

# PYRAMID<sup>®</sup>

Issue 3/31 May '11

## MONSTER HUNTERS



### LAST STAND ON MASON DRIVE

by Matt Riggsby

**THE HORROR  
OUT OF DREAMS**  
by David L. Pulver

**THE NETWORK**  
by J. Edward Tremlett

**MONSTER HUNTER  
FIREPOWER AT THE MOVIES**  
by Hans-Christian Vortisch

**PULP HUNTERS!**  
by Christopher R. Rice

**INSPIRATIONAL FICTION**  
by Jason "PK" Levine

# STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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## Article Colors

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

*Pale Blue:* In This Issue

*Brown:* In Every Issue (letters, humor, editorial, etc.)

*Dark Blue:* **GURPS** Features

*Purple:* Systemless Features

*Green:* Distinguished Columnists

## COVER ART

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*Matt Riggsby*

# IN THIS ISSUE

When you stare at the horror, the horror stares at you . . . and that's a great time to shoot it in the face. This month's *Pyramid* is for those who fight against fearsome foes – especially the high-powered heroes of the **GURPS *Monster Hunters*** series!

The line between good guys and bad guys is blurred at the *Last Stand on Mason Drive*. This adventure for **GURPS *Monster Hunters*** – by Matt Riggsby (author of **GURPS *Locations: The Tower of Octavius*** and others) – includes stunning maps of the target warehouse and the underground lair it hides.

Why would a monster hunter grab a bucket of popcorn and load up the DVD player? Research! *Monster Hunter Firepower at the Movies* looks at the firearms and weapons utilized by the heroes of 10 monster-hunter films. Written by Hans-Christian Vortisch (co-author of **GURPS *High-Tech*** and **GURPS *Loadouts: Monster Hunters***), this article also includes **GURPS** stats on more than 20 new weapons!

The worst nightmares find themselves reborn time and again – especially if they involve a phantom van. In this month's *Eidetic Memory*, **GURPS *Fourth Edition*** co-author David Pulver introduces you to *The Horror Out of Dreams*, a supernatural adventure for modern-day **GURPS** heroes.

Some are born into greatness, and others are called – sometimes literally! *The Network* presents a generic modern-set organization with deep pockets, a tight leash, and powerful allies. It begins with a mysterious package, and ends with . . . well, that's open for debate. Do the heroes heed the call? (Do they have a *choice*?)

Before the monster hunters of today could take up arms, the champions of the past needed to pave the way. Learn how to tweak the templates from **GURPS *Monster Hunters*** to tackle the turmoil of yesteryear with *Pulp Hunters*!

If you wanted to drink deeply from the creature-killing cauldron from which modern monster-hunting mayhem emerged, check out *Inspirational Fiction*, written by Jason "PK" Levine – author of the **GURPS *Monster Hunters*** series!

This issue also includes a bit of magical mirth from *Murphy's Rules*, plus a look at *The Optimism of a Darker, Deadlier World* in this month's *Random Thought Table*.

If you're a vampire, werewolf, or other scourge that would make a snack of society, please leave the secrets herein unlearned. For the rest of you, this jam-packed issue of *Pyramid* is a welcome addition to your arsenal!

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# FROM THE EDITOR

## SECRET SCHEMES REVEALED

There were a few weeks between when these words were written and when the issue uploaded, so we had a chance to see how tight our security is around here. See, this month's *Pyramid* was something of a secret. It didn't appear on our Wish List, and we've been working "behind the scenes" to make it happen. A few hints were dropped here and there, but we didn't reveal anything fully (although we planned to a week or so before upload).

Why the cloak-and-dagger routine? Well, we thought the *GURPS Monster Hunters* was cool and interesting enough that we wanted to celebrate its release here in *Pyramid* . . . but we also knew the magazine release was timed close enough to the *Monster Hunters* release schedule that we couldn't expect more than a few souls to join in. In true *Pyramid* tradition, we've also tried to include enough ready-to-play goodness for you to use even if you're not running a *Monster Hunters* game yet!

With this issue, we want to emphasize that *Pyramid* is a place that can surprise you. The more we get you all buzzing about how interesting we are, the more we can grow our audience – enabling us to be *more* exciting in the future!

So, if this is your first issue of *Pyramid* – welcome! If you're an occasional reader who picked us up again – welcome back! And if you're a longtime reader – welcome to you as well . . . and thank you for helping to make this issue possible.

Regardless, we hope you'll let us know if our little experiment worked. Check out one of the existing discussions at [forums.sjgames.com](http://forums.sjgames.com) – or start your own!

## P.S.

In case a glance at the table of contents didn't make it clear: This is a jam-packed issue. We didn't have room for everything! We've trimmed *Odds and Ends* for this month, and given *Murphy's Rules* a home here.

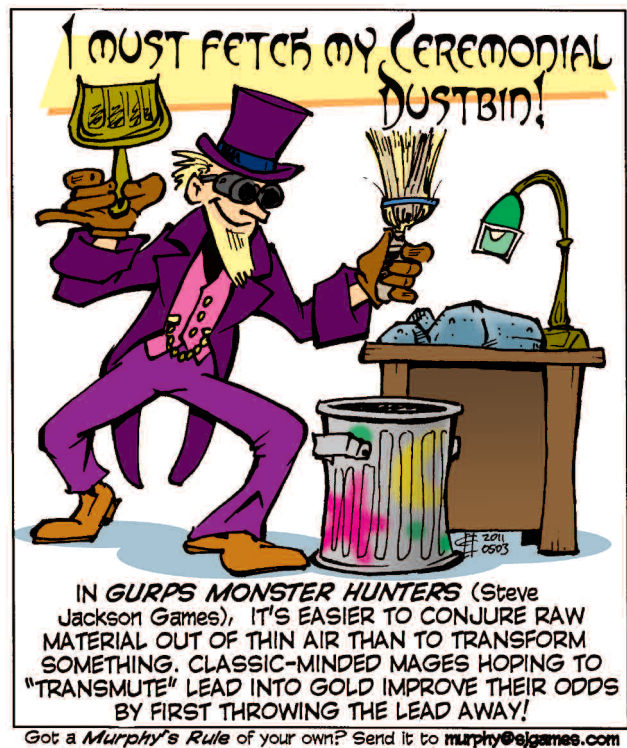
## P.P.S.

Special thanks to everyone who helped make this issue possible, including harried creators Greg Hyland, David Pulver,

Christopher R. Rice, Matt Riggsby, J. Edward Tremlett, and Hans-Christian Vortisch. Thanks also to Jason "PK" Levine for dispelling the darkness in a half-dozen ways.

## MURPHY'S RULES

BY GREG HYLAND



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# LAST STAND ON MASON DRIVE

BY MATT RIGGSBY

In this adventure, monster hunters find a reclusive and moderately powerful vampire. His stronghold – hiding in plain sight as part of a remote industrial area – will be a tough nut to crack, but a well-prepared group of hunters can take him down, and they may get some mystical goodies out of it in the bargain. Unfortunately, they're not the only ones with their eye on the place. A rogue agency has picked the same time as the heroes have to eliminate the master vampire, and they want to be sure that nobody knows anything about the agency or their targets. That means killing the vampires, his minions, *and* the hunters. Can the hunters complete their mission? Can they get out alive? Can they survive without making an unsavory alliance?

*Angel: We need you to distract the vampires.*

*Buffy: Right.*

*Xander: What are you gonna do?*

*Buffy: I'm gonna kill them all. That oughta distract 'em.*

– *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* #2.1

## PRELUDE

The hunters catch wind of a vampire hidden in plain sight on the outskirts of an unremarkable industrial town. Hunters pursuing physical evidence of monsters may discover that several exsanguinated bodies have been found in the area, clear signs of vampires. Moreover, they're fairly tightly clustered in a single neighborhood, suggesting that they're part of a stationary nest of vampires rather than roving individuals. Hunters who are more in touch with underworld "society" may find that this town consumes more than its fair share of mystical artifacts and materials. With some research, the recipient of those items can be narrowed down to a specific address.

In any event, the center of the vampire threat can be determined as a single location: 2813 Mason Drive, home of Dutchman Recycling and Processing. To the casual observer, Dutchman is a company that handles a wide variety of waste.

They process a variety of waste products (both safe and toxic), and many things they can't refine, they can safely package and ship off to more specialized processors. Rather than dealing directly with the public, they haul wastes away from nearby municipalities and companies they contract with, gathering material from public collection points to take back to their central facility.

Investigators will have to look *very* closely to see things that don't make any sense. The number of people who show up at the beginning of a shift doesn't always match the number of people who leave in the end (though you'd have to count the carpoolers to know that). Employees cycle through the company quickly, and many seem to vanish thereafter. Though one would expect a facility processing toxic wastes to be secure – simply to keep hazardous materials safely segregated from the rest of the environment – it looks a bit *too* secure. A surprisingly large proportion of the company's employees are armed security guards. A comprehensive analysis of the area's need for recycling services doesn't seem to support an around-the-clock schedule at the plant. Most telling, areas of the facility are protected with *magical* wards that prevent outsiders from looking in. Clearly, something is up.

## GETTING READY

One thing the hunters have on their side is time. A successful Research roll suggests that people have been disappearing in the area for at least five years. Whoever is abducting and killing people isn't going anywhere soon. Hunters have the freedom to make extensive preparations, though the longer they take, the more people die. Indeed, if they're in the area, one of them may end up randomly encountering a vampire.

Fairly clever researchers can find out a significant amount about the facility's layout from external sources. A careful search of public records will lead the hunters to the architect who built the facility, and some light breaking-and-entering will turn up the blueprints (see p. 9 for a color version, and p. 10 for a black-and-white one). Similar information (though slightly less detailed) can be found in environmental impact statements filed by the company with various governmental agencies. From these, the hunters can get a good feel for the overall layout of the facility. However, there's a significant exception. There's a basement on the blueprints at the southern end of the building, under the executive area. This is the area protected from magical surveillance, and if any hunters reach the executive area, they won't find the expected stairs leading down into it.

However, infiltrating the site is nigh-impossible. By strict company policy, almost no one who isn't an employee is allowed past the front desk. Those few who are (important visitors from organizations Dutchman processes material for) only get as far as the conference rooms. Mail and package deliveries are accepted at the front desk and picked up for internal distribution from there. On the rare occasion outside services are required (for example, electrical or plumbing repair), the company relies on trusted contractors called out specifically for that purpose. The company is small enough that if there's a problem, the receptionist will know about it; the old "I'm the plumber, and I've come to fix the sink" ploy simply won't fly. Breaking in is theoretically possible, but the site is well-lit at all times and under constant surveillance. Hunters can probably get past the side doors with combined Traps and Lockpicking rolls, but they're likely to be greeted by a security guard on the other side.

Finding the "back door" (through the short tunnel; see p. 6) in is an option if they keep the site under surveillance long enough. Sooner or later, one of the feral vampires will come out in search of a more lively snack, but all of the feral vampires would rather die than talk. Unfortunately, the tunnel is trapped and monitored, so they'll likely get hurt *and* end up collapsing their chosen way in.

At some point, a direct approach is likely to become the only viable option. However, the scrying defense is the *only* mystical defense the facility has. If a spell caster can gather enough energy to put everyone in the building to sleep or beguile them with illusions, the team will encounter little resistance.

## THE FACILITY

Like some more-intelligent monsters, the master vampire at the center of this nest of undead – Adrian Van Dyjk – operates through a front company. In addition to being a fully functional legitimate business, the facility's many areas of restricted access and careful environmental filtering make it easy to hide pens for captive humans and dispose of troublesome physical evidence without comment. A certain amount of solitude helps as well. Though it isn't isolated in the wilderness, the facility is one of the few buildings still operational in an industrial park that has seen better days. The surrounding area sees relatively little traffic during the day, and essentially none at all at night after everyone working at nearby businesses has gone home. Location numbers with the descriptions refer to the *Facility Map* (p. 9).

### The Lot

The facility sits on a large and quite open piece of land. There's a sizable parking lot with lamp posts and a few decorative shrubs, but the ground outside of the facility itself is flat and featureless, with the nearest buildings at least 200 yards away on the left (a strip of wholesalers' offices, half vacant) and right (a depot for HVAC equipment). Anyone can drive onto the lot unchallenged, but all gates and doors have access controlled by electronic key cards and have attached alarms. There are two connected structures on the lot: the office building and the recycling bays. The office building is immediately off the parking lot. The recycling bays are accessed around the side of the office building. The bays have an 8' chain link fence around them, topped with a foot of barbed wire. The gate is unlocked during the day, but a guard is on duty at all times.

Fences, rooftops, and some lampposts are equipped with video cameras, giving security personnel comprehensive and multiple overlapping views of the lot.

### 1. Reception Room

The only part of the facility outsiders can reach with any ease is the reception room. There are a few reasonably comfortable chairs, end tables with current magazines, and the receptionist's desk. The doors beyond are opened by key cards or a button at the desk. This area is the only part of the building that gets any natural light.

### 2-4. Conference Row

Once inside the building, a hallway runs the length of the front of the building. Most of the rooms leading off of it open on conference rooms (all labeled #2), but it also leads to the mail room (#3), the cube farm (see below), and the security office (#4), where at least two guards constantly monitor video feeds from all over the facility. The conference rooms are equipped with phones, whiteboards, and overhead projectors, but lack more modern audio-visual equipment.

### 5. Cube Farm

Most of the space in the office building is taken up by a grid of cubicles. Dividers are uniformly 5' high, just low enough for most people to peer over without straining. The cubicles are filled with the usual contents: papers, filing cabinets, slightly out-of-date desktop computers, and small personal items such as motivational posters and pictures of family – and, of course, the workers themselves. Men's and women's restrooms are on the same side of the cube farm as the executive offices (see below).

### 6. Labs

The facility has several on-site chemistry labs for assay tests and similar purposes. Each lab has a range of useful chemicals and extensive chemical equipment; treat as good-quality equipment (+1) for any Chemistry skill roll. The labs are also equipped with extensive venting and air-filtering systems to prevent the escape of toxic fumes into the atmosphere.

One lab is unused. In addition to the usual chemical gear, it contains a set of climate-controlled safes. If the hunters can get them open without destroying the contents, they'll find four dead-language grimoires. They're remarkably well-decorated, with tattooed human-skin bindings and engraved iron clasps holding them shut. They're potentially quite useful as well, providing at least +4 to skill; the GM may make up appropriate specific rituals for them. However, they're also heavy (11 lbs. each) and fragile: DR 0, 4 HP. There are also 10 fetishes made of bone, feathers, skin, and other organic materials. Each acts as an artifact providing 2 points of energy (see *Monster Hunters 1: Champions*, p. 36) for rituals within a single Path (two each for Body, Chance, Crossroads, Energy, and Matter). However, figuring out just what they do will take some research or consultation with an index Van Dyjk keeps in his sanctum.

### 7. Executive Offices

The back of the building contains offices used by company officers, which have full floor-to-ceiling walls. The offices are reasonably well-appointed, though by no means luxurious.

For example, the furniture is fairly new and high quality but still mass-produced, the carpet is spotlessly clean and likewise new but very generic, and so on.

This section of the building is also protected from magical scrying. This is because two offices contain trap doors leading to the pits below. In the normal course of events, the doors are covered by a 2" thick, 3' by 3' slab of reinforced concrete faced with squares of carpet that blend in seamlessly with the rest of the floor. This is, in turn, under the desk in the room. The vampires rarely take this route in and out of their lair, but they have the occupants of the offices thoroughly conditioned via Mind Control, so being noticed isn't an issue.

## Wall Stats

Walls are made out of a variety of different materials. Consult the table below if someone wants to tear down or shoot through a wall.

| Wall                    | DR or Cover DR | HP |
|-------------------------|----------------|----|
| Cubicle dividers        | 0*             | 0  |
| Executive and bay walls | 8†             | 54 |
| Other interior walls    | 1†             | 18 |

\* Cubicle dividers provide no meaningful protection. However, if firing blindly through dividers, roll 3d for each target. On 16+, the shot must pass through a small bookcase, metal divider support, or other more substantial item, which provides DR 5 cover.

† Repeated damage to a small area lowers DR, as explained on p. B559.

## 8. Machine Room

There is a locked room at the far southeast corner of the building. This room contains some electrical panels, phone switching boxes, and HVAC equipment. Anyone with a bit of Electronics Repair skill could turn off power to the building and the internal phone system here.

## Recycling Bays

The "factory" section is divided into seven bays around an octagonal courtyard/parking area. Each bay is for different kinds of wastes: glass, plastics, metals, and various toxic wastes (spent batteries, old electronics, used motor oil). They are filled with noisy and, in spots, dangerous machinery. Most of the bays have crushers, pressers, or similar machines that make large physical impacts, doing from 5d to 8d cr or 3d(2) to 5d(2) cut per turn to anyone shoved into them. Anything that has crushing or shredding capacity also has a conveyor belt to move items to the business end of the machine at a Move 3. Several bays have incinerators or machines that heat up their contents, doing up to 6d burn per turn.

Access to the parking area is through a guarded gate on the east side. Two dump trucks and an unloaded semi are currently parked there. None are running, but the keys are inside.

## THE UNDERGROUND

The recycling company is the front concealing the vampires' lair. Though forbidding to mortals, it contains all a

vampire needs. The area under the facility consists of a basement, a half-finished industrial tunnel, and several rough-hewn tunnels held up with coarse beams and crude masonry. They are lit with a few bare, low-wattage bulbs dangling from bare wires, though Van Dyjk occasionally uses torches, candles, and oil lamps. Lighting penalties range from -2 near a light source to -9 for darker niches. Location numbers with the descriptions refer to the *Underground Map* (p. 12).

## 9. Short Tunnel

The vampires' usual exit from the pits is through a tunnel that leads to a grating on the far side of the parking lot. The tunnel is 60 yards long and about 4' in diameter, obliging anyone who tries to enter that way to crawl. It is also heavily trapped, with multiple pressure switches, infrared beams, and small bombs (treat as fragmentation grenades, p. B277) every 10 yards. Even if an intruder isn't killed, the tunnel will likely collapse, and someone on the inside will have plenty of time to make sure the heavy door at the end is barred as and locked.

## 10. Pens

Although the vampires sometimes feed on employees and people in the community, their regular food source is kept in several pens. The pens, which are what used to be the basement indicated on the blueprints, are large rooms with an 8'-deep, concrete-lined depression in the floor, covered with a rusty iron grating. The gratings are chained and locked shut. They currently hold a total of about 20 living people divided over all but one of the pens.

The last pen instead contains one of Van Dyjk's last-ditch weapons: a small horde of 25 zombies (see p. 8). If the facility is being overrun, Van Dyjk plans to release them to spread confusion among any attackers.

## 11. Trap Doors

The trap doors from the offices in the executive area (# 7 on the *Facility Map*) to the underground are indicated by darkened hexes. One is just outside the pens, the other is about 20 yards to the east. The GM can feel free to determine just which offices those spots line up with.

## 12. Monitor Station

The underground has a set of security monitors duplicating the ones in the security office upstairs, plus a few more monitoring the short tunnel and other areas underground. It also has a switch that can deactivate the traps in the short tunnel. The vampires don't monitor it constantly, but the video camera feeds are available to them.

## 13. Tunnels

This section of the underground is where Van Dyjk's feral minions usually spend daylight hours. Niches in the earthen walls contain wooden coffins standing up on end. The vampires don't have to rest in coffins, but it amuses them to do so.

## 14. Sanctum

The sanctum is where Van Dyjk spends most of his time. The chamber is finished slightly more luxuriously than the rest of the underground. It contains a cabinet of curios similar to the grimoires and artifacts in the lab upstairs (twice as many of each type, but all are in better shape and have DR 1 and 50% better HP) and a comfortable throne-like chair.

## SIEGE

Not long after the hunters enter the facility, several vans pull in and set up a perimeter 50 to 100 yards away from it. The vans contain a large number of MIBs (see *Enemies*, p. 8). The MIBs work for a shadowy agency whose mission is to suppress and eliminate the supernatural. This means destroying any supernatural threats *and* getting rid of any witnesses: the vampires, the employees, the victims, and – yes – the hunters.

The MIBs take up positions providing as much cover as possible (which isn't saying a lot) and set up overlapping kill zones around the facility. Snipers deploy to positions where they can cover the doors, along with a spotter and an extra man for security, watching the backs of the sniper and the spotter; anyone who sticks his head out gets shot at. They have sufficient technical capability and official authority to seal off the area (the nominal purpose of the facility allows them to disseminate a story about a toxic chemical spill) and shut off cell-phone and external phone service, although they aren't jamming radio frequencies and the facility's internal phone system still works.

Their plan is to methodically clear out the building by sending in teams of troopers and confirming that they've eliminated the vampires. If they can't, they'll just keep the facility contained. In either case, a helicopter with a powerful incendiary will be by in a few hours so that no traces are left behind. The MIBs' leader will pretend to negotiate safe passage if anyone tries to contact them, but it's a sham; anyone leaving the facility will be shot down before they can reach the perimeter.

Van Dyjk would be happy to let the hunters and the MIB kill one another (and probably will, at least for a while), and he regards his minions as expendable. However, he's also aware that he's enormously outclassed, and with hunters inside and MIB outside, his escape routes are precarious at

*The weapons had evolved, but our orders remained the same: Hunt them down and kill them off, one by one.*  
– Selene, in *Underworld*

best and completely cut off at worst. If things start to look bad and Van Dyjk hasn't been taken down yet, he'll call the hunters at the nearest office phone and suggest a temporary truce. He can get everyone out, but he needs cover from the common threat. Naturally, he'll want to bug out immediately if it's night or delay as long as possible if it's daytime.

If the hunters accept the offer, he'll try to get them out through the hidden escape tunnel in the recycling bays (see *Under*, below). He'll keep his secrets – such as the various hidden explosives and the last-ditch zombies – and use them without warning if he feels it necessary. He'll have no patience with looting, and he'll ultimately regard anyone who falls behind as being as expendable as the employees of his company. If he believes he's got a good chance of betraying the hunters and still getting out alive, he won't hesitate to do so, but his highest priority by far is leaving with his skin intact.

## GETTING OUT

Once the facility is surrounded, the adventurers are in a very, very sticky situation.

### Over

The parking area in the middle of the recycling bays is big enough to land a helicopter. Van Dyjk doesn't have access to one, but if the hunters do, it's at least theoretically possible to bring one in. The MIB didn't think to call up air support (the bomb-dropping aircraft they'll eventually have coming in is otherwise unarmed) and they don't have anti-aircraft weapons with them, so an airborne rescue isn't a bad idea. Nevertheless, the weapons the MIB *do* have can still put a lot of holes in any flying vehicle. The MIB also have access to surveillance satellites and data from nearby airport radar, so if airborne escapees take their time about finding a place to set down, they may end up discovering a reception committee.

### Under

Van Dyjk isn't stupid. He didn't build a fortress without an escape route. A section of floor in recycling bay 5, covered with concrete, conceals a manhole. Though a normal human would be hard pressed to break through the concrete, it's an easy enough job for a small quantity of explosives or a highly motivated master vampire with a pick. The manhole descends into a tunnel, dug by minions who were later consumed.

The tunnel from the recycling bay to the storm sewer is just over 2' wide and just under 6' high, and completely unlit. It also has a few traps. There is a tripwire a third of the way down the tunnel attached to a small explosive charge; treat as a fragmentation grenade (p. B277). The trap can be disarmed by flipping an inconspicuous switch in the recycling bay. Two-thirds of the way down, there's another explosive; this is an actual fragmentation grenade. It's concealed in the earthen side of the tunnel, but Van Dyjk knows where it is.

The tunnel ends in another manhole, which drops down into a storm drain. The municipal storm sewer is about 4' in diameter; anyone escaping through it will have to crawl. Although there are a few outlets into ditches outside the MIB perimeter, Van Dyjk's destination is another concealed passageway about 400 yards away, which leads up into a space in a storage rental facility.

## Through

This certainly qualifies for the boldest option, albeit not necessarily the wisest. The MIB have a good perimeter with very clear lines of sight to the building and a lot of time to aim

at anyone who comes out. However, very confident hunters who feel like the A-Team could give it a try. The recycling plant has a lot of scrap metal lying around, which could be hung on a dump truck and/or the tractor half of the tractor-trailer as improvised armor.

# ENEMIES

The hunters must face a variety of potential opponents, of wildly varying abilities.

## Vampires

Adrian Van Dyk was born in 1848. He arrived in America with his parents two days before the beginning of the Civil War, attended Yale; opened a law firm in Trenton, New Jersey; married an elderly colleague's daughter; and "died" three months later in 1873. Adrian had a marked talent for mesmerism, and he has come to use it to build up a large group of enslaved minions. He's been through a number of front companies in his day, and is quite happy with this one, but arguably he's gotten too comfortable and is over-relying on protective coloration. He also has a fondness for mystical artifacts. He has no magical skills; he simply likes occult accouterments.

Van Dyk may be treated as a mature or master vampire (*Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy*, p. 11), depending on how strong and experienced the party is. He has a clutch of feral vampires under him (*The Enemy*, p. 10); multiply the number of PCs in the adventure by 1.5, rounding down. They spend most of their time holed up in the pits.

## Employees

There are 50 to 250 normal human employees on site at any given moment. Most of them have been subjected to a greater or lesser extent to hypnosis, brainwashing, and other mind-altering techniques over the course of months, turning them into simple-minded sleeper agents.

At least 20 of the employees are armed security guards. Use the stats for cultist thugs on *The Enemy*, p. 31; they have pistols and nightsticks, but not swords. The remainder are average noncombatants with stats between 8 and 11 and no useful combat skills. However, with a mere verbal command (for example, though the office phone system), Van Dyk can have an employee open up one of the facility's hidden weapon caches – there are shotguns and SMGs distributed in locked filing cabinets around the building – and open up on any strangers. Such attacks are likely to be ineffective; employees in a post-hypnotic trance are incapable of using any tactics more sophisticated than pointing and shooting, they are firing weapons at default, and they will stop fighting if disarmed or otherwise snapped out of their trance. Nonetheless, this constitutes one more threat to keep an eye out for, as well as the potential moral quandary about killing innocents.

## Zombies

Somehow, Van Dyk has acquired a batch of 25 fast zombies (*The Enemy*, p. 14). The zombies follow no orders, but vampires don't register as edible to them, so they'll ignore Van Dyk and his feral minions and attack any humans they come

across. They are not infectious, but that won't be immediately apparent to the hunters.

## MIBs

Man for man, the MIB contingent isn't as formidable as the hunters are likely to be, but they're still reasonably well skilled, stiffened by a core of hunter-level leaders, and very well armed. They include:

- Two commandos (*Champions*, p. 9).
- One techie (*Champions*, p. 18).
- Two warriors (*Champions*, p. 19).
- One sage (*Champions*, p. 15).
- One witch (*Champions*, p. 20).
- One supporting spell caster for each PC (treat as a cultist caster, *The Enemy*, p. 31).
- 20 MIB troopers for every PC. Use the stats for the cultist thug (*The Enemy*, p. 31), but they have IQ 11, Will 13, and Per 13, and all weapon and unarmed combat skills are 15. One in every 20 has a sniper rifle, while another one in 20 has a flamethrower. They remainder are armed with a mix of assault rifles and automatic shotguns as their primary weapons, swords and wooden stakes for close combat, and WP grenades.

All of the MIBs wear helmets, night-vision goggles, advanced armor vests, sharp-proof sleeves, and reinforced boots. They also have radios and bottles of holy water. Any given group of them will have a variety of support gear such as flashlights with UV bulbs, go-bars, first aid kits, and rope.

*The vampires only take what they need to survive. Maybe two or three a month . . . but now they will kill for revenge!*

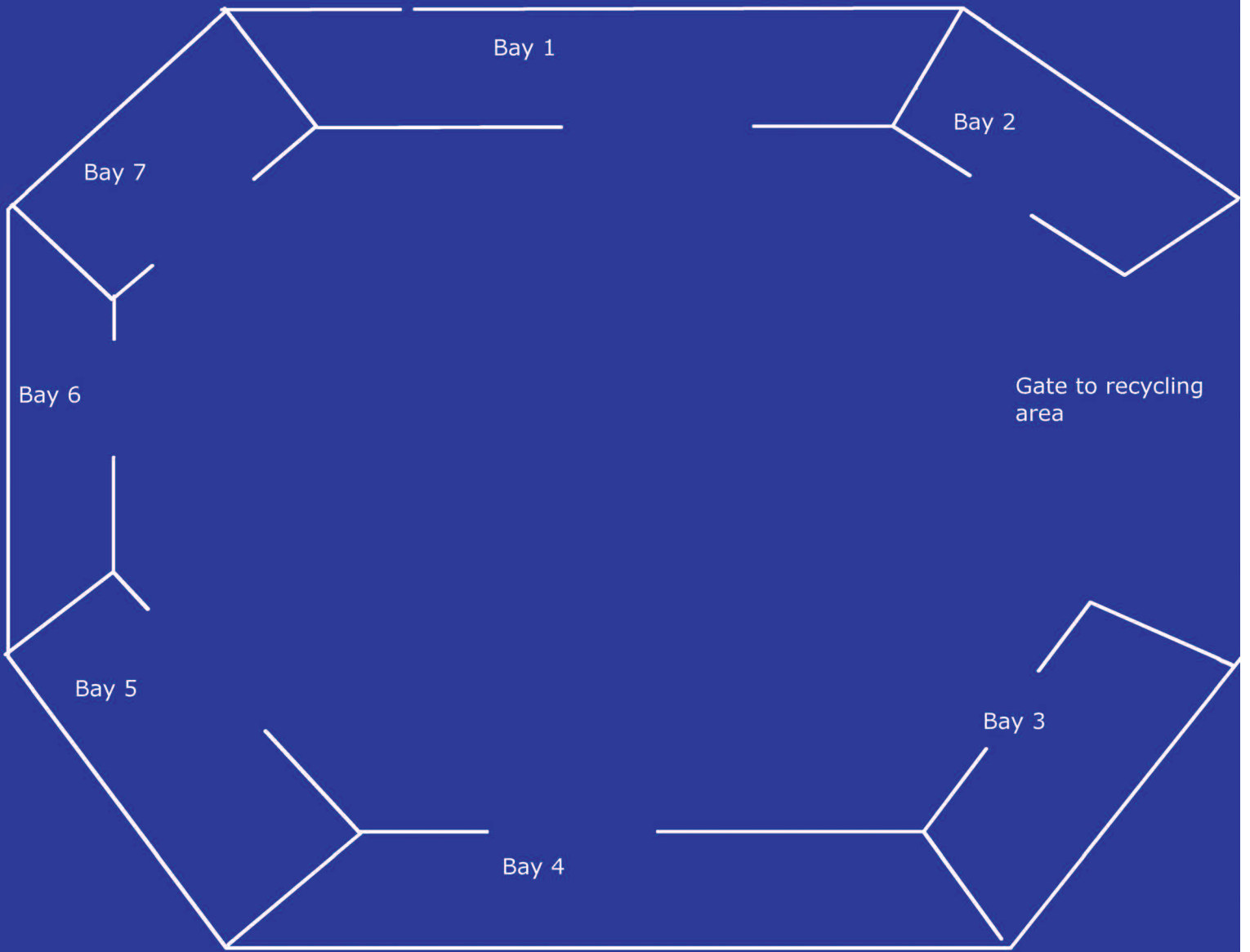
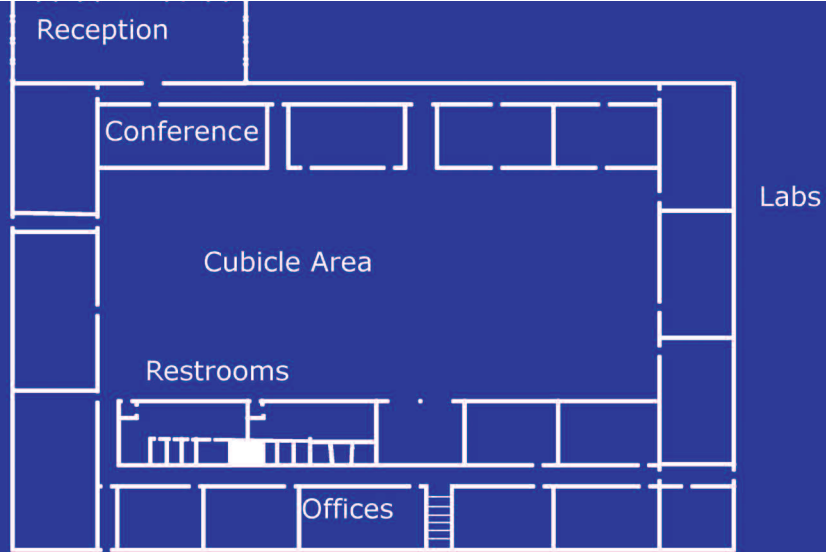
– Top Hat, in *Van Helsing*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

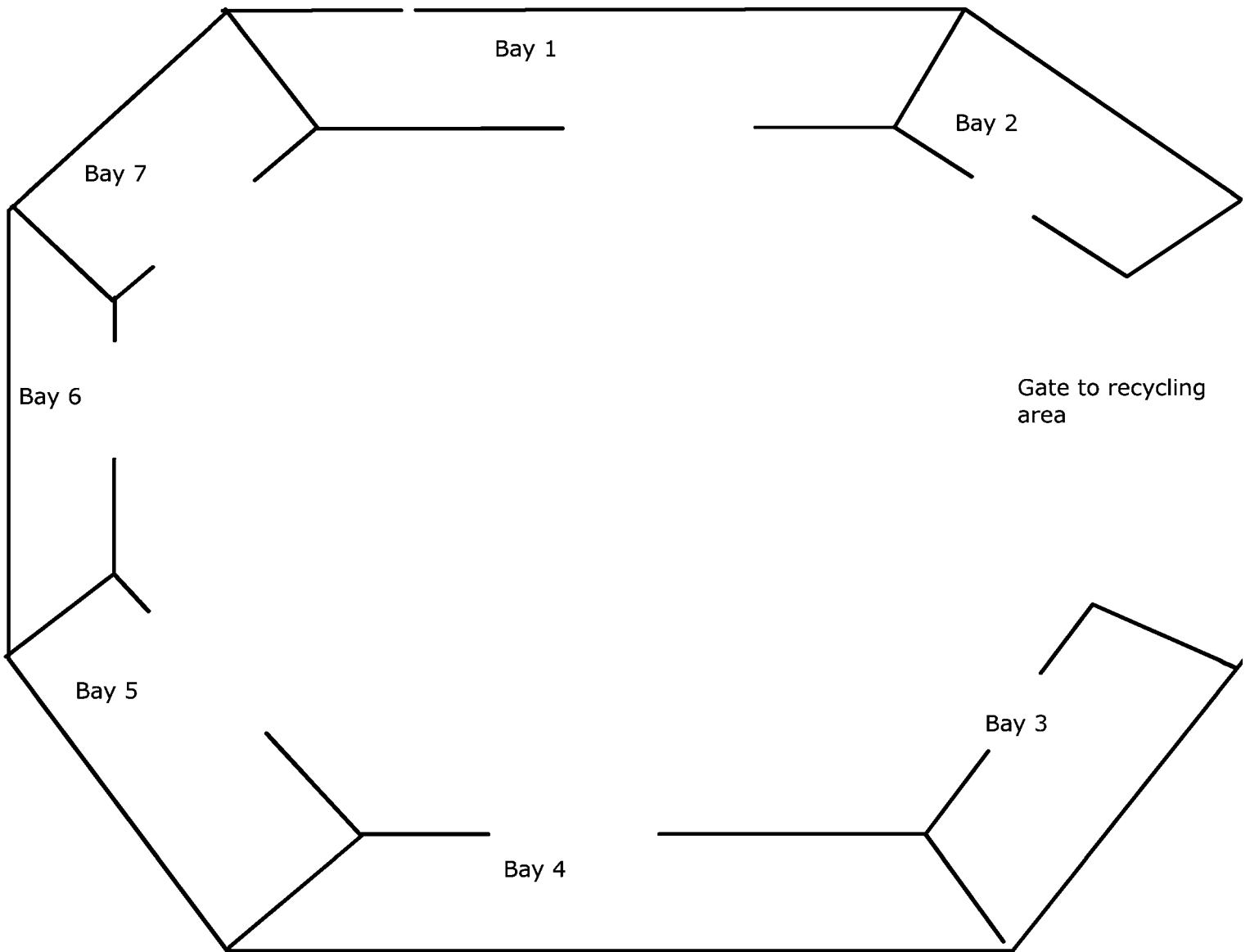
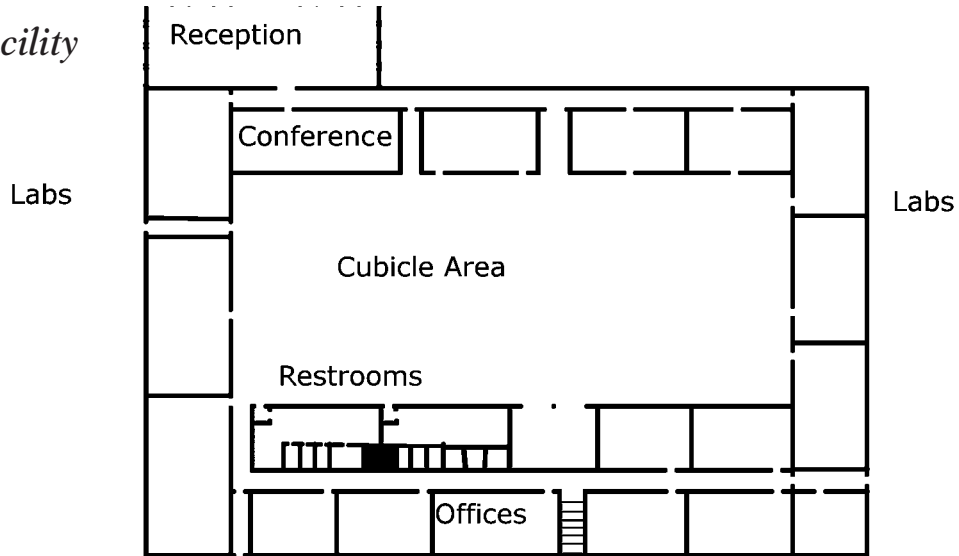
Matt Riggsby once explored the hidden secrets of vanished civilizations. He now works for a company that claims it makes perfectly ordinary medical devices, but who knows what their laboratories really hold? His allies in the struggle include a sorceress, his suspiciously charismatic offspring, and several dogs on guard against all threats, real and imagined.



*Blueprint of Facility*



*Floor Plan of Facility*





*Facility Map*

Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard  
 For room descriptions, see pp. 5-6.



*Underground Map*

Scale: 1 hex = 1 yard  
For room descriptions, see pp. 6-7.

# MONSTER HUNTER FIREPOWER AT THE MOVIES

BY HANS-CHRISTIAN VORTISCH

*GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions* provides a list of generic guns and gadgets to deal with monsters. Many monster hunters are more particular about their hardware, however; *GURPS High-Tech*, *GURPS Gun Fu*, *GURPS Tactical Shooting*, and other supplements offer ballistic solutions to monstrous problems. In either case, the GM and players may wish to know how these things look, sound, and work in action. The following films were used as inspirations for *GURPS Loadouts: Monster Hunters*, which helped inspire the *GURPS Monster Hunters* series.

*Spoiler Warning:* Note that these descriptions all contain spoilers.

## **BLADE (STEPHEN NORRINGTON, 1998)**

In the movie *Blade*, Eric “Blade” Brooks uses a Benelli M3 Super 90 semiautomatic shotgun (*GURPS High-Tech*, p. 106) with a pistol grip and no shoulder stock (“cruiser” configuration), modified with a stake launcher (*Loadouts: Monster Hunters*, p. 12), and an MAC-Ingram M10 machine pistol (*High-Tech*, p. 126), modified with a muzzle weight (*Gun Fu*, p. 42). (The prop actually consists of the smaller MAC-Ingram M11, but the .380 ACP caliber and 16-round magazine capacity make for an unlikely choice for a hunter . . .) He carries a Glock 26 pistol (*High-Tech*, p. 101) as backup, which he later gives to Dr. Karen Jenson. Abraham Whistler has an H&K MP5SD3 submachine gun (*High-Tech*, p. 123) with 30-round magazines and two-point sling (*Tactical Shooting*, pp. 71-72) and a Mossberg Model 500 Mariner pump-action shotgun. All their guns are loaded with silver hollow-points (*Loadouts: Monster Hunters*, p. 13) filled with a garlic solution (*Loadouts: Monster Hunters*, pp. 11-12).

In *Blade II* (Guillermo del Toro, 2002), Blade uses twin H&K USP Match pistols (*Gun Fu*, p. 37) with underbarrel tactical light (*High-Tech*, p. 156) and targeting laser (*High-Tech*, p. 156). Whistler uses an H&K MP5K submachine gun (*High-Tech*, p. 123) with 30-round magazines and a tactical light with UV filter (*Loadouts: Monster Hunters*, p. 11) and an H&K PSG1 sniper rifle (*High-Tech*, p. 116) with 5-round magazine and bipod (*High-Tech*, p. 160).

In *Blade: Trinity* (David Goyer, 2004), Blade keeps his twin H&K USP Match pistols, while Whistler uses a Remington Model 870 Police pump-action shotgun (*High-Tech*, pp. 105-106) with tactical light, 6-round side carrier (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 73), and 6-round buttstock ammunition loops (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 73). Abigail Whistler uses a S&W Model 686 Plus revolver (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 55) called “Lucky Seven.”

Mossberg Model 500 Mariner,  
12-gauge 3” (USA, 1989-)

This is a hammerless pump-action shotgun with 20” unchoked barrel and a corrosion-resistant finish (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 76). Firing the shorter 12-gauge 2.75” shells, it has Dmg 1d+1 pi, Shots 8+1, ST 10†, and Rcl 1/5.

## **FROM DUSK TILL DAWN (ROBERT RODRIGUEZ, 1996)**

Seth Gecko packs an Astra Mod 44 Terminator revolver, while his brother Richard Gecko carries a nicked Colt .45 Government pistol (*High-Tech*, p. 98). Jacob Fuller requisitions the barman’s Mossberg Model 500 pump-action shotgun (*Gun Fu*, p. 38) in “cruiser” configuration. Scott Fuller uses a squirt carbine (*High-Tech*, p. 180) filled with holy water (*Loadouts: Monster Hunters*, pp. 12-13).

**Astra Mod 44 Terminator,  
.44 Magnum (Spain, 1980-1987)**

This is a stainless double-action revolver with 2.625" barrel and swing-out cylinder.

*I shot her five times.  
How was she still standing?  
– J.D.,  
in Resident Evil*

**RESIDENT EVIL  
(PAUL ANDERSON, 2002)**

Alice Abernathy first grabs a stainless Beretta Mod 92F pistol (*High-Tech*, p. 100). Later she uses a stainless Springfield Armory Model 1911-A1 pistol (a copy of the Colt M1911A1 on p. 98 in *High-Tech*).

In *Resident Evil: Apocalypse* (Alexander Witt, 2004), Alice uses twin Para-Ordnance P14-45 pistols (*High-Tech*, p. 99), twin H&K MP5K submachine guns with 30-round magazines, and a Mossberg Model 500 pump-action shotgun in "cruiser" configuration.

In *Resident Evil: Extinction* (Russell Mulcahy, 2007), Alice uses twin stainless Para-Ordnance PXT LDA Nite-Tac pistols and a sawed-off Mossberg Model 500 pump-action shotgun in "cruiser" configuration.

In *Resident Evil: Afterlife* (Paul Anderson, 2010), Alice uses twin stainless S&W Model 460V revolvers in shoulder holsters (*High-Tech*, p. 154), twin sawed-off Baikal IZH-43-1C double-barreled shotguns in back scabbards (*Gun Fu*, p. 43), twin B&T MP9 submachine guns with 30-round magazines, and two H&K MP5K submachine guns with 30-round magazines.

**Para-Ordnance PXT LDA Nite-Tac,  
.45 ACP (Canada, 2005-)**

This is patterned on the Colt .45 Government, but double-action and with a double-stack magazine. Made of stainless steel, it features an underbarrel accessory rail (*High-Tech*, p. 161).

**S&W Model 460V,  
.460 S&W Magnum (USA, 2006-)**

This is a large double-action revolver made entirely of stainless steel. It has a 5" barrel with muzzle ports (*Gun Fu*, p. 42) and a swing-out cylinder. This would particularly suit *Bigger Is Better* (*Loadouts: Monster Hunters*, p. 9) – but note that it's actually a .45-caliber weapon. It can also fire the .45 LC (Dmg 2d+1 pi+, ST 9, Rcl 3) and .454 Casull (Dmg 4d+1 pi+, ST 10).

**Baikal IZH-43-1C,  
12-gauge 3" (Russia, 1955-)**

Actually made by Izhmekh but sold worldwide under their Baikal tradename, the IZH-43-1C is a hammerless

double-barreled shotgun. It has a single trigger (meaning the barrels have to be fired in sequence) and lacks ejectors. As sold, it has choked 28" barrels. Alice has sawed them off to about 9": Acc 2, Wt. 5.2/0.22, ST 12†, Bulk -3, Rcl 1/7, LC2.

**B&T MP9, 9×19mm Parabellum  
(Switzerland, 2006-)**

The MP9 made by Brügger and Thomet is a licensed and improved version of the Steyr TMP (*High-Tech*, p. 126). It features improved visibility sights (*High-Tech*, p. 156), a folding stock (*High-Tech*, p. 160), an accessory rail on top of the receiver, and a vertical foregrip (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 75).

**SUPERNATURAL  
(ERIC KRIPKE, 2005-2011)**

Dean Winchester mainly uses a nicked and engraved Colt .45 Government pistol and a sawed-off Baikal IZH-43 double-barreled shotgun with rock-salt shells (*High-Tech*, p. 103) – later replaced by a sawed-off Winchester Model 1887 lever-action shotgun (*High-Tech*, p. 105). The trunk armoury in his Impala also includes an Air Taser X26 taser pistol (*High-Tech*, p. 90) and a .357-caliber IMI Desert Eagle pistol (*High-Tech*, p. 102), which he seldom uses, though. He does employ twin S&W Model 277 flare launchers to great effect.

Sam Winchester mostly uses a nicked Taurus PT92 pistol (a licensed version of the Beretta Mod 92 on p. 99 in *High-Tech*) and a sawed-off Ithaca Model 37 Featherlight pump-action shotgun (*High-Tech*, p. 105) with rock-salt shells.

"The Colt" is a nicked and engraved Colt-Paterson No.5 revolver (*High-Tech*, p. 93) converted to use cartridges (*High-Tech*, p. 164) with silver bullets (*Loadouts: Monster Hunters*, p. 13).

**Baikal IZH-43, 12-gauge 3" (Russia, 1955-)**

This IZH-43 is similar to the IZH-43-1C but has double triggers. As sold, it has choked 28" barrels. Dean has sawed them off to about 9": Acc 2, Wt. 5.2/0.22, ST 12†, Bulk -3, Rcl 1/7, LC2.

**S&W Model 277 Gas Gun,  
37×122mmR (USA, 1972-1985)**

This is a double-action, single-shot, break-open launcher with 8" barrel. It can fire all sorts of less-than-lethal rounds (*High-Tech*, p. 143), but Dean only uses it with illumination flares.

**THE THING  
(JOHN CARPENTER, 1982)**

The Norwegian uses an H&K HK93A2 semiautomatic rifle (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 62) with 40-round magazines and Zeiss 1.5-6× scope (+0 to +2 Acc, ignores -1 in darkness penalties, expensive, rugged, \$1,500, 1.5 lbs.), as well as AN-M14 incendiary grenades (*High-Tech*, p. 192).

R.J. MacReady first employs an Ithaca Model 37 M&P pump-action shotgun (*High-Tech*, p. 105) from the station's weapon rack. Later, he acquires a Colt .357 Trooper MK III revolver and uses a Beattie M2A1-7 backpack flamethrower as well as sticks of dynamite (*High-Tech*, pp. 184-185).

### Colt .357 Trooper MK III, .357 Magnum (USA, 1969-1983)

This is a double-action revolver with 4" barrel and swing-out cylinder.

### Beattie M2A1-7 (USA, 1958-1962)

The M2A1-7 is a development of the old Beattie M2-2 (*High-Tech*, p. 179), with improved tanks and a smaller M7 flame gun. The igniter in the nozzle has five ignition matches, each burning 10 seconds. Once these have been fired, the flame gun needs to be reloaded (this takes 10 seconds). The two fuel tanks take two gallons of thickened fuel (napalm). Compressed air is used for propulsion.

## TREMORS (RON UNDERWOOD, 1990)

Earl Basset: *What kind of fuse is that?*

Burt Gummer: *Cannon fuse.*

Earl Basset: *What the hell do you use it for?*

Burt Gummer: *My cannon!*

– Tremors

Earl Basset has a nicked Colt .45 S&W Cavalry revolver (*High-Tech*, p. 95) and later gets a .375-caliber Winchester Model 70 bolt-action rifle (*High-Tech*, p. 113), both of which he never gets to fire. Eventually, he uses a S&W Model 19 Combat Magnum revolver (*High-Tech*, p. 96).

Valentine McKee first has a Winchester Model 94 lever-action carbine (*High-Tech*, p. 110) and then uses an IMI Uzi pistol (*High-Tech*, p. 126) with 32-round magazines.

Burt Gummer displays part of his armory in action, moving from a Steyr-Mannlicher SSG-P11 bolt-action rifle with Kahles 6x scope (+2 Acc, expensive, rugged, \$1,000, 1.5 lbs.), 10-round magazine, and two-point sling (*Tactical Shooting*, pp. 71-72) to an H&K HK91A2 semiautomatic rifle (*High-Tech*, p. 116), then to a Remington Model 870 Wingmaster pump-action shotgun (*High-Tech*, p. 105), and finally to his 8-bore William Moore elephant gun. He carries a nicked .357-caliber IMI Desert Eagle pistol on his belt. He also assembles some pipe bombs (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 67).

Heather Gummer mainly fires a .458-caliber Winchester Model 70 African bolt-action rifle with two-point sling, but also uses a Winchester Model 1300 Defender pump-action shotgun in "cruiser" configuration, a Colt AR-15A2 R6400 Sporter II semiautomatic rifle with 30-round magazines, a Ruger Redhawk revolver and a nicked SIG-Sauer P226 pistol (*High-Tech*, p. 102), and finally an EVC AN-M8 flare launcher.

*Man, Burt, you put  
a whole new shine on  
the word "overkill."*

– Earl Bassett,  
in *Tremors 2*

In *Tremors 2: Aftershocks* (Steve Wilson, 1996), Earl Basset and Grady Hoover use Colt XM177E2 Commando assault carbines (*SEALs in Vietnam*, p. 27) with 30-round magazines and two-point sling, as well as dynamite sticks. Earl later receives a .480-caliber Westley Richards elephant rifle with two-point sling and 6-round buttstock ammunition loops. Burt Gummer has a nicked LAR Grizzly Big Boar rifle with Burris 8-32x scope (+3 to +5 Acc, cheap, \$600, 1.4 lbs.) and two-point sling, as well as twin stainless Beretta Mod 92F pistols.

In *Tremors 3: Back to Perfection* (Brent Maddock, 2001), Burt Gummer uses his nicked .357-caliber IMI Desert Eagle pistol, a Muzzelite MZ-14 assault rifle (*High-Tech*, p. 117) with 30-round magazines and two-point sling, his nicked LAR Grizzly Big Boar rifle, and twin Browning M2HB machine guns (*High-Tech*, p. 133) with 210-round belts.

### Steyr-Mannlicher SSG-P11, 7.62x51mm NATO (Austria, 1987-)

This is a fine (accurate) bolt-action rifle with removable 5-round or 10-round magazine (\$32, 0.7 lbs.).

### William Moore Double Rifle, 8-bore 3" (U.K., 1872-1915)

A double-barreled rifle with exposed hammers that breaks open when the under lever is pushed to the side. (The prop is based on a William Moore shotgun, but the real thing would look just like it.)

### Winchester Model 1300 Defender, 12-gauge 3" (USA, 1981-1998)

This is a plain pump-action shotgun with 18" barrel and "Cruiser" type pistol grip, as sold from the factory. It's likely that Heather actually fires the shorter 12-gauge 2.75" shells: Dmg 1d+1 pi, Wt. 6.7/0.44, ST 12†, and Rcl 1/6.

### Colt AR-15A2 R6400 Sporter II, 5.56x45mm NATO (USA, 1986-1987)

This semiautomatic rifle combines features of the original AR-15 R6000 Sporter (*High-Tech*, p. 117) with those of the improved military M16A2, mainly the barrel, pistol grip, and handguard.

### Ruger Redhawk, .44 Magnum (USA, 1979-)

Sturm, Ruger, and Co. produce the Redhawk double-action revolver in a variety of versions. Heather uses a stainless version with 5.5" barrel and swing-out cylinder. Don't forget that *Bigger Is Better* (*Loadouts: Monster Hunters*, p. 9).

### EVC AN-M8, 1.5" (USA, 1942-1945)

Produced by the Eureka Vacuum Cleaner Co. (you can't make this up!), this is a double-action, single-shot, break-open flare launcher chambered for 1.5" shells (40x73mmR, CPS \$5, WPS 0.5). It fires rocket-propelled illumination flares in various colors, with a burn length of seven seconds.

### Westley Richards Best Quality Boxlock Ejector, .475 No.2 Nitro Express (U.K., 1907-)

This hammerless elephant gun has double 26" barrels and an automatic ejector. Although called the ".480," it's actually chambered for the .475 No.2 Nitro Express (12x89mmR, CPS \$10, WPS 0.13), which fires a 480-grain bullet.

## LAR Grizzly Big Boar, .50 Browning (USA, 1994-)

This is a nicked, single-shot, bolt-action bullpup rifle with 36" stainless barrel, muzzle ports, and bipod. Price and weight excludes scope.

## UNDERWORLD (LEN WISEMAN, 2003)

Selene uses twin Beretta Mod 92F pistols converted to full-auto (*Gun Fu*, pp. 40-41) and fitted with muzzle weights, as well as twin Walther P99 pistols (*High-Tech*, p. 102) converted to full-auto and fitted with targeting lasers. Kraven uses a 9×19mm H&K USP Match pistol with hollow-point bullets (*High-Tech*, p. 166) filled with silver nitrate (*Loadouts: Monster Hunters*, p. 11).

Raze fires twin Steyr TMP submachine guns. Lucian uses a Franchi SPAS 12 pump-action shotgun (*High-Tech*, p. 106) and a .44-caliber IMI Desert Eagle pistol with hollow-point bullets with an UV-emitting liquid.

*In those moments where  
you're not quite sure if the  
undead are really dead-dead,  
don't get all stingy with your  
bullets. I mean, one more clean  
shot to the head, and this lady  
could have avoided becoming a  
human Happy Meal.*

– Columbus,  
in *Zombieland*

## V (KENNETH JOHNSON, 1983-1984)

Juliet Parish uses an H&K P9S pistol, which she later trades in for a H&K P7M8 pistol (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 56). Mike Donovan mainly uses a captured laser pistol (*Ultra-Tech*, p. 115). Ham Tyler employs an MAC-Ingram M10 submachine gun with Teflon-coated (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 7) armor-piercing bullets (*High-Tech*, p. 167), as well as an M72A3 light anti-tank weapon (*High-Tech*, p. 149). Most of the other Resistance members use Colt M1911A1 pistols (*High-Tech*, p. 98) and Colt M16A1 assault rifles (*High-Tech*, p. 117).

### H&K P9S, 9×19mm Parabellum (Germany, 1970-1993)

The *Pistole 9mm, Selbstspanner* ("9mm pistol, double-action") is a fine (accurate) pistol with polymer frame and single-stack magazine.

## VAMPIRES (JOHN CARPENTER, 1998)

Jack Crow uses a stainless IMI Jericho 941F pistol. Tony Montoya has a stainless S&W Model 629 Hunter Custom revolver (*High-Tech*, p. 96) with muzzle ports and a barrel shroud acting as a muzzle weight. Later he uses an H&K MP5K with tactical light and two-point sling. Father Adam Guiteau has a stainless Beretta Mod 92F pistol and acquires a sawed-off J.C. Higgins Model 21 Deluxe pump-action shotgun.

### IMI Jericho 941F, 9×19mm Parabellum (Israel, 1990-)

The stainless steel, double-action Jericho 941F is a modified copy of the CZ Model 75 (*Gun Fu*, p. 36).

### J.C. Higgins Model 21 Deluxe, 12-gauge 2.75" (USA, 1961-1966)

This is actually the Hi-Standard K-100 Flite King Deluxe #8120, manufactured under the tradename of J.C. Higgins. The Model 21 Deluxe is a hammerless pump-action weapon with 28" barrel and ventilated rib. Guiteau's weapon has both the stock removed and the barrel sawed off at about 18.5": Acc 2, Wt. 6/0.55, ST 12†, Bulk -4, Rcl 1/6, LC2.

## ZOMBIELAND (RUBEN FLEISCHER, 2009)

"Columbus" uses a Stoeger Coach Gun for his double taps. "Tallahassee" carries a sawed-off Winchester Model 1892 lever-action carbine in "Mare's Leg" configuration (*High-Tech*, p. 110). Later, he acquires a Benelli M4 Super 90 semiautomatic shotgun (*High-Tech*, p. 106) with two-point sling and an H&K MP7A1 personal defense weapon (*High-Tech*, p. 126) with 40-round magazines. During the showdown, he also uses two Mossberg Model 500 Mariner pump-action shotguns in "cruiser" configuration carried in back scabbards, as well as a nicked Colt .45 Government pistol and a nicked SIG-Sauer P226 pistol.

"Wichita" has a nicked Walther PPK/S pistol and a Mossberg Model 500 pump-action shotgun in "cruiser" configuration, with vertical foregrip, 6-round side carrier, and one-point sling (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 71). "Little Rock" fires a Taurus Mod 62C pump-action rifle with two-point sling.

### Stoeger Coach Gun, 12-gauge 3" (Brazil, 2001-)

Actually made by Amantino Armas in Brazil but marketed by Stoeger, this is a double-barreled hammerless shotgun with 20" barrels and double triggers.

### Walther PPK/S, .380 ACP (USA, 1979-)

This version of the Walther PPK (*High-Tech*, p. 99) mates the short slide of the PPK with the larger frame of the PP. It was specifically designed for the American market and is license-made in the USA (originally by Ranger, later by Smith and Wesson).

### Taurus Mod 62C, .22 LR (Brazil, 1999-2008)

This pump-action carbine with 16.5" barrel is a copy of the Winchester Model 62.



# WEAPON TABLES

See pp. B268-271 and *High-Tech*, p. 79, for an explanation of the statistics.

## Revolvers

### GUNS (PISTOL) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)

| TL | Weapon                                   | Damage   | Acc | Range     | Wt.     | RoF | Shots | ST | Bulk | Rcl | Cost    | LC | Note   |
|----|--|----------|-----|-----------|---------|-----|-------|----|------|-----|---------|----|--------|
| 7  | Colt .357 Trooper MK III,<br>.357 Magnum | 3d-1 pi  | 2   | 180/1,900 | 2.6/0.2 | 3   | 6(2i) | 10 | -2   | 3   | \$650   | 3  | [1]    |
| 8  | Astra Mod 44 Terminator,<br>.44 Magnum   | 3d pi+   | 1   | 190/2,100 | 2.9/0.3 | 3   | 6(2i) | 11 | -2   | 4   | \$800   | 3  | [1]    |
| 8  | Ruger Redhawk,<br>.44 Magnum             | 3d+2 pi+ | 2   | 210/2,300 | 3.4/0.3 | 3   | 6(2i) | 11 | -2   | 4   | \$900   | 3  | [1]    |
| 8  | S&W Model 460V,<br>.460 S&W Magnum       | 5d pi+   | 2   | 270/3,000 | 4.3/0.4 | 3   | 5(2i) | 11 | -3   | 4   | \$1,100 | 3  | [1, 2] |

### Notes

- [1] No lanyard ring.
- [2] Muzzle port (*Gun Fu*, p. 42).

*Rule #1: No noise. No questions. If you make a noise, Mister .44 makes a noise. If you ask a question, Mister .44 answers it.*

*– Seth Gecko, in From Dusk Till Dawn*

## Pistols

### GUNS (PISTOL) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)

| TL | Weapon                                     | Damage  | Acc | Range     | Wt.      | RoF | Shots   | ST | Bulk | Rcl | Cost         | LC | Notes |
|----|--|---------|-----|-----------|----------|-----|---------|----|------|-----|--------------|----|-------|
| 7  | H&K P9S, 9×19mm                            | 2d+2 pi | 2   | 160/1,800 | 2.3/0.4  | 3   | 9+1(3)  | 9  | -2   | 2   | \$1,300/\$26 | 3  | [1]   |
| 7  | Walther PPK/S, .380 ACP                    | 2d pi   | 1   | 110/1,200 | 1.7/0.25 | 3   | 7+1(3)  | 8  | -1   | 2   | \$550/\$26   | 3  | [1]   |
| 8  | IMI Jericho 941F, 9×19mm                   | 2d+2 pi | 2   | 150/1,800 | 2.8/0.6  | 3   | 16+1(3) | 9  | -2   | 2   | \$650/\$27   | 3  | [1]   |
| 8  | Para-Ordnance PXT LDA<br>Nite-Tac, .45 ACP | 2d pi   | 2   | 150/1,600 | 3.3/0.8  | 3   | 14+1(3) | 10 | -2   | 3   | \$950/\$28   | 3  | [1]   |

### Notes

- [1] No lanyard ring.

## Shotguns

### GUNS (SHOTGUN) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)

| TL | Weapon                                    | Damage  | Acc | Range  | Wt.      | RoF  | Shots   | ST  | Bulk | Rcl | Cost  | LC | Notes  |
|----|---|---------|-----|--------|----------|------|---------|-----|------|-----|-------|----|--------|
| 7  | Baikal IZH-43, 12G 3"                     | 1d+2 pi | 3   | 40/800 | 8.4/0.36 | 2×12 | 2(4i)   | 11† | -6   | 1/6 | \$400 | 3  | [1, 2] |
| 7  | J.C. Higgins Model 21,<br>12G 2.75"       | 1d+1 pi | 3   | 40/800 | 7.8/0.55 | 2×9  | 5+1(2i) | 10† | -6   | 1/5 | \$500 | 3  | [1]    |
| 8  | Winchester Model 1300<br>Defender, 12G 3" | 1d+2 pi | 2   | 40/800 | 7/0.72   | 2×12 | 4+1(2i) | 13† | -4   | 1/7 | \$400 | 3  | [1, 2] |
| 8  | Stoeger Coach Gun, 12G 3"                 | 1d+2 pi | 3   | 40/800 | 6.9/0.36 | 2×12 | 2(3i)   | 11† | -4   | 1/6 | \$400 | 3  | [1, 2] |
| 8  | Mossberg Model 500<br>Mariner, 12G 3"     | 1d+2 pi | 3   | 40/800 | 8.3/1.26 | 2×12 | 7+1(2i) | 11† | -5   | 1/6 | \$600 | 3  | [1, 2] |

### Notes

- [1] First Rcl figure is for shot, second is for slugs.
- [2] Very Reliable. Won't malfunction unless lack of maintenance lowers Malf. (see p. B407).

## Rifles

### GUNS (RIFLE) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)

| TL Weapon                                       | Damage    | Acc | Range       | Wt.       | RoF | Shots    | ST   | Bulk | Rcl | Cost         | LC       |
|---|-----------|-----|-------------|-----------|-----|----------|------|------|-----|--------------|----------|
| 5 William Moore Double Rifle, 8-bore            | 6d+2 pi++ | 4   | 180/1,800   | 12/0.5    | 2   | 2(3i)    | 13†  | -6   | 7   | \$3,000      | 3        |
| 6 Westley Richards Double Rifle, .475 No. 2     | 8d+1 pi+  | 4   | 900/3,900   | 11.7/0.26 | 2   | 2(2i)    | 12†  | -6   | 6   | \$25,000     | 3        |
| 8 Colt AR-15A2 R6400 Sporter II, 5.56×45mm NATO | 5d pi     | 5   | 800/3,500   | 8.8/1     | 3   | 30+1(3)  | 9†   | -5   | 2   | \$850/\$34   | 3        |
| 8 LAR Grizzly Big Boar, .50 Browning            | 6d×2 pi+  | 6   | 1,700/6,500 | 30.7/0.25 | 1   | 1(3i)    | 14B† | -6   | 4   | \$2,950      | 3 [1]    |
| 8 Steyr-Mannlicher SSG-II, 7.62×51mm            | 7d pi     | 6+2 | 1,000/4,200 | 9.7/0.4   | 1   | 5+1(3)   | 10B† | -5   | 4   | \$2,800/\$25 | 3 [2, 3] |
| 8 Taurus Mod 62C, .22 LR                        | 1d+2 pi-  | 3   | 80/1,400    | 5.4/0.09  | 2   | 12+1(2i) | 8†   | -4   | 2   | \$300        | 3        |

#### Notes

- [1] Muzzle port (*Gun Fu*, p. 42).
- [2] Fine (accurate).
- [3] Cost and weight includes scope.

## Submachine Guns

### GUNS (SMG) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)

| TL Weapon         | Damage  | Acc | Range     | Wt. | RoF | Shots   | ST | Bulk | Rcl | Cost         | LC | Note |
|-------------------|---------|-----|-----------|-----|-----|---------|----|------|-----|--------------|----|------|
| 8 B&T MP9, 9×19mm | 2d+2 pi | 3   | 160/1,800 | 4/1 | 15  | 30+1(3) | 8† | -3*  | 2   | \$1,200/\$34 | 2  | [1]  |

#### Notes

- [1] Accessory rail (*High-Tech*, p. 161).

## Grenade Launchers

### GUNS (GRENADE LAUNCHER) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)

| TL Weapon                  | Damage           | Acc | Range  | Wt.     | RoF | Shots | ST | Bulk | Rcl | Cost  | LC | Note |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----|--------|---------|-----|-------|----|------|-----|-------|----|------|
| 7 EVC AN-M8, 1.5"          | 1d+1(0.5) cr dbk | 0   | 10/300 | 2.6/0.5 | 1   | 1(3i) | 9  | -2   | 2   | \$300 | 4  | [1]  |
| 7 S&W Model 277, 37×122mmR | 1d+1(0.5) cr dbk | 0   | 10/300 | 4.3/0.3 | 1   | 1(3i) | 10 | -3   | 2   | \$500 | 4  |      |

#### Notes

- [1] No lanyard ring.

## Flamethrowers

### LIQUID PROJECTOR (FLAMETHROWER) (DX-4 or other Liquid Projector-4)

| TL Weapon        | Damage  | Range | Wt. | RoF | Shots | ST  | Bulk | Rcl | Cost    | LC | Note |
|------------------|---------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-----|------|-----|---------|----|------|
| 7 Beattie M2A1-7 | 3d burn | 50/75 | 69  | Jet | 5×2s  | 11† | -8   | -   | \$1,800 | 1  | [1]  |

#### Notes

- [1] Takes two Ready maneuvers to prepare for firing.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hans-Christian "Grey Tiger" Vortisch is the author or co-author of *GURPS Gun Fu*, *GURPS High-Tech*, *Fourth Edition*, *GURPS Loadouts: Monster Hunters*, and *GURPS Tactical Shooting*, among other books. He hunts monsters in Berlin, specializing in zombies.

*Special thanks to the Hellions.*

*I was wonderin' when El Capitan was gonna get a chance to use his popgun.*  
*– Palmer, in The Thing*

# EIDETIC MEMORY

## THE HORROR OUT OF DREAMS

BY DAVID L. PULVER

**News at 11:** Police say the body that was found early this morning is missing college student Cherry Ann Burlington, 21, who disappeared last Wednesday. The cause of death was “massive trauma” to the chest area. She was dressed in a wedding gown, which authorities confirmed she had not been wearing at the time of her abduction.

Exactly one week ago, the body of abducted 25-year-old marketing executive Anise Porter was found in the same condition and dressed the same way. Police have so far declined to publicly speculate on the similarity of these murders to those perpetrated by deceased serial killer Charles Ford Darcy.

Between 2007 and 2008, Darcy – dubbed the “Black Van Killer” and “The Wedding Planner” – abducted at least six young women, dressed each victim in a wedding gown and may have forced each to participate in a bizarre marriage ceremony before piercing her heart and dumping her body on city streets. Darcy’s killing spree ended three years ago when he was shot and killed by police during a raid on his residence, which also freed his seventh and final victim: high-school senior Emily Bright Kipple. Evidence found in Darcy’s apartment and van decisively linked him to the other murders.

Interest in the Darcy killings had recently resurfaced with last month’s publication of local reporter Jack V. Finnegan’s book *The Wedding Planner: Portrait of a Deranged Killer* and the subsequent vandalism of Darcy’s grave, allegedly by “goth” teenagers. Although the police have yet to release an official statement, sources close to the investigation indicate detectives are operating on the theory that this spate of publicity may now have inspired a perverse and deadly copycat killer.

### BACK STORY

While doing research for his book last year, reporter Jack Finnegan (pp. 23-24) tracked down Emily Kipple (p. 24), sole survivor of the Charles Ford Darcy killings. Now 21 years old, Kipple was attending the local college studying history while struggling with tuition problems (her parents had recently lost their jobs, and she was in debt). Finnegan paid her \$1,000 for an interview on her experiences including a hypnotic session to help her recall more of what happened. She reluctantly accepted. However, it proved very stressful, and afterward, Emily began having terrible nightmares. Unable to afford a

psychologist and distrusting hypnosis, she attempted other therapies, with little success.

Emily’s stress and bad dreams only worsened when Finnegan’s book finally appeared. It included a photo of her and a lurid account of the abduction. Classmates asked her about the murders or – worse – looked at her and then looked away. After some kids from the local high school vandalized Darcy’s grave, local reporters ambushed her at classes and asked her for a statement. That was too much; she burst into tears on campus, ran away, and locked herself in her room for a week, missing an exam. She couldn’t take any more. She considered suicide and prayed for salvation.

### Eidetic Memory

My players needed a break from my long-running space-opera game. Inspired by a mix of Anita Blake novels and supernatural anime, I decided to run a short monster-hunting campaign. I recall that just for fun, all my players created “modern day” versions of their space-opera characters (so the space patrol agent became a street cop, and the psi-powered warrior monk . . . well, he stayed the same). This hunt for a supernatural dream-killer was one of their first adventures.

Then it arrived. His name was Eric “Zeon” Merkle (p. 24), a fellow student in her American Folklore class and an amateur occultist. He also had a crush on her. He was writing a paper on folk magic in early America. In his research, Merkle had discovered a fragment of an early 19th-century Pennsylvania Dutch occult manuscript called “The Faithful Companion and Other Charms,” a compendium of spells, hex signs, witch-lore, alchemical potions, home remedies, and Native American wisdom its anonymous editor (possibly German-American printer John George Hohman) had compiled.

Merkle had experimented with some of the spells and potions. While most were bunk, a few – those the book attributed to an old mountain witch named Mother Jenkins – gave interesting results. In fact, he was convinced one had briefly allowed him to leave his body and hover over the city (and spy on girls, though he didn’t mention that to Emily).

But more importantly, among the other potions attributed to Jenkins, he found “A Most Potent & Terrible Elixir to Remove Horror from a Dream.” That sounded like it could cure nightmares! Finding all ingredients (e.g., “hair of a cross-eyed cat”) took some time, but Merkle felt the test would make a good paper for his Roots of American Occult Folklore class. With some difficulty, Merkle brewed the potion. One ingredient was a small amount of “magic mushrooms” (psilocybin mushrooms) that Merkle had to buy from a local drug dealer, so he asked Emily not to tell anyone she was taking it.

Emily was initially reluctant to try Merkle’s solution, but another night waking up screaming after nightmares of being stalked and held captive by Charles Ford Darcy changed her mind. She tried the potion (it was awful, “like boiled sewage”) but it worked. Instead of dreaming of Darcy, she found herself “floating” in a quiet, dark scarlet place. It was weird, but peaceful. That was a month ago. She’s taken the potion, and Merkle has made more of it. She’s also gone out to the movies a few times with him, much to his delight.

Now, with the reports of the “copycat Wedding Planner killer” in the news, Emily is very glad she took Merkle’s advice. With this copycat killer on the loose, she is sure she wouldn’t be able to sleep a wink. But thanks to regular doses of the potion, and maybe the pepper spray she now carries, she hasn’t had any more bad dreams at all.

Yes, the potion did what it was supposed to do. The horror has gone from her dreams.

Instead, it is loose in the real world . . .

## What Is Happening

The “potion of nightmare extraction” that Emily drank has created a *dream avatar* (a kind of living nightmare) from the terrible image of Charles Darcy that existed within her mind. As it is formed from Emily’s fears, the entity is more powerful and malign than the original killer, with several occult abilities similar to a movie psycho killer. For example, the new killer does not merely pierce the victim’s heart; instead, he rips it out. The living nightmare is psychically linked to Darcy, but it instinctively knows it cannot harm her without upsetting its own existence. Moreover, it vanishes when Darcy is awake, only appearing when she is deeply asleep and would otherwise be dreaming.

The desecration of the grave of Darcy (which made the news) is a red herring, except in so far as it increased the media coverage that intensified Emily’s nightmares. However, it serves to get any champions thinking that the killings may be an occult occurrence (which is correct).

## INVOLVING THE CHAMPIONS

Some groups of heroes may start investigating based on local news reports. Others may require an additional push.

*Extermination for Sale:* If the champions hunt monsters for money, they’ll need a client. One possibility is a relative of a victim, either one of the originals or one of the new victims. They believe Darcy has “returned from the dead” (possibly as a vampire or ghost) and the police *don’t understand that*. They’ll urge the PCs to engage in conventional vampire or ghost-hunting tactics like standing watch over Darcy’s grave (ineffective) or roaming the city looking for his black van (which isn’t a bad idea).

*Local Guardians:* The heroes probably watch the news, so they should be interested in protecting the people. If one of the

champions is a member of the police force, or has contacts there, they’ll be aware of how little progress local law enforcement is making.

*Road Trip:* The story of the copycat killer makes national news and is taking place over several weeks, which may be enough to draw heroes to the town he’s haunting.

*Shadow Wars:* The appearance of the nightmare killer may be upsetting the balance of power in the area. If he isn’t caught, he scares other “prey” off the streets. Different factions may be convinced he’s undead, or a pawn raised up by some necromancer. For extra plot complications, Eric Merkle may have stolen the “Faithful Companion” manuscript from a mage, vampire, or other entity who wants it back. It’s even possible Mother Jenkins is an immortal entity who is still alive . . .

*Strike Team:* The GM can have the heroes’ patron present most of the preliminary information in the form of a briefing (probably after the killer has struck a few more times), then send them onto the streets to hunt the black van. The champions will only likely resort to investigations after a few confrontations with the Darcy entity prove that it is no normal opponent.

## FIRST ENCOUNTER

“The Wedding Planner” (the dream avatar) is roaming the city at night in his black cargo van. His killings are occurring in no particular pattern, but he will strike once every two to five nights (GM’s option depending on how fast paced the adventure is going to be). When he is not attacking, he’s driving about seeking victims.

The GM should let champions who patrol the city at night looking for “Darcy” encounter him; any reasonable search plan will successfully lead to him. They might try luring him with decoy victims; patrolling the streets at random while relying on their Intuition or Luck; interviewing street people, vampires, police informants, or other any other potential witnesses who spend time out at night on the streets; or using magic, psionics, or similar detection abilities. Whatever the approach, one or more heroes should meet him.

Here are three different situations in which the Wedding Planner may be found.

First, the Wedding Planner may be in the midst of stalking and abducting a woman, or have one held inside his van as he sews a new wedding dress for her (which will usually take a couple of days). If so, he is likely to want to fight to retain control of his captive. The heroes may either save her, or – if they lose the fight – suffer the ignominy of having an innocent be dragged off into the van under their bloodied noses.

Second, he may hunting for a victim. If so, Darcy has no real reason to get into a fight and will probably try to avoid contact. This is a good excuse to use chase rules.

Third, he may be on the way to dispose of a body following a kill. The Wedding Planner prefers to drop corpses of his victims in different locations around the city (usually a quiet side street), though if desperate, he may just toss them out the door without slowing down.

Hunters may attempt to shadow the Wedding Planner, perhaps in the hope of him leading them to his lair. Use the normal rules for shadowing. However, he has no lair. His van will simply vanish into a multicolored spiral of smoke whenever Emily awakens (usually between 5:00 and 7:00 a.m., as she’s an early riser).

## Defeating the Wedding Planner

The Wedding Planner is a moderately tough opponent, but a group of champions should be able to defeat him in their first encounter, and even a single champion might win. However, the Wedding Planner is not real . . . and his body and his van will vanish after killing him. (Any victims inside the van will also vanish until he reappears.) Then Charles Ford Darcy will be back again within a day or two unless the investigators are able to stop the dreams. The only way to stop him permanently is to put together the clues that something odd is going on. This probably requires a final encounter with Darcy (after they have learned the truth about his reappearance), in which they defeat him with Emily's assistance.

Once champions have made the connection that the Darcy avatar was born from Emily's dreams, they may attempt further research into dream magic and magical constructs (such as tulpa). Successful skill rolls against Lore!, Occultism, Alchemy, Thaumatology, Theology (Shamanic), or Hidden Lore (Free Spirits) may suggest a connection between the dreamer (Emily) and the creature, and that perhaps only Emily would have special ability to destroy it. If the heroes don't realize this on their own, the GM may wish to follow the deduction guidelines from *GURPS Monster Hunters 2: The Mission* to help them toward this conclusion, with clue bonuses if they find the manuscript, study the potion, talk to Emily and Merkle, research Mother Jenkins, witness the vanishing and later return of Darcy, or visit the dream rooms inside the Black Van.

## INVESTIGATIONS

The initial "copycat killing" may not get champions interested as it seems like an ordinary – if lurid – crime. If the PCs do not investigate right away, the GM should add more and stranger news reports (or relay this information through other sources, such as police contacts).

*A Weird Killing:* Around 4:00 p.m., another victim (see *List of Victims*, below) vanished. A homeless wino named Bill Barnstable saw a man on crutches wearing sunglasses and a hat ask a woman matching the victim's description to help him with groceries. She lifted them into the van, but never came out . . . and then the van just vanished! (Emily had taken a nap before getting up to finish a paper.)

*Police Stop:* Cops spotted a black van that matched the description Barnstable gave. It ran a red light. "The van was an old beat-up model, but it was really whisper-quiet, like one of those new electric hybrids. The side door opened, and the van

shoved a garbage bag out the back, which bounced." Police got a glimpse of someone with a raincoat and black hat. Cops fired into the van, chased it around a corner while calling for backup, but the van accelerated really fast and then just seemed to vanish. "It was like something supernatural."

*Further Reports:* The above should be enough to convince any champions to get involved, but if they don't, the killer will continue to strike and continue to run rings around the police. Additional oddities may also occur (see *Oops, I Did It Again*, p. 24).

## PORTRAIT OF A DERANGED KILLER

The following back story is available to anyone who researches news and police reports, buys and read Finnegan's book, make Current Affairs (Regional) rolls to remember local news reports from a few years back, interviews detectives or persons involved in the case, or just reads the various summaries available online.

### History

Born in 1975, Charles Ford Darcy was an only child. His father, Wade, was a drill-press operator who was disabled in an accident and spent most of his time drunk. One summer, he left the family. His mother, Lois, worked shifts at a garment factory and planned to open her own dress shop. Sadly, she died of lung cancer when he was 15. Darcy finished high school, and after his father died, inherited their house. Some sources (including Finnegan's book) wax Freudian about Darcy's relationship with his parents, but nothing is known for sure.

Darcy held various jobs, mostly in the garment trade, including one in a bridal shop. In his 20s, he often tried to pick up women he met at singles bars, but this usually ended badly; he was awkward and occasionally crude. Others described him as quiet and self-absorbed. He spent a lot of time at home doing carpentry (and secretly working on a collection of wedding dresses).

What no one knew was that Darcy had darker desires. Forensic evidence found in his house and missing person reports confirm that between 2004 and 2006, he stalked several women and assaulted two, but they escaped capture and attention. Then his urges turned murderous. Between 2007 and 2008, he abducted and killed six women, perfecting the ritual that gave him his name. Darcy preyed on single women who he stalked from his large black van, often in parking lots and near small convenience stores. Based on the testimony of sole survivor Emily plus a few individuals who encountered him but did not fall for his routine, he pretended to be on crutches, ill, or blind, and asked for help loading groceries into his van. After producing a knife or scissors, he threatened victims into his van. A few days later, their bodies would be found dumped in back streets, clad in simple but professionally made white wedding dresses, and stabbed once in the heart. A tabloid journalist dubbed him "The Wedding Planner" killer. The name stuck. Police hunted him for weeks, gathering various clues and following up leads relating to the cloth used in the dresses, sightings of black vans, etc. However, they were always too late.

### Victims

If the heroes are slow off the mark in realizing this is a supernatural case (or take time to solve it) the GM may have to announce a few more victims. Here's a list of the avatar's other prey:

- Charlene Kronk, 19.
- Gigi Kingston, 30.
- Jaime Winters, 22.
- Alice Montague Tucker, 24.
- Antonia "Sarge" Irving, 31.

## *The Last Killing and the Final Abduction*

The last person murdered by the Wedding Planner was Penelope “Morningstar” Jones, 23, a pleasant and well-liked Wiccan who owned a local occult-supply shop. Several local witches called on the Goddess to end the evil that had befallen their sister. However, the Wedding Planner was unfazed and soon struck again, abducting high school senior Emily Kipple.

### *What Happened to Him*

He was caught by accident. In May of 2008, police executed a no-knock warrant on a suspected pot dealer named Burnaby Hopkins. Due to a clerical error, they got the address wrong (e.g., 66 Park Street instead of 606 Park Street) and kicked down Charles Ford Darcy’s door instead! He was posing Kipple for her final photo. Mistakenly believing the cops were onto him, he panicked, grabbed his knife, and rushed to kill Emily. He was shot by the tactical team 23 times. Emily was rescued alive.

### *Emily*

She was traumatized but eventually told police and media how she had been forced to change into a wedding dress and veil, have it altered to fit her, be photographed, then participate in a mock marriage ceremony. When she resisted him, he cursed her as an adulterous slut, and told her she would be punished “like all the rest.” He tied her to the bed. He was sharpening his knife when the police team arrived.

### *66 Park Street*

The house Darcy lived in was sold after his death to pay back taxes, then when the neighborhood was redeveloped, it and neighboring houses were cleared to make a six-level underground parking garage. The van and Darcy will sometimes materialize here. Alternatively, they do so within 100 yards of Emily’s apartment.

### *Charles Ford Darcy’s Grave*

Darcy was survived by a distant uncle, who paid for his burial expenses. His only statement was, “Darcy was a troubled guy who went wrong somewhere. I’m sad for his victims.” On the last anniversary of his death, Darcy’s gravestone was desecrated when pig’s blood was poured over it.

A simple headstone reads “Charles Ford Darcy, 1975-2008. May God Forgive Him.” The stone is slightly stained (from the blood that was dumped on it).

The vandals are just kids, but one is Dan “Damien” Jones, the teenage goth brother of the last original murder victim, Penelope “Morningstar” Jones. Believing Darcy may actually have returned, he and some friends may return to try to further desecrate the grave (perhaps knocking over the headstone, chanting spells of exorcism, and scrawling occult symbols on it). The black-clad would-be exorcists occultists may arrive just in time to get caught in a PC stakeout.

In fact, there’s nothing special about the grave at all. There’s a body in a plain coffin that is in fact Darcy’s corpse, and its fate has almost nothing to do with Darcy.

One exception is that if the dream form of Darcy came face-to-face with the corpse (or better yet, an animated version of it), the shock might force the former to make a Fright Check!

## **“THE WEDDING PLANNER” DREAM AVATAR**

335 points

The dream avatar of “Darcy” appears to be in his 30s, with pale blond hair, watery blue eyes, round face, a thin cadaverous body that belies his great strength, and a wispy mustache. He wears a wool coat over a dark tailored business suit and tie.

Darcy’s weapons are a pair of large knives. He also carries duct tape, a length of cord, and several sharp sewing needles, plus a set of wedding dresses (all stored in his Payload). He affects a French accent and attempts to appear cultured. Although the human version of Darcy mixed elements of inequity and violence, the dream avatar is a pure monster whose only trace of humanity is the affected French accent.

Although Darcy is more than capable of overpowering normal human victims with his raw strength alone, he continues to obsessively follow the pattern left by his former self’s actions. Thus, he will attempt to coerce mundane victims with Acting and Fast-Talk, then threaten them with his knife and bind them. He will only show his true power when threatened.

If he manages to defeat a champion or sidekick, he will generally just leave them there without bothering to finish them off. However, if the PC is an attractive female, he will follow his wedding ritual, keeping her alive (or even healing her) long enough to dress her, pose her for a photograph, and then (try to) kill her. However, he will not kidnap an obviously married woman (e.g., wearing a wedding ring).

Darcy’s Payload is an extradimensional “dream space” within his body where he can store exaggerated versions of the various weapons and tools that Emily remembers he used: crutches (which he can wield as a light club), a giant pair of scissors, and his knives. He will pull them out as necessary to surprise his foes.

There are two ways to get rid of Darcy for good. First, Emily can be persuaded to stop taking the potion (or be killed). Second, Emily can kill Darcy herself. (Obviously she’s no match for him, but if Darcy were restrained, she could deliver the finishing blow.)

This second method presents a horrific paradox, as dream avatars seem to only appear when the individual is sleeping! Champions will need to exercise their creativity (or engage in occult research using skills like Hidden Lore, Occultism, or even Dreaming) to solve the problem. The answer is that a dream avatar can *also* manifest if the creator is in *any* altered state of consciousness – e.g., a trance, sleep walking, or hypnotized into believing he is dreaming even as he remains awake and open to suggestions. Use of Hypnosis skill, psychedelic drugs or potions, shamanistic ritual, or teaching Meditation or Dreaming skills (to self-induce a trance) can create an altered state in which Emily can manifest Darcy while still being able to kill him (with the assistance of the heroes). For added drama, the GM may wish to have Darcy and his van appear near where the hunters are trying to induce the correct state, and be drawn to attack anyone who is assisting her.

If the hunters are unable to figure out that the second method is possible, the GM can drop a few clues; for example, after the investigators meet Emily, she mentions the hypnotic session she undertook at Jack Finnegan’s behest, which first triggered her trauma. This may get the idea of hypnotizing her onto their radar.

## The Black Van

This appears to be an ordinary black-painted cargo van with tinted windows. It has a license plate, but it's always obscured by shadow (Emily never clearly saw it).

The van appears along with Darcy and vanishes when the dream avatar disappears.

Since Darcy's own home no longer exists, he takes his captives into the van. The van's doors lead into a dimensional pocket that is a replica of the basement rooms where he imprisoned Emily and his other victims. There are two areas: One is a dark basement storage room with cement floor and manacles on the walls; a small waste bucket; and a tiny night light. A barred door leads to a furnished room

containing a table, desk, sewing machine, many bolts of cloth, several unfinished wedding dresses, and photography equipment. Finally, there is the killing room, with a blood-stained table, and a wall of photos of his various victims (all posed in their wedding gowns).

The black van has twice the HP and DR of a normal van, and never runs out of gas. When Emily awakens, Darcy, the van, and *anyone in it* temporarily vanish, reappearing only when she sleeps. If Darcy is killed, the van will slowly fade away, vanishing in 1d minutes and leaving any living passengers on the ground.

### Driving/TL7 (AUTOMOBILE)

| TL | Vehicle   | ST/HP | Hnd/SR | HT  | Move  | LWt. | Load | SM | Occ. | DR | Range | Cost | Locations |
|----|-----------|-------|--------|-----|-------|------|------|----|------|----|-------|------|-----------|
| 7  | Black Van | 136   | -1/4   | 11f | 2/45* | 3.5  | 1    | +4 | 1+7  | 8  | -     | -    | g4W       |

In the character sheet below, the avatar's Hidebound trait reflects his inability to deviate from the behavior patterns Emily remembers. Social Stigma (Monster) reflects the fact that people recognize his face as that of a dead serial killer. The combination of Fragile (Unnatural) and Unkillable 3 means he dies (vanishing into multicolored smoke) at  $-1 \times \text{HP}$ , then reforms at soon as his Regeneration (3 HP/hour) restores him. He will normally reform within 100 yards of his creator, though sometimes he appears in the parking lot that now covers his former home.

**ST** 19 [90]; **DX** 13 [60]; **IQ** 11 [10]; **HT** 13 [30].  
Damage 2d-1/3d+1; BL 72 lbs.; HP 30 [22]; Will 13 [10]; Per 11 [0]; FP 13 [0].

Basic Speed 6.50 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 10\*; Parry 11\* (Brawling/Axe/Mace) or 10\* (Knife).  
6'; 175 lbs.

### Social Background

*TL:* 8.  
*CF:* Western.  
*Languages:* English (Native); French (Accented) [4].

### Advantages

Combat Reflexes [15]; DR 2 [10]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Doesn't Sleep [20]; Extra Attack [25]; Payload 3 [6]; Recovery [10]; Regeneration (Regular) [25]; Signature Gear (Black Van) [5]; Unfzable [15]; Unkillable 3 (Achilles Heel, Damage from Emily, -10%) [135].

### Disadvantages

Callous [-5]; Compulsive Murderer (12) [-15]; Fragile (Unnatural) [-50]; Hidebound [-5]; Intolerance (Young unmarried women) [-5]; Loner (12) [-5]; Nocturnal (Variant; Nonexistent when Emily is awake) [-20]; Obsession (12) (Next murder) [-10]; Sadism (12) [-15]; Social Stigma (Monster) [-15]; Supernatural Features (Ice-cold skin) [-5]; Trademark (Kills in specific fashion) [-5]; Vulnerability (Any attack by Emily  $\times 4$ ) [-40].

*Quirks:* Criticizes sloppy or punk-style clothing; Fakes injuries to gain sympathy of victims. [-2]

### Skills

Acting (A) IQ [2]-11; Area Knowledge (City) (E) IQ+1 [2]-12; Axe/Mace (A) DX+1 [4]-14; Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-14; Carpentry (E) IQ [1]-11; Fast-Talk (A) IQ [2]-11; Knife (E) DX+2 [4]-15; Driving/TL8 (Automobile) (A) DX [2]-13; Intimidation (A) Will [2]-13; Knot-Tying (E) DX [1]-13; Sewing (E) DX+2 [4]-15; Stealth (A) DX [2]-13; Wrestling (A) DX [2]-13.

\* Includes +1 from Combat Reflexes.

### Shears

In addition to his knives, the Wedding Planner's most potent weapon is an oversized pair of dressmaker's scissors. The additional "SP" column indicates the skill penalty to use the improvised weapon with the indicated weapon skill.

## OTHER NOTABLES

The heroes will likely come in contact with the other key players in this drama.

### Jack Finnegan

Jack is a 34-year-old tabloid journalist who writes a crime column for the local newspaper and has recently published *The Wedding Planner: Portrait of a Deranged Killer*. Short, with curly brown hair, a goatee, and a pugnacious attitude, he wears a rumpled sports jacket and pants. He always carries two smart phones and a notepad.

He drives a sports car (bought with proceeds from his latest book) he can't really afford. He likes cops, hates bloggers and other semi-professional journalists, and is teetering on the edge of alcoholism. Currently feeling the heat due to many in the city blaming his book for the "copy cat," he's eager to cooperate if it can help catch the killer . . . and possibly give him a sequel.

## Weapon Table

### TWO-HANDED AXE/MACE (DX-5, Axe/Mace-3, Polearm-4, or Two-Handed Flail-4)

| Weapon         | SP | Damage   | Reach | Parry | Weight | ST | Notes  |
|----------------|----|----------|-------|-------|--------|----|--------|
| Giant Scissors | -2 | thr imp  | 1     | 0U    | 3      | 8† |        |
| or             | -2 | sw+2 cut | C     | No    | -      | 8† | [1, 2] |

#### Notes

[1] Crippling damage to a limb amputates it!

[2] If closed on neck or limb.

**ST 10; DX 10; IQ 12; HT 11.**

Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10; Will 10; Per 10; FP 11.

Basic Speed 5.25; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8.

5'5", 130 lbs.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Alcohol Tolerance; Bad Sight (Nearsighted; Glasses); Callous; Compulsive Spending (12).

**Skills:** Area Knowledge (City)-13; Carousing-12; Criminology/TL8-10; Current Affairs/TL8 (Regional)-14; Driving/TL8 (Automobile)-11; Fast-Talk-13; Research/TL8-12; Savoire-Faire (Police)-13; Speed Reading-12; Streetwise-13; Writing-14.

### Emily Kipple

Emily is the 21-year-old student whose nightmares accidentally created the horror. She has big brown puppy-dog eyes, long brown hair worn in a ponytail with a red ribbon, and glasses. She typically wears blue jeans, colorful fuzzy sweaters, and a red backpack. She carries pepper spray, takes self-defense lessons, and drives a beat-up yellow subcompact car. She lives in a cheap off-campus apartment packed with books and located above a Thai restaurant. Emily has 1d doses of the potion of nightmare extraction in a glass bottle in the fridge in her room (it needs to stay cool). It is a weird purple sludge. Use Alchemy or Thaumatology to analyze it!

As detailed in the description of Darcy, Emily is the key to ending the monster's reign of terror. Emily will initially be uncooperative with any investigators, due to her earlier bad experiences. However, if confronted with evidence that something is wrong, she may be persuaded to tell her story. Anyone who shadow her may also see her meeting furtively with Merkle after class as he provides her with new potions (or takes her on dates, which, he being a nerd, she doesn't want other students to know about).

**ST 9; DX 10; IQ 12; HT 10.**

Damage 1d-2/1d-1; BL 16 lbs.; HP 9; Will 12; Per 10; FP 10.

Basic Speed 5; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8.

5'6", 110 lbs.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Attractive; Bad Sight (Nearsighted; Glasses); Nightmares (6) (Mitigator; Potion); Pitiable; Reputation -1 (As helpless victim; City residents; 7 or less); Struggling.

**Skills:** Diplomacy-10; Driving/TL8 (Automobile)-9; History (American)-12; Judo-10; Research-13.

### Eric "Zeon" Merkle

Eric is a 27-year-old, sixth-year undergrad history student (he keeps changing majors and failing to graduate). He has

long black hair, green eyes, and thick glasses. He wears a leather jacket and baseball cap, and drives a cheap motorcycle, but looks ridiculous doing it. He always has a backpack full of folklore and occult books. He often gets over-enthusiastic and trips over his own words, and is a bit of a nerd. He lives in a dorm on campus in a room that is filled with occult paraphernalia, a desktop computer, history books, math books, and partly disassembled computer hardware (the latter two from his roommate, Steve Keller, a computer science major and total skeptic). Merkle has numerous herbs and "witchy" ingredients (eye of newt, magic mushrooms, etc.) in the kitchen. A scanned copy of the manuscript is on his computer.

**ST 9; DX 10; IQ 12; HT 10.**

Damage 1d-2/1d-1; BL 16 lbs.; HP 9; Will 12; Per 10; FP 10.

Basic Speed 5; Basic Move 5; Dodge 8.

5'6", 100 lbs.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Bad Sight (Nearsighted; Glasses); Oblivious; Reputation -1 (As stoner, occult freak, and nerd; Local students; 7 or less); Sense of Duty (To Emily); Stammering.

**Skills:** Alchemy-10; History (American)-12; Driving/TL8 (Motorcycle)-10; Occultism-13; Research-14; Streetwise-10; Thaumatology-10.

### Oops, I Did It Again

If not confronted by the heroes, Merkle won't realize what he did and is likely to try out the "successful" potion again. Merkle's next test subject will be local jock Elliot Carpenter, a friend of Merkle's roommate, who has been suffering a recurring nightmare in which he is attacked by a shark that chases him out of the water and onto land. The GM should start with the stats for the tiger shark on pp. B457-458, and adjust them based on the abilities of the group. The solution is the same as described in "The Wedding Planner" *Dream Avatar* (pp. 22-23).

## ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

David L. Pulver is a Canadian freelance author. An avid SF fan, he began roleplaying in junior high with the newly released *Basic Dungeons & Dragons*. Upon graduating from university, he decided to become a game designer. Since then, David has written over 70 roleplaying game books, and he has worked as a staff writer, editor, and line developer for Steve Jackson Games and Guardians of Order. He is best known for creating *Transhuman Space*, co-authoring the *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* anime RPG, and writing countless *GURPS* books, including the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*, and the recent *GURPS Spaceships* series.



# THE NETWORK

## A QUESTIONABLE GLOBAL FRATERNITY

BY J. EDWARD TREMLETT

*Gregor always knew this moment would come – he was just never sure about the details.*

*For example, he hadn't imagined the package would actually be **inside** his safehouse, sitting on the filing cabinets underneath his trophy rack. They'd done such a good job placing the plain, padded envelope that he didn't even notice it until he was half into his leather armor.*

*He walked over to it cautiously, guns drawn, wondering if it was a trap. Considering the numerous vampire skulls he had on display on that rack – and countless others stacked about the place – any number of angry allies could be trying some sneaky revenge.*

*But at the same time, from everything he'd heard, **this** was how it happened. You came home and found a padded envelope with no markings. Inside the envelope was a black cell phone – no make, no model, just buttons, a screen, and a camera.*

*The moment you held it in your hand it seemed to get warm, and could possibly be pulsing. Then it rang – sharp and insistent – and when you answered it . . .*

*"Gregori Mikhailovich Donetsky, vampire hunter," the tinny voice on the other end said. "You have joined the Network."*

*"Yes," he said, realizing the other thing they'd said was true as well. The Network didn't ask for cooperation. As far as they were concerned, they already had it.*

*He had just been conscripted.*

They say most champions die alone, and they'd be right. The other side of that saying is that monster hunters live longer when they fight together, back-to-back, like true comrades. But how do you make those connections without alerting the authorities, or, worse, the very things you're out to fight? How do you pay for the war? Who do you turn to when the enemy is too large, or too hard to understand?

The Network has stepped forward to answer these questions. Its apparent goal is to assemble a large, worldwide army of operatives – brave and knowledgeable people who can assemble within a day to go hunt supernatural evil, or be called on the phone to give valuable expertise. Every member gets a phone, an invisible pipeline to draw money from when on Network business, a substantial paycheck for services rendered, and the security of knowing that, when it all goes wrong, the invisible army has their back.

But does it really? Strange whispers and uncomfortable rumors surround the group. If it's all about shining the light,

why is there so much darkness around it? If it's so great, why do some people risk everything to leave it?

What is really hiding behind the anonymity of those black cell phones?

This organization for **GURPS Monster Hunters** provides a way to get groups of champions together in the first place, as well as solve money woes, facilitate fast character replacement, and create an in-game reason to shuffle through different characters for different stories. It also asks a number of uncomfortable questions as to the true nature of the group and hints at the dire consequences of trying to leave. Sample cases are given at the end, along with suggested character types to deal with them.

*Welcome to the  
Network. You have  
just been conscripted.*

### FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

Word has it that the Network has been in operation for the last seven years. It came out of nowhere in a rain of black telephones and untraceable money transfers, all connected by a strange, tinny voice. For all anyone knows, it could vanish the same way.

The group is rumored to have more than a thousand members, but this could be a lie, and the voice refuses to give numbers. It's rumored to be a modern-day incarnation of the Knights Templar, the militant arm of the Church of England, the secret army of an American spy organization, or any number of other clandestine groups. The voice refuses to confirm or deny, and may actually be laughing.

It's also purported to be a "false flag" operation, run by vampires, demons, evil magicians, or something entirely different to do away with rivals and competitors. However, no one's been stupid enough to ask the voice that question directly.

What is certain is this: At some point in their career, certain champions are apparently flagged by the Network for observation. Sometimes this is done by hunters who are already part of the Network and on the lookout for new talent. Sometimes this is done by the Network itself, though no one's sure who does it or how. A test might be thrown the champion's way, and the criteria are anyone's guess, as no one seems to remember anything test-like occurring.

If the hunter passes, the offer is made. The offer comes in the way of an unmarked, padded envelope, left somewhere that only the hunter has access to. How it gets there is unknown, but most hunters with an ear to the ground should know what it means. The rumor mill has a lot to say about the Network by now – good, bad, and otherwise.

If the hunter tosses or destroys the envelope, or at least avoids touching the phone once the package has been opened, the offer is denied. There's no going back on the denial, either: If not destroyed, the spurned envelope will be gone within the hour, leaving only shreds of paper and scraps of shredded, black plastic behind. The offer is never repeated, which may or may not be a bad thing.

However, if the hunter takes out the phone, and answers it when it rings, he has joined the Network. Once in, there is no going back.

## GOT MY HEART ON THE LINE

The phone call that ensues is surreal. The voice on the other end – “My name is not important” – is warbling and tinny, yet possessed of a certain eerie charm that makes it almost impossible to hang up on. It welcomes the hunter into the Network by telling him things that no one other than the hunter could possibly know: family secrets, shameful failures, recent cases worked alone.

“We already know you, outside and in,” the voice says. “Now you know of us, and this bond is forever.”

Then it explains how the relationship works, which is very simple: When the phone rings, answer, listen, and do as instructed. The assignment may be nothing more than advising other Network members with a current hunt – providing translation, lore, or other areas of expertise. It might also require the hunter to meet up with some nearby Network members to deal with a local problem.

Then again, it may involve getting on a plane and going halfway around the world to deal with a very large problem – the sort of thing people don't tend to walk away from in one piece, if at all. The understanding is that – no matter what he's up to – the hunter must drop everything and everyone when the black phone rings and give it primary importance, no matter what's asked of him.

The Network has its rewards. There's money, for one thing. When the champions are on a hunt for the Network, all expenses – no matter how frivolous – are completely recouped at the end of it. There's also a very large paycheck in their account along with the reimbursement. (Hunters who live off the grid get an anonymous, mysteriously delivered package of money, instead.)

Another reward is access to information in a speedy manner, and physical backup as soon as possible. If the champion's having a problem understanding something, he can call the

Network and get an expert working on the problem as soon as one can be found. If the hunter's up against the wall and in trouble, he can request aid, though that might take some time to pull together. These perks are never billed, though there is an understanding that a hunter on the Network shouldn't ask for too many favors before answering his first assignment.

Once those things are understood and agreed to – at least in theory – the voice asks the hunter to pick a codename. Then it instructs the hunter to keep his membership in the Network a secret. He must also keep the phone on or near his person at all times, and to let no one other than a Network member use it.

“We'll speak again – soon,” it says, and then hangs up. It sounds more like a cold promise than a friendly welcome.

*When choosing between  
two evils, I always like to  
try the one I've never tried  
before.*

– Mae West

## WAITING FOR A BELL TO RING

Days may go by, leaving the hunter to wonder what he's gotten himself into. He may eventually realize the phone has no charger with it, nor does it have any place to insert one. Almost miraculously, it doesn't seem to need one – there isn't even a battery bar on the top.

There isn't a signal strength indicator, either; these phones work everywhere for as long as they need to. Plus, they're waterproof and cannot be broken . . . but those who test either of those variables receive a harsh phone call telling them to please stop.

How often does the telephone ring? Generally, the answer is “not often.” There are a lot of people on the Network, operating all over the world, and not as many missions to undertake (or advise on) as one might suspect. Certain kinds of activities peak at certain times of the year, making some forms of expertise very relevant for a short time, and then only academic until the next nightmare season. An all-purpose kick-butt commando may get called every other weekend; a sage who knows everything about the ultra-rare European speckle-backed were-badger might never be called at all.

But when the phone *does* ring, the champion is expected to pick up before 10 rings – no matter where he is or what he's doing. Fortunately, the phones can be set to vibrate, so as to not alert ignorant friends of what's going on. Unfortunately, the phone does not have an answering service: if you miss the message, it goes on to the next available Network operative.

The really bad news is that a missed call is considered a “strike.” The next time the hunter is free, the phone will ring, and the tinny voice will bluntly inform the slow pick-up artist, “Three strikes means you're out. Don't make us *fetch* you.”

Better news is that the Network seems to know when *not* to call, and does not hold it against you – usually. If the character's in the middle of a life-or-death firefight, fleeing for his life, or half-dead in a hospital, the phone call will pass on to the next operative without complaint. However, if the character's out with friends for a drink, working his own cases, or knee-deep in the sand chasing a quarry, he's generally fair game.

That said, some people have been shouted at for not picking up while literally in the jaws of a vampire, while others have been let off for being dead asleep after an impressive bender. The voice is kind of capricious.

The finances are not, though. All remuneration for expenses and services rendered appears in the hunter's bank account (or in his sanctum) within an hour after a consulting call ends, or a hunt is successfully concluded. Consulting garners the equivalent of \$25,000 to \$100,000, depending on the nature of the call, and an actual hunt could bring up to \$250,000 – maybe more. The money is always in UK pounds. (For a little more info on the currency, see *Tracing the Call*, below.) A failed hunt gets only expenses covered, and sometimes not even that depending on how badly the team – or the individual – botched the job.

## Tracing the Call

More technical-minded hunters might want to do a little reverse-spying on their new masters to figure out what's up, just in case they have to bolt. They'll be largely frustrated, though.

For one thing, forget tracing the calls. The phones don't work in the same way normal ones do, as they don't receive or send out signals. There is also no number for the Network, itself – just the entry NETWORK in the Contacts that has no details at all.

The phones are of seamless construction, and seemingly contain no metal parts as they don't set off metal detectors. They have no screws to loosen, and are almost impossible to crack open without applying ridiculous pressures or explosive force. Those that are broken thusly explode into useless plastic scraps, and when a replacement comes – less than 24 hours later – a very nasty phone call ensues.

The money transfers don't leave many traces, but anyone who does a really masterful hack on the global banking network will eventually track the money back to the Undercliffe Bank. It's a small banking consortium based out of Bradford, West Yorkshire, in Northern England, which probably explains why the payout's in pounds. But anyone who snoops that far gets a phone call to please stop before they *fetch* you. (That word again?)

As for historical precedents, it turns out there was a gentleman's society called The Net back in Bradford in the late 19th century. It was founded by Sir Charles Sutcliffe, and meetings took place on an ad hoc basis at his estate in nearby Shipley. Its members were called to action by messengers who carried urgent letters in black envelopes.

What they hunted was not spoken of in polite society, but a tintype exists that purports to be the end result of one of their affairs. It shows a mostly stern group of armed men surrounding a bloodied, nude man who seems quite dead. The apparent corpse is lying on what looks like a large pile of fur, bones, and offal; anyone with sufficient Hidden Lore (Lycanthropes) knows that some dead werewolves shed their animal parts upon death, and these quickly rot, leaving only the human behind.

## OPERATOR, GIVE ME TRANSATLANTIC

When a mission comes through, the champion is told what's going on – as much as the Network knows, anyway. This comes complete with pictures on the phone's screen, where applicable. They're told where and when to rendezvous with the other summoned hunters, and given their codenames and a call sign. The phone's contacts automatically fill up with the codenames of the others, but they're told not to call until on the ground unless there's an emergency.

At this point, the hero has the option of refusing the mission. It is possible to say no for whatever reason, but the voice will not be happy, and will coldly inform the person that he gets only three denials, and he has just used one. What happens at the third rejection is not elaborated upon.

The Network's much nicer about giving its people a reasonable amount of time to get there, unless it's a world-shattering emergency. They have to make their travel arrangements themselves, of course, but it'll all be reimbursed in the end – provided they don't screw up. Different people arriving at different times can facilitate the early birds getting some more intelligence to surprise their late friends with, but hopefully they won't solve the case all by their lonesome.

While on the job, the champions have the option of calling the Network at any time for assistance. They tell the Network what problem they're having, and the voice goes about trying to find an expert to help out with that. Getting an expert on the line is usually quick, but ferrying in some extra muscle takes time the heroes may not have. It's also a step the Network seems loathe to take unless absolutely necessary, preferring to let the investigators prove their martial prowess – or at least their ability to run.

When a hero dies in the field, there's no point calling the Network to tell them. They already know. A call has already gone out to that poor soul's replacement, and the others will receive a message when it's convenient to get it, informing them who the new body is, that he's on the way, and where to meet him.

As for the dead operative's phone: the mysterious object vanishes a few minutes after the hunter dies. It will most likely wind up in another padded envelope in someone's hidden sanctum.

## CAN YOU HEAR ME CALLING YOU?

There are a number of ways to utilize the Network within a *Monster Hunters* game. The most obvious one is to use the group as the central framework that acts as an overarching reason for normally suspicious hunters to get together on a case. It provides monetary support for usually cash-strapped heroes, and real-time logistics and expertise for those heroes who can't possibly know everything. It also helps facilitate in-game PC replacement should the inevitable happen during the story.

To take this route, the GM should have each player make a couple different hunters, or else provide a few mostly done templates in search of a lens and pass them around for the players to complete and personalize. At the start of a story, the black phones ring, and one PC per player is contacted. The other champions can either sit tight or possibly be called for expertise or backup. Should someone's hunter die while fighting were-tigers in Cambodia, one of that player's other characters could be called in, or else a handy NPC or premade PC – perhaps based on another expert the remaining hunters have dealt with before – could be handed over for the story.

Alternatively, all the group's PCs are invited into the Network. They come back to a central location they all use and find padded envelopes waiting for each of them. When they open them, the phones ring, either one at a time or all at once, and several disjointed conversations take place. After that point, they're all in. Working for the Network can either become the main focus of the group's existence, or another source for stories and in-character aggravation, depending on how often the GM wants to utilize it.

Another option is to make the Network as a plot complication. The GM might introduce the ominous package to a lone hero in a one-on-one session with one of the players. Given that he's supposed to keep his membership a secret from his trusted companions in the fight, this is not going to make things any easier – especially if they've heard the rumors and know what that black cell phone is. It'll require some good roleplaying and GMing to keep the other players in the dark as to what's going on.

Yet another fun wrinkle would be to have all members of the group except for one get the cell phones; they'll all have to work to keep it a secret from the odd man out. Or perhaps *every* hero gets drafted, but they have no idea – in or out of character – that the other team members are in the group, too. However, both of these options will have to be carefully watched lest what's supposed to be another level of intergroup paranoia turns into a comedy of errors.

Finally, there's the option of having the Network be something for the hunters to investigate. Maybe they've heard the rumors about the less above-board side of the group, and want to know if it's as bad as they say, and who – or what – is controlling it. It could also be that a fellow hunter has been acting really weird lately, and he's been seen carrying a new cell phone he doesn't want others to use. Or maybe that hunter vanished after a very strange night on the town, and was last seen shrieking and firing guns at shadows in an alley.

## **NO PLACE TO HIDE; I'D BETTER TAKE THE CALL**

The following are short notations on potential Network stories. It gives the basic known information going into a situation, and some types of characters who could be selected to follow up on it.

### *Magic Carpet Ride*

On the 23rd of the last month, at 9:31 p.m., Flagstaff, Arizona, was rocked by a massive explosion on the southern outskirts of town. The epicenter was determined to be Jerry Habib's Oriental Emporium – a large but dodgy store that purported to be Flagstaff's only authentic provider of Middle

Eastern wares. Mr. Habib (also known as Jerry Rubadue, 46) wasn't supposed to be selling anything more dangerous than genuine fake Persian rugs, but the police estimated the blast was equivalent of 100 lbs. of C-4. Curiously, no explosives residue was found – it's like the bang came out of nowhere.

As another curious fact, survivors of the blast swore they saw a strange man walk out of the flames. He was tall, bald, and covered in tattoos, and wore flowing robes of what looked like black silk. More disturbing was the fact that when he spoke, fires rushed from his eyes and mouth. He purportedly escaped the scene by flying away on one of Jerry's prized carpets.

Mission objectives are to interview survivors and first responders, investigate what Jerry was keeping under wraps, and determine the truth of what happened that night. If a *djinn* is indeed loose in Arizona, it will have to be dealt with. The Network has called a crusader, a sage, a sleuth, a warrior, and a witch.

*Sitting by the telephone  
Waiting for a bell to ring  
I don't want another call  
– Chaka Khan,  
“Telephone”*

### *Suffer the Children*

Chesne Falls, Nebraska – a small burg of around 780 souls. Its primary claim to fame is the massive gravel mine just outside town. About 15 years ago, there was a temporary shut-down of the mine when workers unearthed something “radioactive.” Several workers were killed instantly, and the government cordoned off the area for a month for safety reasons. When they let people come back in, workers complained of headaches, nosebleeds, and the feeling like they were being watched. The incident was never fully explained, and the bodies of the dead workers were never released to the families.

This last year, Chesne Falls High School, which serves three nearby communities, has been reporting disturbing incidents among its freshman class. Students have been complaining about being bullied by a small gang of “townie kids”: being verbally assaulted, thrown into lockers – even beaten up in the hallways. However, the teachers haven't *seen* the gang do anything; they just stand nearby and watch while their apparent victims wince as if being insulted, and writhe in pain as if being beaten.

All five members of the gang were born around the same time, 15 years ago. All of them have parents who worked at or near the gravel mine when the incident happened. All of them have blue eyes so pale that they look almost white. They never seem to speak among themselves, even though they move their heads and act as if they're having a conversation. Onlookers get the “treat” of being stared at in silent unison by the five.

Mission objectives are to infiltrate the town and observe the gang and their victims, and make determinations as to what to do with them. The operatives should also interview their parents, and any persons who were present at the mine during the accident. Finding out what the government kept a secret may also be essential to unraveling the mystery. The Network has called a commando, a psi, a sage, a sleuth, and a techie.

## *The Angels of Hell*

Out in the badlands of the West, where the highways burn long and hard between sparse towns, all kinds of unseemly activity goes on. Drug running, arms trading, human trafficking, and general mayhem are often carried out by gangs of outlaw bikers. Worse, some of the gangs become so powerful that they effectively take over entire towns – paying the police to look the other way while they party and flout the law.

That's what the 6-D Devil Dogs were doing in western Idaho, up until a year ago. The 20 men essentially owned the stretch of SR-93 from Jackpot, Nevada, up to Rogerson, Idaho, and called the minuscule, Idaho town of Dinker Flats theirs. Sheriff Kim Park happily took their money so long as they didn't do anything too embarrassing, the town got paid to look after them, and everyone was happy.

Then something happened, but no one's sure what. Law-enforcement sources say a deal with a new client went really bad, but who he was and what happened are both unknown. All they know is that the gang's completely changed hands, the old guard is MIA, and the 15 new guys are so vicious and destructive that most of Dinker Flats' people have fled to nearby Rogerson for police protection.

The stories they tell have made veteran police officers queasy: wanton slaughter, grotesque tableaux of suffering, and actual human sacrifice. They also say the new gang is strong enough to rip people apart with their bare hands, and perform feats of what could only be magic, or hellfire, but no one's taking that seriously. Yet.

The Network believes that the gang has been taken over by otherworldly entities – possibly demons, possibly something else. This will be a combination of intelligence gathering and then total disposal, leaving nothing for the police to find but the spoor of another “devil cult.” Under no circumstances may the gang become mobile, or else the situation will become harder to contain.

To that end, two teams are being called in, one after the other. The first consists of a commando, an inhuman, a sage, a sleuth, and a witch. The second's roster will be determined based on the observations of the first, but will most likely include the heaviest hitters available: commandos, crusaders, experiments, inhumans, and warriors.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

By day an unassuming bookstore clerk, J. Edward Tremlett takes his ancient keyboard from its hiding place and unfurls his words upon the world. His bizarre lifestyle has taken him to such exotic locales as South Korea and Dubai, UAE. He is a frequent contributor to *Pyramid*, has been the editor of *The Wraith Project*, and has seen print in *The End Is Nigh* and *Worlds of Cthulhu*. He's also part of the *Echoes of Terror* anthology. Currently, he writes for Op-Ed News, and lives in Lansing, Michigan, with his wife and three cats.

## Stop Calling; I Don't Wanna Talk Anymore

Is it possible to flee the Network? Some have tried, but many have utterly failed. The lucky ones come back like dogs with their tails between their legs. The others are irrevocably broken or simply vanish.

The worst bit is that the Network *knows* what they're thinking. They're tired of being enslaved to that telephone, knowing that every time it rings there's a chance they could be on the next flight to Cambodia to fight were-tigers in the lost jungle kingdom. Money means nothing if they're not alive to spend it or sane enough to appreciate it.

It *knows*, so it calls and warns them: “I told you, this is forever. The only way out is through. Do we have to come and *fetch* you?” Then it hangs up.

If the hunter tries to run with the phone on his person, possibly to show others that he's not crazy, something terrible will get him. But no one ever gets a good look at that something terrible except for the one who it's after. All witnesses see is a large and shadowy figure, moving much faster – and silently – than one would expect possible for a person of that size, and then it and its quarry are gone.

The abducted hunter disappears for a day and a night, and then comes back with no explanation given. Ever after, those who've worked with him before will wonder what's changed. Why is he so silent and strange – so quick to laugh at the wrong thing, or nothing at all?

If the hunter's smart enough to chuck the phone, the phone will follow. Wherever he goes, it will appear: in hotel rooms, dives, cellars, sewers, crowded bars, empty restaurants. It appears at random intervals, just when he thinks he's finally eluded it – always the same phone, always ringing.

He can still pick it up and come home, of course. But the longer he sits and looks at it, the better the chance that something terrible will fetch him. The only other option is to keep running, and hope that one day the phone will stop following.

That said, there are those who have eluded the grasp of the Network altogether, but in almost all cases, it involved making another deal with something even worse. Demons, evil gods, and black magicians are always happy to take on such fugitives. Becoming a member of the Undead-American community also seems to break the bond with the group, though becoming a vampire, mummy, or zombie probably creates more problems than it cures.

There's also a rumor that one can leave the group provided one offers a replacement. It's probably not a one-for-one deal, though: it may involve bringing three, seven, or more new hunters that are even better candidates to the Network's attention. This may be how the group does all its recruiting. This may also just be wishful thinking on certain recalcitrant operatives' part.

# PULP HUNTERS!

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

**GURPS Monster Hunters** is all about taking down the boogeyman before the boogeyman takes you down, or worse, harms an innocent or someone you care for. But it's not just about violence. The children of the night are tricky things that hide themselves well; that is after all how they have survived for so long. Of course with the advent of cell phones, the Internet, and modern firearms it has become measurably easier. It wasn't always so . . . Drawing upon the excellent outlines of *Pulp Action!* from *Pyramid #3/8 Cliffhangers* this article seeks to do for **Monster Hunters** what that article did for **Action**, enabling cinematic pulp adventure style play in a TL6 setting.

## TEMPLATES

The templates in **Monster Hunters 1** need a bit of a tweak to work in a lower TL campaign, such as eliminating computer- and electronics-related skills that appears on many templates. For all templates, add Riding (Camel or Horse) and Teamster (Equines) to the list of background skill options, and remove Computer Operation (if present).

### Commando

The commando works pretty much as is in a pulp setting, needing few adjustments. After all a gun is pretty much a gun in either TL6 or TL8. Commandos in most pulp stories don't just rely on firearms to get them through; sometimes, a fist to the jaw just *works* better than a bullet. The two-fisted ex-soldier is common trope.

**Advantages:** Gun Fu perks (if allowed) such as Quick-Reload and Hand Cannon are *immensely* useful when dealing with bulky TL6 firearms. Don't overlook buying up ST either: The higher BL you have, the more ammo you can carry!

**Wildcard Skills:** If the GM allows the optional Fist! wildcard skill (see p. 33) it may be substituted for Blade! or Ten-Hut!

**Primary Skills:** If the optional Fist! wildcard skill is allowed, then the Brawling, Boxing, Judo, Karate, and Wrestling skills suffer from a significant overlap and should not be selected.

### Crusader

The crusader, like the commando, more or less works as is; with this single template you can create *many* types of characters, such as an exorcist, primitive shaman from the darkest heart of Africa, etc. Note that while you are a "holy man," your hunter is still a champion and designed mostly to kick monster butt!

**Advantages:** Clerical Investment [5] is an excellent choice but is especially useful for those with Theology (Abrahamic), such as the classically eponymous Roman Catholic exorcist.

**Disadvantages:** If the GM wishes, he might allow someone from a primitive area (such as a shaman) to have Low TL as a disadvantage.

**Primary Skills:** For exorcists, remove Esoteric Medicine and add the points freed into Exorcism, bringing it up to 16.

*. . . the human mark distorted but did not hide the leopard, the ox, or the sow, or other animal or animals, from which the creature had been moulded.*

– H.G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*

## Experiment

While the regular experiment is human, just not 100% human, a pulp-style experiment could be anything that *was* human (like Frankenstein's Monster) or *part*-human (like the hybrid human-animal creatures of *The Island of Doctor Moreau*).

**Advantages:** Injury Tolerance (Unliving), Epidermal Resilience, Adrenal-Muscular Trigger, and increased ST are musts when creating champions modeled after Shelley's Frankenstein. Likewise, Discriminatory Senses, Enhanced Ground Move, Enhanced Speed, and Ocular Adaptability are suitable for hybrid-animal experiments. The GM might allow certain exotic physical advantages such as Claws, Extra Limbs, Strikers, and Teeth to be purchased with some of the 60 points reserved for Bioenhancement abilities. These would *not* have the usual Bioenhancement Power Modifier; they are instead innate physiological capabilities, like a cat's claws or a monkey's tail.

**Disadvantages:** Add Appearance [Varies], Social Stigma (Monster or Dead) [-15 or -20], and Unnatural Features [Varies] to the list of disadvantages available.

**Primary Skills:** Remove Computer Operation, and replace it with either Area Knowledge (any) or Current Affairs (any), both IQ [1]-13. Weird Science (VH) IQ [8]-13 may be substituted for Biology. Remove Electronics Operation, Bioengineering, Computer Programming, and Computer Hacking from the first list's options; these skills essentially do not exist at lower TLs. Instead, allow each choice to add 4 points to raise any primary skill by a level.

**Background Skills:** Add Shadowing (A) IQ-1 [1]-12 and Urban Survival (A) Per-1 [1]-12 to the list of available options. Remove the Beam Weapons (Projector) skill as an option.

## Inhuman

Inhuman characters can offer some of the widest choices when it comes to optimizing your character, and they can also be some of the *coolest*. After all who doesn't want to play the reformed vampire? Or the outcast angel who sees not just the black and white of morality, but the gray, too?

**Advantages:** See the new inhuman racial template, ethomorph (pp. 31-32), for another option when deciding exactly what sort of creature you are.

**Disadvantages:** If the monsters of the campaign setting have a monster underworld as described in *Monster Hunters 2*, then a given Inhuman might have Reputation -4 (Traitor; All monsters; 10 or less) [-6] instead of his normal Reputation. Add the option to "upgrade" Reputation (for a net -1 point) to the list of optional disadvantages.

## Psi

"Weird menace" pulp novels seemed to have a bit of a fascination with psychics, especially "spirit rappers" and "spiritual mediums." Most psis should probably pick ESP abilities as that seems to be what most pulp psychics have in the stories that feature them.

**Advantages:** Many of the ESP abilities are especially appropriate, with Aura Reading and Psychometry being the most common. Some mediums are also able to actually manifest spirits through the use of "ectoplasm" to build them a temporary body. To create a medium like this, make sure you purchase the second level of Spirit Communication (*Monster Hunters 1*, p. 44).

**Secondary Skills:** Remove both Computer Programming and Computer Hacking from the list options.

**Background Skills:** Remove Electronics Operation from the list options.

*You're a very brilliant woman,  
but a foolish one to pit your  
strength against mine!*

*– Armand Tesla,  
in The Return  
of the Vampire*

## Sage

Almost as common as the commando, the sage is a classic trope in pulp stories, one of the most popular being Abraham Van Helsing from Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Every pulp-style team should have a sage, especially given the fact that information is harder to come by than in a contemporary setting due to lack of modern information technology.

**Advantages:** Contacts are *important* for a sage, as are Languages, since many ancient prophecies, texts, etc. are written in obscure tongues so as to obfuscate their meaning or purpose. For those who are less adept at magic, lower Magery by

1 and spend the 10 points on Language Talent or further Contacts, both of which are useful.

**Primary Skills:** Sages concentrating on languages can take Thaumatology at a level lower and instead buy Linguistics (H) IQ-1 [2]-15, allowing them to better understand unknown languages (and learn them!).

**Background Skills:** Add Cryptography and Mathematics (Cryptology), both (H) IQ-2 [1]-14 to the list of available choices. Sages in pulp stories seem to have a knack for figuring out secret codes, ancient puzzles, and other enigmas.

## Sleuth

Many heroes of pulp stories don't have flashy skills or arcane knowledge, what they do have is a knack for obtaining information by any means necessary, many times through blind, stupid luck.

**Advantages:** Spending the points to bump your Luck up a level is well worth it, as is purchasing higher levels of Craftiness. Danger Sense is a common trait as is Unfazeable ("We don't rattle, do we?") and an Ally in the form of a plucky sidekick, usually a street kid or secretary.

**Disadvantages:** Add Code of Honor (Professional) [-5] and Sense of Duty (To Clients) [-5] to the initial list as optional choices.

**Wildcard Skills:** If the GM allows the optional Fist! wildcard skill (see p. 33) and you pick the second package option, you may either substitute Fist! for Ten-Hut! or spend the additional points to buy it at DX-1 [12]-13.

**Secondary Skills:** If the optional Fist! wildcard skill is allowed, then the Brawling, Boxing, and Wrestling skills suffer from a significant overlap and should not be selected.

## Techie

You might be a man of science, a crackpot inventor, or a private researcher into the occult . . . You might be *all* three. Regardless, you are the man with the wrench, a spool of copper wire, and an old Coke bottle – and a way to somehow turn all that into a sophisticated ghost-catching container. Unlike many of the adjusted templates, the techie gets to keep his higher tech skills, except for computer-related ones, of course. This template might also be used for fantastically capable doctors capable of creating vaccines for new diseases overnight, extracting supernatural parasites from teammates, and so on.

**Advantages:** If the GM permits it, you may purchase up to two levels of High TL [5/level], allowing you access to better gear and equipment, though this still has its downside (see *Tech Level and Equipment*, p. B27). Medically skilled techies will want a level or two of High Manual Dexterity (for Surgery), Resistant to Disease (for entering pestilence-ridden areas), and Gizmos (for always having the right medical supplies when needed).

**Wildcard Skills:** Some techies focus heavily on medicine. If this is the case, you may choose to take Inventor! IQ-1 [12]-15 and Medic! IQ+2 [48]-18, instead of the listed options.

**Primary Skills:** Remove Computer Operation and use that point to instead raise Scrounging to 17. Remove Computer Programming and Computer Hacking from the list options. Add Lockpicking and Traps, both (A) IQ [2]-16 to the second list of choices. Note that Electronics Operation (Security) and Electronics Repair (Security) are probably less useful in a TL6 setting than they would be in a TL8 one.

## Warrior

Whether you are a time-lost Knight Templar, samurai from the far east, or just a medieval weapons aficionado, you are a force to be reckoned with. Many heroes from pulp novels are would-be warriors, including Howard's Solomon Kane, a nomadic wanderer who travels the world over with his cutlass and pistols vanquishing evil in all its forms.

**Advantages:** The warrior template presented in *Monster Hunters 1* focuses mostly on using weaponry to give an edge in battles, with punches and kicks playing a secondary role; the GM may wish to reverse this. If so, simply add Trained By A Master [30] to the additional options. This then unlocks the following additional traits: Blunt Claws [3], Enhanced Parry 1-3 (Fist!) [5/level], and Improvised Weapons (Fist!) [1].

**Wildcard Skills:** You may substitute the new Fist! wildcard skill for Blade!, here. (Fist! should be available to any warrior with Trained by a Master, even if the GM doesn't otherwise allow it.) Optionally, you may take *both*: one at DX+2 [48]-16, and the other at DX-1 [12]-13. If so, you will take fewer normal skills; see below.

**Primary Skills:** If you took *both* wildcard skills, remove the second and third bulleted list (the unarmed striking and grappling skills). If you took Fist! *instead* of Blade!, remove those same options, but spend the 8 points on one or more bladed Melee Weapon skills.

**Secondary Skills:** If you took *both* wildcard skills, reduce the skill choices from the second bulleted list (Forced Entry, etc.) by one; that is, take four of those skills instead of five.

**Background Skills:** If you took *both* wildcard skills, reduce the skill choices by two; that is, take three background skills instead of five.

## Witch

Rogue witches are typical fare as far as antagonists go in pulp stories, but that doesn't mean that a particular witch can't be a Good Guy. It just means it's a tad unusual for the genre.

**Advantages:** A higher Magery is good, since witches and other powerful users of magic are portrayed as being able to pull off some high-octane stunts. Telekinesis is also seen quite a bit, and a few points invested in it can yield highly useful results, such as opening handcuffs, picking a locked door, or sliding a latch on the inside of a window. Like sages, witches benefit from having multitudes of Languages, this can make grimoires much cheaper.

**Disadvantages:** If there is a monster underworld and witches are a part of it, then PC witches might be considered "rogue"; and those witches who work to closely with the "mundane" might be shunned or ignored, resulting in Reputation -4 (Traitor; "Normal" witches; 10 or less) [-5]. Add this to the disadvantage list as an option.

## NEW INHUMAN RACIAL TEMPLATE

The pulp era suggests a new racial template for inhuman champions.

### Ethomorph

200 points

An ethomorph is *similar* to, but different from a lycanthrope. For whatever reason (curse, weird-science mishap, etc.) you are fundamentally two people: your normal self; and a darker, more twisted version of you, who may look radically different from you or even be a different gender or ethnicity. The most famous example of this sort of inhuman is Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde of Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

Inhuman ethomorphs have (mostly) mastered their shift to their other half, forming a symbiotic partnership with their inner monster, allowing them to use it for good. While they have usually have complete control, when an ethomorph experiences *strong* emotions – like those caused when someone harms a loved one, being in the presence of a hated enemy, or joy caused by being near to one they love – he must make a Will roll or shift into his other form.

Like the lycanthrope, you can only shift between your human form and your ethomorphic one; transforming you any other way (even with powerful magic) is impossible. It takes a single Ready maneuver and a HT roll to shift forms, but takes five seconds for you to fully change – you do not need to concentrate during this time. Failure on the HT roll means you still shift forms, but it is painful, causing a -2 to all DX, IQ, skill, and self-control rolls for minutes equal to your margin of failure. You may, if you choose, spend 2 FP to change in a single turn, or, if you spend 4 FP and make a HT-2 roll, do this as a free action. Failure means you Do Nothing this turn. Any clothing or gear you have is still with you when you shift, though if your two forms are radically different, they might not fit properly (GM's decision). All of the following traits apply to both forms.

**Attribute Modifiers:** HT+2 [20].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** Will+2 [10]; Basic Speed-0.5 [-10].

## Ethomorphic Form

The following template is a "typical" form that an ethomorph transforms into and is presented here for ease of character creation. While in this form, you gain the attribute bonuses, advantages, *and* disadvantages listed. You retain all your normal traits, including those of your ethomorph racial template. The GM might allow a player to design his own template, tailored to his character concept. If so, the form should temporarily add 165 points' worth of traits; it must include Callous [-5].

**Ethomorphic Form:** Gain ST+8, DX+2, HT+3, Appearance (Ugly), Berserk (12), Callous, Claws (Blunt), Combat Reflexes, Disturbing Voice, DR 6 (Tough Skin), Enhanced Move 1/2 (Ground; Temporary Disadvantage, Semi-Upright, -5%), Focused Fury†, Ham-Fisted 1, and Super Climbing 2.

\* Allows you to combine *Mighty Blows* (p. B357) with All-Out Attack (Strong), improving its damage bonus to the higher of +2 per die or a flat +3. This costs 1 FP per attack.



**Advantages:** Alternate Form (Active Change, +20%; Backlash, Resistible, Severe Pain, -20%; Reduced Time 1, +20%; Reduced Time 3, Costs 2 FP, +54%; Uncontrollable when experiencing strong emotions, -10%) [174]; Compartmentalized Mind 1 (Mental Separation Only\*, -80%) [10]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Regeneration (Slow) [10]; Immunity to Transformation [5].

**Perks:** Brave [1]; Shtick (Clothing survives to modestly cover ethomorph after changing shape) [1].

**Quirks:** Parasitic Persona† [-1].

**Disadvantages:** Frightens Animals [-10]; Manic-Depressive [-20].

\* You do not get extra mental maneuvers. This advantage only helps to protect you against mental intrusions.

† This is essentially a quirk level of the Split Personality disadvantage; while you still hear the voice of your other half you can “mute” it to a whisper.

## HUNTER TRAITS

There are a handful of new options that are a benefit to champions in a pulp-style campaign.

### Higher Purpose

see p. B59

A great many stories revolve around a human and a monster falling love. The relationship usually doesn't last long as soon they realize they can't be together (though sometimes it works out!). Love strikes a chord deep in most people; it's something everyone seeks, and thus becomes fodder for roleplaying as well.

*True Love:* You get a +1 to all rolls to protect, assist, find, etc. your True Love, including Will rolls to resist compulsions to hurt him or self-control rolls to resist disadvantages that might affect them – Uncontrollable Appetite (Blood), Berserk, and so on.

### Perks

A common theme in many stories is that of a bloodline of monster hunters who have through the years fought against The Enemy. While this could be represented as merely a back story element the GM could offer the following perk.

*Hunter Scion:* Once per game session, you can add your level of this perk to one of the following skills: Hidden Lore, Lore!, Theology, Occultism. This represents the hard-won knowledge of the generations of champions who came before you, which has been passed down to you. You may not have more than four levels of this perk.

## Boxing with the Boogeyman

Sometimes a champion might find himself without weapons while facing down The Enemy. While this is not an ideal position to be in, it does happen. For some concepts, however this is how they prefer to fight even if they are at a bit of a disadvantage. The following new wildcard skill should give these champions an edge.

### New Wildcard Skill: Fist! (DX)

From street-fighting to tai-chi, you know what you're doing – you don't just *know*, you are a *master*. Use this skill to make all unarmed attacks, including weapons that can be wielded using an unarmed skill, such as brass knuckles or improvised fist loads. It replaces Boxing, Brawling, Judo, Karate, Parry Missile Weapons, Sumo Wrestling, and Wrestling. If you know Fist! at DX you do +1/die damage when you strike, slam, or shove; this rises to +2/die if you have it at DX+1. This damage bonus applies even when you bite, use fist-loads, or natural attacks. You also receive +1 ST for all grappling purposes at DX; this goes to +2 ST at DX+1 skill level. Finally you get the improved Retreat bonus when parrying, but aren't penalized for encumbrance or for parrying kicks or weapons.

You can roll against this skill in place of *any* physical roll made when in combat while fighting unarmed, such as Acrobatics, Climbing, Jumping, and so on. Make an IQ-based roll for Savior-Faire (Dojo) in social situations, Fast-Talk to use *Specious Intimidation* (p. B202), Tactics for close-in unarmed fighting, etc. Make a Per-based roll for Body Language or Observation if someone is about to sucker punch you, or Detect Lies when someone is making a threat he can't back up. Make a Will-based roll for Intimidation if you are threatening someone with your unarmed fighting skills (“I should warn you: I can kill a man with my thumb”). You may also use it instead of Forced Entry when you are attacking doors, windows, and other inanimate objects.

Even if the GM doesn't normally use techniques (p. 229), he should let you buy them for Fist! You need only buy an unarmed technique once to improve it for *all* uses of this skill; e.g., Kicking (Fist!). If a technique has different defaults for different unarmed skills, always use the most favorable one.

### Autohypnosis

see p. B179

Like heightening your Will or ignoring pain, the following new uses should prove helpful to any champion.

*Heighten Senses:* Increases your ability to perceive objects and other people; you get +2 to Perception (+5 on a critical success) for one hour. This roll is at -4.

*Less Sleep:* As for the existing *Negate Pain/Fatigue* usage, but only to cancel the negative effects of FP lost to missed sleep. This roll is at -2, and you may make one attempt per hour.

## EQUIPMENT

While a good portion of the gear in *Monster Hunters 1* (pp. 54-63) is “high-tech” and therefore not suitable for a TL6 pulp setting, some work as-is and make great inventions for techies. Fortunately there are a ton of books that cover TL6 equipment including *GURPS High-Tech* – which examines this topic in depth – and *GURPS High-Tech: Pulp Guns, Volume 1* and *Volume 2*. *GURPS Loadouts: Monster-Hunters* already has equipment loads for TL6, and anyone wishing to start a game quickly will find this book invaluable.

Everything listed under *Esoteric Gear* (**Monster Hunters 1**, pp. 56-58) can be used since it either has no TL or is superscience. This also goes for the *Protective Clothing*, *Melee Weapon*, and *Muscled-Powered Ranged Weapons* sections (**Monster Hunters 1**, pp. 59-61) though you should ask the GM first if he is going to allow the titanium weapon option as it was rare (outside of laboratories) at TL6.

Only a few of the “generic firearms” (**Monster Hunters 1**, p. 62) are available in TL6 versions. The following are not: the assault carbine, assault rifle, and compact SMG (all late TL6); the compact, high-powered hand grenades (use the TL6 ones on p. B277); the auto pistol .50AE, auto shotgun, backpack squirt gun, entry rifle, sniper rifle, and squirt carbine (all TL7-8).

One item that should be touched on is radio technology, which varies so greatly in pulp stories that a GM should check out *High-Tech* (pp. 37-39) and decide what role it will play in his campaign. Other electronic devices should remain rare (as are the skills to operate them except for a few templates), or entirely in the hands of the techie.

The following can be used as TL6 equipment with lower TL fabrics, metals, etc. replacing the higher TL synthetics, plastics, and so on.

| <i>Acceptable Gear</i>     | <i>Type</i>              |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Basic Gear*                | Basic Gear               |
| Bayonet                    | Gun Accessories          |
| Binoculars                 | Optics                   |
| Body Bag                   | Medical Supplies         |
| Bolt Cutters               | Demolition and Intrusion |
| Bottle                     | Containers               |
| Climbing Kit               | Miscellaneous Gear       |
| Concealed Holster          | Gun Accessories          |
| Crash Kit†                 | Medical Supplies         |
| Disguise Kit               | Miscellaneous Gear       |
| Electric Lantern           | Light Sources            |
| Explosives Tools‡          | Demolition and Intrusion |
| First Aid Kit              | Medical Supplies         |
| Flashlight (all but Smart) | Light Sources            |
| Grapnel                    | Miscellaneous Gear       |
| Holster                    | Gun Accessories          |
| Labs/Tool Kits             | Labs and Tool Kits       |
| Library                    | Miscellaneous Gear       |
| Reloading Press            | Miscellaneous Gear       |
| Rope (3/8")                | Miscellaneous Gear       |
| Scope                      | Gun Accessories          |
| Silencer                   | Gun Accessories          |
| Sling                      | Gun Accessories          |
| Small Backpack             | Containers               |
| Surgical Kit               | Medical Supplies         |
| Thermite                   | Demolition and Intrusion |
| Wire Cutters               | Demolition and Intrusion |

\* See **Monster Hunters 1** p. 54; the GM may disallow duct tape even though it's a TL6 advancement.

† A “doctors bag.”

## Fezzes Are Cool

Sometimes, it's the clothes that make the monster hunter as much as it makes the monster. Having a set of nice clothing might make you distinctive (something you probably want to avoid being a champion), but it can also make an impact on the local population. The following is a new modifier for armor and the equipment.

*Styled:* The item helps you look your best while hunting monsters. Gives a reaction or Influence roll bonus whenever the GM feels that being well-dressed would count, though it also gives a *bonus* for others to identify or follow you (including their Shadowing and Observation rolls). This costs +1 CF for +1 bonus, +4 CF for +2, and +9 CF for a +3.

‡ Basically, caps, timers, etc. – no plastique, radio detonators, or other remotes, however.

## TELLING THE STORY

A pulp game is run just like a regular **Monster Hunters** campaigns with a few small adjustments.

### Campaign Types

Suitable campaign types from those listed on pp. 5-6 of **Monster Hunters 1** are *Extermination for Sale* (especially for wandering champions), *Road Trip* (for the same reasons as *Extermination for Sale*), *Shadow Wars* (with emphasis on experiments and inhumans), and *Strike Team* (for Vatican or privately funded hunter-killer teams). Another variety of campaign type is also valid.

*Intertwined Destinies:* The PCs are embroiled in a fight with a powerful Threat. Perhaps the Threat wants something the champions have or are protecting, perhaps he wants one (or all!) of the hunters, perhaps he wants to prevent his own death due to an ancient prophecy that states that the investigators will destroy him. Whatever the reason each adventure revolves somehow around the champions and their common foe. For instance, if they are protecting an object or locale, then they must fight off an incursion of the Threat's minions. The leader of such groups is often a sage, who usually gathered the other hunters together to fight off the Threat to begin with. Accidental hero, hired gun, and chosen one are common motivational lenses. This is also a good campaign type to use if the team has some lower-powered members.

### The Hunt

Not much changes in the guidelines in **Monster Hunters 2** (pp. 4-18), though it does get a bit harder in the initial investigation as there are no modern computers to rely on for speedy access to information. Given that TL6 Forensics is also rather primitive, this too might act as a bit of a stumbling block. Some tasks that call for Electronic Operation and Electronics Repair might be possible but the GM will need to use his own discretion. Anything computer-related (tasks such as web search, hacking, and self-assistance) are flat out impossible, even for the techie. While a given techie *might* have built a computer using his superior know-how, the rest of the world simply hasn't caught up yet.

## Being Awesome

Not much changes in this chapter in *Monster Hunters 2* (pp. 19-27), but the GM should note that any high-tech tasks and foils should simply be ignored. The Gadgeteering rules are useful, especially if you have a techie in the party; high-tech gadgets can make a champions life easier (“So it explodes in a flash of sunlight?”). However, unless one of the team members is willing to bank-roll the operation *and* the GM is comfortable with it, this probably won’t happen often.

### Budget Cuts

Being a TL6 campaign, the amount of starting money that champions have access to is much less than in a TL8 campaign. Reduce all dollar amounts under *Patrons*, *Signature Gear*, and *Wealth* (*Monster Hunters 1*, p. 53) by 50%. This lessens starting, lodging, air travel, replacement budgets, personal wealth, pocket money, and the value of Signature Gear.

## Travel

Getting to where The Enemy is sometimes is half the adventure! Before commercial air travel, getting around was a bit more difficult. The *optional* rules in this section are available to the GM who wishes to keep track of such things.

Each of the following skill uses can increase rate of travel by 10% on a success, failure reduces it by 10%, and critical failure reduces it by 20%. The results are cumulative, giving up to a 30% increase in speed, or reducing it by up to 60%. Also take note of the *Terrain* and *Weather* modifiers on p. B351.

*Lay of the Land:* By having someone keep track of their precise position, he can than roll against Navigation (usually Land or Sea, despite the name).

*Sun on Your Face:* Someone may make a Meteorology (or Weather Sense) roll. This allows the heroes to walk, ride, or sail with the wind, avoid inclement weather, or take shelter when they need to, avoiding hazards.

*Double Time:* When traveling overland, everyone involved can make a Hiking, Riding, or Skiing roll as applicable, to move quickly; use the *worst* result. On water, the champion

with the highest skill in Boating or Seamanship may roll against his skill to gain the bonus.

## Travel Rates

Use the following table to help determine any travel times for the investigators. Assume a 12-hour day except for tramp steamers and trains, which use a 24-hour day.

| Mode          | Miles per Hour | Miles per Day  |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Boat*         | 1              | 12             |
| Foot          | Average Move/2 | Average Movex6 |
| Horseback†    | 6              | 36             |
| Stagecoach    | 8              | 96             |
| Tramp Steamer | 12             | 288            |
| Train         | 35             | 840            |

\* This can increase or decrease depending on the current and its direction, see p. B466 for more information.

† Camels increase these values by 2 and 12; donkeys reduce by these values by 4 and 24.

## Superstition or Science?

It should be noted that a GM should allow some leeway with champions if they accidentally reveal the existence of monsters, since in many parts of the world, the population of a given village, town, or area *do* believe in the things that go bump in the night. To compensate for this, the GM might have the police investigate the hunters if they rack up too high a body count, even if the local people tell them it was a monster. After all, monsters don’t exist – that’s just superstition.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher R. Rice is currently working part time as computer repairmen. From Portsmouth, Virginia, he consorts with bogeymen, vampires, and lycanthropes in a vain attempt to challenge his monster-hunting gaming group. He is currently pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering and dreams of being able to write for a living one day. Having gamed over 17 years, he likes to think he knows a thing or two about the subject, though is often reminded about how much he *doesn't* know. He wishes to thank L.A., his own personal muse, as well as the rest of his gaming group, friends, family, Reg Langford, and Antoni Monrós.

*Maleva: Bela turned into a wolf and you killed him. A werewolf can only be killed by a silver bullet, or a silver knife . . . or a stick with a silver handle.*

*Larry Talbot: You're insane! I tell you, I killed a wolf! A plain, ordinary wolf!*

*– The Wolf Man*

# RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE

## THE OPTIMISM OF A DARKER, DEADLIER WORLD

BY STEVEN MARSH, *PYRAMID* EDITOR

Consider that the typical modern monster-hunting setting is significantly scarier than the real-world counterpart. Here in the real world, there's practically no chance of my getting all my blood sucked out by a vampire in a filthy alley. I will almost certainly not have my soul devoured by a demon lurking in the shadows. There's less than a 5% chance of my getting ripped limb from limb by werewolves while I go for an evening walk (although, admittedly, the odds on this double when I visit my in-laws in Michigan).

So why do I find most monster-hunting campaigns to be significantly more comforting than the real world?

### THE DARKNESS CAN BE SHOT

Okay . . . here's the number one reason. To me, the modern world is a fairly frightening place. It's a world where a two-key-stroke typo can cause a jillion dollars to evaporate from the economy in a second. It's a world where one person leaning on the "Don't Lean on This" lever on the offshore oil platform can cause untold damage and suffering for a generation. It's a world where clashing ideologies usually have a hard time even agreeing what *problems* exist, let alone what solutions should be taken.

However, in most monster-hunter campaigns, there's an inclination to explain away many of the world's woes on the shadowy forces that lurk beneath the surface. Why did the stock market dip 10% last week? It's some dapper bloodsucker amassing wealth for his most recent sinister scheme. What was behind the awful coal-mining disaster? It's EvilCo, engaging in a blood sacrifice for some dark ritual. And so on.

It may be unrealistic, but an accessible fiction is usually much easier to handle than a horrible truth. All of those problems are tangible and finite. The heroes (and players) can wrap their minds around them and, as the need arises, shoot them – or trap them, or cast the ritual that send them back to their nether realms, or . . .

If I happen to be playing in your game (or if any of your players have proclivities similar to mine), feel free to make as many diabolical influences behind real-world problems as you like. Sure, it's not realistic, but it's certainly satisfying.

### I AM A HERO

In my decades of gaming, I don't think I've ever encountered anyone in even a moderately high-powered campaign who said, "I'd like to play a person of average attractiveness and wealth, not terribly physically fit, with average social skills and contacts . . . none of which are particularly useful in almost all combat or noncombat situations. Oh, and I should have no special or supernatural gifts whatsoever." (Of course, having typed that, I find myself intrigued about what would be left to sink 400 points into . . .)

No, a monster-hunting campaign lets the players actually take arms against the world's woes. I'd argue that – in a good monster-hunting campaign – the heroes are not only in a better position to identify the darkness behind the world's problems; they're also able to do something about it. Sure, it may not be easy, and it may involve difficult choices or hard sacrifices, but most monster-hunting scenarios are designed so that – in the end – the heroes have a reasonable shot at defeating the darkness.

In the real world, I believe I'm defined as much as my abilities as my limitations. My sense of humor is tempered with my relative shyness. My writing abilities give me an edge but my extreme nearsightedness puts me at a disadvantage at relatively common tasks (such as recognizing objects). I have an *awesome* phone voice . . . although, sadly, it's an *awesome woman's* phone voice.

However, in a good high-powered monster-hunting campaign, "competent" is the baseline assumption for most common skills, ratcheting up to "noteworthy" and "kick-butt" levels from there. In addition, many monster-hunter "disadvantages" tend to be of the form similar to those "I work too hard" job-interview responses:

“Sometimes, when I’m killing monsters, I get all crazy-eyed and really enjoy killing them. Oh, and I get harder to hurt when I’m on a killing spree.”

“Wow . . . I can see how becoming an unstoppable killing machine would be a real drawback when trying to kill things.”

In lower-powered games, there’s often an inclination to take fairly limiting disadvantages just to get enough power to become effective. That’s not the case with a high-powered game; there are usually enough points that you can be assumed to have few-to-no significant flaws . . . unless the player wants the challenge of playing a hampered hero. Even then, the extra points you get for starting as a wheelchair-bound warrior will make you *even better* in other areas.

For the GM hoping to hammer this home, realize that most monster-hunter campaigns are fairly optimistic affairs. The heroes may face challenging odds, but the assumption is not only the hunters are the best ones available to face it – they’ve also got a good shot at *winning*. Above all, they are *heroes*.

## THERE IS AN ENDING

The real world also suffers from problems that are ongoing concerns. Many of the world’s current difficulties started a long time ago, and they’ll probably continue long after we’re put in the ground.

Similarly, within our own lives, we realize that the story begins before we’re born. Unless metaphysics get very strange, as far as I know, I have no shot at reading the definitive biography about myself.

However, a good monster-hunters campaign is self-contained. It begins with enough anthills for the first PCs to start kicking, and it ends after the last heroes die or hang up their hats. Even if there’s the implication that there are more battles left to fight, most GMs I know of try to wrap up outstanding storylines and open questions (at least, questions left hanging in the players’ minds).

How to manifest this in a high-powered game can be tricky, and it depends on the preferences of the group. Personally, I take my cues as a GM from serial television, with the idea that most “episodes” (adventures) are designed to be self-contained, but there might be a two- or three-parter here and there, along with larger story arcs that develop across the “season” (series of adventures). However, every so often I like to

## We Are Our Own Evil

If any of the ideas herein resonate with the gaming group, one possibility in utilizing them for good gaming – and to keep the players on their toes – is to mix up the expectations of the power behind the curtain. What if the mastermind responsible for wiping out the firefighters’ pensions isn’t a vampire genius hoping to fund his next diabolical plan, but just some corporate conman looking to get as rich as he can?

Such entirely human threats aren’t likely to pose much of a physical challenge to the PCs, but they might prove some moral ones. Depending on the heroes’ views about using their abilities, they may be able to take a heavy hand at dealing with the world’s purely human evils. Plus, if they don’t have an issue with turning their monster-hunting means against mundane malcontents, it’s likely to be cathartic for the players (who probably can’t take such an active role in resolving the real world’s problems). Of course, the *problems* caused by such human actors are likely much more difficult to untangle . . .

make sure the players know that they’ve more or less cleared the slate – their heroes’ significant foes will be dealt with (even if they’re retreating to the shadows for another century or two), outstanding questions will have at least a good-enough-for-now answer provided, and any loose ends have either been cleared up or progressed enough that everyone feels satisfied.

Of course, if the campaign continues, then all new threats can arise for the heroes to deal with . . . decisively, before the end of the “season.”

All games are escapist to some degree. However, a good modern-day monster-hunting game can give the players a great outlet for tackling frustrations in a fun and furious fashion. It’s satisfying to envision a *more* dangerous world whose problems respond well to silver-tipped, rune-covered wooden stakes.

## ABOUT THE EDITOR

Steven Marsh is a freelance writer and editor. He has contributed to roleplaying game releases from Green Ronin, West End Games, White Wolf, Hogshead Publishing, and others. He has been editing *Pyramid* for almost nine years; during that time, he has won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Nikola Vrtis, and their zombie-fighting son, Sam!

*Lovecraft makes readers wish their own lives were as romantic and carefree as those in his stories, like the Mad Arab Abdul Alhazred, who pens the forbidden Necronomicon only to be devoured alive by invisible demons in front of screaming onlookers.*

*– The Onion, “Nation Escapes Depression Through Fanciful Works of H.P. Lovecraft,” **Our Dumb Century***

# INSPIRATIONAL FICTION

BY JASON "PK" LEVINE

The past few decades have produced some amazing films, television shows, and books about hunting monsters. It seems that, deep down, a part of us yearns to be the hero who slays the forces of darkness to keep the rest of the world safe. The *GURPS Monster Hunters* series attempts to tap into this desire, but none of it would have been possible without the following works. Those marked with a \* were primary sources; if you only have time to check out a few of these entries, make it these few.

## FILMS

*Aliens* (James Cameron, 1986). Space marines take out an infestation of deadly extraterrestrials. While *Alien* (1979) focused on survival, this sequel brought in heavily armed commando hunters. Watch both to see how to trade "terror" for "action" without losing the horror undertones that define the monsters.

*Army of Darkness* (Sam Raimi, 1993). A man trapped in the past has to defeat an army of undead monsters. The *Evil Dead* (1981 and 1987) films established Ash Williams, but this one made him a true monster-hunting action hero. His chainsaw-and-shotgun style is delightfully over-the-top, but don't overlook how his Gadgeteering helps save the day.

\**Blade* (Stephen Norrington, 1998). The titular dhampir slays vampires with a mix of inherent ability and high-tech weapons. A great reference for "slaying with style" and a reminder that being half-vampire doesn't mean eschewing technology. Blade may be the archetype of the atoning inhuman. He usually hunts alone, but *Blade Trinity* (David S. Goyer, 2004) portrays an actual hunter team.

*Constantine* (Francis Lawrence, 2005). A crusader exorcises escaped demons back to Hell. While hardly great cinema, the film shows a monster underworld, Hell itself, and dark plots involving demons and angels. It's very loosely based on the comic *Hellblazer* (Garth Ennis et al., 1988-present) – which is worth reading, though less monster-focused overall.

*Gabriel* (Shane Abbess, 2007). The archangel Gabriel is sent into Purgatory to rescue his wayward brethren from the clutches of the Fallen. Gabriel loses most of his angelic stature once there, but his various holy abilities were inspirational for the Mysticism power.

*Ghostbusters* (Ivan Reitman, 1984). Scientists bust ghosts for profit and laughs. While the low-powered heroes are side-kicks at best, their proton packs and PKE meters influenced the psychotronics gear while the film helped inspire the

"Extermination for Sale" campaign frame. *Ghostbusters II* (1989) is weaker, but the recent video game (Atari, 2009) is a must-play!

*Mummy, The* (Stephen Sommers, 1999). A pulp hero must stop an awakened mummy from fulfilling its destiny as a conqueror. Despite being painfully cheesy at times, it stays surprisingly true to the mythology of the old black-and-white films. This was the primary source of inspiration for *Monster Hunters* mummies.

\**Night Watch* (Timur Bekmambetov, 2004). Inhumans and empowered freaks square off in a cold war between the Light and the Dark. This Russian film transitions seamlessly between raw character drama and over-the-top action, and was the reason weretigers, UV bulbs, and the Shadow Wars campaign frame appeared in *Monster Hunters*. Watch it and its sequel *Day Watch* (2006) back-to-back.

*Predator* (John McTiernan, 1987). A alien squares off against an elite group of soldiers in the jungle. Observe the way an intelligent commando uses patience, preparation, and cunning to overcome an "unstoppable" monster. *Predator II* (Stephen Hopkins, 1990) is inferior, but its urban setting is closer to hunters' usual battlegrounds.

*Nothing in the world is the way it ought to be. It's harsh and cruel. But that's why there's us. **Champions.** It doesn't matter where we come from, what we've done or suffered, or even if we make a difference. We live as though the world were as it should be, to show it what it can be.*

– Angel, in *Angel* #4.1

*Prophecy, The* (Gregory Widen, 1995). An angel comes to Earth seeking a weapon to use in a war against God. The protagonist is weak by champion standards, but this film does the best job of answering the question, "How can an angel be one of the bad guys?"

\**Resident Evil* (Paul W.S. Anderson, 2002). A paramilitary team deals with an accidental outbreak of zombies in an underground base. The sequels *Apocalypse* (Alexander Witt, 2004), *Extinction* (Russell Mulcahy, 2007), and *Afterlife* (Anderson, 2010) focus on Alice and her strange new abilities, which inspired both the experiment and psi templates.

*Underworld* (Len Wiseman, 2003). Vampires hatch dark plots and wage war against lycanthropes in the shadows of the city. The sequel *Evolution* (2006) expands on the dark plots, while the prequel *Rise of the Lycans* (Patrick Tatopoulos, 2009) details the war. A good example of a Shadow Wars campaign, worth watching for its combination of gothic imagery and stylish action.

\**Vampires* (John Carpenter, 1998). A Catholic-sponsored hunter team takes out vampires across the nation, succeeding due to their incredible training, knowledge, and determination – no powers. This may be the best film example of what a **Monster Hunters** adventure should look like. The novel that inspired it, *Vampire\$* (John Steakley, 1990), takes a darker, more serious approach with the hunters; *both* are worth your time.

*Van Helsing* (Stephen Sommers, 2004). The greatest monster hunter of his day fights Dracula and his werewolves, with help from Frankenstein's monster. This film is so irreverent in its treatment of classic horror monsters that you can't help respecting its audacity. Watch it to remind yourself not to take the game *too* seriously.

*Zombieland* (Ruben Fleischer, 2009). A commando and three sidekicks deal with life after a zombie apocalypse. Along with being hilarious, this film goes out of its way to offer useful zombie-killing advice and tactics.

## TELEVISION

*Angel* (Joss Whedon, 1999-2004). A vampire and his sidekicks protect the citizens of L.A. from the *numerous* things that lurk in the shadows. They exemplify an Extermination for Sale team that isn't really in it for the money. The law firm Wolfram & Hart is an *excellent* example of an evil organization, with vast resources but few supernatural employees.

\**Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Joss Whedon, 1997-2003). A supernaturally strong and gifted teenager battles vampires and demons with the help of her friends. This show demonstrates how to run a Local Guardians game without limiting the scope; their town is literally connected to Hell. It influenced the sage and warrior templates, the chosen one lens, and even the magic system. Avoid the 1992 film at all costs!

\**Supernatural* (Eric Kripke, 2005-present). Two brothers, trained in demon-hunting by their father, go from seeking revenge to trying to stop the Apocalypse. A perfect example of a Road Trip campaign (especially in the earlier seasons) that illustrates how to gradually ramp up a game's scope and power level without having to reveal the truth to the world at large.

## THE PRINTED WORD

\*Carella, C.J. *GURPS Voodoo: The Shadow War* (Steve Jackson Games, 1995). Voodoo initiates fight a secret war against mages and in-betweeners. This evocative book turns the mythology of Voodoo into an exciting supernatural setting, without disrespecting its culture or beliefs. It had an obvious influence on the crusader and on the series' monsters.

\*Correia, Larry. *Monster Hunter International* (Baen, 2009). Well-trained, well-armed hunters take out monsters for bounties. MHI could be used as a Patron in any game; its employees are chosen for individual capability, not conformity. The novel and its sequel *Monster Hunter Vendetta* (2010) go into plenty of detail on monster-slaying tactics and on being a "chosen one."

Harrison, Kim. *Dead Witch Walking* (HarperCollins, 2004). A witch teams up with a pixie and vampire after a corporation paints a metaphorical target on her back. The Hollows series is more urban fantasy than monster-hunting, but its details on inhuman races are worth reading and it influenced Ritual Path magic (especially the charm rules).

\*Koke, Jeff and Ross, S. John. *GURPS Black Ops* (Steve Jackson Games, 1997). *Amazingly* well-trained agents use cutting-edge technology to secretly slaughter aliens and other monsters. While it takes its own unique approach to hunting, there are a wealth of ideas in this book for anyone planning a **Monster Hunters** game.

\*Mignola, Mike. *Hellboy* (Dark Horse, 1993-present). A demonic champion and his (*very* diverse) group of allies put a stop to evil supernatural creatures and plots . . . and Nazis! The main characters are *much* more powerful than normal champions, but the stories fit the genre *perfectly*. The films (Guillermo del Toro, 2004 and 2008) focus less on hunting monsters, but are still must-sees.

Ringo, John. *Princess of Wands* (Baen, 2006). A housewife learns to channel Christ into a weapon against the forces of darkness. Arguably *the* most detailed look at crusaders, featuring holy warriors of *all* faiths working together to fight evil.

Stross, Charles. *The Atrocity Archives* (Golden Gryphon, 2004). A techno-mage battles bureaucracy and red tape . . . oh, and supernatural foes, too. Lacks the straightforward, two-fisted approach of **Monster Hunters**, but the protagonist is a great example of a techie dealing with the supernatural.

### We Are Not Alone

With *Aliens*, *Predator*, and *GURPS Black Ops* in this list, some readers may be wondering why aliens haven't yet shown up in **Monster Hunters**. This is actually something that was considered from the very beginning of the series – but the supernatural focus of the game made it difficult to fit extraterrestrials in without them seeming forced and out of place. Does that mean you'll never see aliens in a **Monster Hunters** book? Never say never . . .

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rev. Jason "Pee Kitty" Levine is the Assistant **GURPS** Line Editor and the creator of the **GURPS Monster Hunters** series. Nifty, yes?

## ABOUT *GURPS*

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be reached by e-mail: [info@sjgames.com](mailto:info@sjgames.com). Resources include:

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