

Welcome to the Aftermath

It is the present day in an alternate reality.

Six months ago, you and your teammates toppled the Castaigne regime, the authoritarian government of Imperial America. After more than a century in power, it, and the shadowy figures behind its throne, has gone.

You aim to use the skills you developed as revolutionaries to help rebuild your shattered nation.

But weird mystery has always had a way of finding you, and you suspect that it hasn't done with you yet.

Everyday Life

You've gone back to the job you had during the Struggle.

The economy was already stagnant when the final push against the regime began. Recovery is just around the corner, you hope. You might not be getting paid your full salary. Somehow though, everyone muddles on.

At night you gather with the rest of your crew at a favorite hangout, maybe one where lots of other former insurgents gather.

You listen to hotjazz, the exciting new music form that's sweeping the nation, now that a totalitarian agency no longer controls culture and entertainment.

You probably drink Belgian beers—a huge craze now that protectionist trade regulations have gone out the window and anyone with the dough can import anything.

The old monopolies, given out to cronies by the Emperor and his family, fight to survive against sudden competition. Everyone wonders if a soft drink competitor will rise to replace the freshly privatized Casta-Cola Company.

Brands that died out in our reality continue in this one. Studebaker is a major car manufacturer.

Look and Feel

Grim, utilitarian concrete towers fill the streets of your home, New York City.

They lie atop a grander layer of now-grimy, once-white structures built during the optimistic 19-teens. During this period the famed reformist President Winthrop leveled the city's vibrant, ramshackle neighborhoods for monumental façades of neoclassical columns teeming with Greek and Roman influences.

In place of a subway system, New York boasts the underground highways, major thoroughfares that rumble beneath the surface, under a light display of artificial stars.

For fashion and design, think late '50s or early '60s.

Technology has advanced to what we would think of as a 1980s level, at best. Forget video tape, the Internet, sophisticated DNA testing, personal computers, or digitized documents.

The government's weird weapons of oppression remain on the street. From needle guns and obedience whips to mind-warping gases and implants, the science of oppression is one area where the Castaignes excelled.

Weirdness

The eerie realm of Carcosa kept the Castaignes on the throne. The final battles of the Overthrow somehow closed the gates between worlds. The minions of the King and his court can no longer freely come here. But some of them, and the monsters spawned with their alien discipline of parageometry, remain on this side.

The role of the unnatural in the last hundred years of history might be common knowledge to the average person, a secret few know, or a strangely fading memory. Ask your GM about your game's Weirdness Level.

Government

Elections haven't been held yet. The Interregnum Administration promises them soon, but first the People's Congress, an appointed body dominated by former dissidents, has to settle on a new constitution. Parties haven't formed yet; some hope they never will. Instead various factions tussle for influence.

As a group, you will choose a political agenda and try to bring it into being. Choose from this list, or make up one of your own:

- **Shut Down Government Lethal**

Chambers: The Winthrop government installed suicide machines throughout the country. Now that the world has gone sane again, you want these closed down.

- **Preserve Government Lethal Chambers:** The chambers remain a popular symbol of self-determination. You support the individual right to choose and want to protect the GLCs from those who would shut them down.
- **Truth and Reconciliation:** You think that society can only be healed by exposing the crimes of the past, and then forgiving them.
- **War Crimes Trials:** The Castaignes might be gone, but many who abetted them in oppressing, torturing, and killing innocent people remain. To bring closure to those they harmed, they must be rooted out, interrogated, and made to face the people's justice.
- **Preserve Order:** The period after a revolution can be as dangerous to the ordinary person as the time of tyranny that preceded it—if not more so. Only with safe streets and tough justice can civil society flourish.
- **Reinstate Freedom:** The Castaigne regime forced people to obey. You want a constitution that protects the rights of individuals to earn a living, love who they want, worship in the manner of their choice, read whatever pleases them, and speak their minds without fear of official censorship.
- **Banish the Supernatural:** The Castaignes held onto power as long as they did because of the help they got from another realm. You can't let the monsters and aliens come back to rule humanity again.
- **Harness the Supernatural:** The otherworldly beings who helped the Castaignes were evil. But the magic they wielded is just an alternate technology, neither good or bad in and of itself. In the right hands, it can heal, innovate, and bring prosperity to a devastated nation.
- **Get Elected:** If you leave government to people driven by fancy opinions, common sense goes out the window. During the rebellion, you learned to fix problems, preconceptions be damned. Time to bring that wisdom to public life!
- **Build a Business:** You intend to use your accumulated know-how to provide something people need—jobs and opportunities.

Meet the New Cops

The Interregnum Administration kept police forces running by flushing out the worst regime stooges and replacing them with trusted revolutionaries.

When you go to the cops, you will run into some old allies, but also officers who worked under the Castaignes. The first group distrusts the second, and vice versa. With sedition laws struck from the books, local forces now focus on crime and public order, leaving politics aside.

Prosecutors' offices still function, enforcing the laws they think will remain on the books. Expecting any convictions gained now to be appealed when a new criminal code comes in, they're reluctant to move on any case that isn't absolutely solid.

The Provisional Federal Police hunt for war criminals to put before the Tribunal. Activists opposed to this process, knowing that one in four people informed to the old Department of Internal Security, instead argue for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Whether they're destined for forgiveness or imprisonment, folks still fear the old secret police, popularly known as Hussars, or the Huss. They used to hunt you down. Now the tables have turned.

Shrunk Empire

The USA doesn't stretch from sea to shining sea. To the south lies the independent nation of Suanee, a majority black nation that has managed to keep learning and democracy alive in an otherwise bleak time for the continent. California, once a breakaway republic, now considers union with the new, democratic America.

Further Reading

For more atmosphere, world-building, and a template for adventure in the world of *Aftermath*, check out the novel *The Missing and the Lost*, also from Pelgrane Press.