

MAY MY RIGHT HAND FORGET ITS SKILL

A [Samson Option](#) Scenario by mellonbread

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An appraiser liquidating the estate of an antiques collector has found an extraordinary item among the junk: a “goodwill gift” sent to a Lehi militant in 1941 by a Nazi diplomat.

Attempts by the Stern Gang to establish diplomatic contact with the Reich are well documented and ordinarily have no occult significance. This specific case is different. The item in question was gifted to Lehi fighter Yiftah Hacoen by Honorary SS Standartenführer Hilda Hammerstroem. Hammerstroem appears in period sources as a member of Himmler’s occult inner circle. The circle with the actual wizards in it.

If the “gift” is really an item of supernatural power, and the papers accompanying it contain secrets of its activation, then it belongs in the Samson Option’s archives, not floating around in the wild where anyone could get it.

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THE PREGENS

If your players aren't interested in creating Samson Option researchers, they can choose from these pregens.

- Lt Lubavitch has a badge, a gun, and the authority to enforce the 1978 Antiquities Act
- Rebbe Kessler has a deep well of historical knowledge, and a couple helpful spells
- Dr Rosenkrantz has covert skills, digital intrusion capabilities, and old Mossad contacts
- Sally Fields, JD is a persuasive bureaucratic miracle worker with a sharp legal mind
- Burya Popovich has black bag training, combat skills, and friends in the criminal underground

Lieutenant Laredo Lubavitch, Antiques Robbery Prevention Unit

Lt Lubavitch comes from law enforcement, and has no background in archaeology. His talents are in HUMINT rather than ARCHINT. His first exposure to the power of the unnatural was in the 1990s, investigating the murders of ageing holocaust survivors with backgrounds in mysticism, occultism or cryptography. This ignited his perverse fascination with the supernatural, and led him to his work in the Department of Antiquities.

Lubavitch is the Option's main contact in Israeli law enforcement. Lubavitch works the Robbery Prevention Unit, fighting the archaeological pillage of Israel's historic sites. His mission allows him to request the cooperation and resources of Israel's regular police force, as well as his own outfit's detectives and uniformed officers. When the Option needs something done inside Israel, he's often the one who makes the arrangement.

Lubavitch is a secular Jew. He is terrified and fascinated by the supernatural. Sometimes he wants to read every book and scroll and tablet in the Option's archives. Sometimes he wants to smash and burn it all.

LT LAREDO LUBAVITCH - Archaeology Cop

STR 13, CON 12, DEX 11, INT 11, POW 12, CHA 12

HP 13, WP 12, SAN 49, BP 39, Pyrophobia/Pyrophilia (Lt Lubavitch fears and is fascinated by fire)

Skills: Alertness 50%, Archaeology 20%, Bureaucracy 40%, Criminology 50%, Drive 50%, Firearms 50%, Foreign Languages (Arabic 30%, English 40%), Forensics 30%, HUMINT 60%, Law 30%, Occult 40%, Persuade 50%, Search 50%, SIGINT 50%, Unarmed Combat 60%, Unnatural 6%

Armor: 3 (kevlar vest)

Attacks: Glock 19 (50%, D10)

Baton (60%, D4+1)

Taser (55%, Stun)

Bonds: Your Wonderful Wife 12

Your Informant in the Antiques Trade 12

Choose an Option Colleague 6

As his given name suggests, Laredo is a Sephardic Jew, with dark skin and darker hair. He likes sweaters and sweatervests, when the weather doesn't punish him for it.

Rebbe Jeroboam Kessler, Library Department

Rebbe Kessler is more an occultist and bibliophile than archaeologist. His initiation into the unnatural came through the world of Talmudic scholarship, when his Rebbe bequeathed him copies of the *Sefer HaGanuz* ("The Hidden Book") and *Sefer HaNisraf* ("The Burned Book"), a pair of legendary and supposedly lost Kabbalistic texts by the great 18th century Torah scholar Reb Nachman of Breslov. Nachman had ordered the books destroyed out of fear of punishment from the "upper world" where the knowledge originated. How his mentor had found surviving copies, Kessler never learned. The old Yid went up in the smoke of Birkenau, the books burned (again) or lost in the shuffle of the Nazi antiquities pillage. Kessler almost shared the same fate, but by then, he had already memorized them.

Now, Kessler curates tomes for the Option, keeping his ears open to Israel's most insular Ultra-Orthodox communities for potential acquisitions. He doesn't see a conflict between his faith and his work with the Option. From the Witch of Endor to King Solomon's ring, the Jewish faith has always acknowledged the existence of ungodly and otherworldly powers, which wise men could bend to the service of G_d's Law. He's the closest thing the Option has to a leader.

Kessler knows Burya is a fraud, but hasn't told anyone.

REBBE JEROBOAM KESSELER - Grizzled Kabbalist

STR 7, CON 9, DEX 8, INT 17, POW 13, CHA 11

HP 8, WP 13, SAN 51, BP 43, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (Rebbe Kessler's behavior is mediated by a complex obsession with math and numbers that only he understands)

Skills: Anthropology 50%, Archeology 40%, Bureaucracy 40%, Craft: Bibliography 40%, Foreign Languages (Arabic 20%, German 60%, Greek 20%, Hebrew 50%), History 60%, Occult 80%, Persuade 40%, Science (Mathematics 50%, Physics 40%), Search 60%, Survival 50%, Unnatural 19%

Special Training: Macrodimensional Physics (INT)

Bonds: Yeshiva Students Who Ask You Questions 11

Learned Men You Debate Them With 11

Your Wonderful Children, Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren 11

~~Your Shtetl, Which Went Up Through the Chimneys of Birkenau 0~~

Choose an Option Colleague 6

Rituals: Kefitzat Haderech, Word of G_d

Kefitzat Haderech

This incantation opens the operator's awareness to places and events anywhere on Earth. The vision costs 30 WP from the operator, assistants, and/ or human sacrifices, and 1D12 SAN. The operator can attempt another activation roll to physically teleport himself or herself to that location, with another cost of 30 WP and another 1D12 SAN.

Word of G_d

The operator must overcome the target in an opposed POW test. If that succeeds, the ritual costs 8 WP (or 1 POW) and 1D4 SAN. For one turn, the victim willingly obeys any command given by the operator. Commanding a victim to commit murder, suicide, or some other awful act costs the operator the same SAN as it costs the victim.

Rebbe Kessler dresses in your usual Ultra-Orthodox garb, though his baldness prevents him from wearing sidelocks. His number tattoo stays under his sleeve, unless he has it rolled up on a hot day. A native Yiddish speaker, Rebbe Kessler speaks Hebrew and German well, Greek and Arabic passably, and English not at all.

Dr Rachel Rosenkrantz, Excavations and Surveys Department

Rachel Rosenkrantz was a case officer in the Mossad, serving in Defensive Shield during the Second Intifada. She encountered the mysterious powers of the Other Side when she was assigned to liquidate a cell of Palestinian “bombers”, shunned by other militants and sheltered in hidden caves not found on any map. After leaving the service she went for a PhD in archaeology. Her interest in the occult and intelligence background attracted the attention of the late Dr Labe Horovitz, one of the Option’s contacts in Academia, who mentored and initiated her into the group.

Officially an archaeologist in the Excavations and Surveys Department, Dr Rosenkrantz is the Option’s primary link to the Israeli intelligence community. Her ability to actually use her old contacts is limited now that she’s no longer a part of the Mossad, but you never really leave that life behind you. Dr Rosenkrantz is a Reform Jew. She believes the mythos is very real and very evil, but also believes the same about many other things in the world. Like cigarettes, which she would never deprive herself of. This cavalier attitude bothers her colleagues in the Option.

DR RACHEL ROSENKRANTZ - Mossad Officer Turned Historian

STR 13, CON 8, DEX 12, INT 13, POW 12, CHA 10

HP 11, WP 12, SAN 50, BP 43, Addiction: Tobacco

Skills: Alertness 50%, Archaeology 60%, Bureaucracy 40%, Computer Science 60%, Criminology 50%, Disguise 50%, Drive 40%, Firearms 40%, Foreign Languages (Arabic 50%, English 40%), HUMINT 60%, Occult 50%, Persuade 60%, SIGINT 40%, Stealth 50%, Unarmed Combat 50%, Unnatural 2%

Armor: 6 points during wetworks (tactical body armor and helmet)

Attacks: Makarov as her carry gun (40%, D8)

Tavor w/ MARS Optic and Suppressor during wetworks (60%, D12 or 10% lethality, 3 AP)

Bonds: Old Mossad Pals 10

Choose an Option Colleague 5

Dr Rosenkrantz wears shorts and a vest whenever she can get away with it. She alternates between contacts and glasses, hating the eye irritation of the former and the fragility of the latter.

Sally Fields, JD, Antiques Robbery Prevention Unit

Sally Fields is an American Jew, who made *aliyah* during the depression in '07. Employment prospects in the States weren't good, and the IDF offered a better recruitment package than the US Army. The MAG Corps snapped her up before Cast Lead, training her up as a disciplinary officer. Her first brush with the Option came during the tribunal of a handful of IDF grunts caught in a low level artifact trading scheme. She didn't understand why the nebbishes from the Antiquities Authority were so wound up over a few bits of scrap metal and parchment.

When she found out, she decided there were more interesting things in the world than military law.

Sally Fields is a lawyer for the Israeli Antiquities Robbery Prevention Unit. She prepares evidence and builds cases to send to the Israel Police for prosecution. She tells her colleagues what they can get away with, and then helps them get away with it. And, for the Option, she does all this to funnel interesting and dangerous items into their collection. She doesn't really "get" the Unnatural. She recognizes it's dangerous, but also thinks it's interesting and even fun. Why else would she have joined the Option?

She is Jewish by ethnicity rather than by practice, and secretly very self conscious about her lack of religion. But Reform Judaism is too artificial, Orthodox Judaism too strict. It would be nice if she found something to believe in.

SALLY FIELDS - Fast Talking Lawyer

STR 10, CON 11, DEX 11, INT 13, POW 12, CHA 13

HP 11, WP 12, SAN 55, BP 48

Skills: Accounting 50%, Alertness 40%, Archaeology 40%, Bureaucracy 60%, Craft: Forgery 50%, Criminology 50%, Foreign Language (Arabic 30%, Hebrew 50%), Firearms 40%, Forensics 50%, History 40%, HUMINT 60%, Law 60%, Military Science (Land) 40%, Persuade 70%, Unarmed Combat 50%

Attacks: Taser (55%, Stun)

Bonds: Military Prosecutor Who Taught You Everything You Know 14

State Prosecutor You Sometimes Fool Around With 14

Choose an Option colleague 7

Sally is the best dressed operative in the whole Samson Option. She modest clothing look immodest and immodest clothing look dignified. Her Hebrew is grammatically perfect but obviously accented - she never attended Shul, picking it up later in life.

Burya Popovich - Self Employed

Burya Popovich is a GRU SV8 Deep Cover agent who emigrated to Israel in the 1990s. His original mission was to investigate occult activity in the world of Russian and Israeli organized crime. The feelers he put out in artifact trading circles led him to the Option, who unwittingly acquired several pieces from him. His acumen in intelligence work allowed him to worm his way into the organization itself, and discover its true purpose. His underworld contacts have since proven invaluable to the Option.

Burya is a gentile, Jewish ancestry falsified to gain entry into Israel. He now supports the Option wholeheartedly, with the zeal of a convert and with the fear of discovery that he's not even slightly Jewish hanging over him. He never reported their existence to SV8, and has not attempted to re-establish contact since his handler stopped messaging him in the mid 2000s. He doesn't know what he would do if Mother Russia tried to recall him, or ordered him to betray his adopted homeland.

BURYA POPOVICH - The Option's Criminal Fixer

STR 14, CON 14, DEX 13, INT 11, POW 10, CHA 7

HP 14, WP 10, SAN 43, BP 40, Adapted to Violence

Skills: Alertness 50%, Craft (Locksmithing) 40%, Criminology 60%, Disguise 60%, Dodge 40%, Drive 50%, Firearms 40%, Foreign Language (Armenian 20%, Hebrew 40%, Hungarian 20%, Italian 20%), Law 40%, Melee Weapons 60%, Occult 50%, Persuade 50%, Stealth 50%, Unarmed Combat 70%

Attacks: CZ75 (40%, D10)

Big Knife (60%, D6+1, 3 AP)

Garotte (60%, D6)

Knuckledusters (70%, D4+1)

Bonds: Israeli Mafia Pals 4

"Cousin" in America 4

~~Old SV8 Handler~~ 0

Choose an Option Colleague 7

Burya is the kind of ugly you could stare at for hours, with a stony face like something out of a painting. He speaks Russian perfectly and Hebrew acceptably. He's never unarmed, and always fiercely protective of his colleagues.

THE APPRAISER

Yosef Sharon, JD, of Sharon Partners is an appraiser and lawyer specializing in property and antiquities law. He came to an arrangement with the dead collector's creditors, paying them off in exchange for the dead man's estate. He put out feelers to some of his usual antiquities buyers about the unusual items in the collection, and got a bite on the mysterious Nazi artifact he picked up in the lot.

YOSEF SHARON, JD - Appraiser and Antiquities Trader

STR 10, CON 13, DEX 10, INT 12, POW 11, CHA 11

HP 10, WP 11, SAN 55

SKILLS: Accounting 50%, Archaeology 40%, Bureaucracy 50%, Criminology 60%, Foreign Language (Arabic 40%, English 40%, Russian 40%, Yiddish 40%), HUMINT 40%, Law 50%, Occult 60%, Persuade 60%

Yosef is happy to let representatives from the Antiquities Authority examine **THE ARTIFACT**, which is currently in the storage room at his corporate offices. They've got no jurisdiction over it, since it's from after 1700 BCE and isn't an antiquity. But obviously he has to let them examine it if he wants to prove it. He knows the law.

He can be persuaded to mention that he's got a client lined up to buy the hand. He made sure he was selling to someone who wouldn't put it on display for unsavory purposes. The last thing he wants is it sitting in a museum where fascists can fawn over it. It's going into a collector's vault somewhere, never to be seen again.

THE BUSINESS

Sharon Partners is located in the main tower of the Jerusalem Technology Park, a complex of office buildings and shops in a suburb of Jerusalem. They've got the entire thirteenth floor of the building for their offices. The building has security guards, the floor has alarms and surveillance but no guards.

Sharon employs a couple other lawyers and a handful of paralegals and administrative staff.

The office has a climate controlled storage area for the artifacts. It's not a secure bank vault, but it's got alarms and surveillance.

THE ARTIFACTS TRADE

Israeli Law says that "antiquities" discovered 1978 and earlier are legal to buy and sell, provided they are registered as such, while those discovered after '78 are the property of the Israeli Antiquities Authority.

The way antiquities traders get around this is by selling an item registered discovered before 78, then assigning the registration number to another, similar item. Sell that item, reassign the number again, etc. The trick is to use the same number for items that are similar enough that, if they were ever caught, there would be no way to prove the number had been reassigned. If the registration is for an oil lamp from the time of Jesus, and you have ten oil lamps from the time of Jesus, the archaeology cops can't prove that lamp number seven isn't legit, unless they catch you with the other three, or the buyers with the other six.

Sharon Partners are middlemen in the antiquities trade. They rely on the sellers to falsify the records, purchase the items, and resell them to interested buyers. If they get caught with hot items, they point the cops to the sellers, who handled the registration number. The company loses the artifacts, but not the whole business.

This also means that when Sharon gets a collection of antiquities in an estate liquidation, he can only sell the stuff the owner had papers for, and the stuff that doesn't count as an antiquity. The object the option cares about, the Hand of Torment, isn't an antiquity.

THE COLLECTION

The collection in the vault includes items with false registrations. While Sharon Partners wouldn't be in legal trouble if they were proven to be fraudulent, the Antiquities Authority could confiscate the items - a substantial portion of the total inventory.

THE COLLECTOR

Ariel Plocker was an antiquities dealer in the Old City of Jerusalem. He sold items to gullible tourists and discerning collectors alike. He wasn't very good at the financial side of things, and died of colon cancer with substantial debts to his name.

THE SHOP

The shop is in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City in Jerusalem. It's right up on the inside wall. Two stories tall, with the guy's place of residence on the second floor. It's got a balcony and a skylight that doubles as roof access. The street outside is crowded with tourists, Haredim and the occasional serious collector. The adjacent businesses on the row are also antique stores.

The store is closed and locked. Breaking in is easy, doing so without being spotted and chased by the authorities is harder.

Inside, the place has obviously been searched and objects removed. Much of the collection is still inside. Sharon only took things that the owner had prepared documentation for. He left the stuff he wasn't sure was legal. There's a wealth of old junk that would be worth money on the black market. Roman glass vials, coins, pottery, etc.

One of the cabinets is swung open on hinges, revealing a secret shelf behind. It's full of artifacts which Sharon knew were hot and wasn't interested in taking. One object is obviously missing. There's a ring of blue and white wax on the shelf, about the circumference of a human forearm. Like a fat candle was sat there.

THE CHAIN OF CUSTODY

A careful search finds documents that the appraiser missed. Among them are records of how Plocker came by the Hand.

The Hand originally belonged to Yiftah Hacohen. On his death, it was picked up by one of his old Lehi buddies, Horza Gideon. Gideon sold it to Ariel Plocker along with other trinkets of Yiftah's.

(Technically, a possession of Yiftah's should have been passed to his family. Without a will, there's no proof he wanted Horza to have it. Legally it should belong to Nara, his surviving descendent)

THE NAZI

THE PUBLIC RECORDS

Records show that honorary SS Standartenführer Hilda Hammerstroem was an archaeology PhD student at Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg in 1939. By 1941 she was performing administrative duties for the Schutzstaffel, mainly writing and translating diplomatic documents. It's unknown how or why she achieved the rank of Standartenführer, equivalent to a Colonel in the military branch of the SS. Rumors abound that she was the mistress of an Anenherbe Nazi who taught at her alma mater.

After the war, she appears briefly in American records as a prisoner at a detention camp for female Nazis in Celle, and after that, no more.

THE SAMSON RECORDS

Hilda Hammerstroem is one of 164 names which appear in the Samson Option archives, in documents associated with the Hexenkartothek. Ostensibly one of Himmler's pet projects investigating medieval and early modern German witch trials, the Hexenkartothek was a cover for the clandestine activities of Himmler's pet wizards. Whenever someone's name appears in a requisition form, budget change request, personnel file or memo as Hexenkartothek, you can be confident they were up to no good.

THE TRUTH

Hammerstroem was a Karotechia witch. Her subject area was the extraction of useful sorcery from the esoteric traditions of the *untermensch*, particularly Jews. She surprised her fellow Nazi occultists by accomplishing this through HUMINT sources rather than ARCHINT. Through deception, persuasion, and even sometimes the honest exchange of ideas, she extracted a modest handful of genuine elder secrets from Kabbalists and Jewish folk mages. Though she spoke Hebrew and Yiddish fluently, and put on a convincing front toward her targets, she was a dedicated Nazi to the end, collecting Jewish secrets only so that the Reich could use them after their race was ashes.

Delta Green caught her after the war.

(The Samson Option knows Nazis with real magic existed, and that many survived the war. They don't know the full extent of the Karotechia organization and operations. They call them "Himmler's Wizards" because Heinrich Himmler was the top Nazi occultist of the time)

THE PARTISAN

Yiftah Hacohen was a Polish Jew who migrated to the Holy Land in the interwar period. As conflict with both the Arabs and British ratcheted up, he fell in with the Irgun, a paramilitary group slash terrorist organization committed to Jewish independence and self defense by any means necessary. When Avraham Stern split off from Irgun to form Lehi, Hacohen went with him.

THE STERN GANG

Lehi ratcheted up Irgun's violent paranoia to an absurd degree. They viewed Great Britain as the greatest enemy of the Jewish people, so much so that they tried to enter an alliance with Nazi Germany in order to ensure the United Kingdom's defeat during the Second World War. Lehi's goal was the formation of a "new totalitarian Hebrew republic". The organization was ultimately marginal in the story of Israel's formation, but punched above its weight, assassinating both British government officials, and Jews they viewed as collaborators.

Stern was shot by British police in 1942. As the Reich's star waned, and the extent of Nazi atrocities became clear, the surviving militants pivoted toward the Soviet Union. Their embrace of "national bolshevism" sapped what little popular support they enjoyed. The Jewish people had been ill treated by both Hitler and Stalin, and had no appetite for fascist communism. In 1948, the Israeli government disbanded the organization and cracked down on the remaining fighters, declaring them terrorists. Revisionists in later decades would recast them as freedom fighters, ignoring their embrace of fascism.

Lehi's logo was a hand with the middle and index finger extended and the thumb folded, accompanied by a ribbon across the wrist with the acronym "Lehi". Their motto was taken from Psalms 137:5, "If I forget thee / O Jerusalem...may my right hand forget its skill."

THE BIOGRAPHY

Yiftah shows up a couple times in the historical record, in failed assassinations of British officials and Jewish "collaborators". He was among the fighters arrested after the Israeli government declared them terrorists, but was released under general amnesty.

He had a family, but clearly had trouble adjusting to civilian life. He tried to join the IDF several times from the 50s to the 70s but was repeatedly rejected for medical complications related to alcoholism. He died in 1990 from liver problems and old age. His closest surviving descendent is his granddaughter Nara Hacohen, now Nara Rosenberg.

THE DESCENDENT

Nara Rosenberg lives in Jaffa, on the South end of Tel Aviv. She has a family and a job she likes, and zero interest in talking or thinking about her piece of shit grandfather.

If persuaded to open up, she grudgingly explains that Yiftah was a piece of shit who liked to hurt people when he was drunk. Which was often. He would drink and talk about how he should lift up his "left hand" and kill all these dirty Arabs and backstabbing *Mizrahim* and whores and *ars* and the fucking limeys Then he'd hit her.

Nara didn't know that he exchanged letters with Nazis, but isn't surprised. He was a real piece of shit. She has no interest in claiming the Hand of Torment as her own, even if informed (based on the notes in the collector's shop) that she has a right to do so. She'd have to be persuaded to involve herself.

THE ARTIFACT

The artifact is currently in the corporate offices of Sharon Partners, in the climate controlled storage area. There's the gift itself (the Hand of Torment) along with an accompanying letter.

THE GIFT

The object is a severed human left forearm, dipped in wax, blue and white in color. It's frozen in the Lehi salute, index and middle fingers extended, thumb folded. There's a Black Sun cartouche on the wrist where the words "Lehi" should be.

On the back of the forearm is a concentration camp number tattoo, indicating who the hand came from.

It looks like a Hand of Glory, but the fingers are not melted or burned, indicating that lighting the item is not the way to use it. A student of **Anthropology** or **Occult** knows that sometimes such objects are activated by speaking a "command word" or phrase while holding them.

If the words "If I forget the, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill" are spoken while holding the Hand of Torment, everyone within line of sight of the Hand (including the user) takes damage equal to half their current HP. This costs everyone affected 1/D6 SAN, stuns victims until they pass a CON save, and inflicts intense pain.

THE LETTER

The letter is in grammatically perfect Hebrew. The letter is from SS Standartenführer Hilda Hammerstroem to Yiftah Hacoheh. It praises the brave fighters of Lehi for taking a stand against English imperialism and decadent liberal capitalism. It hopes for a fruitful relationship between the SS and Lehi. It offers the attached gift as a goodwill gift, the first of many artifacts Hammerstroem hopes to exchange with the stalwart Lehi militants.

It instructs Yiftah to remember that "If I forget the, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill"

It's signed "Heil Hitler, Next Year in Jerusalem!"

THE BUYER

THE COVER IDENTITY

Bernold Graff is an American agronomist from Nevada, headed to Israel to cut a deal on some agricultural technology with an Israeli pipefitting startup. His flight arrives tomorrow at noon, and he'll be in the Holy Land a couple days. It was cheaper to get him a hotel and pay his per-diem than get the soonest flight back after the meeting with the supplier. His parent firm, Full House Irrigation, is located in Las Vegas, a desert community even more parched than Israel.

(A little push with Accounting reveals the company is a front, probably for organized crime)

THE EXCHANGE

Asking around criminal circles, pushing the law firm about their client list, **SIGINT** and **Computer Science** intercepts of the law firm's communications, or surveillance of Graff can get the real story. Graff is here to buy the Hand of Glory and the notes.

The day after he arrives in Israel, Graff goes to the Technology Park to make the exchange. He doesn't have a briefcase full of cash or anything, the transfer is conducted electronically. But he wants to meet the appraiser and inspect the item before parting with his money. And to carry it out by hand. He flies back to the United States the afternoon of the day after. When he's not carrying the arm around in a suitcase, he leaves it (in its packaging) in the hotel safe deposit box at the front desk.

THE SYNDICATE

Research into the criminal underground reveals that Graff is from the Vegas Syndicate. Like many mob outfits in the City of Lights, Syndicate skims money from Vegas' casino and vice economy. They recently recovered from a destructive civil war after the head of the family was killed in a car accident.

Pressing their mob contacts further (Vegas was practically built by Jewish gangsters), the characters can learn that the Syndicate are "spooky". They have weird powers and they use them on people who get in their way.. Nobody knows much about Graff, he's probably a low level courier. But who knows what he can do.

THE TRUTH

The Syndicate are supernatural criminals, weaponizing the Unnatural to destroy their enemies and hoard money and power. Bernold Graff collects magic items for the gang.

BERNOLD GRAFF - Syndicate Sorcerer

STR 11, CON 12, DEX 11, INT 11, POW 13, CHA 10

HP 12, WP 13, SAN 51, Autopagnosia (Bernold must concentrate to keep his body solid. If distracted or distressed, he collapses, limbs limp and jelly-like)

SKILLS: Alertness 50%, Criminology 60%, Drive 50%, Firearms 40%, Foreign Language (Spanish 20%, Yiddish 20%), Law 40%, Melee Weapons 40%, Occult 50%, Persuade 50%, Stealth 50%, Unarmed Combat 50%, Unnatural 5%

ARMOR: See LIQUID RESILIENCE

ATTACKS: See DROWNING

PHASE TRANSITION: Bernold is a liquid man inside a human skin suit. When he leaves the suit, he issues forth out of the mouth as a stream of liquid vomit. This is his true form. He can grow another skin suit if he has a few hours to himself, but the process is messy, uncomfortable, and requires his full concentration. Also it leaves him naked, without phone, wallet, etc.

FLUID DYNAMICS: Bernold can fit through any space that water can fit through. He can flow independently along surfaces at the speed of a running human. If he slips into a body of moving water, he can move as fast as that water. He can carry only lightweight or buoyant objects with him.

LIQUID RESILIENCE: Bernold takes no damage from bullets, blades, bludgeoning, etc. Extreme heat boils him, extreme cold freezes him, and salt or other desiccants dry him out. All these attacks deal full damage. Mud or other thickening agents introduced to his mixture can slow him down and impair his movements. Explosives stun him by scattering his fluid everywhere.

DROWNING: Bernold can kill a target by sliding into their lungs and suffocating them. Victims take D6 damage per round of suffocation. The heimlich maneuver, suction or inducing strong vomiting can eject him from a victim's body.

SAN Loss: 0/D6 to see Bernold's true form

For business, Graff wears a lightweight basket suit and panama hat. While "vacationing" he wears a polo shirt and shorts with the same hat. He always appears deep in thought, or concentrating intensely (holding his body together is an effort of will).

Graff does not kill, except in self defense, or if it will get him what he wants and he knows he can get away with it. He is a threat because when his efforts to acquire the Hand of Torment are blocked, he investigates who's behind it. He uses proper tradecraft and his contacts in the criminal underground to track down the people who snatched it from under his nose. Or right out of his hand, depending on how the Option got it. This is easiest if they did the whole thing by the book, and Sharon can point to the Antiquities Authority goons who shook him down.

The worst case scenario is that Graff realizes there are people in the Antiquities Authority hunting down items of supernatural power. Then he'll switch targets. Instead of hunting the Hand, he looks for the Option archives at the Rockefeller Museum.

If Graff decides to hit the Option archives, go after any Option researchers, or just needs extra muscle, he trawls the Israeli criminal scene for some hired hands. He has to rely on the people his local contacts recommend, which means the quality of the help leaves something to be desired.

HIRED GOONS - Assorted Shtarkers

STR 10, CON 10, DEX 10, INT 10, POW 10, CHA 10

HP 10, WP 10, SAN 45

SKILLS: Alertness 40%, Athletics 40%, Melee Weapons 40%, Stealth 40%, Unarmed Combat 40%

ATTACKS: Blunt Instrument (40%, D8)

Sharp Object (40%, D6, 3 AP)

Illegal Gun (20%, D10)

Flavor for criminals: A Haredi kid, rebelling against his overly strict parents. A Haredi kid, who wants to join one of the settler militias one day. An Ar (Israeli chav) who just likes violence and money. A Palestinian kid, looking to break into the artifacts trade. A Russian kid, vaguely attracted to Nazi ideas.

None of the criminals want a murder rap. They're more comfortable laying a beating and then running off. You're at more risk of being shot by an accidental discharge than a deliberate hit by these jokers. They have poor morale. Being shot at, injured, seeing magic, etc can scare them off. The main reason Graff hires them is literal muscle - carrying artifacts he can't lift while in liquid form.

THE PLAN

There are a number of ways for the Option to get their hands on the Hand of Torment and associated documents.

THE OFFICIAL ROUTE

The Antiquities Authority has the power to confiscate any antiquity not registered as discovered before 1978.

The 1978 Antiquities Law defines an antiquity as

1. an artifact produced before the year 1700 CE.;
2. a human-made object of historical value made after the year 1700 CE., and declared by the Minister of Education and Culture to be an antiquity; or
3. a biological fragment dating from before the year 1300 CE.

The Hand *could* fit in the second category, but that would require getting it designated an antiquity. Since the Minister of Education and Culture no longer exists as a government office (split into the Ministry of Culture and Sport and the Ministry of Education) the authority falls to the Minister of Culture and Sport.

It is unlikely that the Option will succeed in persuading the Minister to designate the Hand of Torment an antiquity. Lehi are officially remembered as founding heroes of the State of Israel, and the revisionist Likud government is not eager to remind anyone that they were would-be Nazi collaborators. Horse trading or blackmail are possible, but this is a long shot otherwise.

The other official route is to persuade Nara Rosenberg to claim the items as hers. With the property records from the shop in the Old City, it's clear that the items didn't pass to the collector legitimately. As Yiftah's surviving descendent, Nara should legally be the owner.

THE HUSTLE

The dealer could be convinced to part with the Hand, if the Option operatives apply sufficient pressure elsewhere on his collection. Threaten to take away the rest of his treasures, and provide sufficient justification to make the threat credible, and Sharon will give up the Hand rather than endanger his entire inventory.

Any of the official options could be pursued by forging the necessary documents, if the Option operatives have a way to forge them, and to prevent the "decision" from being appealed to the actual authorities.

THE HEIST

The Sharon Partners' offices at the Jerusalem Technology Park are inside a building with security cameras and guards on the first floor. That doesn't make them impenetrable. Someone with a good plan and the right skillset could steal the Hand from the Sharon Partners' collection. If they can frame someone else for the theft, even better.

THE MUGGING

It's easier to take a package off someone on the street than to steal it from an office building with cameras. Once Bernold takes the Hand out of the building, it becomes much easier to steal. The downside is that unless the robbers take precautions, he'll know who to look for when he steals it back.

THE KABBALAH

All these options go smoother with a wizard on your side. If Rebbe Kessler is in play, the heist can be effected with the Kefitzat Haderach, the mugging with the Word of G_d, and other ingenious schemes streamlined as appropriate by the power of the Unnatural.