

# VENDETTA RUN



BY

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# ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST

*"All right, Clanton ... You called down the thunder. Well, now you've got it! ... Take a good look at him, Ike, because that's how you're gonna end up! ... The Cowboys are finished, you understand me?! I see a red sash, I kill the man wearin' it! So run, you cur ... run! Tell all the other curs the law's coming! You tell 'em I'm coming... and Hell's coming with me, you hear?! Hell's coming with me!"*

-- Wyatt Earp, in *Tombstone*, written by Kevin Jarre

You've rustled cattle. You've stolen horses. You've killed men. You've done worse things, but you've never done anything as dangerous as angering the Earps. Because now they are coming to kill you. And they can't be killed. Not permanent, anyhow.

In December 1881, after the gunfight at the O.K. Corral, three Cowboys ambushed and shot Virgil Earp. Three months later, four Cowboys shot Morgan Earp in the back and killed him. Wyatt Earp assembled a posse of his surviving relations and willing gunmen to hunt down the killers, gunning down the Cowboy Frank Stilwell in Tucson on March 20, 1882. You and the other Cowboys can no longer count on corrupt or intimidated local authorities for protection. The Earps have turned vigilante, riding out in vendetta against you, and you have turned and run.

This survival-horror frame for *Fear Itself* is set in the worst and weirdest West, a nightmarish distortion of reality and of history.

## THE COWBOYS

The players all take the roles of Cowboys, members of the quasi-criminal ring of local rustlers and thieves in cahoots with Sheriff Behan. One of you may even be Sheriff Behan -- the Earps no longer care about legal niceties. Your party is one group of Cowboys, with the Earps' posse on their trail.

## RELATIONS

Decide how your character is related to at least one other character in the party: brother or cousin, father-son, uncle-nephew, inseparable best friends, jailmates, rivals for Cowboy leadership, etc. This relationship should be a powerful motivator for your Cowboy. The GM may consider acting against that relationship motive a soft risk factor, costing 2 Stability.

The other character's player can veto anything except family bonds -- you can't pick your kin.

In addition to relations, you may want to decide each character's affinity and enmity within the group (*Fear Itself*, p. 30).

### PRINT THE LEGEND

The Earps represented northern, Republican business interests (such as Wells Fargo) in a town and territory whose newspapers (the *Tombstone Epitaph* excepted) were solidly pro-southern and Democratic. Those papers' propaganda, combined with Wyatt Earp's own tendency (and that of his biographers) to exaggerate his past to sell books or movies, have fed an anti-Earp debunking tradition still going strong after a century and more. One can thus still read serious academic histories written from an anti-Earp perspective, but the bottom line is that the Earps were duly elected town marshals and deputies, and the Cowboys were thieves and murderers. Wyatt Earp's "Vendetta Ride" was colorably vigilantism -- but even then, Wyatt was a deputized U.S. Marshal, riding against a gang who had bought the sheriff, killed peace officers and stage drivers, and back-shot his brothers. Wyatt's posse killed nobody except those directly involved in Morgan's death. In short, the Earps were the good guys. But even then, the Earps were much scarier than their foes -- that's how Wyatt kept the peace in Wichita and Dodge City without firing a shot for three years. Speaking of real history, Wyatt Earp walked into gunfire at both the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral (five Cowboys shooting at him) and the Iron Springs ambush (nine Cowboys shooting at him) and never received a scratch. In the world of horror, the scariest guy in the territory becomes the bogeyman -- especially to you back-shooting curs.



## SINS

Determine your character's **besetting sin**, ideally choosing from among the seven traditional offerings: Pride, Wrath, Envy, Sloth, Greed, Lust, and Gluttony.

Then answer the question: **What is Your Darkest Secret?** This might be same as your answer to the standard *Fear Itself* question: What's the Worst Thing You've Ever Done? Or, in a game in which all the player characters are thieves and murderers (or at best accomplices to murder), it might not.

Use these as guides to roleplaying your Cowboy.

The GM may optionally spare the life of a Cowboy in a scene in which he reveals (or allows to be revealed) his Darkest Secret. Confession is good for the soul.

## RISK FACTORS

Choose a risk factor for your character, ideally reflecting or tied to his besetting sin. Possible parallelisms include:

**Pride:** Curious, Dismissive, Skeptical

**Sloth:** Drug Fiend (opium or bourbon), Oblivious

**Envy:** Greedy, Vengeful

**Greed:** Greedy

**Wrath:** Gung Ho, Vengeful

**Lust:** Horny, Thrill-Seeking

**Gluttony:** Drug Fiend, Thrill-Seeking

**Any:** Curious, Protective

You might derive a Protective risk factor from your relationship, but be aware that this is a very dangerous risk factor in survival horror.

## ABILITIES

Buy abilities as normal for GUMSHOE, using the following parameters:

# OF PLAYERS	INVESTIGATIVE BUILD POINTS
2	16
3	12
4+	10

Each player gets 65 build points to spend on General abilities, regardless of group size. Fleeing points cost half: spending 1 build point gets you Fleeing 2.

Every player character gets 1 Riding, 1 Health, and 1 Stability for free.

No ability is capped, although it may strain credulity to have a whole gang of Cowboys with Doctoring, for example.

Note that there is no Shrink ability available to you. You are callous men who do harm.

See the list of available abilities for *Vendetta Run* in the box on p5.

## ABILITY DETAILS

Most of the abilities in this campaign frame are familiar from other GUMSHOE games, or their parameters are obvious from their names. Others are simply familiar GUMSHOE abilities renamed for period flavor:

**Courtroom Talk:** Cop Talk, in this setting mostly judge and "marshal from Back East" talk since the (mostly non-professional) cops talk like everyone else + fancy, eddicated talk in general

**Doctoring:** First Aid, Medic; includes Diagnosis and other Investigative medical abilities including crude Forensic Science if needed

**Driving:** refers to carriages, buckboards, wagons, stagecoaches, etc.

**Mechanics:** includes lockpicking

**Smooth Talk:** Reassurance

**Sneaking:** Infiltration; if necessary also covers Shadowing (on foot), Surveillance, etc.

**Streetwise:** also covers rural bandits, rustlers, etc.

**Toadying:** Flattery + sucking up to those more powerful than you

Here are a few clarifications and details for the remainder:

## VENDETTA RUN ABILITY LIST

Investigative abilities with an (IP) are Interpersonal abilities. General Abilities with an asterisk are more likely to be called on to serve double duty as Investigative Abilities as well: spend 1 point of Doctoring to figure out the boy died of fright, for example.

### Investigative Abilities      General Abilities

Area Knowledge	Athletics
Bargain (IP)	Conceal
Book Learning	Doctoring*
Bullshit Detector (IP)	Driving
Carousing (IP)	Explosives
Courtroom Talk (IP)	Filch
Flirting (IP)	Fleeing
Intimidation (IP)	Gambling
Languages	Health
Law	Mechanics*
Notice	Preparedness
Occult	Riding*
Outdoors	Scuffling
Smooth Talk (IP)	Sense Trouble
Streetwise (IP)	Shooting
Taunt (IP)	Sneaking
Toadying (IP)	Stability

### AREA KNOWLEDGE (ACADEMIC)

Knowledge of the geography, terrain, lore, and population of the territory (vaguely, southern Arizona). Can be used, e.g., to pick ambush spots or recall local ghost legends.

### BOOK LEARNING (ACADEMIC)

Covers any fancy, high-falutin' knowledge like History, Chemistry, Accounting, and the like that comes up in play. The GM should be the judge of when something stops being Book Learning and becomes something more practical - although Book Learning covers plenty of practical arts, too, like distilling cactus liquor or recognizing silver in a mine.

### CAROUSING (INTERPERSONAL)

You can make friends in saloons, taverns, dance-halls, or on festival occasions, while retaining general command of your own tongue and faculties. This is also the ability to pick up the "word on the street" or at least in the bar or crowd, as the *Gaeen Reach* ability Scuttlebutt.

### EXPLOSIVES (GENERAL)

Tombstone is a mining town: dynamite (+6 per stick), black powder (+8 per barrel), and nitroglycerine (any positive modifier up to +9 per flask, but +2 to all Difficulties to set or safely trigger a charge) are all available.

### INTIMIDATION (INTERPERSONAL)

Signals unwillingness to back down from a physical challenge as much as willingness to begin one.

### LANGUAGES (ACADEMIC)

Operates as in *Esoterrorists* and *Trail of Cthulhu*: one extra language per rating point. Potentially useful languages in *Vendetta Run* include Spanish and Apache, as well as Latin or another occult tongue if the game heads that way. (Mexican characters begin with Spanish but probably need English.)

### RIDING (GENERAL)

Includes not only riding horses (and mules, perhaps), and tracking and following on horseback, but also the technical side of ranching and the general cowboy arts. Lasso attacks, for example, use Riding, not Scuffling.

If the Posse is chasing the Cowboys, the Posse needs only roll Riding for one of its member rather than piggyback for the group.

### SHOOTING (GENERAL)

All pistols and rifles do +1 damage; it is an age of heavy ammunition loads. Most shotguns are 12-gauge, doing +1 damage (+2 at Close range).

**Two-Gun Attacks:** Firing two pistols in the same round (two-handed) costs 3 Shooting + 2 Athletics. These points do not add to the die roll.

**Counting Rounds:** In a game where the GM intends to mimic the resource depletion aspect of survival horror, you begin with a number of bullets equal to 5 times your Shooting rating. You must replenish them in-game, spending a scene buying ammunition (or stealing it) or forcing your compatriots to provide your reloads.

### TAUNT (INTERPERSONAL)

You know what insult or gibe will spark a reaction from





your target. You may intend to put them off-balance, goad them into unwise action or revelation, or otherwise aim their ill-humor.

## HISTORICAL COWBOYS

Use the following list of historical Cowboys as a source of names (or family names at least), as NPCs, or as potential player characters. Suggested ability ratings to match the Cowboy's historical reputation appear in brackets, but don't feel bound by them - almost none of them are based on anything approaching reliable history.

Alex Arnett  
 Johnny Barnes  
 Sheriff John Behan [Courtroom Talk 1, Law 2]  
 Tall Bell  
 Frederick Bode  
 "Curly" Bill Brocius [Scuffling 6, Shooting 8]

Billy Claiborne  
 Ike Clanton [Taunt 2]  
 Phin Clanton  
 Jim Crane  
 Florentino "Indian Charlie" Cruz  
 Charles "Pony" Diehl [Riding 5]  
 Harry Ernsshaw  
 Jake Gauze  
 Dick "Dixie" Gray  
 Charlie Green  
 John Greene  
 Billy Grounds  
 Bill Harrison  
 Harry "the Kid" Head  
 Bill Hicks  
 Milt Hicks  
 Joe Hill  
 Jim Hughes  
 Zwing Hunt  
 "Rattlesnake" Bill Johnson  
 Luther King  
 Billy Lang  
 Ed Lyle  
 Johnny Lyle  
 Jake Mackenzie  
 John McGill  
 Frank Patterson  
 Johnny Ringo [Book Learning 1, Athletics 8, Shooting 8+]  
 Bud Snow  
 Pete Spence  
 Hank Swilling  
 Charlie Thomas

## THE POSSE

A posse led by Wyatt Earp pursues the Cowboys. While being pursued by Wyatt Earp and a dozen other deadly gunmen might be terrifying enough, the GM will likely want to add a supernatural component to the Posse.

She can add it either to their description:

- Deathlike pallor (true of the tubercular Doc Holliday in life).
- Wears a black suit like a mortician, including black gloves.

### OPTIONAL RULE: INTRAPARTY INTERPERSONAL COMBAT

To better model the disintegrating relationships of survival horror, some groups may wish to use Intraparty Interpersonal Combat. This is a one-round contest in which the winner can force the loser to go along with some scheme, plan, agenda, etc. The loser cannot overtly challenge the winner during the remainder of the scene or the entire next scene.

Each party to the contest secretly notes an Interpersonal ability he possesses and his spend (if any) from that ability. All reveal simultaneously and then each rolls one die. Add 1 to the total for the user of an ability which **trumps** his foe's ability. For example, if Ike and Curly Bill throw down, and Curly Bill spends 2 Intimidation and Ike spends 1 Toadying, then each adds +2 to his die: Curly Bill because he spent 2, Ike because Toadying trumps Intimidation so he can add +1 to the die along with his spend of 1. Ties go to the Cowboy with the highest Shooting *rating*; if it's still tied, roll again.

Then run the scene for a bit using those Interpersonal abilities, playing toward the outcome you know the dice have decreed.

This is horribly unfair and perhaps grating to player sensibilities, and intentionally so. It is meant to encourage raw rivalry, short-term decision-making, and tit-for-tat vengeance. Just like you see in zombie movies, or in bands of outlaws and criminals running for their lives.

INTERPERSONAL ABILITY	TRUMPS	TRUMPED BY
Bargain	Courtroom Talk	Smooth Talk
Bullshit Detector	Flirting	Courtroom Talk
Carousing	Smooth Talk	Flirting
Courtroom Talk	Bullshit Detector	Bargain
Flirting	Carousing	Bullshit Detector
Intimidation	Streetwise	Toadying
Smooth Talk	Bargain	Carousing
Streetwise	Taunt	Intimidation
Taunt	Toadying	Streetwise
Toadying	Intimidation	Taunt

- Implacable, almost machine-like movement without overt rage or emotion.
- Weirdly elongated shadows and strangely distorted shapes when seen at a distance, even when there

should be no light source or heat distortion. Or conversely, no shadow or reflection in a mirror.

- Stuttering, weird strobe or frame-drop motion like a ghost in a J-horror movie.



- Continues to bleed from the bullet wounds you inflicted two days ago, otherwise normal.
- Glowing red eyes.
- Wounds flow closed like clay being worked invisibly.
- Pale fire (or glowing scarlet hellfire) ripples around wounds, guns, eyes.
- After resurrecting once, begins to rot like a zombie.
- Gleam of a skull visible in shadows under the wide flat brim of his black hat; eventually revealed as a fully skeletal face like the countenance of Death.

Or to their abilities:

- **Revenant 1:** He doesn't stay dead. After being killed, he returns the next night at sundown, all ability pools refreshed.
- **Revenant 2:** After being killed, he can return in the next scene, with pools half-refreshed. They fully refresh the next sundown.
- **Revenant 3:** After being killed, he gets back up in a number of rounds equal to the amount of "extra" damage he took after Health 0 (or Health -12 for Kings).
- **Call Storms:** He spends Vindicta to call down the thunder. Each point spent adds 1 to the Difficulty the storm poses for Riding or Fleeing tests to escape, Sense Trouble tests to see anything through it, etc. At 2 points, the storm is mostly cosmetic and terrifying; at 4 points, he can direct lightning at inanimate objects in his vicinity; at 8 points, he can direct lightning at a man or horse (+4 damage, Difficulty 8 Athletics or Riding test to evade for half damage).
- **Colt of Wounding:** The bullets fired by his pistol are death-touched, connected mystically perhaps to the bullets that killed Morgan Earp. The wounds these Morgal bullets make do not heal; lost Health from their shots cannot be cured with Doctoring. At 10:50 p.m. every night, such wounds bleed out 1 more Health point each.
- **Darksight:** He can see in the dark, and has contest advantage (-1 to Difficulties, including foes' Hit Thresholds) in darkness.

- **Grave Chill:** By gaze, touch, or taunt, once per scene he can fill a target with the chill of the grave. He spends Vindicta and rolls; his total becomes the Difficulty of the target's Stability test to resist freezing. On a failure, the target must freeze for a number of rounds (-2 to Hit Threshold) or take Health damage equal to his margin of failure, or some combination thereof:

*Warren Earp spends 2 Vindicta and rolls a 6, for a total of 8. Ike Clanton must make a Difficulty 8 Stability test. He spends 2 and rolls a 2, failing by 4. The GM rules Ike freezes for 1 round and loses 3 Health (1 + 3 = 4).*

- **Head Shot:** Only a deliberate head shot or heart shot from the front (+2 to Hit Threshold) can wound a revenant; ignore (or treat as cosmetic) all damage to other body parts.
- **Hellfire:** He can cause the fires of Hell (+0 damage) to spring up by spending 2 Vindicta. For each additional point spent, the damage modifier of the fire increases by 1. The fire burns flesh for 1 round per point spent (background burns naturally). He must make a Shooting roll to set a living target on fire directly; a miss sets the nearest flammable object or building ablaze.
- **Regeneration 1:** He refreshes 1 Health per round until killed. Regeneration 2 refreshes 2 Health per round, etc.
- **Uncanny Speed:** He can spend 2 points of Vindicta for any of the following effects:
  - Shoot or otherwise attack more than once in a round, for a cost of 1 Shooting or Scuffling point per attack (Vindicta cost lowers to 1).
  - Move from Long to Close or Near to Point-Blank range (or otherwise cross 40-50 yards) in a single round when not directly observed.
  - Increase his Hit Threshold by +1 for four rounds.
  - Automatically get the drop or go first in a Shooting combat.
- **Other:** The GM may also wish to incorporate vampiric powers from *Night's Black Agents*,



superpowers from *Mutant City Blues*, or the powers of various monsters from the *Hideous Creatures* series or *Trail of Cthulhu*.

Or to both.

A Posse with full-fledged supernatural abilities doesn't have to visibly appear demonic or Biblical – summoned storms can just “happen to appear” and fires mysteriously start in their presence. Contrariwise, a skeletal Grim Rider might still use nothing more than a Colt .45 Buntline Special to kill his prey.

Note: Vindicta (Latin for “vengeance”) powers the Posse's supernatural abilities and otherwise replaces Athletics. A rider with a Vindicta rating of 8+ has a Hit Threshold of 4.

## DEUCES

These are the less significant members of the Posse. They might be bodies raised from the Tombstone cemetery, or simply enthusiastic citizens imbued with the Earps' sorcerous rage.

If all of the Deuces in a scene are killed *and* there are no un-killed Jacks or Kings in the scene, they remain dead until next sundown.

**Ability Ratings:** Health 4, Riding 4, Scuffling 4, Shooting 4, Vindicta 4

**Hit Threshold:** 3

**Damage Modifier:** +1 (pistol), -1 (knife), -2 (claw or bite)

**Alertness Modifier:** +1

**Stealth Modifier:** +0

**Suggested Powers:** Revenant 3, plus Darksight *or* Head Shot

**Historical Deuces:** Lou Cooley, Fred Dodge (infiltrates Cowboys among list of other Cowboy NPCs; first attack in game gets initiative and lowers foe's Hit Threshold by -2), Johnny Green, “Oregon” Charles Smith (Shooting 6), Daniel “Tip” Tipton (Shooting 6)

## JACKS

These are major members of the Posse. A Jack might be leading a group of Deuces, or operating alone as a scout or harasser. If their abilities wind up being lower than those of the Cowboys on average, increase them.



**Ability Ratings:** Health 8, Riding 8, Scuffling 8, Shooting 8, Vindicta 8

**Hit Threshold:** 4

**Damage Modifier:** +1 (pistol), -1 (knife), -2 (fist or kick)

**Alertness Modifier:** +1

**Stealth Modifier:** +1

**Suggested Powers:** Revenant 2 and Darksight, plus two other powers.

**Historical Jacks:** Warren Earp (Colt of Wounding; when killed the first time, summons Wyatt with a death-call), “Turkey Creek Jack” Johnson (+2 Alertness, Regeneration 2, lowers foe's Hit Threshold by 1 for every round spent aiming and not firing), Sherman W. McMasters (former Cowboy; Riding 12, +2 Stealth), “Texas Jack” Vermillion (a.k.a. “Shoot-Your-Eye-Out Jack”; Shooting 12, Uncanny Speed)

## KINGS

These are the leaders of the Posse, the deadliest killing gentlemen in this life or the next. They only die at -12, and never suffer any consequences from being Hurt or Seriously Wounded.

If both of them are dead, the Posse's direct attacks stop for the night.



## WYATT EARP

**Ability Ratings:** Gambling 5, Health 10, Riding 10, Scuffling 16, Shooting 12, Vindicta 16

**Hit Threshold:** 5

**Damage Modifier:** +2 (Buntline Special pistol), +1 (shotgun), +0 (pistol-whipping), -1 (knife), -1 (fist or kick)

**Alertness Modifier:** +3

**Stealth Modifier:** +1

**Suggested Powers:** Call Storms, Colt of Wounding, Darksight, Head Shot, Hellfire, Revenant 1

## JOHN HENRY "DOC" HOLLIDAY

**Ability Ratings:** Gambling 8, Health 8, Riding 8, Scuffling 10, Shooting 16, Vindicta 12

**Hit Threshold:** 4

**Damage Modifier:** +1 (pistol), +0 (silver-headed cane), +0 (knife), -1 (fist)

**Alertness Modifier:** +3

**Stealth Modifier:** +1

**Suggested Powers:** Darksight, Grave Chill, Regeneration 1, Revenant 1, Uncanny Speed; coughs acidic blood (+0 damage for 3 rounds) onto one foe once after a successful Scuffling attack; can refresh 4 Vindicta once per night by winning a contest of Gambling.

# THE RUN

The GM should abstract her treatment of Cochise County away from the specific and historical and toward the surreal, horrifying, and weird. The skies might glow red at night, the mountains shift and groan, the cacti sport howling faces.

Tombstone itself might be eerily deserted, or full of people who fear the Cowboys – but fear the Earps more. The Posse can appear any time they wish at Hatch's Saloon or the Town Marshal's office. The GM decides how much human interaction she wants to feature; the game might begin with mostly normal (if panicky and edgy) activity in Tombstone, perhaps allowing the Cowboys to wallow in their besetting sins one last time. Then it slowly darkens into the apocalyptic *métier* of survival horror as the citizens barricade themselves inside and leave the Cowboys to their fate.

The Cowboys must succeed at a Difficulty 4 contest of Riding to buy scenes without danger from the Posse. (In town, the GM may substitute Sense Trouble or Sneaking.) For every point of margin on that success, the party gets one scene free of interruption, for a maximum of three scenes.

## INSPIRATIONAL SOURCES

*High Plains Drifter* (Clint Eastwood, 1973)

"The Spectre of the Gun" (*Star Trek* episode, 1968)

*Tombstone* (George Cosmatos, 1993)

\*\*\*\*\*

*Inventing Wyatt Earp*, by Allen Barra

*Tombstone – Wyatt Earp, the O.K. Corral, and the Vendetta Ride 1881–82* (Raid #41, Osprey), by Sean McLachlan

*Wyatt Earp, the Life Behind the Legend*, by Casey Tefertiller

This contest can be piggybacked, and the Difficulty goes up by 1 every two days.

A particularly clever solution (such as the ruthless extermination with knives and teeth of an isolated farm family), or a generous spend (Area Knowledge to find a disused silver mine, Flirting to take over a brothel) can even set up a haven for refreshes of ability pools. Make the players work or spend to get havens – the Posse is always looking for them.

Gunfire (including between Cowboys) can always bring the Posse.

Every night's attacks should be different, ideally escalating over the course of the campaign from eerie events to a Deuce fight to a single Jack to a posse of Jacks and Deuces to a concluding gunfight at Iron Springs or back at the O.K. Corral again. If the Cowboys seem confident, pour on more Posse, and consider bringing Wyatt or Doc on screen. The first-act turn – when the Cowboys discover their foes don't stay dead – is a great opportunity for horror, so build toward and on it.

## ESCAPE?

In pure survival horror, escape is an illusion or a cheat. The Cowboys all die horribly, and instructively.

Players often expect coddling and success, however, even in horror games. Here are some possible solutions to encode into the adventure and reveal in exchange for contrition or tactical brilliance:

- The Devil built Wyatt's faro box (or "shoe") in exchange for a favor back in Wichita. It sits in the Orient Hotel (where Wyatt used to deal faro), quietly spitting out new cards. Until it stops dealing, the Posse keeps reviving.



- There is a signed demonic pact (in a locked Wells Fargo message box) in the Earps' house, or buried with Morgan. Burning it with an Occult spend ends the Posse's sorcerous power.
- Wyatt, Doc, and Turkey Creek Jack are all Freemasons; they performed a Masonic working in Tombstone's Masonic Hall (King Solomon Territorial Lodge #5) and left their notes in its library. It requires 5 points total spent from Book Learning, Courtroom Talk, and Occult to figure out a counter-rite: put the pistol that killed Morgan into Wyatt's hands, sacrifice 5 Health in blood, and activate the "unworthy craftsman rite." Once performed, Wyatt turns on Doc and kills him and the Posse disintegrates.
- Fundamentally, it's Ike Clanton's cowardice, malevolence, and stupidity that got the Cowboys into this. Hang him in front of the Marshal's office and it can all end. This requires sufficient investigation (and perhaps flashbacks) for the townsfolk and NPC Cowboys to keep pointing out Ike's role; it only works dramatically if Ike is a player character.
- Any Cowboy who survives until Easter (April 9) and makes it to a Catholic confession that day can be forgiven and escape the Earps' hellish justice. The Vendetta Ride begins on March 21, the vernal equinox.
- After the characters die or survive immersion in enough dramatic juice to make it worthwhile, there is a whirring blur and they wake up in their uniforms on the surface of an alien planet. They had been hit with an old Combine mental weapon leftover from the War, the Posse were androids, and the PCs are all *Ashen Stars* characters. Boldly go!

### VENDETTA RUN ON THE OWLHOOT TRAIL

The party is not likely to be Cowboys, so they must take on the Cowboy curse by trickery or spite or greed. They stumble across a near-dead Ike Clanton, who promises them his hidden fortune (from the robbed Fargo stage) if they save him from "the Devil." If they agree, that transfers the curse to them. If they decline, he spits blood onto whoever is closest (the one who actually refused, likely) and dies cursing him. Presto, the curse is still transferred - Clanton's blood glows and sinks into the callous one's skin.

And we're off. The party can investigate the backstory in Tombstone, where locals insist on treating them as though they were well-known Cowboys, perhaps even calling them by Cowboy names.

*Pale Rider*: "And I saw a rider on a pale horse, and his name was Death, and Hell followed with him." The equivalent of a King.

Lvl 8, GRIT 4, DRAW 4, WITS 3, HP 63, Def 22, MDef 21. Buffalo pistol-whip +12 (1d8) *Scythe & Wesson .45 caliber Pistol* +12 (or both guns at +10/+10): 2d8+2; range 0-2; 6 shot. *Hellhound Shotgun* +12: 3d6 at range 0, 2d6 at range 1, 1d6 at range 2; fire both barrels for +1d8 damage. *Hardy 1, Deadly 1.*

Wyatt is WITS 4, *Hardy 2*; Doc is DRAW 6 (Pistol +14), *Sickly 1 against any damage except bullet damage; Deadly 2.*

Any gun that fires a shot that hits and damages a Pale Rider briefly glows pale green (Wile + WITS to spot, DC 18 during combat); its next shot automatically hits the nearest comrade of the firer, or the firer himself (in the back) if he is alone.

Pale Riders also have the following Powers, at +11:

*Hideous Laughter* (2nd Rank Trick)

*Anger of the Storm* (3d Rank Spirit)

*Singing Forth the Corpse* (4th Rank Spirit)

The Jacks are *Spectres* (OHT, p. 54) who also carry *Scythe & Wessons* in .44; Pistol +6 (or both guns at +4/+4) (2d8). They also have *Hideous Laughter* and *Anger of the Storm* (both at +5).

The Deuces are *Zombies* (OHT, p. 54) with DRAW 1. They carry *Scythe & Wessons* in .38; Pistol +3 (1d8+1).

None of the Posse can be permanently killed - they resurrect the next sundown -- until the silver star worn by Morgan Earp (and buried with him) is melted down. (The GM decides if Morgan is buried in Tombstone, somewhere in the Territory kept secret to protect his body from desecration, or in California as it was historically.) If instead, a true hero sworn to protect Tombstone dons the star, the Posse rides to the graveyard and vanishes.