



The Haunting of Ashcroft Manor

A Laundry Files Game
David Dorward ☆ James Clokey



Good morning everybody.

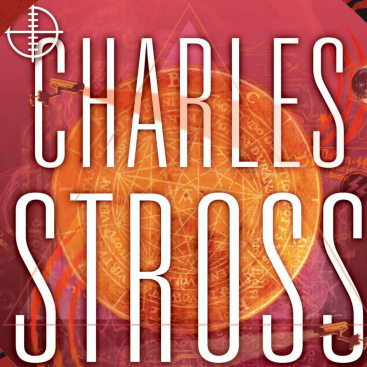
This briefing has been classified OGRE BLUE SILENCER and you've all been granted access to those keywords.

Mahogany Row has provided an exception to the usual rules so you may discuss the contents of this session in line with your duties to convince more people to come to Dropzone. Your Oath of Office will not enforce the usual consequences of loose lips.

The Laundry Files

If the world contains things that (as Pratchett puts it somewhere) even the dark is afraid of, then you can bet that there'll be a secret government agency covering them up for our own good.

– 'The Atrocity Archive' by Charles Stross



CHARLES
STROSS

For those of you who are new to this department, the setting is primarily based on the Laundry Files series by Charles Stross. It has been tweaked to make it more gamable, some of the more earth-shattering events of the novels such as what happened to Leeds (spoilers) haven't happened, and some other influences (such as the Peter Grant novels) have been drawn from.

The Laundry Files

The Occult division of the SOE (Special Operations Executive).

Founded during WWII

Field agents tend to be specialists in science, history, computing, or the occult.

Military support is provided by the Rifles (Borchester Light Infantry).



You are agents of the occult division of the Special Operations Executive (that is to say spies, scientists, sorcerers, hackers, and bureaucrats) with military support from the Rifles in the form of the Borchester Light Infantry. There are extra dimensional tentacle monsters from beyond reality out there and they do want to eat you (or have you worship them or both). They are attracted to magic, and magic is a form of higher mathematics. I know a couple of you are here because your equations got a little too esoteric and you started ripping holes in the fabric of reality. Giving you a job was the best way to keep an eye on you. But I digress.



Alex has very kindly provided us with his rules and setting guide along with notes on the changes he wanted to make to them. Jim and I have been going through them and sprucing them up for the 2020s.

We're doing some streamlining, some balancing, tweaking the skills, and are going to trial a new armour system.

Defences against magical attacks are still handled by playing cards, and we're keeping marbles to represent mental stability but completely changing what happens if you run out of them — roleplaying the mental disorders is hard to do respectfully so we're not going to ask people to do that.

If you've played a Laundry Files game before then that probably sounds pretty familiar. If you haven't then hopefully there's enough there to peak your interest. We're aiming to get the a public version of the guide out by the end of March — hopefully sooner but I'd rather give ourselves a distant deadline than have to post "Sorry, it is late" messages.

That should give you two months to read them and build characters, and there will be more on that later.

Ashcroft Manor



We're here to talk about Ashcroft Manor, which is where our Dropzone game is set.

The Haunting of Ashcroft Manor



Sir John Ashcroft

Senior member of the team
at the Borchester branch of
The Laundry



Civilians

Witnesses report sighting of
black figures on the Ashcroft
estate.



Fire

Ashcroft Manor almost
entirely destroyed



Sir John has been a presence at this branch of the Laundry for many years. Many of you will know him, so it is with regret I must inform you that earlier today there was a fire at his home and we believe that he and his family have all perished.

Civilians from the village have reported sightings of strange black figures on the estate; this is highly concerning given Sir. John's penchant for taking work home with him.

Your assignment is to go to Ashcroft Manor, contain any esoteric entities that may have been released, retrieve all classified materials from the site, and ensure the safety of any non-Laundry personnel.

Game Style

What you can expect



Combat	Medium to High (including tooth and claw)
Social	Low but there will be some talking to NPCs
Puzzle Solving	Medium to High
Minigames (Bop-its, etc.)	Low to None
Pop	None
Travelling	The game will cover most of the site, but there will be an opportunity to set up an HQ

Ultimately, players have a lot of control over the balance between the different ingredients that make up a game. LARP is a very collaborative medium. This, however, is what we expect the game to focus on.

There will be plenty of opportunity to shoot at moving targets, some of them will have the tooth and claw rule.

There will be some, but not a lot, of learning from and negotiating with non-player characters.

There will be quite a lot of puzzle solving, by which I mean we'll give you clues as to what is going on and how to deal with it and let you figure out the solutions. We're not simulating tasks using jigsaws here.

We *might* make use of a bop-it or similar mechanic for one or two small portions of the game, but we're leaning away from that approach at the moment and it definitely won't be a major part of the game.

We *aren't* going to try to induce any player-vs-player scheming.

The game is going to cover most of the site and sunset should be about an hour in. We recommend you to set up a mobile HQ at the village and bring clues and the injured back there to work on so that less mobile players can be included as much as possible.



We will need six or seven folk to crew. Costuming will be pretty basic and the roles are quite active ones. Did I mention the tooth and claw rules were in effect?



Player Characters

While it is getting an update, the character design system is, essentially, the same as in previous Laundry Files games.

You write your own background, you select an archetype (such as “soldier”), and then you buy skills with costs determined by your archetype (so Science is cheaper for a scientist while Sniper is cheaper for a soldier).

This isn’t a game focused on interaction between players who have been primed with their own detailed briefings. I know some people like that style of game and others don’t. This isn’t one of them.

Even though the guide isn’t out yet, Jim and I would be delighted if you told us what sort of characters you want to play. We can use information like that to add opportunities for specific characters to shine to the game, and edit the skill lists to make it easier to build the character you want.

Player Characters



Soldiers

6+



Hackers

1+



Spellcasters

2+



This particular game would benefit from the player team having at least half a dozen soldiers, a couple of spellcasters, and at least one hacker. Other skills will be useful, but those cover the essentials.

If you're unsure about what you want to play then we can offer suggestions and help you plug holes in the player roster's skill set. If you really don't want to engage with the character building system then we can put something together for you based on a broad idea of what you want whether that be "I want to science!" or "I have a shiny new tagged up sniper rifle that I want to use".

People who tell us things like "I'd like to play a BLANK who is an expert in BLANK but I'm happy to crew if you need another body" are our favourite kind of people.

Trying to sort out a character after arriving at Dropzone is a drag — and I say that as someone who has done that and had to beg forgiveness from the GMs. Life does get in the way sometimes! We'll try to have to spare characters to pick up and go for such emergencies but, obviously, they won't be tailored for you.

Some people have existing characters from previous games and they are more than welcome to return. Please send us a briefing on who they are and, when the rules are out, rebuild them with the updated skill system.

Thanks!

Do you have any questions?

<https://laundry.larp.org.uk/>

david@dorward.me.uk / james.clokey@gmail.com

[@dorward@mastodon.social](https://mstdn.social/@dorward)

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Thank-you for your time. Does anyone have any questions?

[Questions and Answers go here]

Our email addresses are on the screen. Please get in touch and let me know how you want to take part in the game.