

The Devil's on Third

By Eric Frackleton

The first thing to note is that the first letters of the words in the flavor text are larger than the rest and spell out *TERNARY*. This indicates that the numbers should be examined in base 3. This is also hinted at with the title, which is reminiscent of baseball's third base, aka base 3.

The second thing to note from the text is the numbered list. This indicates that there are no zeroes, a one is associated to a dot, and a two is associated to a dash. Samuel M. is also mentioned to hint at Morse Code.

Hence each letter in Morse code corresponds to a unique number in base 3, which are the numbers in the puzzle. This results in the following conversion table:

A	5
B	67
C	70
D	22
E	1
F	43
G	25
H	40
I	4
J	53
K	23
L	49
M	8
N	7
O	26
P	52
Q	77
R	16
S	13
T	2
U	14
V	41
W	17
X	68
Y	71
Z	76

Decoding the message above, you get:

UNLUCKY

DECK OF CARDS

ALPHABET SIZE

DAYS IN WEEK

FIVE SQUARED

LONELIEST NUMBER

Each of these messages corresponds to a number, giving the sequence 13 52 26 7 25 1. Reapplying the same decoding scheme, you get the answer **SPONGE**, which can be used to clean up the devil's mess.