the death (or at least to unconsciousness).

If Patrick’s men are aware of the approach, either because the agents tripped a booby trap, or because the driver in Encounter 3 made it here, the henchmen will be on active guard – two stationed at the barn door, one by the back window, and one at the side. (If present, a fifth man (the driver from Encounter 3) will hold himself to reinforce whichever wall needs defence most)

Otherwise, two henchmen will be on alert, and the other two will be catching some zzzs. The two on watch will get Alertness rolls against the agents’ hide/Move silently rolls.

A fight will begin as soon as the henchmen become aware of the agents and the agents are in range.

If the agents are slow, or are having problems against the henchmen, then MI5 will turn up. They announce their arrival by tripping one of Patrick’s welcome devices, and two rounds later they join the fight

The Confrontation

The Amnesia Gambit

If any of the agents have the background Amnesia, there is one final wrinkle to this confrontation.

“Wait.” Patrick laughs. “I know you” (points to agent with Amnesia) “but I bet you don’t know me.

“Ha. I guess I have one last throw of the dice after all. Get me out of here, get me well away from here, and I’ll tell you a little something you don’t know about yourself. Oh it’s good stuff, you won’t like to hear it, but you probably do *need* to hear it.”

There is a small explosion outside. Patrick gives a grim smile. “If I was to guess, I’d say that’s MI5 just found one of my gifts. We have no time. What’s it to be?”

Roll a couple of Bluff checks – Patrick has +8 at this, against agent Sense Motive. If the agents are successful, they will realise that he does know something (first bluff), and it is important, but he has absolutely no intention of telling the agent(s) anything (second bluff).

Nevertheless, Patrick will promise to contact agent a week after he’s made good his escape. “Be reasonable, if I tell you anything before I’m properly away, you could easily renege).

Conclusion

Aftermath

Several days later, you are each called to a meeting with John Hamilton. The address you’ve been given is an old office building in the City. The architecture is old, and the building seems a little run down, but this is largely artifice. All the windows are mirrored, and the front door security is top of the range.

Hamilton meets you in the foyer, and leads you up a tight stairway to the second floor. He takes you into a large room, filled with second-hand desks sporting first rate computers, mostly still wrapped in bubble wrap.

“Welcome to the new NIA central office. Or it will be once we’ve got all the kinks worked out.

If the agents have been largely successful

“You did good work for me, and I don’t impress easily. I have a job offer for you, but if you take it, there’s no going back. I’ve been appointed new head of Central London office, and I’d like you to work for me, here at the NIA as one of my field teams.

“What do you say?”

Or, if the agents largely failed

“Central London has become something of a poison chalice for the NIA, and it seems I’m left to drink from it. As new department chief here I need staff, and right now I’m having problems getting people to volunteer. You and I both need a chance to redeem ourselves, and this could be it. What do you say?”

Rewards

Experience points and penalties are awarded based on the success and failure of each objective during the mission. If the team do not succeed at an objective then they won’t receive any experience for it. Base experience is the same for all members of the team.

[Briefly describe each objective within the mission that warrants experience, and the suggested experience award for each level of success. Such as:

Save the life of the Prime Minister, his wife and his chief aid – suggested XP award
Save the life of the Prime Minister and his wife – suggested XP award
Save the life of the Prime Minister – suggested XP award

Experience for each mission (Tier 2 and Tier 4) should not exceed 1,000 experience points. However, please be aware that final experience awards will be decided by the ‘For Queen and Country’ team.]

Individual experience (in addition to the mission experience) is given for each action dice a character receives during the course of the mission (25XP per action dice they are awarded). You may also give an additional 50XP for exceptional roleplaying to the best player. However, this is for exceptional roleplaying only and should not be awarded as a matter of course.

Penalties

Each mission is categorized as either ‘deniable’ or ‘official’. If a mission is deniable and goes wrong, then there are implications will be for any ‘noise’ or exposure. A penalty of 250 experience points should be imposed for deniable missions that go wrong. If this occurs, then please make sure that you explain clearly to your players why they have been penalized. In some circumstances we will also require GC feedback about the outcome of missions.

Statistics

To try and reduce the huge amount of paperwork that usually comes with the Statistics section we have decided to streamline the process. Below are three templates, one for a Standard NPC (eg. average henchman) Tier 2 and 4, one for an Important NPC (eg. lieutenant henchman) Tier 2 and 4, and a generic template for a Major NPC (eg. the main adversary).

You are welcome to include your own statistics for NPCs. The templates we have provided are well balanced for Tier 2 and 4, but are not tailored to your game. Some sections on the templates are left blank for you to fill in your own details. Please think carefully about what information the GC will, and won’t, need during the game.

Too often there is far too much detail for a GC to wade through – particularly when running a combat. To help with this we have decided to replace a number of key skills with just three overarching skills.

- Athletics (jump/climb/tumble/drive)
- Alertness (listen/search/spot)
- Interaction (bluff/diplomacy/intimidation/sense motive)

To work out the overall skill number just simply take an average of those skills that your NPC has in that category.

Opening Sequence

Tom Hickman and Ben Church

VITALITY	6	DEFENSE	10	GRAPPLE	+1	
WOUNDS	11	INITIATIVE	+1			
UNARMED	+1	FORT	+2	ATHLETICS	+1	
MELEE	+1	REF	+1	ALERTNESS	+2	
RANGED	+1	WILL	+1	INTERACTION	+1	
WEAPON	ATTK	DMG	ERROR	THREAT	RANGE	SIZE
None						
ARMOUR	DB	DR	MDB	ACP	SPD	
None						-
VEHICLE	SIZE	HND	SPEED	MPH	DEF	WP / HRD
None						
GEAR						
Mobile phone, wallet, keys, Oyster card – nothing unusual						

WHAT THESE CHARACTER KNOWS

These two characters are peripheral to the main mission plot-line, and don't know anything which will impact on the search for Gordon Patrick, except that if the agents ask either if they have heard the name Gordon Patrick, they have both heard the name in passing. Neither will offer up Patrick's name however, since they know nothing about his recent activities.

- Tom Hickman is actually newly recruited to the cause and is unsure of himself and his role in it. This makes him particularly skittish, and he will run at the merest hint of danger or discovery. He will automatically fail any resistance to Intimidate, and will immediately begin his life story, all of which is in his file in the NIA anyway.
- Ben Church is a bit more of a seasoned professional. A mercenary, he is currently completely unconnected to the plot, and was meeting here to be sounded out by Hickman. It is quite likely that he would have turned down Hickman's attempt to recruit him anyway, because he doesn't work for amateurs. There is nothing to be gained from Church.

Scene 2: Known Associates

Generic muscle (9 occurrences)

VITALITY	6	DEFENSE	10	GRAPPLE	+1	
WOUNDS	11	INITIATIVE	+1			
UNARMED	+1	FORT	+2	ATHLETICS	+1	
MELEE	+1	REF	+1	ALERTNESS	+2	
RANGED	+1	WILL	+1	INTERACTION	+1	
WEAPON	ATTK	DMG	ERROR	THREAT	RANGE	SIZE
None						
ARMOUR	DB	DR	MDB	ACP	SPD	
None						-
VEHICLE	SIZE	HND	SPEED	MPH	DEF	WP / HRD
None						
GEAR						
Headset comms (range ~100 yards), wallet, keys and a gun each! Note that none of the thugs carry mobiles						
WHAT THESE CHARACTER KNOWS						

All of these thugs know where Patrick is holed up, so if the agents take any of the agents alive they can get this information, and also learn that Patrick is leaving either as soon as he gets his daughter back, or learns that it's gone sour.

Patrick cannot be contacted by phone, to avoid being tracked, so none of his minions carry mobiles either.

Scene 3 The Chase

Driver Thug

NAME		David Smith	CLASS		Soldier 2	
VITALITY	19	DEFENSE	12	GRAPPLE +4		
WOUNDS	11	INITIATIVE	+3			
UNARMED	+4	FORT	+3	ATHLETICS +3		
MELEE	+4	REF	+4	ALERTNESS +4		
RANGED	+3	WILL	+0	INTERACTION +3		
WEAPON	ATTK	DMG	ERROR	THREAT	RANGE	SIZE
ARMOUR	DB	DR	MDB	ACP	SPD	
VEHICLE	SIZE	HND	SPEED	MPH	DEF	WP / HRD
Sedan	Large	+1	600'	60/120	10	100/6
GEAR						
As thugs in scene 2						

WHAT THIS CHARACTER KNOWS

Like the thugs from scene 2, David knows where Patrick is holed up, and indeed is making there post-haste to warn Patrick that the agents are hot on the trail

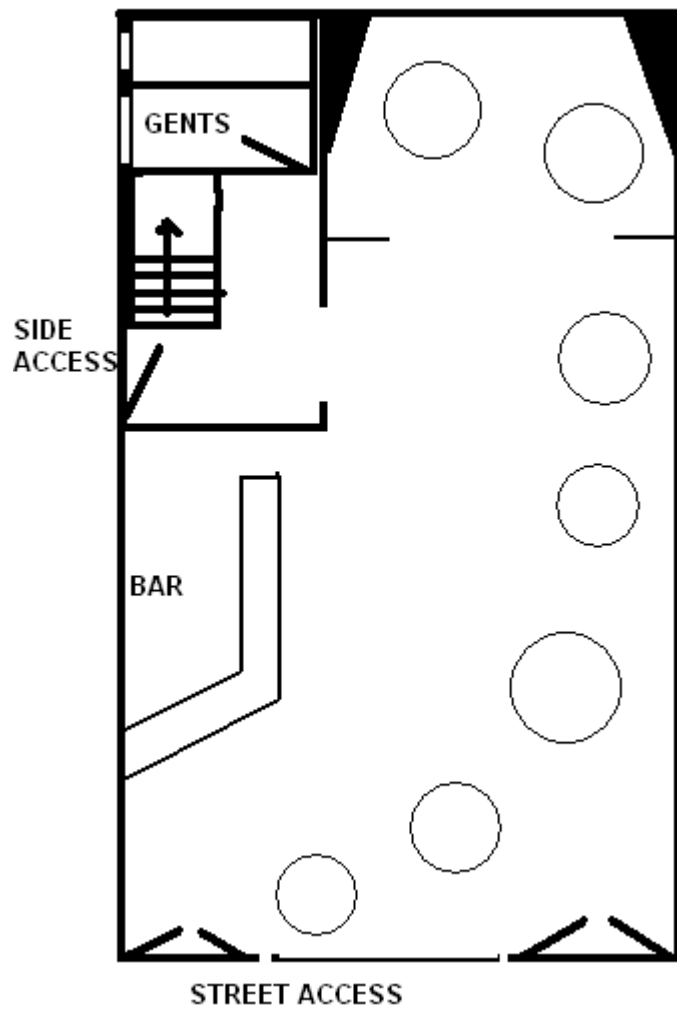
[Scene name]
Major NPC – Generic template

NAME		CLASS				
APPEARANCE			TACTICS			
MOTIVATION Why is the NPC doing what they are doing?000			OBJECTIVES What does the NPC want?			
VITALITY		DEFENSE		GRAPPLE		
WOUNDS		INITIATIVE				
UNARMED		FORT		ATHLETICS		
MELEE		REF		ALERTNESS		
RANGED		WILL		INTERACTION		
WEAPON	ATTK	RECOIL	DMG	E/T	RANGE	SIZE
ARMOUR	DR	RESIST	DP	ACP	SPD	SEARCH DC
VEHICLE	SIZE	OCC	A/T	MPH	DEF/SV	
GEAR						
WHAT THIS CHARACTER KNOWS						

Appendix

This last section is used for handouts, so it can be conveniently re-printed for multiple runs of the same mission. Embed any maps you've included in your mission here and send any copyright information in a separate file to the campaign co-ordinator. Any media that you want to include that is not your own work must have proper copyright.

Handout 1: The Black Lion



Hand-out 2: Gordon Patrick

Background

- Patrick, born Aberdeen 06/02/1962
- Degree from Edinburgh University 1983 BSc Mechanical Engineering (1st class)
- Married to Morag McDonald in 1986
- Employed in Aberdeen oil industry as diver and maintenance 1983-87
- Left under cloud, rumoured but never proved to be responsible for explosion that damaged Piper Delta in October 1987
- Sightings in northern Africa through early 90s, believed to have turned freelance mercenary and bomber in 1994

Known Aliases

- George Fraser, Dougal McInnery
- “the Bomber of Budapest”

Known activities

- Successful bombing campaigns in areas across northern Africa and the middle East.
- Suspect association with bombings across Eastern Europe
- Confirmed responsibility for placing explosive device beneath Parliament Building in Budapest – gained entry through underwater gate from the Danube
- Rumours in 2003 that Patrick had been employed by MI6 for a job in former USSR. Hotly denied by then MI6 director

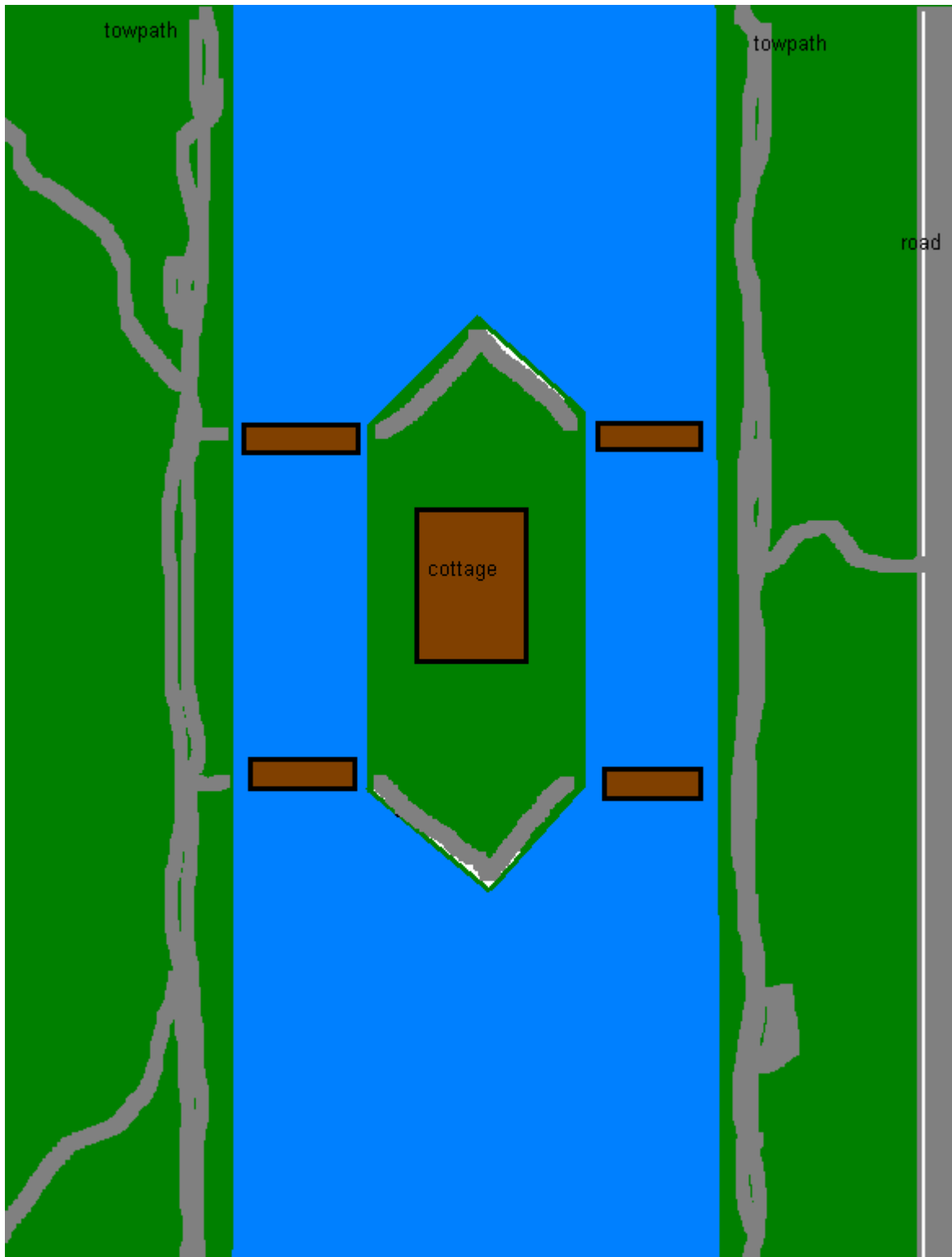
Known associates

- Wife Morag Patrick (deceased, RTA 1994)
- Daughter Anne (b. 08/12/1987). No known contact for last five years. Not believed to share Patrick’s radical views
- Known to operate with small gang on occasions (see Chris Ashmore, Nick Gatt, Rahul Bajaj, James Giordan, Chris Bradfield)
- Contacts in extreme factions in Africa – identities unknown
- Possible contacts within British secret service

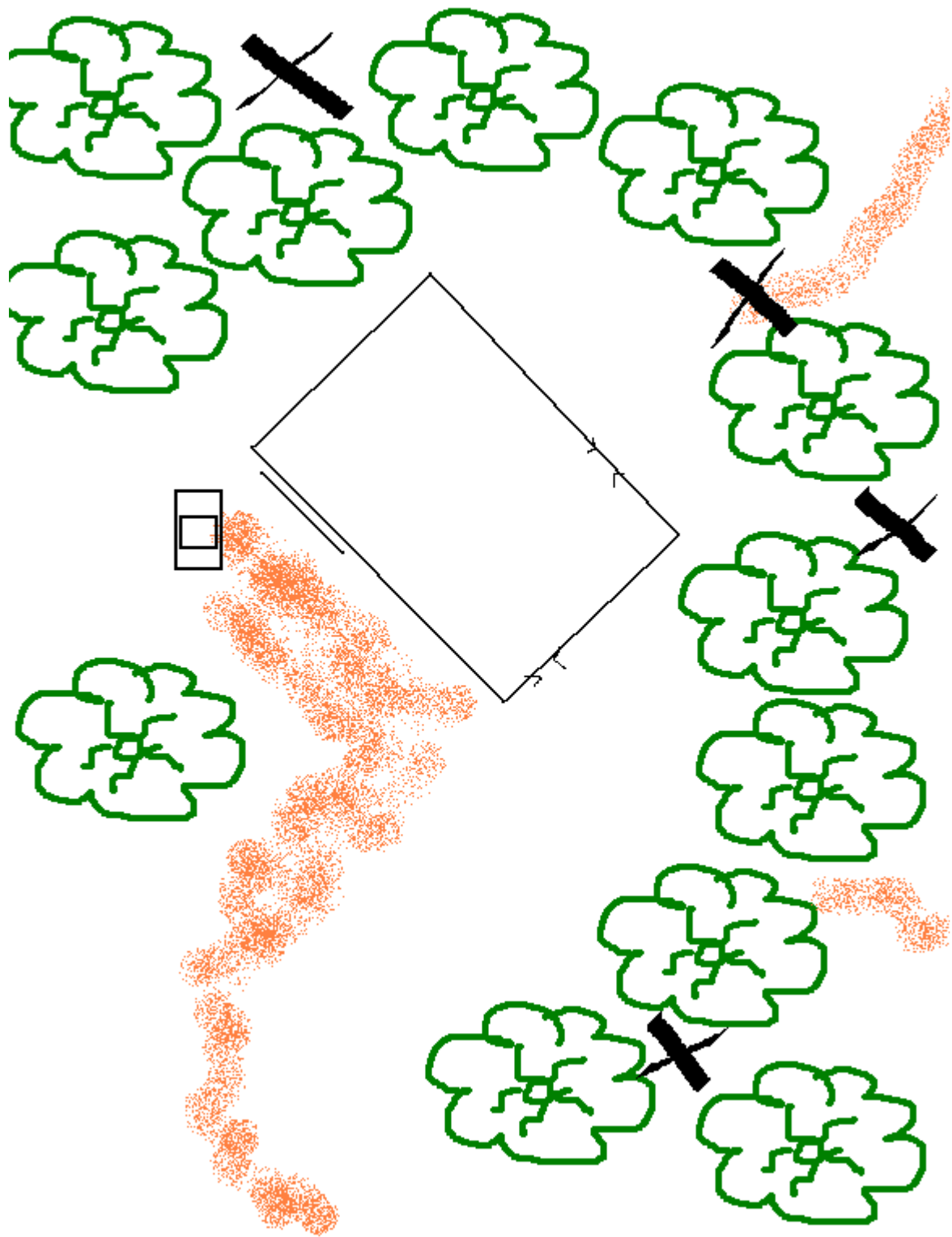
Psychology summary

- Patrick is not politically or radically motivated
- Profiles indicate keen analytical mind, problem solver, driven by need to be acknowledged as “the best”
- Borderline psychoses, no direct empathy with victims
- No direct activity within the UK to date – twisted patriotism? Not wanting to involve daughter?

Hand-out 3: The Lock-keepers Cottage



GC Reference: Hide-out



Critical Events Summary

Opening Sequence

Did the agents arrest Hickman or Church?	Hickman	Church
--	---------	--------

Encounter 1

Did the agents break cover with the police or the reporter?	Yes	No
Did the agents physically threaten Floria Cheng?	Yes	No
Did the agents save the dying analyst?	Yes	No
Did the agents realise/discover that Patrick must have had inside help?	Yes	No

Encounter 2

Did the agents put Anne Patrick's life at risk in the hostage showdown?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

Encounter 4

Was Patrick captured alive?	Yes	No
Was Patrick allowed to escape?	Yes	No

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