

protodimension magazine



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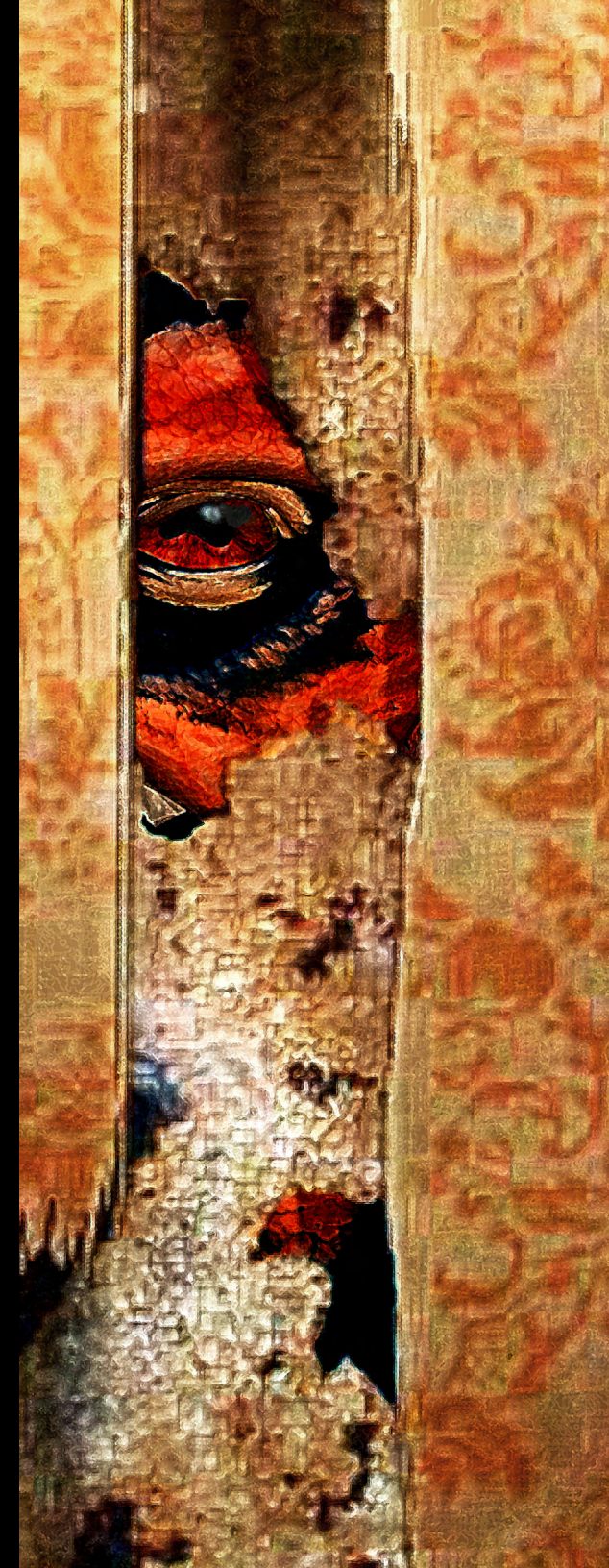
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MERCURIAL

A metallic proto-dimension

By Ron McClung

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

Proto-dimension: Mercurial

Type: Splinterland

Discontinuity: 2

Assimilation Effect Value: 40

Mercurial is a minor *splinterland* of desolate beauty. Upon first glance, it is an endless world of metallic mountains, hills, pools and oceans. The beauty is mesmerizing to some. However, it is as beautiful as it is deadly. Some believe that this world was once a full sized Earth-like world that was consumed by a dimensional being made of metal, while others believe it was a dark lord's experiment gone wrong. All theories aside, the truth is probably more complicated than anyone could imagine.

Mercurial is a world of living metal. This living metal exists in varied states—liquid, semi-solid and solid. There are several different metallic types in this dimension, dividing the world into four primary factions—Chromes, Coppers, Golds, and Irons. Each metallic type has a central hive mind and can form various metallic beings to do its bidding. These metallic factions are far from unified. They have fought many wars of domination over their world and are currently in a state of cold war. Only the prospect of new power would spark a new war, a prospect like a gateway to another world.

The living metal of this world consumes anything and everything organic. Upon touch, an organic being is slowly absorbed and transformed into an infected golem slave, the victim's mental capacities completely taken over by a new consciousness loyal to one metallic faction or another. The infected golem then becomes a carrier for the living metal, which will infect anything organic it touches. Assimilation in this dimension represents naturally converting to this living metal and is usually very painful as well as mentally terrifying when the hive mind (of the nearest faction) begins to take over.

Each metallic hive mind can also produce its own *mercurial* golem to serve the same function as an infected golem. If an infected or mercurial golem were to infect another world, it must stay in contact with the hive mind through an open gate or else eventually disintegrate. The only way to cut that connection—similar to the mystic's silver thread—is to close whatever gate it came through. A mercurial golem's primary goal is to infect enough of the world to allow the central hive mind to transfer from Mercurial to the new world. How much is enough is not known.

The hive minds can also spawn “pocket minds” to create “metallic mind servants”—fully intelligent beings that serve the hive mind wherever it is needed. These metallic mind servants along with the infected or mercurial golem drones have been known to venture out into the dimensions for short recon missions. While on these missions, the metallic mind servants maintain the golems from disintegrating but neither are able to infect the world unless a gate is open to Mercurial.

While in the service to a metallic mind servant, the golems can spawn smaller drone creatures or form into any shape needed. While alone, the golems remain in a single initial form created by the hive mind.

Stats for these minions are left to the Game Master.

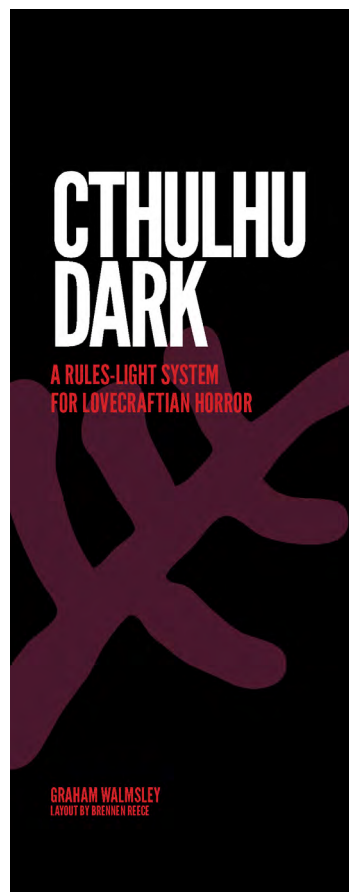
WIGHT WEDDING

Something Old, Something Horrid

By Shae Davidson

FOR CTHULHU DARK

Wight Wedding is a non-Mythos adventure for Graham Walmsley's *Cthulhu Dark* in which long-buried secrets cause a group to turn on one another as a supernatural avenger approaches.



HOMECOMING

One spring morning each investigator receives an email from Cass and Danni, two close friends of many years, announcing their wedding. The wedding will be a small event with a handful of Cass and Danni's other friends from high school in attendance. The investigators have not been back to their hometown of Pine Grove in many years and even Cass and Danni moved from the area in their twenties, but they decided to hold their simple ceremony in the fondly remembered spot where they first realized they were falling in love.

THE INVESTIGATORS

In addition to listing the PC's core concept, the players need to determine how the characters knew one another (and Cass and Danni) during high school. Maybe they all had AP History together, or played games at the local bookstore—anything that works for the group. The investigators may not have kept in direct touch with each other after leaving Pine Grove, but they will have remained fairly close to Cass and Danni.

After the players have discussed the concepts of each investigator and how the characters knew each other in Pine Grove each player needs to create a secret known to the character. Each should roll a die out of sight of the other players. If the number is even, the secret involves the investigator and either Cass or Danni and reflects some experience they had growing up in Pine Grove. If the number is odd, the secret is something the character has heard about another one of the investigators, but to which he or she has no direct personal connection.

The secrets should be something damaging to the character's reputation if not illegal or outright horrific. The players must not share these with one another, but should note them for the Keeper.

CANDLES

Ideally the group will be playing the scenario at night or in a darkened room. The Keeper should safely

light five candles on the table plus one for each player. These will be extinguished over the course of the adventure.

The Keeper will blow out four candles as the story unfolds. The candle in front of a player will be extinguished when a secret (whether true or false) about the player's investigator is revealed or when the character first makes a SAN roll.

Only one candle should remain at the end of the scenario.

THE FAUSINGER HOUSE

The wedding is being held at a house museum about five miles outside of Pine Grove. Cass and Danni volunteered at the site when it was first opened to the public. The house, built in 1837, is a three story structure (not including a dormer-windowed attic) overlooking the Sand Run River. Horace Fausinger, the original owner, had been a land speculator and member of the state assembly, although most accounts seem to indicate that he was more feared than loved by his constituents. He died childless in 1864.

The current director has heard about the time and energy Cass and Danni dedicated to the house when they were in high school and readily agreed to let them use the museum for their wedding, even offering to serve as officiant due to an obscure old law granting museum directors the power to solemnize marriages.

The wedding has been scheduled for a Sunday afternoon in late April, just before the site expands its weekend hours. Mr. Cabell, the director, insists on escorting the group around the museum when they first arrive. Reproductions fill the dining room and parlor on the first floor, and these two rooms are easily accessible to the public. An attached kitchen stands behind the dining room, and a doorway leads to a twentieth-century addition containing a restroom constructed when running water was installed in the house

in the 1930s. A velvet rope barricade guards the doorway leading from the parlor to a library. Mr. Cabell's office is in an old bedroom on the second floor. The other bedrooms are filled with pieces from the period and stand safely behind velvet barricades. The locked attic—a single room running the length of the house—provides storage for the museum.

Mr. Cabell brags about his role in expanding the exhibits as the group tours the house. He is keen on showing period acquisitions to Cass and Danni, and is particularly proud of an ornate pocket watch and pair of wire-rimmed glasses locked in a glass display case in the parlor, both of which belonged to Horace Fausinger himself. An old photograph hangs above the case, showing the Fausinger house and the long-gone double row of trees that once created an avenue leading across the broad front lawn from the river to the main entrance. Danni explains that it was taken sometime between 1909 and 1913, and is the oldest known photo of the structure.

THE STORM

The sky darkens as the wedding party finishes unloading food and cameras from their cars, and a steady grey rain settles over the area as Cass and Danni move upstairs to change for the ceremony. Over the next twenty minutes the sky turns to dark slate and rain lashes the walls and windows of the house. Mr. Cabell rushes to turn on the lights. Electric lights were added in the 1940s, but they don't fit the style of the building. The lights only seem to illuminate small pools, and the light they do provide looks garish and unnatural. Anyone who didn't accompany Mr. Cabell on the tour of the house must roll a d6 and a SAN die when entering a new room of the house after the storm has started. If the SAN die is higher, the angles of the walls seem to shift and investigators feel shadows moving just outside of their peripheral vision.

The Keeper should extinguish a candle when Mr. Cabell turns on the lights.

Anyone who tries to flee the house will be driven back inside. The rain literally beats most investigators back to the relative safety of the house. A character who is particularly tough or has a high willpower will be able to push into the storm, but quickly becomes disoriented. The vague outlines of the investigators' cars seem to appear then vanish behind curtains of rain, the character stumbles in puddles and runs into bushes, and somehow ends up tripping over the stairs leading to the main door of the house.

THE FIGURE

Despite the violence of the storm Cass and Danni decide to move ahead with the wedding. Mr. Cabell lights an old kerosene lamp and places it on a small round table in the middle of the parlor, and lights two candles on the mantle. As the wedding party settles into the room for the ceremony each player should roll two dice. The character with the highest total notices something odd about the photo. One of the trees nearest perspective of the viewer seems to conceal something. A drab shapeless form can be seen emerging from behind a tree, with a much thinner protrusion jutting in the direction of the house. Neither Cass nor Danni has ever noticed the detail before, and Mr. Cabell is adamant that it was never in the image until today.

The keeper should extinguish another candle.

As the storm rages and the sky grows even darker, the strange form continues to appear in the painting. After the first sighting it becomes apparent that it is a figure cloaked in some kind of cloth. Each time it is seen it will have moved closer to the house—sometimes partially visible behind trees, sometimes moving in a weird loping crawl along the center of the vanished avenue. The drab cloth shrouding the figure makes it impossible to get a clear view of it, although it seems strangely

thin and its limbs sometimes appear at unnerving angles.

The rain is too heavy for any of the investigators to see anything through the windows unless the player is willing to risk a Sanity roll. The figure becomes clearer with each successive effort however. The first person to try peering through the windows will see a thin humanoid crouching in the yard watching the house. The second will see nothing at first, but then catch a glimpse of it belly-crawling along the ground sniffing as it goes. The third investigator to try looking into the storm will see the revenant kneeling and staring at the house, its shroud whipped by the wind. The creature has strange empty eyes and beneath the bit of the shroud concealing its lower face the PC will see its jaw moving up and down.

Anyone whose SAN die was higher will see the creature and have a feeling of overwhelming rage. In addition, if the third PC to try rolls a higher SAN she will have a weird glimpse—like a fragmentary memory—of crawling along the ground during the violent storm.

The creature's position in the yard when spotted always matches its position in the picture.

LOOKING FOR ANSWERS

It is apparent that the creature in the picture is slowly and deliberately moving toward the house. As the party moves through the house desperately peering through windows and the picture in the parlor continues to change, Danni asks if anyone has any idea what the figure is or what it wants. Cass ventures that it is coming for someone in the house.

Ideally, at this point the investigators will begin raising the secrets they have heard. If the players are reluctant, Cass or Danni can mention one of the secrets involving his or her partner, but not mention the investigator's role. The other will sputter a defense and mention the PC's involvement.

During the course of the argument Danni and Cass will try to shift blame onto others if a secret involving them is brought to light.

Mr. Cabell is obviously nervous, but will stay out of any arguments unless the group is in the parlor. He seems more agitated as rain slams into the parlor's windows, and becomes openly hostile and accusatory while there before retreating to his office in anger and locking himself inside.

THE FINAL TERROR

The lights flicker occasionally when the picture shows that the creature has made it halfway down the old avenue leading to the house. When the specter nears the last tree the picture shows it suddenly sprinting to one side of the house. As the picture continues to morph the ghoul runs around the side of the house and disappears behind the back, at which point power to the house is lost.

Extinguish another candle

Anyone willing to risk SAN to see the specter at this point—if close to one of the windows on the side of the house it's circling—will see only the suggestion of something running on bone-thin legs. If the SAN die is higher she will hear a horrible triumphant laugh.

The creature is the wight of Horace Fausinger. It has come to the house to avenge the desecration of Fausinger's grave by Mr. Cabell, who found the isolated family plot in the hills behind the museum and—two nights prior to the wedding—opened Horace's coffin and stole his watch and glasses.

After creeping behind the house the specter will enter through the door or first floor window farthest from the party. Inside the house it moves in a bear crawl (using its hands and feet rather than hands and knees), and will generally only stand fully erect to survey a room for Cabell or Fausinger's stolen possessions.

The keeper should extinguish a candle when the specter is first seen directly inside the house. In addition, each investigator needs to make a SAN check when first getting a clear view of the ghost.

The creature will only leave when it has retrieved the glasses and watch and killed Cabell. Moving the watch and glasses will distract the vengeful spirit (and can even trick the ghost into going back outside) unless it has already caught sight of the museum director. When the revenant finds Cabell it will try to force him to the floor, pry open his mouth, and breathe some of the dust of its grave into his face. It is impossible to move the creature once it has pinned its victim. The creature lashes out at anyone who rolls a one or two when attempting to free Cabell. Anyone who is struck will lose feeling in the body part the creature touched. For the remainder of the investigator's life the location of the blow will feel stiff and sore during rainstorms. The ghost continues to breathe into Cabell's mouth for about one minute. A sudden bolt of lightning blinds the investigators as a peal of thunder rattles the entire house. When they regain their senses they find Cabell dead and the figure gone. A medical examiner will later rule that he died from an asthma attack.

The investigators may hit on the idea of destroying the photo before the wight enters the house. As soon as they destroy the image all of the windows and doors in the house blow open, unleashing a gust of wind and rain that knocks everyone present to the floor. After the investigators catch their breaths they will find Mr. Cabell lying dead with a look of terror on his face. A medical examiner will later rule that he died of a massive heart attack. The investigators will find no trace of the strange shrouded figure, and the glasses and watch will be missing from the locked display case.



NOTES

The secrets about other investigators are only rumors. If the player who is the focus of one of the rumors wants to run with it, though, the group should follow through.

The Keeper can adjust the number of candles and their placement in any way. Rather than sitting around a table, the group could play while lounging in a living room with the candles scattered to create small pools of light.

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The basic idea for White Wedding comes from the M. R. James story "The Mezzotint." The setting has its roots in the Jenkins House museum north of Huntington, West Virginia. The site felt cut off from the world when it rained, and the electric lights that had been retrofitted into the old building had an almost disorienting effect at night.

Thanks to Johanna Haas for editing and advice.

A CONSPIRACY AMONGST THE STARS

A Dark Conspiracy inspired campaign

By Linden Dunham

FOR THE 3:16 RPG

INTRODUCTION

A Conspiracy Amongst the Stars is a campaign for Gregor Hutton's military science fiction role playing game **3:16**. It is primarily intended as a follow up to a successful Dark Conspiracy campaign. Having seen off the alien threat humanity gears up for round two: Taking on the monsters in their own back yard!

The campaign setting is much the same as that presented in the "3:16" rulebook, but with the Terran utopia coming about some time after the repulsion of an alien invasion in the early 21st century. The aliens may have been defeated but they are still out there somewhere and maybe one day they will come back. This dormant threat provides the Terran government with its *casus belli*, as well as a reason for the Troopers (perhaps descendants of the original minion hunters) to join up. As the campaign progresses the Troopers may learn that not all aliens are hostile and perhaps start to ask questions about their intergalactic crusade.

As well as providing additional setting information Dark Conspiracy also features a menagerie of aliens, servitors and allies, plus unrelated nasties, suitable for populating a standard twenty-planet 3:16 campaign. They add a little more color than the game's random generation tables, which often create interesting aliens but leave the GM to do the work in describing their appearance, habitat and behavior.

For each alien I've given it's 3:16 type followed by Dark Conspiracy beastie/minion identification in brackets together with original source and page number. All page references are to first editions. Abbreviations are DC=Dark Conspiracy Rulebook, DR=Dark Races, PDS= Proto-dimensions Sourcebook.

The campaign can of course be played as a straight "3:16" game without reference to Dark Conspiracy. The discovery that the Expeditionary Forces are a dumping ground for those unable or

unwilling to live in the Terran utopia packs considerable dramatic force in itself. That's without sending the Troopers off on what they think is a "good war" and then pulling the rug from under them...

BACKGROUND

In the early 21st century Earth found itself under attack by aliens. Not the classic *War of the Worlds* style planetary assault, but a clandestine take over by a variety of different alien races that infiltrated seats of government, the military, large corporations and other institutions. The aliens seemed more interested in acquiring and misusing power for its own sake rather than outright territorial conquest. As if causing pain and misery to the word at large counted for more than subjugating it.

Some of Earth's inhabitants became aware of this hidden invasion and waged a guerilla war against the aliens and their human collaborators. After a long and bitter struggle the aliens were exposed and defeated. Earth entered a new era of enlightenment and prosperity. Still, a racial memory of the war against the cruel extraterrestrials persisted within the Terran psyche, along with the fear that the aliens might one day return. With the invention of the faster than light drive (itself developed from captured alien saucers) humanity at last had the means to launch a pre-emptive strike against its enemies. The Earth Council founded the Expeditionary Forces to seek out and destroy the aliens on their homeworlds. Never again would Terra be threatened by invasion. The cosmos would be cleansed of hostile life.

THE CAMPAIGN

The planets are presented in the sequence that the 3:16th are ordered to attack them. In the initial phase of the campaign the Troopers find themselves up against horrific aliens whose wholesale extermination probably won't cause too many pangs of conscience. They may discover links

between different species, and conclude that the aliens are working together in a vast plot against Terra. By the time they assault the Dark Lord controlled world of Holbein the Troopers might well believe that they are keeping Terra safe from a malevolent alien conspiracy. However, once Holbein falls subsequent missions are increasingly directed against species that offer no threat to humanity. At this stage the Troopers, as well as experiencing a sense of anticlimax, perhaps start to wonder what the point is of their mission to kill all extra-terrestrial life...

Some planetary descriptions contain a section headed **Intelligence**. This is information about life forms on other planets. It should become available after the final encounter with a successful NFA roll. If the Troopers fail to locate the information it is subsequently discovered by the 3:16th's Intelligence Company. In either case details are passed up to the Brigadier and his command staff so that they can plan future assaults. PCs of Colonel rank and above can nominate those particular planets for attack if they wish, but need to persuade their fellow officers with a successful NFA roll (unless a PC is the Brigadier in which case he/she can simply order an attack).

Planet Number:	PT09A001
Planet Designation:	DURER
Planet Type:	Cloud/Gas Planet
Alien Lifeform Type:	Siren (Bloodkin, see DC p214)
Alien Ability (AA):	5
Alien Special Ability:	Regeneration

Notes: Vampire planet. The inhabitants feed on Durer's less advanced life forms by drinking their blood. The arrival of the 3:16th promises a welcome change in diet. The Bloodkin are vulnerable to sunlight but the thick clouds of gas that envelope Durer filter out the harmful rays of the system's sun. In the daytime the planet is bathed in a strange red glow that gives a blood colored tinge to the landscape.

The gas clouds also disrupt starship sensor beams. The 3:16th's command echelon know that there is life on Durer but they don't know what type. Initial planetary missions are reconnaissance based i.e. establishing if intelligent life present, and if so what type along with an assessment of how much a danger it represents. Of course the PC's platoon is one of the first units on planet.

The Bloodkin initially appear human, welcoming the Troopers as long awaited rescuers. They claim to be the descendants of a failed colonisation effort, forced to hole up in the various stone keeps and fortresses that dot the planet's surface to escape the depredations of Durer's hostile wildlife (of which there is remarkably little sign). The Troopers are invited into one of the fortresses for a banquet in their honour. If the Troopers accept they are in danger of ending up on the menu: Mid-way through the celebrations the Bloodkin drop their disguise and attack.

Subsequent encounters involve pitched battles storming Bloodkin citadels then defending against the inevitable counter attacks. The Bloodkin have well developed empathic powers. They inflict "Emotional" damage when fighting at near and far range, and have the option of doing so at close range.



Planet Number:	PT09A002
Planet Designation:	POLLOCK
Planet Type:	High Gravity
Alien Lifeform Type:	Humanoid (Dwarf Gremlins, see DR p42)
Alien Ability (AA):	Lowest FA
Alien Special Ability:	Stop Technology

Notes: Pollock is a huge scrap heap, its surface covered by vast piles of rusty metal. Some heaps of wreckage are recognizable as the hulks of starships, perhaps pulled down to the surface after being caught in the planet's gravity well?

Flitting in between the piles of of junk are the planet's inhabitants, misshapen dwarf-like creatures well adapted to the planet's high gravity. They are technically proficient and excel at sabotage. They also possess telekinetic abilities. Troopers encountering the Gremlins soon discover that their weapons are useless. Getting in close and fighting hand to hand is the only sure way of killing these aliens. Frustratingly, the Gremlins are unwilling to engage in a stand up fight. A successful use of their AA in an encounter usually sees them opening up the range as they try to retreat from combat. The Troopers are left lumbering after the Gremlins in their heavy Mandelbright armored suits. If the Troopers are badly weakened in an encounter the Gremlins will press their advantage, emerging from the nooks and crannies of the surrounding junk piles to attack *en masse*.



Planet Number:	PT09A003
Planet Designation:	TITIAN
Planet Type:	Asteroid Belt
Alien Lifeform Type:	Furred Creatures (Super Rats, see DR p93)
Alien Ability (AA):	Lowest FA+1
Alien Special Ability:	Lasting Wounds

Notes: The larger asteroids in this system play host to colonies of highly evolved rodents—bipedal, intelligent and about half the size of a man. The rats have a fully functioning if ramshackle life support system that provides their tunnel complexes with a breathable atmosphere. Nonetheless the tunnels are still unpleasant places for humans being cramped, dirty and pervaded by the smell of rotting garbage.

Initial encounters take place in mine tunnels, smelting plants and storage facilities. The final battle takes place inside a hollowed out asteroid used as a spaceport.

The Super Rats' special ability represents their tactic of using poisoned weapons, ranging from worker creatures armed with filth smeared knives to soldiers equipped with firearms whose ammunition has been treated with virus cultures.

Intelligence: Records stored in a Heath-Robinson style computer system indicate that the rats are visited on a regular basis by cargo vessels from the planet Cezanne. Details of the trading arrangements between the two worlds can also be obtained, plus imagery of the other alien race, grey skinned humanoids with elongated skulls, large almond shaped eyes and small slit like mouths. The rats mine metals from the asteroids which they trade with the humanoids for items of advanced technology or luxury foodstuffs.



Planet Number:	PT09A004
Planet Designation:	KANDINSKY
Planet Type:	Dense Atmosphere
Alien Lifeform Type:	Shadow Beasts (Stalkers, see DR p87)
Alien Ability (AA):	(Highest NFA+Lowest FA)/2
Alien Special Ability:	Reduce Visibility

Notes: Kandinsky looks like the set of an old German expressionist horror film, a dark rocky landscape wreathed in thick fog that clings to the stone outcrops and boulders. The air itself feels almost solid. Trying to move through it is like wading through soup. The sinister robed figures that inhabit Kandinsky have no such difficulty, gliding along the ground with great speed. They loom out of the thick fog to strike at their enemies with broad bladed daggers fashioned out of a black metal that cuts through Mandelbrite armor with ease. Having inflicted casualties they fade away back into the fog and regroup for their next attack.



Planet Number:	PT09A005
Planet Designation:	CARAVAGGIO
Planet Type:	Arid
Alien Lifeform Type:	Slugs (Insectoid ET Grubs, see DC p219)
Alien Ability (AA):	Lowest NFA
Alien Special Ability:	Swarm

Notes: A nursery for the insectoids of Monet (qv.) which deposit their eggs in the cavern systems beneath Caravaggio's inhospitable surface. The grubs hatch out and are immediately thrown into a Darwinian struggle where they must learn to hunt and kill if they are to reach adulthood. There is food in the caves in the shape of a fast breeding, blind albino chimpanzee like species, but it has to be caught. Grubs that reach maturity go back to Monet with returning egg transport ships.

When the Troopers first explore Carravaggio's cave system they encounter subterranean apes that subsist on lichen and fungus growing in the caves' upper levels. The prospects of a turkey shoot soon evaporate as the Grubs arrive on the scene. They aren't particularly fast or clever fighters but they are persistent and there are a lot of them. With each encounter there seems to be more and more of the beasts as they try to overwhelm the Troopers by sheer weight of numbers.

After clearing the caves the Troopers are faced with one final mission: Assault on a grounded starship shot down by the 3:16th's fighter-bomber wing. The flight crew, half-a-dozen insectoid creatures resembling human sized cockroaches are dead, killed by the impact. The cargo is largely undamaged and is in the process of hatching out. The Trooper's last fight takes place inside the cavernous hold of the alien ship against a horde of newly born and very hungry Grubs.

Intelligence: The insect aliens' technology is organic and difficult for humans to understand. The GM may like to apply a penalty to Trooper NFA rolls when trying to obtain useful data from the crashed starship. A successful roll reveals that the the craft originated from Monet. Details can also be obtained of the insectoids' practice of transplanting their young to Caravaggio where only the strongest and most aggressive reach adulthood.



Planet Number:	PT09A006
Planet Designation:	MONET
Planet Type:	Desert
Alien Lifeform Type:	Insectoids (Insectoid ETs, see DC p219)
Alien Ability (AA):	(Highest FA+Lowest NFA)/2+2
Alien Special Ability:	Ambush

Notes: The deserts of Monet are dotted with huge towers of sand resembling termite mounds. Each tower is hundreds of meters tall and houses a colony of Insectoids. The Troopers are assigned to assault one tower and kill everything they find inside. A nightmarish battle against a sophisticated and implacable enemy follows.

The Insectoids' technology is equivalent to the Troopers: The aliens defend themselves with organic looking energy weapons. The creatures are also well versed in the art of ambush, emerging from connecting tunnels that run under the desert between the hive towers. Inside the hive the aliens pop out from behind well camouflaged trap doors set into the walls, floors and ceilings. As if this wasn't bad enough the interior of the hive is physically and psychologically unpleasant for humans: Its chambers are dark and gloomy, the surfaces often coated with slime. Progress through the structure is via a multiplicity of interconnected tunnels running in a dizzying array of directions sometimes twisting back on themselves and providing plenty of opportunities for the enemy to strike in the attacking force's rear. At times the Troopers feel as if they are progressing through the digestive system of some vast monstrous creature. One particularly large and heavily defended chamber is adorned with a star chart showing a sizeable expanse of intergalactic space centered not on Monet as one might expect, but instead a world known to the Expeditionary Forces top brass as Holbein.

The final encounter of the mission takes place in the Royal Chamber near the top of the tower. The remnants of the hive's defenders fall back here to make a last stand protecting the queen and her eggs. The PC who removes the last threat token is assumed to have killed the queen, they only receive one kill but qualify for a Crimson Sword or Skull.

If a Trooper deliberately targets the queen prior to removal of the final threat token then the aliens should be treated as having the Big Mothers ability for this encounter only: The Trooper must make an even numbered FA roll to hit the queen and again receives only one kill, but they will be awarded a Crimson Sword or Skull. If the queen is killed in this way any trooper who subsequently removes the last threat token also qualifies for a decoration in the usual manner.



Planet Number:	PT09A007
Planet Designation:	CEZANNE
Planet Type:	Low Gravity
Alien Lifeform Type:	Advanced Humanoids (Humanoid ETs, see DC p218)
Alien Ability (AA):	Highest NFA
Alien Special Ability:	Impair

Notes: Cezanne is inhabited by “Grey” aliens that live in majestic floating cloud cities. Although physically unimpressive the Greys possess advanced technology that allows them to fight the 3:16th on equal terms. The aliens are equipped with flying saucers, missiles and beam weapons. They also have psychic powers which can be used to inflict “E” type damage as well as creating realistic hallucinations that confuse Troopers and reduce their fighting efficiency.

Intelligence: A temple like building contains a frieze depicting a star chart similar to the ones found in the insectoid hive on Monet. Again the central symbol depicts the planet code-named Holbein.



Planet Number:	PT09A008
Planet Designation:	DEGAS
Planet Type:	Water World
Alien Lifeform Type:	Oozes (Amoebeons, see DR p6)
Alien Ability (AA):	Lowest FA+2
Alien Special Ability:	Ignore Wounds

Notes: The ocean planet of Degas is infested by Amoebeons—protoplasmic blobs that feed by engulfing and absorbing other organic life. They are used as a slave race by the amphibian aliens of Picasso who regard them as a kind of biological Swiss Army knife—versatile enough to perform any number of tasks but still fundamentally a tool. This is a misjudgment. Nourished by the brains of their prey the Amoebeons are gradually increasing their racial intelligence and are ready to rebel against their overlords. Then the 3:16th arrives on the scene...

After a number of aquatic encounters the Troopers discover a starship of unknown design floating on the surface of the ocean. Its crew of octopoid aliens are all dead. Many of the corpses are still in the process of being consumed by their killers, a pack of Amoebeons unwilling to be taken off world to be slaves. A few Amoebeons have gathered in the bridge of the ship and are trying to figure out how to make it fly again.

Intelligence: The starship's data banks reveal that it originated from Picasso. It is a harvester vessel designed to scoop up large numbers of Amoebeons from Degas' oceans. The Amoebeons escaped the harvester's holding tanks and slaughtered the crew.



Planet Number:	PT09A009
Planet Designation:	REMBRANDT
Planet Type:	Forested Surface
Alien Lifeform Type:	Canines (Moreau Weres, see DC p230)
Alien Ability (AA):	(Highest NFA+Lowest FA)/2+2
Alien Special Ability:	Isolate

Notes: Rembrandt's inhabitants are bipedal wolf like creatures living a hunter-gatherer existence in the vast tracts of forest that cover their world. Although technologically primitive their intelligence should not be underestimated. They possess a strong tribal culture and are adept at hunting in packs. The Canines will try to draw the 3:16th into the woods where the humans can be isolated into smaller groups and picked off with relative ease. Likely battle grounds include forest trails, clearings, a tribal camp site and an abandoned extraterrestrial base.

Intelligence: The abandoned base is a laboratory. Alien computers inside a sealed chamber contain records that reveal the Canines are genetically modified animals native to the planet which the Picasso aliens hoped to employ as a soldier/slave race. The modified Canines proved utterly intractable, rebelled against their creators and drove them off planet.



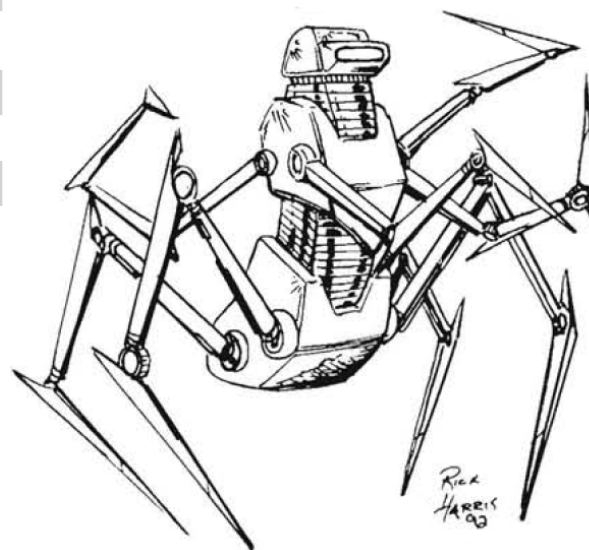
Planet Number:	PT09A010
Planet Designation:	BOSCH
Planet Type:	Poisonous Atmosphere
Alien Lifeform Type:	Artificial Lifeforms (Mechaniacals, see DR p59)
Alien Ability (AA):	Highest FA-2
Alien Special Ability:	Armour

Notes: Bosch is an industrialized hell-hole. Factories, powerplants and warehouses cover the planet. All of the buildings belch out vast clouds of poisonous fumes that make the atmosphere deadly for humans. The factories produce legions of robots intent on exterminating and/or cannibalizing organic life. Not that there's any organic life left on Bosch. The 3:16th's arrival provides the robots with an opportunity to carry out their primary programming.

The initial encounter will be with the murderous Steriloids. In a subsequent encounter the PCs meet a group of Symbiods that have massacred another unit of Troopers and scavenged their body parts. The PCs may recognize the remains of former comrades: "That thing, it's *wearing* Sergeant Dolan's face!"

Steriloids and Symbiods are prone to fighting each other and this may provide material for flashbacks, e.g. a PC who selects cowardice as a weakness is able to run away and hide when rival squads of robots start blasting lumps out of each other.

Intelligence: One encounter should take place in an underground laboratory, similar to the one found on Rembrandt, littered with the corpses of aliens from Picasso and Cezanne. Data can be recovered describing the creation of the robots by the Picasso aliens, the emergence of programming faults and assistance by the humanoids from Cezanne that accidentally created the Symbiods. The aliens abandoned Bosch to the robots but the occupants of the lab didn't evacuate in time and were slaughtered by Steriloids.



Planet Number:	PT09A011
Planet Designation:	PICASSO
Planet Type:	Reefs and Coral Islands
Alien Lifeform Type:	Amphibians (Tentacular ETs see DC p219)
Alien Ability (AA):	Highest FA-1
Alien Special Ability:	Boost Ability

Notes: With the 3:16th having visited three planets inhabited by the Picasso aliens' failed experiments the Brigadier and his/her staff consider the Tentaculars a priority target for annihilation. The aliens are malevolent, but also show a degree of ineptitude that actually manages to compound their dangerousness. They have to be stopped before their rogue creations spread across the universe and threaten Terra.

If the Troopers thought the Tentaculars' propensity for using servitor races meant that the aliens were likely to shy away from combat they're sadly mistaken. The aliens are aggressive and technologically advanced. Their multiple limbs also enable them to wield more than one weapon at a time making them quite deadly combatants.

If forced on to the defensive the aliens retreat to island fortresses which have to be reduced one by one in bloody seaborne assaults.

Intelligence: Inside the last fortress to fall to the 3:16th is a coral lined chamber, a combination of temple and chart room. Carved in exquisite detail on one wall is a star map with the world designated "Holbein" at its center.



Planet Number:	PT09A012
Planet Designation:	HOLBEIN
Planet Type:	Rain world
Alien Lifeform Type:	Sentient Planet - Dark Lord
Alien Ability (AA):	10
Alien Special Ability:	Solitary

Notes: The rain sodden world of Holbein is the home to the being served and worshipped by the aliens of Monet, Cezanne, and Picasso. It is psychically powerful entity able to harness the fabric of the planet to defend itself. The Troopers are harassed by a multiplicity of lifeforms which employ a variety of tactics against the invaders. As if that was not bad enough the weather itself seems to be fighting the Troopers: Heavy rainstorms cover alien attacks, disrupt communications and damage equipment.

Having finally fought their way through the Dark Lord's armies the Troopers encounter the master alien itself, a curiously unimpressive shapeless blob of protoplasm covering exhausted in a cave on a mountaintop. It proves all too vulnerable to the Troopers' weapons.



Planet Number:	PT09A013
Planet Designation:	RENOIR
Planet Type:	Mountainous
Alien Lifeform Type:	Flying Beasts (Rock Gargoyles, see DC p36)
Alien Ability (AA):	(Highest FA+Lowest NFA)/2
Alien Special Ability:	Suicide

Notes: Renoir's mountains are host to colonies of Rock Gargoyles: Leathery skinned winged creatures, roughly humanoid in outline but when viewed up close are also seen to possess apelike and reptilian characteristics. They are territorial beasts and fight ferociously to defend their mountaintop nests. As the Troopers try to scale the mountainsides they come under constant harassment. The Gargoyles launch vicious diving attacks against the human invaders, or else climb to high altitude where they can bomb their opponents with rocks and tree trunks.

The Gargoyle nests are actually tunnel complexes that extend deep down into the rock of the mountains. Like the insectoids of Monet the Gargoyles are a hive society and the Troopers may begin to experience a sense of *deja vu* as they fight their way into the nest. This time the last stand takes place by a communal dung heap where the Gargoyles place the Queen's eggs to incubate. In the encounter with the Queen the GM may like to utilize the same Big Mothers rule that applied during the final Monet battle: The Queen's physical proportions aren't hugely different from her servitors, but she is tougher. The opportunity to win an additional Crimson Sword or Skull could make for some entertaining rivalry between medal hungry Troopers.



Planet Number:	PT09A014
Planet Designation:	REUBENS
Planet Type:	Electrical Storms
Alien Lifeform Type:	Giants (Ogre, see DC p225)
Alien Ability (AA):	(Highest FA+Lowest NFA)/2+1
Alien Special Ability:	Enrage

Notes: The Troopers may be forgiven for thinking they've been dropped into the realm of storm giants from ancient Nordic myth. The thunder and lightning lashed world of Reubens is inhabited by gargantuan humanoids whose lives on their bleak planet revolve around violence as they fight over territory and scarce food. While the Giants may not be very bright they do know that they don't want the 3:16th making life any more nasty, brutish and short than it already is. Putting aside their personal animosities they attack ferociously with clubs and crudely made swords. Ranged attacks are made with slings, spears and the occasional uprooted tree trunk.



Planet Number:	PT09A015
Planet Designation:	WHISTLER
Planet Type:	Volcanic
Alien Lifeform Type:	Plants (Spongies, see DC p176)
Alien Ability (AA):	Lowest NFA+2
Alien Special Ability:	Exploding Bodies

Notes: The volcanic soil of Whistler is extremely fertile and supports a rich variety of plant life. Some of it has developed rudimentary intelligence as well as locomotive abilities. The Spongies are able to ascertain when a nearby volcano is about to erupt, and then escape before they are engulfed in lava or clouds of poisonous sulphur. The plants also use their mobility to hunt their prey, i.e., animals slower, smaller and less intelligent than they are. The plants obtain nourishment by seizing living creatures in their myriad tendrils and sucking them dry of fluids. The Spongies will try to utilize this technique against the Troopers, their tendrils seeking joints and flaws in Mandelbrite armor suits. Fighting the Spongies at close range presents an additional danger: The plants explode when killed, scattering poisonous spores all around.



Planet Number:	PT09A016
Planet Designation:	MATISSE
Planet Type:	Ice World
Alien Lifeform Type:	Apes (The Yeti, see adventure module "Ice Daemon" p20)
Alien Ability (AA):	Highest NFA-1
Alien Special Ability:	End Encounter

Notes: Matisse is inhabited by two-meter tall white furred apes which are well adapted to living in its bitterly cold climate. Having encountered the brutish Ogres of Reubens the Troopers may think they are in for more of the same here: a primitive but violent enemy whose sheer savagery makes them a dangerous proposition in combat. It soon becomes clear though that the Yeti do not want to fight. The first few encounters end prematurely as the aliens use their special ability. Their white fur allows them to blend in with the surrounding snow landscape so that they can retreat out of range.

In subsequent encounters the Yeti, angered by the deaths of their fellow aliens, charge headlong into battle, eager for revenge against the human invaders. The aliens prefer to fight hand-to-hand but if forced to fight at near or far range they throw large icicles, and rock-encrusted lumps of snow with deadly precision. They use their End Encounter ability if a battle goes badly for them but will renew the attack before too long.



Planet Number: PT09A017
Planet Designation: KLIMT
Planet Type: High Humidity
Alien Lifeform Type: Dinosaurs (Dragons, see DC p193)
Alien Ability (AA): (Highest NFA+Lowest FA)/2+1
Alien Special Ability: Leaping

Notes: A world of primeval aspect; steaming swamps, forests of huge trees and warm, shallow oceans. It seems only appropriate that the dominant life form is fearsome looking dinosaur-like reptiles. The Dragons more than live up to their appearance being voracious predators that hurl themselves at their prey in a lightning fury of slashing claws and snapping teeth. Although the Dragons undoubtedly possess a high degree of animal cunning they do not seem very dangerous to the universe at large. The Troopers could be forgiven for thinking that they've been sent to Klimt just to keep them occupied in the aftermath of the fall of Holbein.



Planet Number:	PT09A018
Planet Designation:	GOYA
Planet Type:	Temperate
Alien Lifeform Type:	Felines (Sabre Tooth Tigers, see DC p196)
Alien Ability (AA):	Highest NFA-2
Alien Special Ability:	Rapid Movement

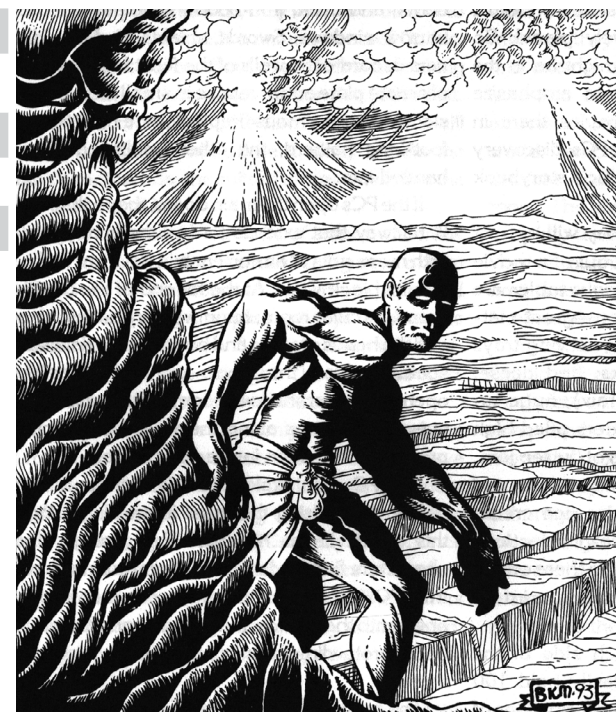
Notes: Like the Dragons of Klimt the dominant species on Goya are animals: dangerous animals that put up a fierce fight on their home ground but don't pose any threat to Earth. More "busy work" for the elite Troopers of the 3:16th?



Planet Number:	PT09A019
Planet Designation:	MICHELANGELO
Planet Type:	Resource Rich
Alien Lifeform Type:	Mineral Based Forms (Obsidian People, see PDS p 89)
Alien Ability (AA):	Lowest NFA+1
Alien Special Ability:	Flee

Notes: The expeditionary force needs Michelangelo for its metal and mineral deposits. The plan is to turn the planet into a production facility building the ships, vehicles and weapons the force needs to continue its galactic campaign against the aliens. The indigenous inhabitants have to be wiped out first though.

The Obsidian People prove to be an enigmatic enemy. They are of uniform appearance, resembling humanoid statues carved from jet black stone. Seen up close their faces are inscrutable, devoid of expression. They are well equipped with energy weapons and fight methodically rather than aggressively. They often disengage from combat at an early stage, retreating in good order and evading the Troopers' pursuit. It's almost as if they regard humans as a nuisance, one which they'd prefer to avoid rather than fight.



Planet Number: PT09A020

Planet Designation: WARHOL

Planet Type: Pleasure Planet

Alien Lifeform Type: Corrupt Troopers

Alien Ability (AA): Highest FA

Alien Special Ability: Induce Weakness

Notes: The initial survey of Warhol found it to be idyllic and uninhabited by intelligent life. The planet was designated a rest area, a place where exhausted Troopers could go to rest and recuperate after particularly grueling missions. Warhol's pleasant climate and beautiful landscapes offer a naturally therapeutic environment to battle fatigued and wounded soldiers. The entire 15th Brigade under Colonel Dennis Bacchus was sent to Warhol for R&R a month ago. After a week of positive, if inconsequential, radio reports all communications from the 3:15th stopped. Attempts by the fleet to make contact have been unsuccessful. Accordingly the 3:16th has been tasked with finding out what happened to its sister unit.

The restful, even soporific, atmosphere of Warhol has worked its magic on the men and women of the 3:15th. The unit has deserted *en masse*, abandoning their sworn mission of genocidal mayhem in favor of a hedonistic existence on the new-found pleasure planet. One or two have made desultory efforts at farming, but in truth the planet is amply supplied with naturally growing foodstuffs and there is no need for agriculture other than as a hobby for those so interested.

The PCs first encounter is likely to be with some ex-Troopers who try to persuade their former comrades from the 3:16th to join them in a life of easy pleasure. If the PCs respond in their usual fashion it does not take long for the survivors of the 15th Brigade to find their previously abandoned weapons and mount a stubborn defense of their new found idyll.

Warhol's atmosphere combined with the 15th Brigade personnel's exhortations to throw down their weapons means the PCs can suffer "E" type damage. In the final encounter the PCs are addressed by Colonel Bacchus, the 3:15th's commander who tells them the real reason for their ongoing mission to protect Earth: The Expeditionary Forces are just a convenient way to get rid of Terran society's misfits and undesirables. The aliens may have been a threat once, but not any more. He urges the PCs to stop being the tools of a corrupt regime that despises them and join the 3:15th on Warhol. The choice is theirs. Warhol's sybaritic society is perhaps not that different from the one the PCs joined the Expeditionary Forces to escape so this plea may fall on deaf ears. On the other hand the enraged Troopers may withdraw from the planet and go in search of a new target...Earth!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article uses material from the expanded alien abilities list at <http://316.wikidot.com/alien-abilities>, and also the *Disposable Heroes* supplement by 3:16 designer Gregor Hutton which appeared in issue 1 of the *Collective Endeavour Journal* (available as a free download from RPGNow: http://www.rpgnow.com/product_info.php?products_id=59188)

Planets have been presented in the same format as that used by the Planetary Survey (random planet generator) at: <http://bullypulpitgames.com/projects/316/planets.php>

SIGHTS SELDOM SEEN

An Urban Explorer Career

By Jason D McEwen

FOR CONSPIRACY RULES/DARK CONSPIRACY III



Maria watched Tsutomu check his gear. "First aid kit, camera, two flashlights, chalk...."

Maria glanced at her current beau, Kyle, "I've managed to get these from my brother's crib."

Kyle looked at the pistol Maria thrust in his hand, a Glock 9mm, easy to use. Kyle knew these tunnels had a bad rep, a couple of guys went missing a week ago, "Let's go."

Urban Explorer

Urban Explorers are serial trespassers, they do not steal or vandalize the areas, but post pictures and videos online. As more are injured, killed, or missing, more are arming up. This is usually a mike or nome interest.

PREREQUISITE: None.

First Term

SKILLS: Climbing 2, History (city or locale) 2, Intrusion 2, Map 1, Navigation 0, Observation 1

Subsequent Terms

SKILLS: Act/Bluff, Admin/Legal, Bribery, Computer Operations, Construction, or previous skills.

All Terms

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT: 9+, DM+1 for increased risk (see below), for **Crime, Gun Combat, Melee, Perception**

PROMOTION: None.

CONTACTS: One per term, Journalist, Law Enforcement, Specialist (civil engineering). On 1D10 roll of 8+, the contact is foreign.

SPECIAL: Check once per year (four per term) to see if the character is caught trespassing. Roll for an Average [Intrusion] test. The character can take a DM+1 to the Special Assignment roll, but has to take a DM-1 for the trespassing test. If the test is failed, determine the penalty with an Average [Act/Bluff or Admin/Legal or Luck] test or a Difficult [INT] test. If this test is failed, the character receives a fine of 1D3 x \$100. Critical Failure doubles the fine. If the character cannot pay the fine, the sentence is 1 day in jail for each \$50 fine.

The character can also take a DM+1 to the Special Assignment roll at the risk of getting hurt. Declare the attempt, and roll 1D10. If the result is greater than the character's current CON attribute, the character has received an injury and receives a -1 to the CON attribute.

When figuring beginning cash, use the Intrusion asset instead of SOC for each term as an Urban Explorer.

EL NIEBLA ROJA

A Bar Brawl

By Phil Ward

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

"EL NIEBLA ROJA": THE RED MIST

ARE YOU READY TO RUMBLE?

RED MIST IS a short, violent encounter set in the Austin fight scene, because every game needs a bar brawl. It takes place in two locations: a small motel which has been occupied by a pride of ogres smuggled from Mexico, and a sports bar where a Martial Arts Champion is about to discover his opponent is inhumanly tough...

GAMEMASTER'S BACKGROUND

Mixed Martial Arts has been popular across Texas for many years, the coming of the Dark led to an upsurge in unregulated, no-holds-barred bouts. The desperate enter the cage for a shot at fame and fortune, and ballotmen fight to the death in penthouses for some corporators' entertainment.

The **Tower Sports Bar** is a favourite on the local circuit, one of the last stops before fighters move up to televised bouts and Austin's Darklings sometimes feed on the crowd's bloodlust and anger during a fight.

One Darkling is a little more involved than the others, a **Dread Sidhe** who tamed a **pride of ogres** in the Sierra Madres near Sinaloa, Mexico and trained them as wrestlers. He smuggled them over the border to join the American fight scene, where the feeding is richer.

The pride originally booked a room in a Holiday Hilton, but after the old bull ate a desk clerk, they moved to a **No-Tell Motel** on the outskirts of Austin. They are laying low until the alpha makes his US debut at the Tower Sports Bar. During the fight, one of the fans takes offence to the Dread Sidhe's manner and guts him with a ceramic knife smuggled past security. When he goes down in the second, the ogres are no longer under his empathic control, and their bestial nature takes over.

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

The action can start in either the bar, or the motel, so choose your opening location, then read or paraphrase the following to your players.

SELF-STARTERS: IN MEDIA RES

This intro leads the hunters to Tower Sports Bar:

"You've chased them for a couple of weeks now, a pair of psychic leeches, fattening on bloodlust and pain across Texas, leaving catatonic victims behind them, trawling the easy pickings of the local fight scene.

"The biggest match of the month is about to take place in the Tower Sports Bar, famous for weekend cage fights, no way your prey will miss the crowd frenzy there."

EMPATHICS: FOREBODING

This intro takes the PC's to the No Tell Motel, read the following to the PC with the highest Foreboding skill:

"The white bakelite phone rings and you pick it up, hearing the clicks of a call centre computer hunting a free customer service agent:

*"Good evening sir, I hope I haven't disturbed you, I was wondering if you had thought about changing your long distance telephone provider? I represent **Austin, Texas Telemarketing**, and do I have a deal for you!"*

"Before you can answer the accented voice blurts a Spanish phrase, then the screaming starts. Blood flows from the ear piece before a final loud crunch and the right side of your face is sprayed with dark blood."

GM's Note: For more experienced hunters add two Darklings of whatever race you like to the Tower Sports bar, and make it a four way fight!

THE PATRON — DRONES

This introduction can send the hunters to either location; one of them is contacted by a friend of a friend, a freelance reporter:

“Your friend said you had an interest in the unusual. I work with drones, and I usually have one following me when I ride; it lowers my health insurance premiums. Now watch this feed.”

“The video follows a pushbike along the sidewalk, pedestrians step out of the way on the helmet cam, except for two that the rider swerves around, Hispanic, one young and massive, face obscured by a grey and silver mask, the other distinguished and grey with a sneer on his face.

“The thermal shows a different story, the tall figure is a giant, twice the width of anyone else on the street and half as tall again. There are cold spots in the figure, dead spots in the cameras heat vision. It’s not human.

“I had the drone follow these two, they led it to the No-Tell Motel just off I35 at the Tower Sports Bar”

GM’s Note: Mr Jabituya is not a freelancer, he’s a talent scout indentured to **Jenner Talent Acquisitions**, looking for a new reality TV angle on combat sports. If the hunters check, he has video drones at their meeting.

STARTING AT THE BAR

This weekend at the Tower Sports Bar and Grill, **Mick Walker**—aka the Texas Ranger—will take on Mexico’s best in a fight that’s expected to push him up into the **Unlimited Fighting Federation**. There will be scouts in the audience, and video drones from half a dozen TV Stations buzzing over the excited crowd.

Walker’s opponent, **El Coloso Tóxicos** (The Toxic Giant) has never fought this side of the border, but he has a perfect 20-0-0 record as a **Luchador Rudos** (A “heel” in American wrestling) in the **Nova Laredo Metroplex**. He’s an enormous man (7’6 and 200 kg’s) famed for his brutal fighting style, and never ever speaks. His trainer **Ricardo Valentin** makes up for his silence however and capers around his fighter as he walks to the cage, insulting his opponent, the referee, and anyone else who catches his eye. He seems to enjoy the anger he gets from the crowd, almost feeding on it.

THE DARK TRUTH

El Coloso Tóxicos is a stunted **ogre** dominated by his trainer Valentin, a **dread sidhe** who puts others in the limelight and then feeds on the crowd reaction.



BENJAMIN JABITUYA - DRONE ENGINEER

An Indian-American (not an American Indian), Dr Jabituya traded in a job in R&D for the bright lights of TV, he hunts new experiences for jaded viewers.

Level:	Novice
Skills:	Observation 8, Electronics 8
Likeness:	Fisher Stevens in Short Circuit
Motivation:	Spade 8, Diamonds 6
Personality:	Will tell you whatever you want to hear to get you to sign and ensure his bonus.
Gear:	Red/MAAP Camera Drone Swarm (q.v.), Bike, Cycling clothes, Bike helmet (as helmet melee only), Red/MAAP PVCC (q.v.).



TOWER SPORTS BAR AND GRILL

"Where nobody knows your name and nobody cares"

The Tower is a four story corner bar in South East Austin on the edge of the Controlled Zone along the central I35 corridor. It's a tough bar patronised by oil worker, day labourers, militia members, and other rough and ready types.

The first floor bar is a beer and whiskey chaser place, and god help anyone who asks about micro-breweries. There's no cover, no dress code just a large bouncer on the door, and a gun-ported security booth inside.

On weekends, the upstairs is a popular spot for combat sports, where a good win means moving to the Minor Leagues of TV Mixed Martial arts.

ENTRY

At the door bouncers run metal detectors over the clientele; weapons are checked in the *cloakroom*.

NOVA LAREDO METROPLEX

Designated a free trade city, and one of the trade hubs between Mexico and America under President Trump's "Great Wall of Mexico" act, the Nova Laredo 'plex combines the cities of American Laredo, and Mexican Nuevo Laredo. The city is a free marketer's dream where Mexican Cartel's whitewash their profits alongside American Corps looking for the next big thing.

The Nova Laredo Flea Market is infamous to hunters as a place where you can buy anything, want alien Energy weapons, check, synthetic organs, check, 20mm armour piercing incendiary ammunition, check, just be sure you have a way to smuggle them all past the Border Patrol.

ID's aren't checked too thoroughly if the underage pay a cash cover fee.

THE BAR AND GRILL

The bar is decorated with dark, well-worn wood and brass, the floors are sticky, and the walls are covered with sports memorabilia and mementoes of foreign wars. White walls mount flat screen TV's armoured with mesh and Plexiglas. There's always a game somewhere, and usually somebody running a book. The grill serves Tex-Mex and burgers but there's no table service.

THE SECURITY BOOTH

Just inside the main entrance is a secure booth with a steel door and thick Plexiglas, full of metal lockers. Weapons are stored, magazines out, chambers blocked with safety flags. One security staff member is stationed here, armed with a Taser, issuing receipts for check-ins.

THE FIGHTING FLOOR

Behind a Staff Only door, stairs lead up to the arena, two floors knocked together into one cathedral of violence; brushed concrete, bare bulbs and a long bar. At the centre of the room stands a raised six-sided fighting cage, the hexagon.

On fight night, two bouncers stand at the top of the stairs, and patrons pay ten *dolmarks* to watch blood spilled. During a big match, swarms of micro-UAV's buzz around filming in case there's broadcast quality mayhem. To one side, the changing rooms are guarded by two more security men.

THE FOURTH FLOOR

Is set aside for Whitman's offices, living quarters, and some storage, the fight is unlikely to spread up here.

PAUL WHITMAN

Usually found behind the first floor bar, Whitman likes to play the cowboy. If the hunters can avoid



PAUL WHITMAN - BAR OWNER

Ex-Army and very Texan, Whitman has a six gun on his belt, and a shotgun under the bar.

Level:	Veteran
Skills:	Small Arms (both) 7,
Likenesses:	Don Johnson in Machete (2010)
Motivation:	4 Hearts, 6 diamonds
Personality:	Whitman likes to chat with his clients, and he's always looking for new revenue.
Gear:	Colt Python, "Tactical" Remington 870; side saddle, glass cutter, torch and black.

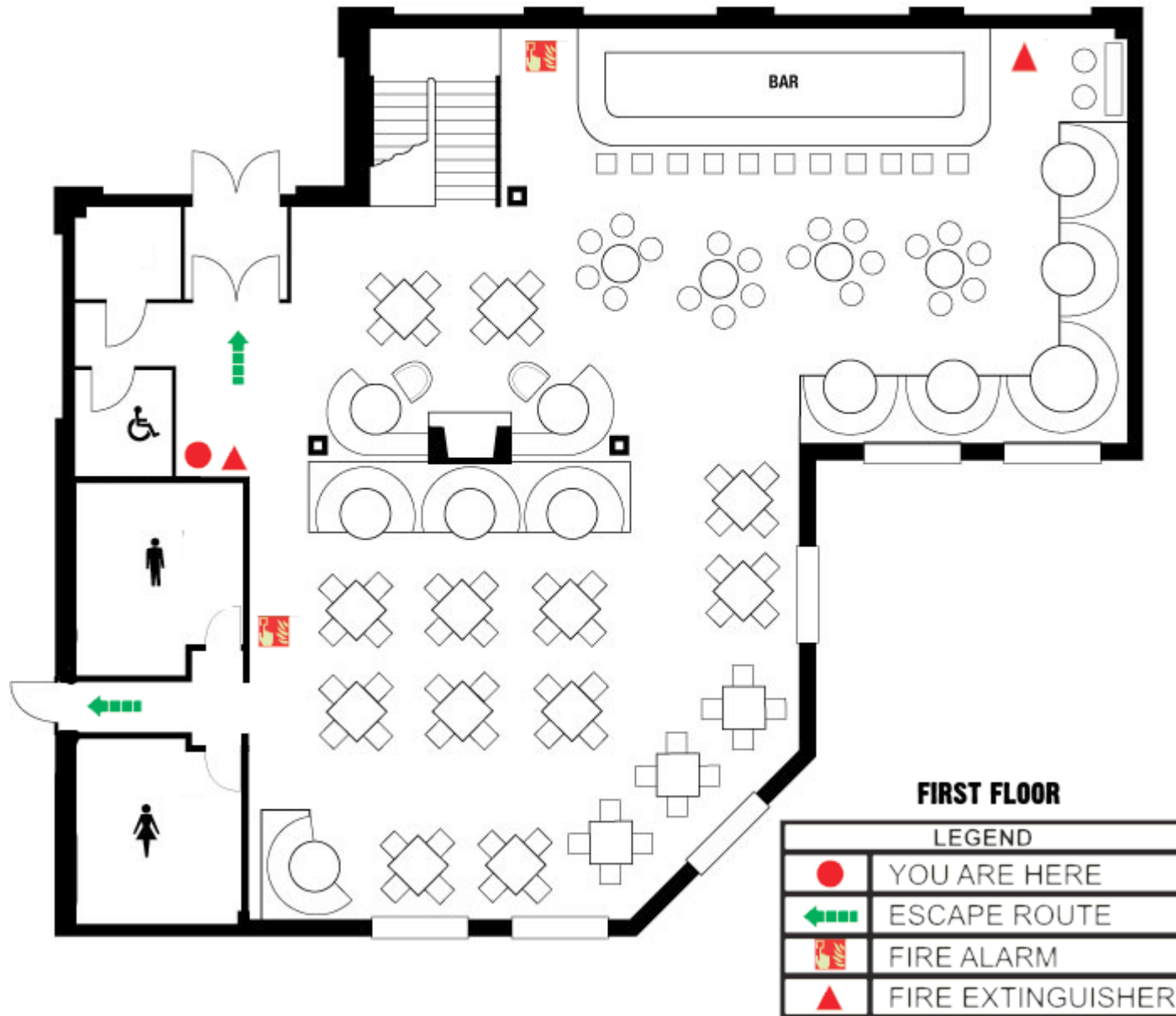
too much damage to the bar, Whitman will be grateful.

THE CROWD

Are a mixed bunch of locals, fight fans, Mexican immigrants (legal and otherwise) here to cheer their hero, the odd slumming corporator and local fighters watching somebody else take a beat down. The crowd are noisy and boisterous, and rumour has it that a talent scout from the next season of *The Unlimited Contender* is in the bar!

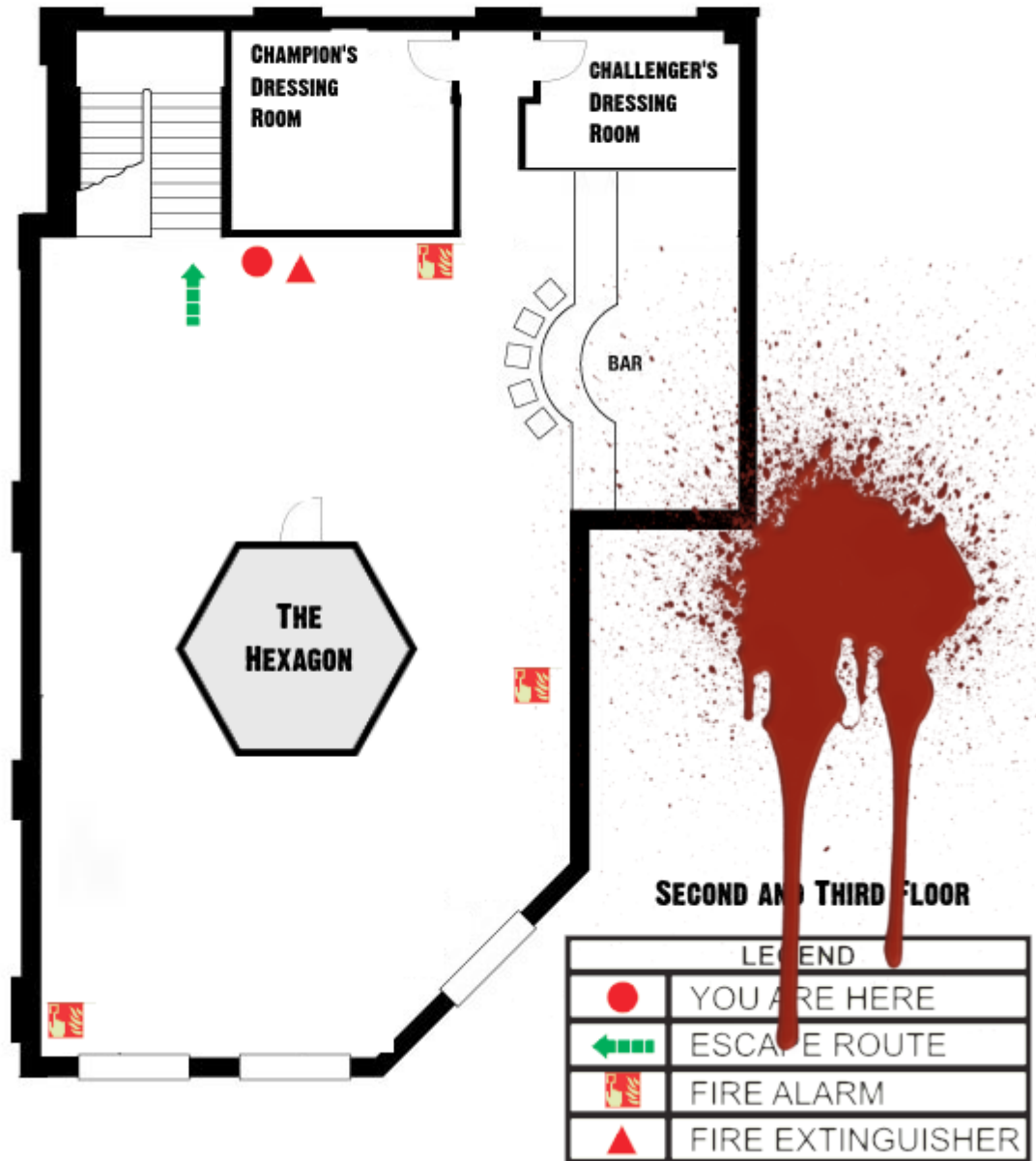
TOWER SPORTS BAR AND GRILL

PROP: PAUL WHITMAN



TOWER SPORTS BAR AND GRILL

PROP: PAUL WHITMAN



Workers and Fight Fans: Novice NPC's with no particular skills and no weapons.

Local Roughs: Experienced NPC's, Unarmed Martial Arts 5, broken bottles, pool cues and bar stools.

Local fighter: Veteran NPC, Unarmed Martial Arts 6.

Security Team: Veteran NPC's, Unarmed Martial Arts 5, *Armed Martial Arts* (Club) 4, Collapsible Batons and stab vests (Melee Armour 1). Tasers are kept in the security booth. Two on the door, one in the booth, two more upstairs.

MICK WALKER TEXAS RANGER

Austin MMA champion and all round good ol' boy, Texas Mick likes fighting, his country (Texas) fame, and women, competing gets him all of the above. The local champion, Mick's management found him a good opponent in order to draw in Mexican fight fans, and the increased ratings should push him into TV.

Keeping Mick alive will earn the players his gratitude and a new solid contact.

MICK WALKER

Former Texas Ranger and current champ.

Level:	Elite
Skills:	Unarmed Martial Arts 8
Likenesses:	Chuck Lidell
Motivations:	10 Clubs, 10 Spades
Personality:	Mick likes to hurt people, and he wants fame and the trappings that go with it
Gear:	MMA Gloves and shorts, street clothes in changing room, Pickup truck out back sponsored by Texaco-Pemex.

head in an open pelican case, wearing a spare silver and green mask.

RICARDO VALENTIN — DREAD SIDHE

Valentin is a vampire who feeds on human emotions, he bites "groupies" and controls them via empathic micro-organisms in his saliva, (see *Conspiracy Rules* p. 185).

Unlike other Dread Sidhe, Valentin prefers that others take the limelight so he can soak in the raw emotion from the shadows. He's not as powerful as others of his race, so his feeding strategy follows suit.

His human persona is unpleasant, combining all the worst aspects of fight promoters, he treats his fighters like dirt, and their opponents and fans even worse. He almost seems to feed off their hatred of him.

THE GLAMER

Valentin uses Project Thought to place a "glamer" around himself and his fighter to conceal their inhuman appearance, he draws power from a nearby proto-dimension to fool all of the people, all of the time.

Of course hunters are always looking for monsters in their midst, a Willpower [DIF], or a Darkling Empathy [AVG] will break through the Dread Sidhe's illusion and show the truth. A simple Observation [DIF] will show things are not quite as they seem, such as lights being brushed out of the way by a man who is a metre shorter than the roof...

EL TOXICO COLOSO

The stunted ogre Valentin trained was enhanced surgically, one eye replaced, heavy masses added to his fists, knees

RICARDO VALENTIN: DREAD SIDHE

Strength:	8	Education:	3	Move:	3/9/16/32
Constitution:	5	Charisma:	10	Skills/Dam.:	7/1d6+2
Agility:	9	Empathy:	8	Hits:	40/80
Intelligence:	7	Initiative:	4		

Special: Bite is a 3p2 poison, if total damage \geq the target's intelligence, they are dominated by the Sidhe.

Likeness: Ricardo Montalban in Fantasy Island.

True Likeness: A twisted caricature of a man, short, wizened features twisted in hate.

Gear: \$2500 fee in a money belt, Truck Keys, Electronic Motel Room key.

EL TOXICO COLOSO: STUNTED OGRE

Strength:	24	Education:	1	Move:	2/6/20/40*
Constitution:	21	Charisma:	2	Skills/Dam.:	7/4d6+4
Agility:	6	Empathy:	1	Hits:	30/60
Intelligence:	2	Initiative:	5		

* Jog and run speeds are in a straight line only.

Special: Long unarmed combat range; opponent cannot attack in the first round.

Enhancements: Bone reinforcements (2 AV, 3 AV vs melee, -3 chance of Stuns), Striking Implants (+4 dam.), Thermal Vision. See **Gear** q.v.

Skills: Acrobatics 6, Climb 8, Melee (Unarmed) 10

Glamered Likeness: A Mexican *Andre the Giant*

True Likeness: An enormous patchwork monster, poorly stitched scars everywhere, one eye is metal and red glass, and part of the skull is a metal plate. Viewing the ogre in his true form is terrifying.

Gear: Silver/Grey Lucha Libre outfit, coat, Trilby

and feet, bones reinforced with titanium and his rib cage sealed over with steel plate. He is a lethal opponent in close combat.

In his human appearance he is a massive Hispanic man, with bruised and gnarled features only a mother could love, he is almost never seen without his mask.

THE MAIN EVENT

Assuming the hunters do not start the festivities early, the lights go down, and the MC announces the challenger, El Toxico Coloso, he walks out to Puscifer's "Toma". His trainer throws insults into the crowd, shoving people, smacking hands out of the way, and the crowd is barely held back by security as they hail plastic beer glasses and jeers.

While the Luchador stretches, the MC announces the champion, to a roar from the crowd. Mick Walker works the crowd slapping hands and sharing hugs as Pantera's Walk angrily spits from the speakers. Observant hunters spot Dr Jabituya in the crowd with a video drone swarm run from his arm computer and data monocle.

The bout starts slowly, with each fighter gauging his opponent, while their managers exhort support. But a minute in Valentin pushes the crowd too far, and a local tough shivs him with a ceramic knife, he passes out, and the empathic backlash breaks his domination and shorts a breaker, plunging the club into darkness.

For a second all is quiet, then El Coloso smashes his opponent flat and uses him as a battering ram to open the hexagon. The emergency lights come on, as the enraged ogre smashes into the crowd, seeking freedom and to be re-united with his pride at the Motel.

Round 1-4: Emergency lights kick in, and the ogre is revealed. Some of the crowd panic and flee, others use phones to video the carnage, people are crushed under foot, and El Coloso smashes anyone

between him and the door. Mick Walker and others need first aid fast.

Round 5: El Coloso heads downstairs, and out of the bar, people in the bar are shocked and awed.

Round 6: El Coloso heads up the street, paramedics enter the bar, and the police response begins.

WEAPONS IN THE BAR

Hunters will be scrabbling for weapons in the bar, unless they came prepared, but they can find bottles (as per *Conspiracy Rules* p.130), glasses (use once as a knife), bar stools (large club), burning spirits, and fire extinguishers.

FIGHTING IN THE BAR

For the first few rounds, add one difficulty level to any ranged combat attacks, due to the crowd and emergency lighting. The GM may call for a danger zone test for any misses; there are a lot of bystanders.

OGRE TACTICS

An ogre is a tough opponent when you've got armour and rifles; when you're only armed with a broken beer bottle, you're going to have a bad day.

Two things that will help the hunters; first he likes to show off, so he won't finish an opponent quickly, he'll do it spectacularly, hurling them over the bar and out a window, or lifting them over his head and shaking them rather than breaking them in half.

Secondly, he only wants to escape the bar, so he won't stop to finish a downed opponent.

PHONING 911

The local 911 contract is handled by Austin Texas Telemarketing (q.v.) unfortunately when the dread sidhe loses consciousness the ogres in the motel are ravenous, and the call centre is just next door...

Sharp eyed PC's might notice people dialling 911, then looking at their phones in horror, as the phone switch puts them through to people busy being eaten.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The police response will be limited; the local 911 contract is owned by ATT, and their operators are about to get eaten by the rest of the pride (q.v.). There is a radio car parked outside the bar, but when El Coloso exits the bar, he runs straight over it. Whitman has a pair of paramedics on standby, and a **Stack and Pole Emergency Services** HMMWV sits outside, the medics enter the building and can provide first aid to hunters.

More Taurus Security units arrive in around ten minutes, along with medics and firefighters if needed.

SCALING THE FIGHT

If your hunters are tough, then add more Groupies to the Sidhe's coterie; he can control one person per point of charisma. There are six ogres, and the clerk, so add three more, the bouncer in the weapons booth for example. For more threat, the young ogres are ordered about by their parents, so add another three slaves.

Want to make it trickier without adding danger, then El Coloso grabs a ring girl as he escapes, don't shoot her!

Of course the sidhe could recover from his faint and join the fray too! Or, the pair of psychic leeches that the hunters have been tracking since the introduction take advantage of the situation to feed.

COMING TO THE BAR SECOND

If the hunters started at the Motel, then the GM has the option of El Coloso realising his family has been slaughtered and returning the favour in the bar. Or, the sidhe may be aware (due to his empathic link), but the ogre is not, play the scene as written. The

Texas Rangers Beats Gorilla

Mick Walker the Texas Ranger made a gorilla submit with his Brazilian Jiu Jitsu this Friday when the crazed animal escaped its cage and waded into fight fans at a sports bar! Yes, the local hero is even tougher than a silverback!

WATCH THE TEXAS RANGER TAP OUT A TITANIC GORILLA EXCLUSIVELY HERE:

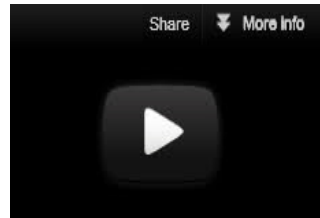
© Kardashian TV



The Californian highland gorilla was kept illegally by the bar's owner and escaped its cage after feeding time. Mick, who had just won his bout by Knockout, spotted the gorilla as it entered the bar and attacked the crowd.

WATCH MICK WALKER DISCUSS MAULING A MONKEY HERE:

© Kardashian TV



"I saw a guy thrown through the crowd and hit the wall and I knew something was wrong" said Walker when we interviewed him, "I couldn't stand by and let that dumb brute hurt anyone so I got out of the cage and headed straight for it."

"I knew he'd see me as a threat, so I made as much noise as possible and distracted him from the rest of the crowd. Onlookers then fled the bar, leaving Walker along to face the might ape.

"It was just like my fight with Jack Jones, I knew it was a striker and it had reach on me, so I got inside his first swing then took his arm and pulled a triangle, after that it was just a matter of time, that thing was dumber than

Walker's new manager Karl Kardashian Jr, then ended the interview, noting that Walker has been signed to the Unlimited Fighting Championship, and when he recovers from injuries sustained in wrestling the gorilla, will start training for his first fight next season against Sonny Slice.

ADVERTISEMENT

GOLDEN EYE

Get the new ocular implant sported by Taylor Lautner Jr. and his bride to be Kayleigh Kardashian, perfect 20/20 vision, and our new chromafix colour range, don't be seen on the red carpet without it!

Golden Eye is Recommend by the Texas State Medical board for many ocular diseases and can be fitted by any reputable surgeon.



CARL HOOPERS "THAT'S AMAZING" PREMIERING THIS SUNDAY ON FOX

Yes the antipodean with all the answers is back, Carl Hooper returns to Fox with his own unique brand of edutainment, debunking all those crazy myths you read in supermarket tabloids. The first show premieres at 8pm Central Time and covers chupacabras, skull and bones, and the Jackelope!

hunters may even be able to neutralise him in his dressing room before he can eat anyone in the bar.

GETTING FROM THE BAR TO THE MOTEL

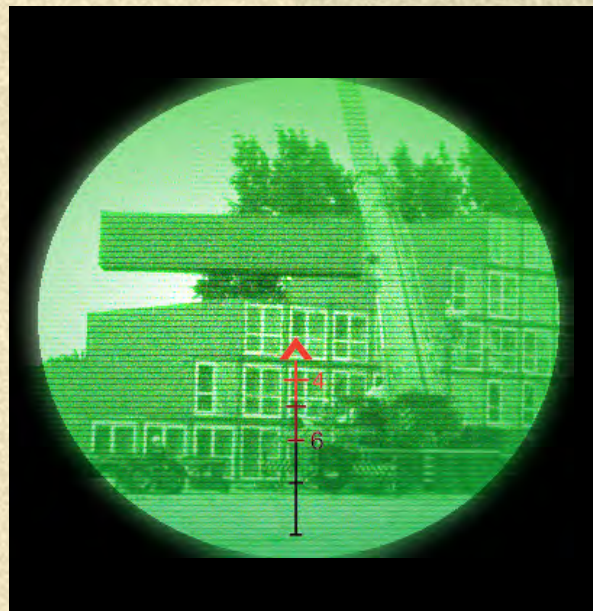
The hunters are unlikely to stop the ogre Dead Right There, if he gets out of the bar then he heads straight for the Motel to re-unite with his pride.

CHASING EL COLOSO

On the straight, El Coloso is faster than a normal human and he has a head start. It won't be too hard for the hunters to follow the trail of crashed cars and shocked victims down the road towards The No-Tell Motel. If the PC's need to be delayed, then give them some morale dilemmas; crashed cars with critical passengers or a police road block, and a flattened animal control van.

THE DRESSING ROOM

As described earlier, the dressing room has a few clues that might lead the hunters to the motel:



- ☞ An electronic swipe key for the motel, if they haven't found it on the dead dread sidhe.
- ☞ Crumpled in the bin, a pamphlet from the No Tell Motel over on I35.
- ☞ A cash receipt for a week's rental paid in advance in cash to a Señor Martinez.

THE MASK

The mask of a luchador is incredibly important, Coloso's has its own Pelican carrying case, and mannequin heads where it sits when not in use. Smart Hunters will realise that the head is way too large to be human.

The mask is silver, with green highlights around the eyes and mouth, the green also forms small horns and tusks, much like a Japanese Oni. It's not too far from his real visage.

THE SIDHE'S TRUCK

A Ford F750 box van is parked a block north of the tower bar, with a sealed cargo area large enough to fit the ogres (children in the cab, adults in the rear). The rear compartment is full of real, grubby animal hides and it smells like wet dog. Amongst the debris can be found the wallet of Sean Williams "The cannibal clerk" (see this issue's weekly world news) wanted by police.

The cab is full of fast food wrappers, and the glove compartment is full of narcocorrido tapes.

An Easy [Computer Operation or Navigation] check will show the last trip in the truck's GPS, from the No-Tell Motel to the bar, an average check will show several previous trips, starting in a Nova Laredo barrio, to Border Crossing 22, the Holiday Hilton mentioned in the accompanying weekly world news article, Border Crossing 22, and most recently, the No Tell Motel.

STARTING AT THE MOTEL

The dread sidhe, Valentin, and his pride of ogres are currently renting a "room" at the no-tell motel

NO-TELL MOTEL

The No-Tell Motel® chain started as a running joke between its founders, who spotted a gap in the market for modular housing with disposable furnishings that could be hosed clean between clients. The living units are assembled in Mexico, hauled north on autonomous big rigs, and dropped into place by a crane. They can be stacked up to five high without any structural reinforcement. A universal utilities port allows cable, plumbing and electricity to be connected in moments, and nobody has ever got the water inlet and the sewer outlet mixed up. Ever.

Their resemblance to cheaply obtained shipping containers is entirely coincidental.

TARIFF

Cash in advance, no personal checks. Do not ask for credit, as twelve gauge birdshot often offends.

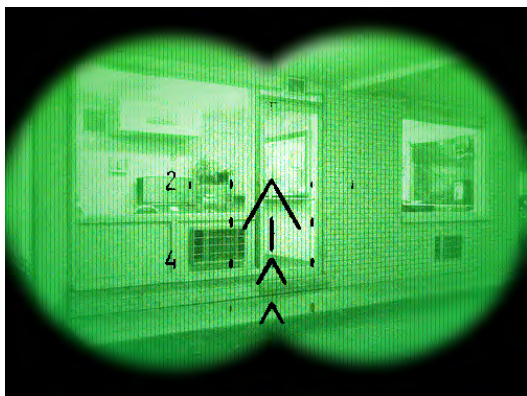
Basic Rates

Per Night +Soiling deposit	\$25 +\$25
Per Hour +Soiling deposit	\$10 +\$50

EXTRA'S

Basic Cable	+\$5/day
Room clean*	+\$5
Ground Floor Unit	+\$10/day
Top Floor Unit	+\$10/day
Parking Space	+\$10/day
Ladder Deposit	\$20

* Turn the sprinklers on and let the room drain out



BOBBY STYLES — DOMINATED CLERK

Bobby is a groupie of the dread sidhe, but lacks the bestial willpower of the ogres, so his domination extends past the grave. He will shoot anybody he considers to be a threat to his master.

Level:	Novice
Skills:	6 Diamonds, 2 Hearts
Likenesses:	
Motivations:	Serve the Dread Sidhe
Personality:	Minimal, it's been overtaken by his need to serve Valentin.
Gear:	12 gauge sawn-off under the desk, soft body armour (AV 1, chest and abdomen)

on Interstate 6, after the unfortunate devouring of a clerk and a police officer in their previous residence, the Holiday Hilton.

AUSTIN TEXAS TELEMARKETING (HSE: ATT)

AT(and)T outsources telemarketing, tech support, and whatever else they can do from behind an anonymous bank of phones. Their workers are on zero hour contracts and work from homes, minimising costs.

ATT provides customer services and upselling for half the cities telephony providers and owns 25% of Austin's 911 contract. ATT is traded on the Houston Stock Exchange.

If players go to the downtown admin office, or speak to any employees they find that all the call centre work is out-sourced. Resourceful players should be able to get a list of workers, and their locations. With some legwork, the hunters can find a No Tell Motel, where Mexican immigrants work and live in a call centre.

MOTEL OFFICE - THE CLERK

The office is a Kellogg Brown & PERI Bürogebäude 2000 modular office unit, anchored to dozens of *KBP Modulare Wohneinheit -Kleine* (Modular Habitation Unit - small).

The "reception" isn't welcoming at all, a bare metal half sized container with a Plexiglas front and remaindered office furniture. Behind the desk is a greasy young man with one hand holding a comic, and the other under the desk, no doubt glued to a panic button.

The Clerk is Bobby Styles, who has been lucky enough to find a job that pays him to sit and read.

THE GLAMER

Drawing on power from a parallel proto-dimension, *The Hunt*, Valentin has cloaked the motel in the camouflage of a hunter, stopping other guests from noticing the smell of the ogres, dominating

the clerk and ensuring that nobody asks difficult questions.

THE MURDER ROOM — CONTAINER 141

"Room" 141 has a dire reputation, over the last two years, three people have been murdered here and it is a dark shadow in nearby proto-dimensions. An Average [Foreboding or Human Empathy] check will see the stain from the previous deaths. Valentin finds it comforting.

The room is a double length container; two containers knocked together and now occupied by his pride of ogres. The door is chained, the heavy curtains drawn, and the TV is always on, showing the latest Mexican telenovela from **Televisión Sin Fronteras**. A slightly odd smell, like musty animals can be sensed around these rooms, and even the rats avoid them.

Anyone knocking on the door will receive a guttural "Vete" (Go Away in Spanish), from a thin sliver of space held together by a chain. The room beyond houses a small family clustered around a TV watching Spanish Soap operas. Thermal imaging shows five large humanoids (two much larger than normal humans) sitting on the floor.

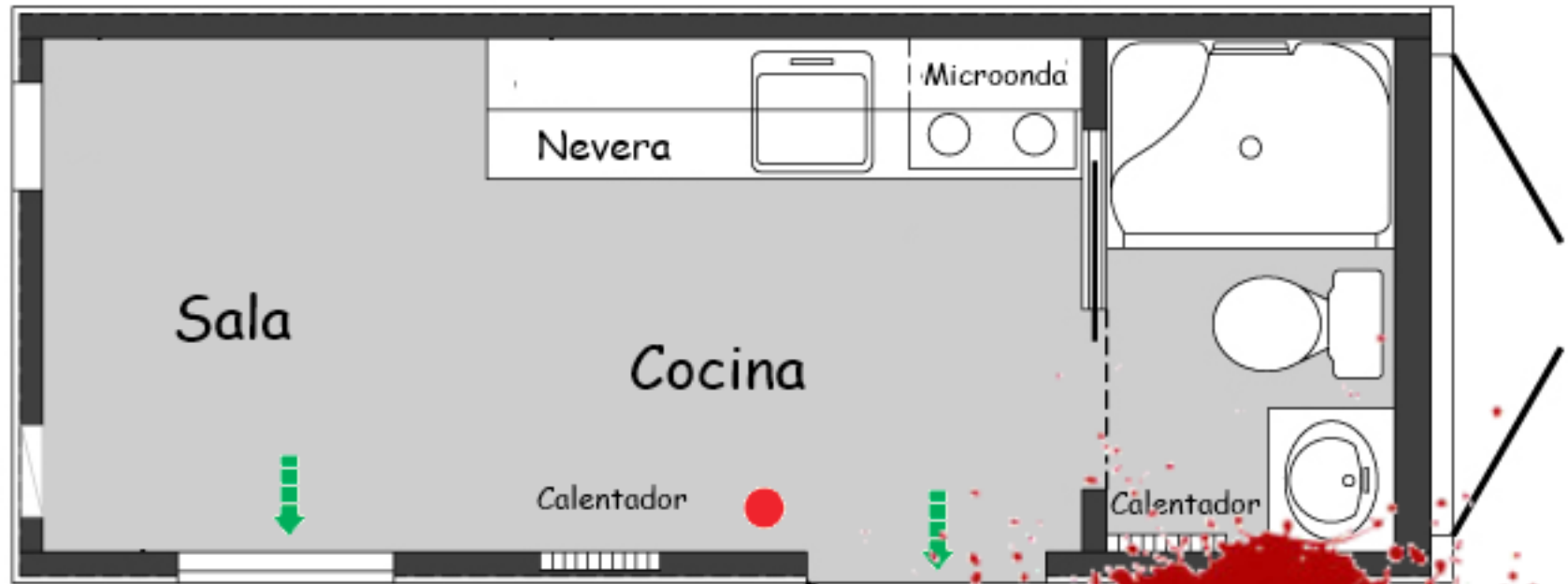
If the glammer is broken, the smell of dead meat, wet animal and waste becomes overwhelming. TV flickers from behind heavy curtains and a small pile of smashed furniture sits outside the door.

Inside, the room is wrecked, filth is smeared all over the walls and food waste and animal hide litters the floors. The room is nearly filled by large humanoids, wearing an odd mismatch of XXXL clothing, and furs. Two males, one female and a pair of young wearing replica Mexican wrestler masks.

THE CALL CENTRE — CONTAINER 241

ATT runs a small call centre in the No Tell Motel; paid a month in advance, it's the cheapest office space in the city. On the second floor (241) it holds

RUTA DE ESCAPE



LEYENDA	
●	TÚ ESTÁS AQUÍ
←	RUTA DE ESCAPE
🔥	ALARMA DE INCENDIOS
▲	EXTINTOR DE INCENDIOS

EN CASO DE FUEGO

1. No entre en pánico
2. Apague todas las luces antes de salir de la habitación
3. No utilice las ascensores
4. Siga las flechas para la salida
5. En el área de casa se registra el humo, la respiración es más fácil si te arrastras por el suelo

twenty workers with wireless headsets, military cots and blankets strung up for privacy, a field stove, and a lot of cheap Mexican workers.

OTHER GUESTS

The rest of the guests are a mix of the desperate, the criminal, and the dispossessed, average proles, while the containers nearest the ogres are empty, others are packed, with eight to ten people sharing a room intended for four. Indiscriminate gunfire may lead to unintended casualties.

KELLOGG BROWN AND PERI (NYSE: KBP)

Kellogg Brown and Root merged with the resurgent German PERI construction company, after their modular building framework became a de facto standard for cheap European construction. Wherever major construction is taking place, KBP self-assembling scaffolds can be seen hauling girders into the sky. KBP zero-hours contract workers are found servicing American Military bases across the globe.

QUICK FACTS:

Industries:	Engineering, Construction, Facilities Management, Orbital Manufacturing, Private Military Contracts
Founded:	1901 M.W. Kellogg
Headquarters:	KBP Tower Downtown Houston, Texas
Revenue:	USD 7.5 billion
Employees:	2,500 permanent

THE ACTION

COMING TO THE MOTEL FIRST

If the hunters come to the hotel first, they may take down the ogre family before El Coloso is due to fight.

If they arrive at the motel second, then the ogres will have already killed a fair number of guests and are lazing about, somewhat satiated. Other guests are finding that 911 doesn't work, or are staying quiet and hidden. Rescuing a call centre worker might get a hunter 10% off their long distance phone calls, but not much else.

OGRE TACTICS

If Styles suspects the hunters are there for the ogres, he will open fire, catching unwary hunters by surprise. After his initial salvo, he won't be much of a threat.

Ogres are not just big dumb brutes who will stand still and let the minion hunters light them up, they are pack predators with a lifetime of hunting behind them. The younger members also happen to have the acrobatic flair of professional wrestlers.

Play the fight out as a mix between a pack of velociraptors and professional circus acrobats; the adults smash through trailer walls and throw hunters across the site, the children climb like chimpanzee's and punch like gorillas. They use cover intelligently to lure the hunters into ambushes. The hunters are limited to two dimensions, the ogres fight in three, climbing up the cargo containers and swinging on power lines.

FIGHTING IN THE MOTEL

Although the thin walls of the rooms might stop a .22LR, anyone hurled by an ogre will probably smash through, and a charging ogre will definitely pass through the walls and floor. They can also climb like Gorilla's, so ensure that they use these options.

Remember, any round that passes out of a motel room will end up somewhere, make Danger Zone tests.

A grenade or other explosion will cause a room to collapse and other rooms to crash down into it. Power lines and pipes will burst adding to the hazard.

Falling rules can be found on *Conspiracy Rules* p.133.

SCALING THE FIGHT

If you need to make the fight easier, then have ogres split up or flee the scene.

If you need to make it harder, then the outlaw bikers cooking meth at one end of the site would like to complain about the noise.

If the hunters start at the motel, then "Daddy's Home", and he brought a Taurus SWAT team in hot pursuit.

GETTING FROM THE MOTEL TO THE BAR

If the hunters start at the motel, then they need a reason to go to Whitman's. The clues are fairly easy to spot; the young ogres wearing t-shirts and masks to match their father, the unused flyers for the Friday Night fight in their lair, the luggage with clothes for a human sized darkling.

If the hunters are particularly dim, then a call for SWAT comes over the Police scanner they *must* have in their transport, or even a news story on K-HUN...

REWARDS

- ☠ 1XP for surviving
- ☠ 1XP for defeating El Toxico Coloso
- ☠ +1 XP for defeating the rest of the pride.

If the characters rescue specific named NPCs, then the GM could award them a solid contact, and use them as a lead-in for future adventures.

THE OGRE PRIDE

The Ogre pride was from a small mountain range up in drug country Mexico, captured by the dread sidhe,

FAGIN — AGING BULL OGRE

Grandfather Fagin used to be in charge of the pride, until his son beat him. He is a wily and embittered opponent, fighting smarter, not harder.

Strength:	27	Education:	1	Move:	10/15/30
Constitution:	27	Charisma:	1	Skills/Dam.:	7/3d6
Agility:	3	Empathy:	1	Hits:	25/50
Intelligence:	4	Initiative:	3		

Special: Long unarmed combat range, opponent cannot attack in the first round.

Skills: Climb 6, Sneak 4

ULLIVER — ELDEST SON

Ulliver wants to follow in his father's footsteps, if he lasts that long. He will charge and show off in a fight.

Strength:	13	Education:	1	Move:	10/20/40
Constitution:	13	Charisma:	3	Skills/Dam.:	6/2d6
Agility:	4	Empathy:	1	Hits:	20/40
Intelligence:	3	Initiative:	4		

Special: Long unarmed combat range, opponent cannot attack in the first round.

Skills: Acrobatics 6, Climb 6, Sneak 2

CHOBBY — MOTHER OGRESS

Like a lioness, Chobby will crush anything that threatens her children.

Strength:	13	Education:	1	Move:	10/20/40
Constitution:	13	Charisma:	3	Skills/Dam.:	6/2d6
Agility:	4	Empathy:	1	Hits:	20/40
Intelligence:	2	Initiative:	3		

Special: Long unarmed combat range, opponent cannot attack in the first round.

THE TWINS

The youngest ogres have not yet earned their names, they climb and swing and attack from the air, in the first round they have two attacks like wolves (*Conspiracy Rules* p156); one diving blow, and one double fist smash.

Strength:	9	Education:	1	Move:	15/30/60
Constitution:	9	Charisma:	1	Skills/Dam.:	6/2d6
Agility:	7	Empathy:	1	Hits:	20/40
Intelligence:	2	Initiative:	3		

Skills: Acrobatics 8, Climb 8



Aguanta ahí bebe

AFTERMATH

KHUN NEWS, ON THE HOUR, EVERY HOUR

"Last night's reports of a monstrous creature attacking the customers of a downtown nightclub have been dismissed by a Texas Rangers LLC spokesperson, the animal has been identified as a Californian Highland Hairless Ape, probably the illegal pet of the owner of the club, who is now being sought for reckless endangerment, and possession of an endangered species.

Financial news next, brought to you by Wu Tang Financial, and remember; 'diversify yo bonds!'

PC's following up on this story will note some entries in the Wikipedia which appear to have been there for a couple of years, and in a months' time, a thirty-minute documentary on the Californian Highland Hairless Ape *will have been* on YouTube for at least three years...

NEW GEAR

Mixed Martial Arts is a business like any other, and in the no holds barred leagues, the only thing stopping fighters from taking any enhancement or drug they can get their hands on is funding. Some of these items have applications outside of the ring.

STRIKING SURFACE IMPLANTS

Fighter's blows are limited by the damage their hands and feet can take, reinforced striking surfaces along the hands, feet, shins, knees, forehead or anywhere enables them to hit harder, for longer.

TAPOUT STRIKING ENHANCEMENTS

Pro grade titanium bone reinforcements, improving striking power without slowing the owner down.

Effect: +1 Unarmed Combat Damage, and user can parry melee attacks unarmed (take 1pt of damage)

Weight: 1kg per limb

Cost: \$2000 per limb (R/S) depending on quality

TIJUANA KNUCKLES

Fitted in a back alley in any large city with no after-care, these heavy steel reinforcement are common amongst street thugs and back yard wrestlers.

Effect: *Fists:* +1 Punching Damage, -1 AGI for initiative, +1 STR for recoil reduction. *Feet:* +1 Kicking Damage, - AGI for balancing, -1 Movement.

Weight: 1kg per fist

Cost: \$1000 (R/S) +Slight injury to that location for 1 month

BONE REINFORCEMENTS

From cheap steel plates or expensive 3d-printed titanium bone lacing, these implants reduce the chance of a fighter breaking a limb, they can also help with bullets.

TAPOUT ENFORCER LONG BONE REINFORCEMENTS

Fitted to the forearms and shins, these high quality implants are a favourite amongst top fighters.

Effect: +1 Armour vs Melee attacks, can block Melee weapons but will take a scratch wound to that location if successful.

Weight: 1kg per limb

Cost: \$5000 per limb (R/S)

ZEISS-VENUM ORBITAL SOCKET REINFORCEMENTS

A joint venture with an MMA Company, these reinforcements reduce the chance of a fighter being knocked out by head hits.

Effect: Reduce any Stun tests (*Conspiracy Rules* p.125) by -1

Weight: 0.5 kg

Cost: \$1000 (R/S)

NIKE SHIN REINFORCEMENTS

Soccer also has unlimited leagues, and these Nike reinforcements massively reduce the chance of players being out of action after breaking a leg.

Effect: +1 Kick damage, +1AV legs

Weight: 1 kg

Cost: \$5000 (R/S)

RED/MAAP MICRO-UAV CAMERA SWARM

Dozens of tiny micro UAV's flying almost invisibly, each recording hi-def video and sound via miniaturised Red cameras provide 360 degree video of any event, these short range drones are controlled from a wearable computer such as the Hewlett-Zenith ArmComp and often used by journalists. Prices start high and rise rapidly, depending on the intelligence of the swarm, and add-ons like low light, thermographic, ultraviolet etc. There is no truth to the rumour that these drones cannot be made by current human technology.

Price: \$10,000 and up (R/S)

RED/MAAP PORTABLE VIDEO CONTROL CENTRE

A high end wearable video editing suite combining a Hewlett-Zenith ArmComp, Headsup EyePiece, TojiCorp Voice Recognition System, Tojicorp wearable data storage, and Tandy Data Radio. This suite of software allows the wearer to control camera drones, review footage, edit it in place, and transmit back to their home station all without getting out of their seat.

As used in Taylor Lautner's hit show Realer than Real™, and the Kardashians' Take Tijuana™!

CERAMIC KNIFE

As per a normal knife, but invisible to metal detectors these vary from a kitchen knife (25\$, 1d3 damage) to fighting knives like the Mad Dog Frequent Flyer. A Favourite of hunters who frequent secure zones.

Price: \$500 (S/S)

Range: S

Hit Mod: +2

Damage: 1d6

THE GRAESHA

A Critter

By Mitchell Schwartz

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

Inspired by Lucas Magnusson's creation for Hårn.

IN THE DEEP forests of northern New England (or in the mountainous northwest, upper peninsula of Michigan, Laurentian forest in Canada, northern Finland, or... anywhere remote, well-forested with a touch of Demonground), in hidden valleys and cursed groves, one might encounter these weird creatures that go by many names by the local folk lore: woodlings, treelings, tree devils, stick men—or the graesha as they are called by wiser men.

The graesha are semi-intelligent, symbiotic creatures that live in harmony with the great trees of the forest. They protect, tend to and feed a host tree and in return they draw nourishment from that host. Their tree is fed anything that provides nourishment for the earth when it decomposes, and in this respect nothing is more effective than rotting flesh. It is unknown whether they are aliens from another planet or from a proto-dimension, but given their affinity for trees on this planet, probably the latter. They are mostly found deep in old growth forests.

Graesha resemble a living multi-armed branch. They appear to be sexless. Their skin is camouflaged in shades of brown and green and is very rough to the touch. They average one meter in height and are very skinny although they are not as fragile as they appear. They move very quietly, but do clatter slightly when surprised.

Graesha spend most of their time connected to their host tree. They entangle themselves among the roots and tap in to the tree's life vein using their sharp claws. In this position they are impossible to detect until they start to move, giving the impression that the very root system of the giant tree comes alive. Needless to say, they do not take it well if they find a person damaging their tree. If their host tree's sap runs thin of nutrients, a graesha will detach to hunt for something to use as fertilizer.

Graesha seldom travel more than a few kilometers from their host tree. If taken further away

involuntarily, they become quite frantic about returning.

This strange creature follows the annual cycles of its tree host. During the winter, it is largely dormant, only to awaken in a feeding frenzy during springtime. In the summer, a graesha is less aggressive but is also at the peak of its strength, and as autumn grows ever colder it spends more and more time resting or sleeping, eventually settling down to hibernate for winter.

When they hunt, graesha use their long, pointy fingers (that end in thick strong nails) which they fold together and lock in position to form a very sharp spear-like natural weapon. They attack from ambush and stab their prey swiftly—several times and with lethal precision—in the torso. Prey is dismembered, and organic parts buried around the roots of the host tree. While their usual prey is squirrel to coyote sized, they can surprise and kill an unwary human. They have no interest in inorganic material, and usually remove it and leave it at the point of attack – pet collars, clothing, weapons, and other equipment. If it won't easily decompose, the graesha have no purpose in hauling it anywhere. They will prefer to tear or cut larger prey into pieces they can easily carry rather than drag a large body; fresh kill sites for large prey can be messy.

Graesha can become very old. They have the same life-span as their host tree (unless killed); some have been known to switch host trees. Several graesha can cooperate, and some live together in very old groves. Such places are known as "Living Groves" and have an extremely bad reputation among locals.

"No, don't think I'd camp theyah. Wouldn't have no picnic 'neath them trees neithah. Woodlings won't like it – or worse, might take a liking to you. Ma cousin's wife's sister and her kids had lunch theyah in '84. Only found her sunglasses and cah keys, and the kids' Addidas."

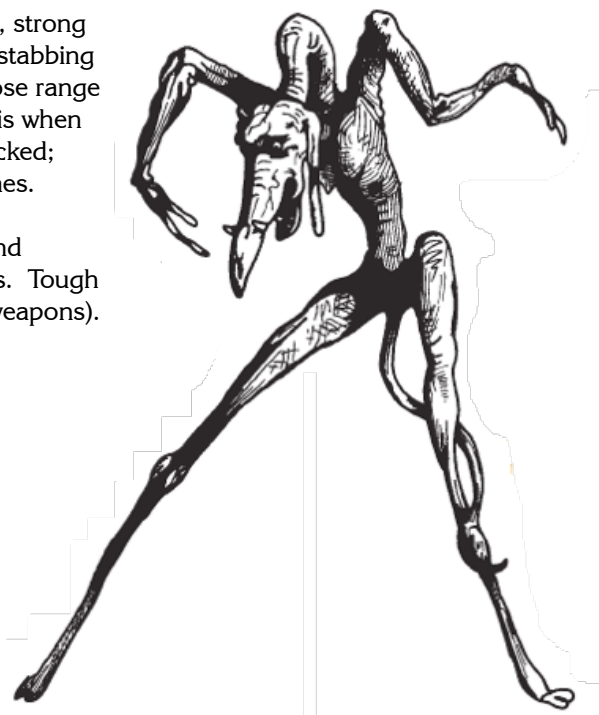
GRAESHA

# Appearing:	1D6	Attack:	70/20	Move:	8/12
Strength:	5	Initiative:	3	Skill/Damage:	7/2D6
Constitution:	4	Intelligence:	2	Hits:	12
Agility:	7	Empathy:	Low		

Description & Notes: 1 meter tall, very thin, with rough skin that looks like tree bark. The long-beaked head is on a sinuous neck. Dormant in winter; most aggressive in early spring. Has a symbiotic relationship with a specific tree. While not of human levels of intelligence, several graesha can cooperate to ambush and attack larger prey (like people).

Natural Weapons/Abilities: sharp, strong claws, with fingers closed to a stabbing point (as Spear), used from close range ambush. The 70 attack value is when out hunting or if its tree is attacked; the 20 attack value is other times.

Special Abilities: Camouflaged and extremely stealthy in the woods. Tough hide (armor level 1 vs. melee weapons).



ADVENTURE HOOKS

1. PCs are camping in the woods for any reason (in the middle of an overland chase, on stake out), and at night, the person on watch (or a tent at random) is assaulted, surprising the camp. The graesha attempt to kill the watchman and make off with his body.
2. The party decides to investigate a *screamsheet* report about living trees stealing household pets and livestock in backwoods Maine – “You’ll never guess what Mainiacs have come up with now... When Trees Attack!”
3. The party investigates a few disappearances (perhaps including a friend or relative) with a peculiar pattern—the person is missing, but all of their clothing and belongings were found scattered about a clearing, with some amount of blood.

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