



# YELLOW DAWN

## Expansion Pack Bile Weed



YELLOW DAWN™ (Second Edition) is  
Copyright © 2007 David J Rodger  
All rights reserved

This “Bile Weed” expansion pack is  
Copyright © 2008 David J Rodger  
All rights reserved

This “Bile Weed” expansion pack is designed to  
be downloaded free of charge as a PDF - and  
made available to share.

Commercial copying, hiring, lending is prohibited.

First Printed 2008

See more of David J Rodger's work at his website:  
[www.davidjrodger.com](http://www.davidjrodger.com)

## ABOUT THIS PACK

This Expansion Pack is designed specifically for Dead Zones and Dead Cities. Yellow Dawn – the Age of Hastur – makes it possible to swap out zombies for new interesting threat(s). The “Bile Weed” is one of many possible ideas.

If you have any ideas of your own, please submit them to me via the contact-email address on the website. If it’s good / comprehensive enough, I’ll format it and make it available as an official expansion pack for Yellow Dawn – crediting your name.

**Yellow Dawn Forum - a repository of unfleshed ideas:** alternatively, if you have just the seed of an idea for swapping out the zombie threat with “something” else, but don’t have the time or inclination to flesh it out, just drop some notes into the Yellow Dawn forum: [www.davidjrodger.com/yog](http://www.davidjrodger.com/yog)

## EVOLUTION OF THE ZOMBIE

Throughout Yellow Dawn, scientists and sociologists have abhorred the use of the term “zombie” to describe the victims of the 2nd pathogen. Now, it seems they are about to be proven correct. The “zombies” of Yellow Dawn are nothing like the creatures from popular fiction. Their blood has been infected with fragments of a Great Old One and this ultimately leads to a grotesque and terrifying change, or evolution, in the nature of the “zombie” threat.

### MANAGING THE CHANGE

Don’t just swap it over, so that one day the characters wake-up and discover everything has changed. The evolution is caused by the movement of distant interstellar bodies rolling through the void beyond the boundary of the Quantisphere - the thin membrane protecting mundane reality from the horrors of the outer chaos. The evolution can happen slowly or rapidly - depending on the story arc the GM wants to achieve. The evolution can begin in one geographical location and spread... or it can occur simultaneously across the globe. As a GM give this choices some thought before you deploy this evolution within your game world.

### Stage One

The next time characters encounter zombies, describe some of them sprouting grass-like fronds of an alien yellow colour. Others are staggering - rather than running in rage - vomiting a vile yellow gloop. Eventually, others can be found sprawled on the ground, seemingly lifeless, sprouting more and more fronds as their flesh corrupts and turns to a fungus / mould; eventually the whole creature transmogrifies into a “Kernel” (see below for description).

### Stage Two

At this point many of the zombies continue to exist but a small number of them have also completed the transformation into “kernels”. Describe the Kernels on the side of the road, or clinging to the walls of buildings, etc, leaving a trail of hideous yellow “bile weed” in their wake. They strike an eerie and chilling impression upon the characters - who should now realise something dramatic is happening.

## BILE WEED

### OVERVIEW OF THE NEW HORROR

There are four components to the “Bile Weed” horror

#### Kernel

Torso-sized lumps of slime, fungus and mould that slowly creep across the urban landscape. They are fatal when encountered close-up and can eject hundreds of “spores”. As they move, they leave behind trails of “bile weed”.

#### Spores

Tiny translucent greenish-yellow droplets, with an outer membrane covered in a cilia. Light enough to be carried on a breeze for up to 20 metres. They can pass through normally “solid” materials like clothing and armour. Contact with flesh allows them to infect a victim’s blood and risks a riotous transformation into something called a “running host”.

#### Bile Weed

Grass-like fronds, translucent and alien yellow in colour, quarter metre in height (shin height), thin trails are left behind by Kernels as they creep across the ground and up walls; more dense patches exist in areas where a large number of spores have been released and settled. Contact with moving / living things causes them to “grab” victims and immobilise them long enough for a Kernel to creep across and do its worst.

#### Running Host

When a person is first infected there is a shocking burst of organic growth within and around them. Fronds of vegetable-like matter burst out from their body, ripping the skin; the edges of the wounds withering and drying like so much beef-jerky. Crimson tendrils bulge out from the restricted cavities of mouth, nose and eye-sockets. They resemble gruesome and horrifying parodies of scarecrows. Initially immensely strong and fast, as time passes they devolve into slowly shambling things that eventually collapse and transmogrify into a Kernel.

### KERNELS

NON-HUMAN SPECIES – roughly the size of a torso spread across the ground, covering a 2 metre area, raised near the middle. They consist of a sickly yellow slime (glistening wet) and part vegetable matter covered in mould and fungus (dirty green veins and cancerous black splodges, hairy and diseased in appearance). The whole mass is striated by crimson tendrils that throb and pulsate in a slow and irregular rhythm. At certain times they display fist-sized pustules - bright scarlet in colour; these are spore sacks and are extremely dangerous. Kernels were once human; transformed into “zombies” that then devolved into these things.

The following facts can be learned about Kernels:

- They avoid areas of open countryside, forests, dense foliage and shrubbery.
- They don’t die in rural areas, they simply linger; if there’s a road, they follow it.
- They drown in water – and die – but gas has no effect on them.

## DAVID J. RODGER

- Direct contact with them is highly dangerous and infectious.
- They have no need for regular nutrition or water-intake.
- They have no head or vital organs. It is not known what can damage them. They have no fear and demonstrate no reaction to pain.
- They have an uncanny ability to “sense” the presence of living things within 100 metres or so, and invariably begin to slowly, relentlessly creep towards their prey.
- Kernels go through rapid cycles of gestation. Typically once a minute they enter a period of gestation; this is noticeable by the emergence of fist-sized scarlet pustules on their upper surface. These pustules remain visible only for a few seconds before withdrawing again. The pustules are only visibly when the Kernel is gestating. It can release hundreds of spores from these pustules.
- When alerted to a target being within 20 metres – or “spore range” Kernels will create a hideous bubbling / wet popping sound that is believed to be some form of communication with other Kernels in the area.
- They seem intelligent and are known to lie in wait by doorways or windows, to surprise victims.

Typical Kernel:

STR: na            CON: na            DEX 1d6  
APP -            INT: 1d6            POW -  
Hp: na            D/b na            Mass: 1

ANX: going anywhere near a Kernel requires an Anxiety check or lose 1 Cool point.

Move: 1 metre per minute (0.8 mm per combat round).

Skills: awareness 80%; hide/evade/move stealthy 80%.

Attack: spore release (only possible when it rolls a ‘1’ on 1d20, one roll per round); touch (95% to-hit, plunges crimson red tendrils into victim, snaking through clothes, penetrating armour\*\*, with an 80% chance of infecting the victim.)

\*\*Cannot penetrate an enclosed suit of armour with SP25+; if armour is SP20-24, then it has a ‘1’ on 1d20 chance to find its way through; SP below 20, it has no problem getting inside through joints and cracks.

## Killing Kernels

Fire damage, explosive damage, and projectile weapons are all effective. They seem to absorb damage and regenerate rapidly, so the higher the damage in one combat round, the more chance of killing it. Regardless of where you strike the Kernel, if the damage from one individual attack is:

**15+ HP:** there is an 80% chance to cause immediate death.

**5+ HP:** there is a 5% chance of causing immediate death.

**Less than 5 HP damage:** there is 0% chance of causing death.

A *dying Kernel* has one chance to Gestate and release spores (‘1’ on 1d20), after which it shrivels up and evaporates away into a bubbling stinking mess that dries to a black residue.

**Bladed weapons:** can deliver damage, but half the rolled damage before determining the chance of immediate death. Also, by slashing and cutting away parts of the Kernel, there is an chance equal to “Damage done x 5%” that a severed part becomes a new independent Kernel – rapidly bubbling, slithering and expanding into full size (Mass 1).

## Kernel Attacks

**Touch attack:** Kernels like to sneak up on their victims. Once they’re within 1 metre, they can reach out and touch them, sending out a riot of lashing red tendrils that can plunge through clothing, beneath armour and into flesh. The touch attack has a 95% chance to-hit. If it’s able to make contact with flesh (not

defeated by high SP armour), then there is an immediate 80% chance of infection.

*If the infection fails:* the Kernel will try again next round, with a new separate attack. Regardless, being struck by the red tendrils delivers 1d6 HP damage (that takes 5 x normal healing time) and has a 40% chance to drain 1 CON, and 20% chance to cause scarring that reduces APP by 1 point.

*Consequences of Infection:* these are described in the “Running Host” section further down.

**Spores:** the alternative attack is more scatter-gun. If a Kernel is gestating, ‘1’ on 1d20 chance, then it can throw out several hundred spores, some of which can travel up to 20 metres in one round.

## SPORES

Tiny translucent greenish-yellow droplets, with an outer membrane covered in a cilia.

**Spores released by Kernel:** the vast majority drop within 3 to 5 metres of the Kernel, but some can fly as far as 20 metres in one combat round. Not all spores function properly; on some, the membrane fails to burst on contact, causing it to lie dormant: these are discussed later. The closer you are to a spore-release the more chance you have of being struck; use the following as a guide:

**Distance from Kernel:**

- Within 3 metres: 80% chance of anything getting struck by 1d100 spores.
- 3-5 metres: 40% chance of being struck by 3d6 spores.
- 6-10 metres: 20% chance of being struck by 1d6 spores.
- 11-20 metres: 1% chance of being struck by 1 spore.

NOTE: this refers to spores that have functioned properly, the membrane has burst and the spore sinks in.

## Being Struck by Spores

They can pass through normally “solid” materials like clothing and armour – anything up to and including SP50.

Each spore (in one combat round) creates a one-off 1% chance of infection (where the victim becomes a Running Host). Example: being struck by 7 spores in one round, creates an immediate 7% chance of infection setting in.

*Consequences of Infection:* these are described in the “Running Host” section further down.

If no infection takes place, then apply the following effects until the victim rolls ‘1’ on 1d20, one roll per minute:

- An immediate sense of overwhelming anxiety. Make a single Anxiety roll (on the combat round the spores struck) otherwise lose 1 COOL point for every 1 spore.
- Intense hallucinations, which include: a sense of an overlapping world on top of normal reality, glimpses of a distant and vast stone tower rising above alien rooftops; a dull, flat sound of sluggish waves lapping against an invisible shore; a creeping darkness, like mould, like rapidly grows and expands across various surfaces.
- -20% to all skill checks and IDEA rolls for duration.
- +1 Hp, +1 DEX, and +1 STR for each spore, for duration.

NOTE: certain individuals have been known to willingly touch spores to “enjoy” these effects. It is possible that a person struck by 80 spores, might avoid infection, but then experience +80 Hp, STR and DEX.

## Spores taking root after release

After a Kernel has released a load of spores, the majority settle to the ground and instantly take root. Shin-high blades of alien yellow “grass” erupt out of the solid ground, or wall, or vehicle bodywork. The consequences are as follows:

- Surrounding 3 metres diameter sprouts up with Bile Weed with a density of 3d6.
- Surrounding 3-5 metres has a Bile Weed density of 1d6.

NOTE: take into account any doorways or windows within this area of effect.

## Clinging Spores

Any character or vehicle caught within 20 metres of a spore release, has a chance of having “faulty” spores on their clothing, or on the surface of the vehicle, afterwards. Whenever they stop to check, or peel off their clothes, or examine the surface of a vehicle, use the following rules:

- 20% chance to have 1d6 faulty spores clinging to clothes / vehicle surface.

**If there are faulty spores clinging:** If character(s) are not looking for spores, then removing clothes / getting into – or out of vehicle, requires a LUCK roll otherwise you come into contact with 1 of them. (If you fail the LUCK roll by 40% or more you come into contact with *half* of them at once).

If looking for clinging spores, then spending 5 minutes checking clothing etc, allows an Awareness skill check to spot them and brush them off with a stick, or some other solid object. Any spores brushed off will strike the ground and have a 40% chance to take root into a blade of Bile Weed.

**Coming into contact with a faulty Spore:** there is a 40% chance the membrane works properly this time and it sinks into you. Otherwise, you’ve had a lucky escape and it rolls onto the ground; at which point there is a 40% chance it takes root into a blade of Bile Weed.

## BILE WEED

Typically shin-height blades of alien yellow “grass”. They sprout up as thin trails in the faintly slimy wake of Kernels, and in more densely packed areas where spores have been released.

The following facts can be learned about Bile Weed:

- Fire and explosives can destroy Bile Weed. Treat 1 square metre of ground covered in Bile Weed as an entity with HP equal to the Bile Weed density.
- Slashing or cutting Bile Weed is a bad idea. Every successful attack with a blade cuts the Bile Weed into two pieces: the new piece falls and takes root, increasing the density of that 1-metre square by *plus* 1.
- An expensive chemical compound, called a “Radial Diotrotic” can kill 1 –square metre of Bile Weed: a few drops from a pipette will do this. One dose weighs around 5 grams and costs 1,000 credits to buy; alternatively, it can be made with 10KG of Specialised Components, a Chemistry skill check (-20%) and 8 hours. The downside to using Radial Diotrotic to free a character trapped by Bile Weed, is that it is highly carcinogenic: any character in contact with Bile Weed when it’s being killed by the Radial Diotrotic will be unable to avoid getting it on their skin, and in their blood vessels. The immediate consequences to the character are nausea and vomiting that lasts for 8 hours: ½ all stats, and apply a -40% penalty to all skill checks. The long term consequences is there is a 5% chance of developing cancer.
- If Bile Weed is more than 100 metres from a Kernel for 48 hours, it withers and dies. Therefore, wherever there is Bile

Weed, it is likely there is a Kernel within 100 metres. This can be particularly relevant away from Dead Cities, when encountering Bile Weed is rare and a point for concern.

## Bile Weed and a flesh riot

Bile Weed is very passive, typically swaying with a surreal underwater movement in unfelt currents of air or energy. This all changes the moment Bile Weed comes into contact with something it perceives as flesh.

**Touch:** simply touching or brushing against Bile Weed will set it off into a shocking, violent riot of organic growth and transformation. In the first instant, it stretches and separates into multiple strands, some almost a metre in length. These strands attempt to locate the flesh it has sensed, if it succeeds it is able to gain energy and sustenance for continued growth; if it fails, it dies.

### Finding flesh to feed and grow:

- touching a blade of Bile Weed with naked flesh allows it to feed and grow automatically.
- if dressed normally, or wearing a standard glove, there is a 95% chance it finds flesh.
- if wearing high boots, with trousers tucked in; or wearing heavy duty gloves with tightly sealed wrists, there is an 80% chance it finds flesh.
- If wearing a full leather armour, or full police armour, there is a 40% chance it finds flesh.
- If wearing an NBC style suit with military grade filters and seals, the chance it finds flesh is only 1%.

**Failing to find flesh:** the various strands of Bile Weed thicken, foam-up and solidify into something with the consistency of hard sponge. It becomes inert, lifeless, and easy to break.

**Consequences of Bile Weed finding flesh:** in the same round it finds flesh, it rapidly increases in length, splits into several strands and gains a grip on the victim with STR of 3d6. To escape, the victim must win an opposed STR roll, otherwise they are held tight, and the Bile Weed is able to sink needle-like siphons into the victim’s flesh, draining them of enough blood to reduce their STR by 1 point.

In the second round, the Bile Weed continues to grow, expand, multiply, and tighten it’s grip. The drained blood feeds this growth, increasing it’s STR by +1d6. For the victim to try and escape again, they must make a COOL roll, otherwise they remain motionless – in fear – for the next 1d20 minutes. Every time they struggle (fail an opposed STR roll), the Bile Weed will drain more blood (1 STR) and increase its own STR by +1d6.

The intention is it will hold a victim in place until a Kernel is able to creep over and do its worst.

See “Moving on Foot” / “Doing it” below, for the difficulty in stepping through or past clumps of Bile Weed.

## Vehicles & Clinging Bile Weed

Any vehicle driving through a Dead City will end up shredding through patches of Bile Weed; some of this will take root within the body of the vehicle itself. In the long run, leaving a Dead City, getting more than a 100 metres from a Kernel, means the Bile Weed will wither and die within 48 hours. In the short term, Bile Weed clinging to a vehicle poses a potential threat to occupants getting in or out.

Take it as given that a vehicle *will* accumulate Bile Weed on its outer body. The chance that a particular entrance / exit, or particular part of the vehicle has Bile Weed on it is 20%.

Example: a character wants to get into a vehicle via the driver door, there's a 20% chance there is Bile Weed on this door; alternatively, a character is thrown back against a vehicle, regardless of where they fell onto the vehicle, there is a 20% chance of some Bile Weed being in that spot.

Avoiding these random blades of Bile Weed, requires an Awareness skill check.

*Failing the Skill check means you've touched the Bile Weed: use the rules in "Bile Weed and a flesh riot" / "Touch", above.*

## RUNNING HOST

When infection starts to set in, the victim will feel dizzy and light-headed; sweat oozes from every pore, and an internal heat erupts through their body as if they're somehow on fire. During this period they suffer -40% to any IDEA and Skill Check. Every round, the GM should roll a 1d6. On a '6' the infection kicks into full effect:

There is a shocking burst of organic growth within and around them. Fronds of vegetable-like matter burst out from their body, ripping the skin; the edges of the wounds withering and drying like so much beef-jerky. They clutch their throats as if choking; their mouths yawn open but no sound comes out; their eyeballs burst or pop out of sockets: then crimson tendrils bulge out from the restricted cavities of mouth, nose and eye-sockets. They resemble gruesome and horrifying parodies of scarecrows. Initially immensely strong and fast, as time passes they devolve into slowly shambling things that eventually collapse and transmogrify into a Kernel.

Whatever their STR & DEX was before, it is now '20'.

They no longer have any endurance restrictions.

Their Sprint rate becomes 'X' metres per round.

'X' is the value of STR, DEX that quickly reduces over time, from this point forward.

Ignore HPs and use the rules for "Killing Running Hosts".

Their IDEA and skills return to normal, but they're now an agent of the King in Yellow, under the control of the GM, and intent on spreading their infection any way possible.

They cannot hold weapons because of the deformity to their hands and limbs. They run, grab victims, and plunge tentacles through their bodies or cough spores onto them.

**STR, DEX – the value of X – starts to drop:** every 1 minute after infection has set in, the GM should roll 1d20. On a '1' reduce the value of X, by 1 point. So at first their STR, DEX, and Sprint Speed is 20... they now all drop to 19.

This will continue until it reduces to 1.

**When STR, DEX and value of X drop to 1:** at this point, the creature is barely human, simply a bipedal humanoid shape, swollen, covered in yellow slime and black fronds of mould, and pulsating with crimson tendrils that flail around when it moves. It shambles along at 1 metre per round, or stands on one spot, swaying back and forth. When the value of X drops to "zero" the creature drops to the ground and goes through a final transmogrification into a fully fledged Kernel.

**Running Host Attacks:** grapple (80%) & tendrils plunge\*\*, if the Grapple is successful, the Running Host pulls the victim into a deadly embrace, in the same combat round, the crimson tendrils whip outwards and plunge into the victim's body. If the victim is normally clothed, then there is a 95% chance they find flesh and sink in.

\*\*If wearing armour etc, then use the same % chances to find flesh as "Bile Weed and a flesh riot" / "Finding flesh to feed and grow", above.

If it is able to make contact with flesh then there is an immediate 80% chance of infection.

*If the infection fails:* the Running Host will try again next round, with a new separate attack. Regardless, being struck by the red tendrils delivers 1d6 HP damage (that takes 5 x normal healing time) and has a 40% chance to drain 1 CON, and 20% chance to cause scarring that reduces APP by 1 point.

*Consequences of Infection:* see the start of this Running Host section.

**Spores:** if a Running Hosts senses it is getting nowhere with infecting a potential victim, it can cough up / vomit out spores. It can do this once per hour, on command (doesn't need to be gestating). It keeps the spores lodged in the back of its throat. Spores can travel up to 2 metres in one combat round. The Running Host has an to-hit chance of 80%, delivering 3d6 spores against the victim.

## Killing a Running Host

**Damage to head:** doing 5+ HP damage to the cranium kills a Running Host outright; doing 1-4 damage has 40% chance of killing it.

**Damage to Torso:** doing 15+ HP damage to the torso in one attack creates an 80% chance to cause immediate death; doing 5+ HP damage has a 5% chance of causing death. Anything less than 5 HP damage has no effect.

**Damage to Limbs:** standard chance of amputation applies. A Running Host that loses a leg, but has two arms can still drag itself along at 1 metre per round.

**Using fire against Running Hosts:** any Running Hosts sustaining more than 4 burn damage to any area, will rapidly start to burn and become a flaming torch ( after 2 rounds). After this, the Running Host is still able to run and attack but it won't last much longer; every round the GM should roll 1d20, on a '1' the Running Host expires. Of note, any Running Host-on-fire that grapples somebody will deliver 1d4 burn damage to that person.



## MOVING ON FOOT

Previously, when the Dead Cities were the domain of zombies, characters could take one of two options. (1) use the streets, moving cautiously but swiftly, or (2) use the buildings, staying off the streets as much as possible, going across rooftops, clambering between windows, using back yards and gardens. However, the very nature of Bile Weed, and the associated Kernels, means that it now makes almost no difference. Kernels can cling to walls and ceilings, as much as litter a road or pavement.

## VIA STREETS

With swift strides, characters cover empty streets quickly, stepping over broken glass and discarded personal items. Noise is no longer the great betrayer: but it can still lead to gestating Kernels to release hundreds of spores.

## Doing it

Every 100 metres travelled, characters must make a Hide/Evade/Move Stealthy skill check; this allows them to move at up to ½ their run speed. If they succeed, great, they've avoided attracting any attention or stumbling into any Bile Weed. Each person that fails creates a *separate* chance of something bad happening:

### Something bad happens- Roll 1d100:

'01-05' then 1d6-3 gestating Kernels notice the noise / movement and react by releasing their spores. The range of each spore-releasing Kernel is 3d6 metres from the character who attracted the attention.

'06-20' the character has stumbled into, or find themselves on the edge of, a patch of Bile Weed. This patch has a density of 1d20. To move out of the Bile Weed without triggering a reaction, requires an Awareness skill check with the following DM, based on Density:

**Density 1:** -5% DM

**Density 2-8:** -20% DM

**Density 9-18:** -40% DM

**Density 19-20:** -80% DM

*Failing this skill check results in a Bile Weed response; see Bile Weed section for a detailed description.*

## VIA BUILDINGS

Clambering over walls, stepping between windows, creeping up stairwells onto the roof, casting ropes to cross narrow lanes, the characters make steady but slow progress. Smashing a window to get into the next building isn't an issue. The real danger comes from the buildings themselves. The characters are entering blind, walking across floors that could give way or using walls that might collapse.

## Doing it

Every 5 minutes the character progress 1d100+40 metres.

On this dice-roll, if they ever score:

'41-60' then the character has entered a building with Major State of Decay; each character must succeed in a 'Rubble Monkey' skill check (NORMAL).

Every 5 minutes, characters must make a Hide/Evade/Move Stealthy skill check with -20% penalty. If they succeed, great, they've avoided attracting any attention or stumbling into any Bile Weed. Each person that fails creates a *separate* chance of something bad happening:

**Something bad happens- Roll 1d100:** as per Via Streets, above.

## DRIVING THROUGH

Vehicles make noise. Nosing or reversing out of a safe-house is considered 'soft noise' and has minimal risk of attracting the attention of Kernels; but starting an engine on a street, or driving at any significant speed (above 5mph) is considered 'significant noise' and can cause a cannonade of spore-releases.

## DRIVING AT 5 MPH OR LESS

This is considered "soft noise". It is possible to *drift* through a Dead City at this speed, the main danger is not seeing a Kernel on the road and driving over it: potentially causing a fatal spore release.

Every 100 metres driving at 5 mph or less, there is a '1' on 1d6 chance of there being a Kernel being in vehicle's path. The driver (and any observers with a view of the road ahead) can make an Awareness skill check, with a +20% bonus, to see it and easily avoid it. Otherwise, failing the Awareness skill check means the vehicle has run over the Kernel: there is an immediate '1' on 1d20 chance of a spore release affecting everyone inside the vehicle (80% chance of being struck by 1d100 spores).

## DRIVING ABOVE 5 MPH

This is considered "significant" noise, provoking any gestating Kernel's in the surrounding area to react by releasing spores. Every 100 metres there is an 40% chance of the vehicle being struck by a number of spores – which simply pass through the structural fabric into the interior. If this happens, then each occupant must make a Luck roll or be struck by 1d6 spores. See "spore" section for consequences of this.

**Risk of driving over a Kernel:** Every 100 metres driving over 5 mph, there is a '1' on 1d6 chance of there being a Kernel being in vehicle's path. The driver (and any observers with a view of the road ahead) can make an Awareness skill check (-20% penalty if driving 40 mph or faster) to see it and avoid it. Otherwise, failing the Awareness skill check means the vehicle has run over the Kernel: there is an immediate '1' on 1d20 chance of a spore release affecting everyone inside the vehicle (80% chance of being struck by 1d100 spores).

**Avoiding a Kernel in the road:** when driving at speed, faster than 5mph, the act of swerving to avoid a Kernel in your path requires a driving skill check. The DM applied depends on the speed you were travelling at:

- Driving between 6 and 20 mph: no DM
- For driving at more than 20 mph: suffer -20% penalty
- Driving at more than 40 mph: suffer -40% penalty
- Driving at more than 80 mph: suffer -80% penalty

*Failing this driving skill check creates a chance of crashing: use the driving rules in the Yellow Dawn primary rulebook.*

## Incremental Damage to Vehicle

### Ignore these rules if driving 5 mph or less

Every 500 metres the vehicle sustains small increments of damage from glancing blows with stationary vehicles and rubble in the road; sometimes a driver simply has to drive *over* debris in the road as the safest option, throwing up grit and debris against the underside.

Every 500 metres there is an 80% chance the vehicle sustains 0.1 DP damage. Armour offers no protection. Only tracked-tanks are immune to this.

Every time a vehicle takes 1 DP damage it must make a Malfunction check.

**General Driving skill check:** Every 500 metres the person controlling the vehicle must make a general Drive skill check with same modifiers as above (avoiding Kernel in the road). Failing this skill check creates the risk of a crash, consult Table 10.7 in the Yellow Dawn rulebook.

## OUT ON THE STREETS

At any point on a street, at any given moment, the distribution of Kernels is easy to work out:

In each direction possible, left, right, and in the case of crossroads, ahead and behind, there will be 1d6-1 Kernels. Each

Kernel will be 1d100 metres away: any time you roll a double-number, i.e. 11, 22, 33, 44, etc, then it indicates the Kernel is up on a wall, or on the side of a vehicle, rather than being on the ground.

**Kernels within 20 metres:** characters are at risk of being “sensed” by the Kernel. Each character will need to make a hide/evade/move stealthy skill check to get beyond the 20 metres “risk” range.

*Failing the skill check means the Kernel has an 80% chance to “notice” you, in which case two things occur:*

1. There is an immediate ‘1’ on 1d20 chance that this particular Kernel is gestating (bright scarlet pustules visible on surface); in which case it instantly releases spores.
2. Regardless, the Kernel starts to make a horrible bubbling / wet popping sound. It’s a form of communication that is picked up by other Kernels in the area (within 100 metres radius); if any of these are gestating (‘1’ on 1d20 chance) they will immediately release their spores in sympathy. You can use the rule at the start of this section “In each direction possible....”, to determine how many Kernels are nearby.

NOTE: the distant spore releases could have an impact on characters who are some distance away; or could result in an entrance / exit way being covered in Bile Weed after the spores have settled.

## Watching & Waiting on Kernels

Sometimes character(s) need to wait out a Kernels. Every 1 hour the GM should roll 1d6 for each Kernel.

- 1 It doesn’t move
- 2-4 It moves 1 metre towards the observing character.
- 5-6 It moves 1 metre away from the observing character.

## BILE WEED ON THE STREETS

There will be trails of Bile Weed in many places, some thin with low density; other areas will be covered in a dense carpet of the stuff. The rules above “Moving on Foot” and “Driving Through” cover the risks of getting caught up in the Bile Weed. Where it can be significant, is when a window / doorway is “blocked” by Bile Weed.

**Any random window / doorway:** the chance that any random doorway or window, at any particular moment, happens to be blocked by Bile Weed is 5%. In this event, the density of Bile Weed is 1d20.

**A particular window / doorway, per hour:** this relates to the window / door of a building or vehicle that characters may be spending significant time within. Every hour there is a 01% chance that either a) it has been passed over by a Kernel leaving a trail of Bile Weed, or b) spores have been released nearby that have settled and taken root here. Either way, the density of the Bile Weed is only ever 1d6.

## CONSEQUENCE OF NOISE

In a Dead City, noise used to be the great betrayer, bringing hordes of screaming zombies bearing down on you. This is no longer the case, but noise can still have repercussions:

### Soft Noise

- o Failing a Hide/Evade/Move Stealthy skill check
- o Creaking door
- o Forcing a door open

- o Easing a vehicle out of a safe-house
- o Driving 5mph or below
- o Silenced-gunshot with calibre above 9mm.

**Consequences:** any Kernel within 20 metres has an 80% chance to take notice. See “Out On The Streets / Kernels within 20 metres” for consequences of this.

### Significant Noise

- o Gunshot
- o Shouting
- o Starting engine outside
- o Driving above 5mph
- o Kernel making bubbling / wet popping sounds
- o Each round of hand-to-hand combat

**Consequences:** Any Kernel within 100 metres will release spores if gestating (‘1’ on 1d20 chance).

### Prolonged Noise

Every round there is prolonged noise from a specific area then roll another 1d20 for each Kernel within 100 metres; on a ‘1’ it starts to gestate and will release spores.

## KERNELS & SHELTERS

The protoplasmic nature of Kernels means that they can get into just about any nook or cranny, and squeeze through closed windows and doors. Slowly, but relentlessly. Kernels have an uncanny ability to sense when people, or animals, are nearby (within 100 metres). When there is one Kernel in an area, the GM can give it an 80% chance to detect life forms within 100 metres (one roll per hour); once detected, that individual Kernel will make bubbling / wet popping sounds, communicating and alerting any other Kernels within 100 metres to what it has detected. Slowly, relentlessly, they will creep towards their prey at 1 metre per hour.

**Quick rule of thumb for GMs:** in Dead Cities, rather than tracking the progress of multitudes of Kernels, use the following rule-of-thumb:

Every hour a character, or animal, is stationary, there is a ‘1’ on 1d20 chance that a Kernel appears within 3d6 metres\*\*†. This can be creeping along the ground; seeping down through a ventilation shaft; oozing through a window or beneath a door.

*\*\*A character may state they are selecting a location based that cannot allow Kernels to appear by surprise at close range; in other words, any approaching Kernel will appear at the 20 metre mark – or further, GM’s decision. For such a location to be valid, it requires at least one character to succeed in an IDEA roll, otherwise they have failed to take into account some aspect of the location where a Kernel could creep up at close range.*

**Doorways & Windows:** also make this check for any doorway or window being used by the character(s). Kernels are smart and may lie in wait beside such an aperture or exit, ready to strike.

### KEEPING KERNELS OUT

**SP25+:** If a vehicle, or building perimeter (Intact with no decay only) has an SP of 25 or more, then no Kernels can get inside.

**SP 20-24:** if a Kernel has reached the perimeter, hull of the vehicle, it can only get inside when it rolls a ‘1’ on 1d20, one roll per minute.

**SP below 20:** a Kernel has no problems getting inside.

## Creating a Kernel-proof perimeter

A new tactic by CRC teams is to build a secure box to sleep within, once encamped in a Dead City. To create such a secure box requires 100 KG of Raw Resources, 4 hours, and a Basic Tech skill check.

**Go Pro:** Alternatively, a lightweight, easily erectable / collapsible safe-box can be made with 20KG of Specialised Resources, 4 hours, and a Basic Tech (-20% DM) skill check. This portable secure box weighs 20 KG, takes 1 hour to put together, or collapse. Putting it together requires a Basic Tech (+20%) skill check.

**Failing the Basic Tech skill check:** when setting up your secure box, a failed skill check means you've missed some vital aspect of securing it. If any Kernel reaches the secure box, there is a 40% chance it can get inside.



**Not** to be confused with Dead Cities. These are the wide donut-shaped expanse of abandoned urbanisation around every Living City.

**Travelling a corridor:** this refers to one of the patrolled roads connecting a Living City to the rural support zone beyond. Bile Weed encounters are possible but less common than the nerve-jarring and relentless insanity of a Dead City. Every 5 miles there is a 5% chance of encountering 1 Kernel within 1d20 metres of the road.

**Moving into the Dead Zone:** the Living City runs patrols along the corridors and kill teams in the area either side, removing the majority of threats. Once a person moves away from the corridor into the Dead Zone proper, the risks increase.

Every 100 metres there is a 5% chance of encountering 1 Kernel within 20 metres of your position.

## About the Author

David J Rodger was born in Newcastle Upon Tyne in 1970. He has published three novels (fiction) and is the creator of YELLOW DAWN, a successful role playing game based on the world formed by his books.

He has written freelance non-fiction for UK magazines and had short stories published in the UK, US and Canada. His presence on the Internet got him a place in a BBC documentary in 2000, 'Through The Eyes of the Young.'

He spent 8 years working for a government agency, within the IT Division, developing a virtual communications service, before moving into commercial online project management for a major UK publisher.

He now lives in Bristol with a Braun coffee-maker, writing from a house on a hill with a view of the Earth's curve. He can be found on the web at:

[www.davidjrodger.com](http://www.davidjrodger.com)

## About Yellow Dawn

The Earth has been ravaged by viral pathogens. The death of billions was observed by the orbital colonies and deep-space habitats largely unaffected by the Outbreak. Terrified of infection, nobody came to help. Less than 30 percent survived the first few weeks. Then came the 2nd Wave of infection, spreading steadily outwards from the impact points, and that was when the horror really began...

It's been 10 years since Yellow Dawn happened and you're part of this world. A survivor. You've seen a handful of cities bounce back; you've seen settlements spring up across the New Wilderness and you've seen the dead things that come shrieking out of the ruins at full sprint. Rumours of alien monsters and Satanic ceremonies filter out from the deep wilderness on the tongues of travellers; you've seen recorded footage, fuzzy and badly shot, purporting to be evidence of a new threat to humankind. Some people believe, most do not. There's a hundred different stories hitting the satellite feeds every day, of people carving a niche for themselves in this Brave New World: adventurers, entrepreneurs, engineers, mercenaries and story tellers. It's been 10 years and now you've got a chance to join them. A chance to become a hero. Post an advert on-line fishing for clients, or stuff your possessions into a backpack and head off into the New Wilderness to test your skills.

**FEATURES:** High-tech and Low-tech weaponry • Equipment and armour • Zombie surges • Computer hacking • Drug abuse • Non-human characters • Scavenging Dead Cities for resources and raw components to build whatever you need • Enhancements through cyberware and bioware. • Complex political, corporate and quasi-religious tensions • Schools of Elemental Magick, occultism, demonology, and many new alien horrors of the Outer Chaos - H.P. Lovecraft's Mythos.

Preview or purchase a copy: [www.lulu.com/content/923035](http://www.lulu.com/content/923035)

## Shadows of the Quantinex (beta)

"Shadows of the Quantinex" is a major campaign for Yellow Dawn. It allows the characters to discover the truth behind this event: the machinations of an individual obsessed with The King in Yellow, and his desire to "bring his God into this world". It also plunges the characters into a desperate race to stop the next catastrophe... a major conspiracy building up to deal another blow to humanity, except this time the King in Yellow has been usurped by a far more powerful Mythos entity, and the consequences will be far reaching (not just Earth)..

Preview or purchase a copy: [www.lulu.com/content/2216451](http://www.lulu.com/content/2216451)

## New "Mythos" Novels

For the uninitiated I'm referring to the collective body of cosmic horror begun by the American author of horror, fantasy, and science fiction, Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890 – 1937). In particular, I'm referring to his Cthulhu Mythos, which contains within its black heart a pantheon of monstrous, god-like entities, and often describes the "sanity-shattering" consequences for those protagonists who foolishly attempt to learn more about them, or worse, interact with them.

This is a brief statement the role Mythos plays in my writing to capture the interest of Mythos fans. None of the PR around my writing screams out "Cthulhu Mythos" bad guys. However, two of my novels, *God Seed*, and *EDGE*, have significant Mythos elements.

**GOD SEED:** see what an aspect of Nyarlathotep has in store for humanity. Can documentary film-maker, Adam Kyle, stop it? Or will Kyle merely capture a record of humanities demise.

Preview or buy a copy: <http://www.lulu.com/content/673735>

**EDGE:** after several millennia roaming the outer cosmos a potent Mythos entity - a Great Old One - has crawled back within our reality through a weak-spot in the Quantispheric boundary. The remote mountain is now a snowboarding resort in New Zealand. See the shocking consequences as its emergence corrupts the susceptible minds within the resort.

Preview or buy a copy: [www.lulu.com/content/4137991](http://www.lulu.com/content/4137991)

Wishing you the best of dark dreams.

David J Rodger  
- Bristol, 2008

