

SAVAGE GHOSTBUSTERS

GM GUIDE

OVERVIEW



Ghosts, demigods and other paranormal and pandimensional entities are real, and quite often hostile to ordinary mortal beings ... but fortunately these problems can be dealt with via a generous application of projected particles or positively-charged ectoplasm. Thus, with the dead getting restless and various long-forgotten quasi-deities rising up to vie for the right to bring on the Apocalypse, there's plenty of business to be had for the Ghostbusters.

The following are some notes with ideas on how to run Ghostbusting missions using the *Savage Worlds* rules.

This is GM territory, so players should read no further!

WHO YA GONNA CALL?

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SETTING RULES

You will need the basic *Savage Worlds* rules for this setting to start with, but the following changes are made to best fit the “mood” of a *Savage Ghostbusters* campaign. Most of these concern the “threat level” of the setting.

INCAPACITATION TABLE

Most of the threats the Ghostbusters face might be scary, but the threat level isn’t as lethal as everyone lets on. The heroes are heroes, after all, and it just wouldn’t be quite a laughing matter if the team had a high fatality rate.

If a character takes enough damage to be Incapacitated, have him make an immediate Vigor roll, applying Wound modifiers as appropriate. The following tables should be consulted, rather than the one in the rules.

- **Raise—Normal Damage:** The hero is merely Shaken, still at –3 Wounds rather than Incapacitated. He suffers a temporary Injury (from the Injury Table); this goes away once combat is over.
- **Success—Normal Damage:** The victim is unconscious, and suffers an Injury that goes away once all Wounds are healed. The hero remains unconscious for up to an hour, or until someone else tends to him with a successful Healing roll.
- **Failure—Normal Damage:** The victim is unconscious, and suffers an Injury that goes away after the current mission (assuming a hospital stay in between missions), or if miraculous healing (e.g., *greater healing*) is applied. The hero is unconscious until someone else tends him with a successful Healing roll.
- **Critical Failure—Normal Damage:** The victim is out of the action for this adventure, presumed dead. At the GM’s discretion, he’s buried under rubble, falls into a dimensional rift, etc.—or just vanishes when nobody’s looking. The GM may let the player take over an Extra for the remainder of the session. The “dead” hero will probably show up safe and sound once the Big Bad is defeated, with some sort of excuse. The good guys aren’t supposed to die (not unless it’s somehow “funnier” that way and the player is interested in trying a new character anyway).

If a situation occurs where a hero *should* be permanently injured (e.g., hand chopped off because he stuck his hand unwisely into a trap), the GM should try to keep things as lighthearted as can be managed. Don’t forget that this is a world where crazy inventions make life more interesting, and the Ghostbusters have access to items of higher technological level than the rest of the world.

An unfortunate hero who lost a hand might have it replaced with an experimental mechanical hand that mostly works like the real thing, but it requires a supply of spare batteries, and may be prone to the occasional goofy

malfunction.

NONLETHAL INCAPACITATION

For Incapacitation caused by Nonlethal Damage, use the following table instead:

- **Raise—Nonlethal Damage:** The hero is Shaken, and at –3 wounds rather than being Incapacitated. He does not suffer any Injury.
- **Success—Nonlethal Damage:** The victim is unconscious for up to an hour, or until someone else tends him with a successful Healing roll.
- **Failure—Nonlethal Damage:** The victim is unconscious for up to 1d6 hours, or until someone else tends him with a successful Healing roll.
- **Critical Failure—Nonlethal Damage:** The victim is unconscious for up to 2d6 hours, or until someone else tends him with a successful Healing roll.

GHOST INCAPACITATION

Ghosts are treated a bit differently. “Dispersible” entities (typically Extras) are usually destroyed after they sustain a single Wound; there is no Vigor test made to see if they stick around.

Regular ghosts, however, cannot be “killed,” but merely weakened. A ghost that takes 4 levels of Wounds is nominally “Incapacitated,” but is not rendered unconscious. Rather, it is Shaken, disoriented, demoralized and will typically try to flee the scene; it suffers a –4 penalty to all its trait rolls. (This, of course, makes it much easier to Snare with a Capture Stream, and to drop into a Ghost Trap.) Any further damage to a ghost already reduced to this level will only cause it to be Shaken; it cannot be Wounded any further.

OTHER DAMAGE LIMITATIONS

- **Damage Cap for Extras:** When Extras deal damage against the heroes, their damage rolls cannot Ace. This rule does not apply for damage dealt against the Ectomobile, Headquarters, barricades the heroes are hiding behind, or any other object that might or might not be associated with the heroes. Trashing the Ectomobile is just fine, but an Extra shouldn’t take out a hero with a lucky “one-shot kill.”
- **Great Health Benefits:** Rather than dealing with natural healing, all Wounds and Injuries inflicted during a mission go away in time for the next mission after an off-camera hospital stay.

THE SUICIDAL HERO CLAUSE

Most of the setting rules concern making it very hard for the heroes to die, even as they take on demigods and venture into hellish alternate-dimension versions of New York City and the like. It’s part of the over-the-top nature of the

setting, meant to be one part cool, one part ludicrous.

However, this does not mean the heroes are immortal. Consider, if the heroes are required to venture through an interdimensional rift into a hellish alternate version of the City Library, walking across a narrow ledge suspended over a seemingly endless abyss, and a ghost pushes one of them, he just might fail his Agility test, especially if he's short on Bennies.

So that there is some sense of "risk" involved, he might be out of the action for the remainder of the adventure (and the player gets to take over some Extra instead for the rest of the session), but after it's all over with, he miraculously turns up safe and sound after the heroes have defeated the Big Bad. It's just part of the genre. You might encourage the player to invent an excuse as to how he survived (the funnier the better).

However, if the heroes get cocky, and someone jumps into the void just to see what will happen, the GM is fully in his rights to declare, "And he was never seen again." Or, if a hero deliberately "crosses the streams" just because he thinks it'd be great for giggles, it's perfectly fine to declare, "And once the smoke clears, no trace is found of him except for a pair of smoking boots." And then the player can write up a new character and the new recruit can be warned about the antics of "the last guy" who was on the team.

After all, death has to be *possible* in this universe, or else there would be no ghosts to bust.

FEAR EFFECTS

Most fear-causing horrors the heroes run into should be, at worst, the sort to make them scream and run away ... but then, after a pep talk and regrouping to gather their wits, they charge back in again to deal with it.

To reflect this, make the following changes to the Fear Effects table (AKA the Fright Table):

- **Minor/Major Phobia:** Instead of any Major Phobia results, use the Minor Phobia result instead.
- **Dead Faint:** Any result of 21+ causes the hero to fall into a dead faint (rather than having a heart attack as on the original table). The character is Shaken, and can't attempt to recover for 1d4 rounds. Also, any character who gets a Phobia or Mark of Fear result on the table may instead opt to suffer a Dead Faint instead.
- **Recovery:** Any Phobia or Mark of Fear gained as a result of the Fear Effects table can be "bought off" with an Advance.

BYSTANDER RULE WAIVER

"Friendly fire" is not a major concern in this setting. A ghost miniature may rest on the game table (because of that pesky thing known as gravity), but the ghost is "really" up in the air, hiding behind expensive chandeliers or up

in the rafters. Most of the time, the GM should ignore the risk of "friendly fire," even when heroes are zapping proton streams past each other to get the ghosts. Maybe someone's hair gets scorched for comedic effect, but that's about it.

Please also note that proton streams are treated as "nonlethal" as a trope of this setting. That is, proton streams are perfectly capable of burning holes in walls and setting carts of toilet paper on fire, but nobody actually gets scarred for life despite all this destructive energy flying around.

To keep things in the spirit of the movies, if a Ghostbuster gets possessed or mind-controlled by a ghost into zapping his buddy, or someone gets caught in the blast radius of an errant boson dart, nothing worse than a Shaken result can be caused by the damage. However, it dishes out its full destructive potential against inanimate objects, ghosts, zombies, demonic turkeys, etc.

TYPICAL MISSION STRUCTURE

Every mission should be different, but here is a rough overview of the structure of a “typical” ghostbusting mission.

THE CALL

There’s been a ghost sighting at a particular location. It’s either **voluntary** (heroes investigating a lead on their own, without a customer paying them to), **casual** (please drop by when it’s convenient), **pressing** (please drop by sometime today, as soon as you can), or **urgent** (please rush down here right away before this thing tears the place apart!).

Voluntary: There is no calling customer. The heroes are investigating for personal reasons such as simple curiosity, trying to find clues relevant to a bigger case, collecting samples for research, or in search of an interesting relic. An Investigation check may be in order to figure out where to go, Persuasion may be required to get permission to enter the property, and great care must be taken not to damage anything.

The heroes aren’t getting paid for this, after all, so you might hang the prospect of negative Requisition Points over their heads if they go in proton-packs-a-blazin’, unless this is a condemned property or remote wilderness area.

Casual: A “casual” mission involves one where, sure, there are some sightings, and perhaps the caller felt obliged to call the Ghostbusters to do something about it sometime, but there are no screaming hysterics involved. The Ghostbusters are free to investigate first to their hearts’ content, and there’s no benefit in breaking traffic laws to rush to the scene.

The adventure typically should start off with Investigation rolls by anyone who has the skill, with successes and raises yielding additional information on the property, history that might be relevant to the haunt on the premises, and perhaps hints about special dangers they might face, so they can make a better selection of what equipment to bring along.

Pressing: This is a mission with a little more urgency, but there’s some factor involved whereby rushing to the scene isn’t strictly necessary. For instance, perhaps the ghost only manifests at night, and the Ghostbusters get the call during the daytime. The team might be faced with an initial choice of whether to go straight to the scene to have a chance to familiarize themselves with the premises (and perhaps make arrangements for fragile, expensive things to be temporarily moved out to minimize potential property damages, should things go awry), or to spend the time Investigating using other resources.

For such an adventure, there should be at least a rough timeline, with benefits to be gained depending upon how each team member allocates the time.

Urgent: There is no time to lose! The heroes grab what’s

at hand, rush to the Ectomobile, and speed to the scene, alarms blaring. A Driving check is made to figure out how quickly the heroes get to the scene, with a better result yielding some benefit appropriate to the situation (e.g., a bonus on Persuasion rolls after the adventure to negotiate on damages, since “At least we got here quickly!”). Any investigation must be done on-site, unless the heroes have someone back at base, furiously working, and occasionally calling in with new discoveries.

THE SITE

The heroes examine the site, and perhaps a Common Knowledge check to see if they know any trivia about it already. They are likely shown the site of the haunting by the client or a proxy. Depending upon how urgent the job was, and how long the heroes took to get there, either they might get a chance to look around, or they might have to immediately leap into action.

It’s a good idea to have a map of the premises to show the heroes, even if it’s a very abstract one. If they don’t know where to start, it can at least be helpful to see what major features there are in the building, and how big of an area they have to cover (since splitting up might be necessary to make contact before a rampaging ghost can do too much damage on its own).

THE OMENS

It’s more fun if the heroes can come across a few signs of the ghost’s antics before running right smack into it. If they’ve brought the right tools, it can also provide an opportunity to test samples and see what sort of paranormal entity they’re up against (or if there’s more than one).

Examples might include furnishings rearranged in strange ways, creepy sounds in empty rooms, a fleeting glimpse of a shadow or a face out of the corner of the eye, a vision that one member has while separated from the others, etc.

Of course, ectoplasm is always popular: green is typical; blood-red indicates a more dangerous entity; black hints at extra-dimensional horror.

THE MAIN EVENT

Of course, there could be multiple encounters along the way, perhaps with some swarms attracted by the main ghost’s activity, or some lesser ghosts tied in with the main ghost’s fate, but eventually there should be the showdown with the main haunt.

Depending upon its form, the heroes might just have to chase it down, weaken it and then hold it with a capture stream and fire off a trap.

More potent haunts have some sort of “anchor” to the physical world that prevents them from easily departing this existence (or being captured in a ghost trap), thus

requiring some research on the part of the heroes, and perhaps even a second visit. This might involve having to destroy or otherwise neutralize some item(s) giving the ghost its power, finding a way to trick a particularly devious ghost into coming out into the open, or perhaps righting an ancient wrong so that a lost spirit can move on in peace. Otherwise, trapping the ghost is only a temporary solution, and the team is likely to be called back by an irate client who demands they do it *right* this time.

Ideally, particularly for more complicated missions, there should be more than one solution. For example, an animated stone sphinx might require the heroes to answer a riddle to allow them to pass unharmed. A player who actually solves the riddle on his own gets a Benny as a reward. Otherwise, characters can make Smarts rolls to solve the riddle. Failing that, particularly if the heroes just aren't the puzzle-solving type, they could still get by, but they'll have to deal with that hostile stone sphinx first (and then explain why, exactly, they had to obliterate that stone statue, when figuring out damages with the client).

THE AFTERMATH

The ghost is caught, the trap is packed into the Ectomobile, damage is assessed and maybe, just maybe there's an interesting souvenir to take back (a sample of a new type of ectoplasm, a cursed artifact the client doesn't want to have in his house anymore, etc.).

This is a chance for the heroes with high Charisma to shine, essentially making a "Soak" roll to minimize the team's responsibility for any damage done to the environment above and beyond what insurance will normally cover.

THE OVERARCHING PLOTLINE

At some point in the campaign, there might be a tie-in to hint at something larger brewing rather than just randomly scattered hauntings. Perhaps the background PKE readings are getting higher in the area. Perhaps there's a trend to the locations where the heroes have been called, and if they plot out the marks on a map, it makes an interesting pattern.

Or, you can just leave them totally disconnected for a while.

Eventually, the ideal "arc" of a campaign is to build up toward the "Big Bad." Ghost hauntings become more frequent and more overt, and there are vague hints of upcoming trouble on the way (an "alignment of the stars," a major holiday, an ancient prophecy, etc.).

At some point, the heroes should be able to break out the normal mission mold and not worry so much about restraint. Perhaps the city hires them to deal with a major ghost outbreak out of fear that the citizens will flee in panic; the heroes no longer have to worry about damages impacting their Requisition Points, though they might still get a good chewing-out if they go overboard. Or, the city gets transported into another dimension, or the heroes

find a portal leading to a "ghost world," or otherwise the paradigm gets turned on its head and the normal rules no longer apply.

At that point, the heroes should feel perfectly free to use the "Strafe" option for those proton packs, and the Large and Cone templates for the slime blowers with wild abandon; nobody's going to bill them for property damage while they're fighting in a pocket-dimension that "doesn't really exist," and burnt wallpaper is nothing compared to the devastation caused by a giant animated concrete dinosaur "avatar of the dark gods" toppling buildings in the downtown area.

TOBIN'S GUIDE: GHOST CHARACTERISTICS

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The following are special “abilities” (including weaknesses) that apply to some of the paranormal entities presented here.

Capture Resistance

The creature is strong-willed and thus hard to permanently trap, gaining a bonus (typically +2) to any rolls to resist being caught in a Ghost Trap. This confers no bonus, however, to avoid being Snared by a proton stream, etc.

Competent Extra

This character gets to roll a Wild Die when making trait rolls. In all other respects, the character is still an Extra.

Energy Attack

This creature is capable of making a ranged attack without ammunition. Damage dealt is typically equal to Spirit + a damage die type, with limited range; specific characteristics should be listed under the creature's entry. Although a player-character ghost with this ability would have to expend a Benny or Fatigue to use this power, a ghost that is in its “native haunt” can use these attacks indefinitely, unless specified otherwise.

Fear Attack

This creature can suddenly, briefly change its form or otherwise create a frightening display. As an action, once per encounter this creature can cause Fear, prompting all present to make a Guts check at –2 (or as specified). Anyone who gets a raise on this Guts check is immune to the Fear Attack from this creature for any future encounters, as the novelty has worn off.

Paranormal Entity

This creature may be corporeal, and hence immune to being caught in a ghost trap, but it still affected by any special attacks or powers that apply to the supernatural (so it can be tracked with a PKE meter or picked up by paragoggles).

It is also able to interact with other supernatural entities, even nonsolid ones such as ghosts, treating them as if they were corporeal.

Nonsolid

This creature cannot normally interact with solid objects (save for some sort of telekinesis if applicable), since it has no true physical form. Even so, old habits die hard, and such creatures must pass a Spirit test in order to deliberately pass through a wall or other solid barrier—and doing so usually leaves an ectoplasmic trace of its passing. Upon failing this test, the creature can try again in subsequent rounds.

This creature can still interact with other paranormal entities as if it were solid, such as by making physical attacks (typically dealing only its Strength in damage unless its ghostly form has “natural weapons”).

Slime Attack

An angry ghost can move through a living target. This is a Fighting attack against the target's Parry, dealing Strength damage. Unless the target has a magical or holy weapon or shield (or a gadget that accomplishes the same thing), it is an Unarmed Defender against the ghost's ethereal attack. Attacks can be made on multiple targets along the ghost's path, but at a Multi-Action Penalty of –2 for each additional target. Slime damage is nonfatal, magical, and goes away at one Wound level per hour.

Please note that a ghost engaging targets in this way does not get a free attack against an adjacent combatant who moves away from the ghost, since it's not truly “in combat” with the individual.

Spirit Sight

This creature may ignore darkness penalties.

Supernatural Weapons

This entity has claws, fangs, a ghostly blade, etc., that allow it to deal extra damage against corporeal as well as ghostly (nonsolid) targets.

Swarmer

This creature is a weaker type of paranormal manifestation, and hence is actually destroyed if it takes a Wound from a proton pack or slime blower, or if it is “caught” in a ghost trap. As per the name, it is typically found in large quantities.

Swarmer, Mook

This is a more fragile type of swarmer that is dissipated not only if Wounded, but even if it is merely *Shaken*. Yes, that means that a Mook Swarmer can be Taunted, Tricked or Intimidated into self-destruction.

Technically Undead

This creature is “undead” for purposes of powers and such that specifically target them, but it does not automatically gain any of the special perks (bonus to Toughness, etc.) normally associated with the Undead ability.

TOBIN'S GUIDE: BESTIARY

A selection of representative paranormal entities.

KNICKKNACK

A small object, animated by supernatural forces, typically anthropomorphic or zoomorphic in form (e.g., dolls, figurines), or adopting zoomorphic characteristics once animated (e.g., a book that “flies” like a bat or bird, flapping its covers and pages like wings).

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting —, Guts d4, Notice d4, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 2

Special Abilities

- **Fear Attack:** Once per encounter, the entire knickknack group may collectively make a Fear Attack (typically in the first round as they animate), forcing all witnessing victims to make a Fear check at -2.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Runs, crawls, hops or rolls with a Pace of 8, and rolls a d10 when running.
- **Flight:** If the object form has “wings,” it flies with a Pace of 8, and rolls a d10 when “running.”
- **Paranormal Entity:** Not technically a ghost, and hence can't be trapped, but can still be affected and detected by Ghostbusters gear once active.
- **Poke:** Can attack in melee for Str damage.
- **Size -2:** Attackers subtract 2 from attempts to hit this tiny creature. It gains a +2 bonus to attacks against other creatures.
- **Spirit Sight:** Ignores darkness penalties.
- **Swarmer, Mook:** Instantly destroyed by a Shaken or Wound result.

CONGLOMERATE HORROR

A pile of trash, the contents of a sandbox, a whole stack of books ... some inanimate collection of particles or objects joins together to form a single quasi-humanoid (or zoomorphic) entity. Typically the entity is given form and pseudo-life due to a cursed relic (e.g., a murder weapon thrown in a trash bin, an unholy tome lurking among ordinary books in the library) that is the creature's “heart.” Eliminating or separating that “heart” from the whole will greatly weaken or even disintegrate the horror.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidate d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities

- **Ablative:** Cannot be Wounded; instead, any attack that

deals enough damage to cause one or more Wounds instead reduces the thing's mass. Its Size, Strength and Vigor drop by 1 step each, and its Toughness by 2. If this would put it below d4 in any trait, or below Toughness 2, it is temporary “dead”; targeting its focal point may be done at no penalty until it regenerates.

- **Burrow:** Can move through whatever element it is made of (or similar material) at its Pace (but cannot “run”). E.g., a sand horror could move through loose earth but not solid rock; a trash horror could move through loose garbage and junk, etc.
- **Construct:** +2 to base Toughness; called shots do no extra damage.
- **Fear Attack:** This creature's first action in an encounter is to gather together into its conglomerate form, accompanied by a spooky display that forces all watching to make a Fear check at -2.
- **Focal Point:** At the monster's heart is a relic that motivates it; this can be detected via Paragoggles, PKE Meter, etc., with a successful Tracking or Notice roll. It can be targeted at a -6 penalty, and either knocked away with enough damage to cause a Shaken result, or with a Snare. In either case, as long as the focal object can be kept away from whatever material type it uses to make its form, the conglomerate horror is immediately rendered inanimate.
- **Paranormal Entity:** Not technically a ghost, and hence can't be trapped, but can still be affected and detected by Ghostbusters gear once active.
- **Projectiles:** Can throw small chunks of itself (range 3/6/12) for Str+d4 damage.
- **Regeneration:** As long as it is in contact with whatever material it is formed from (e.g., trash pile for a trash horror, a sandbox for a sand horror), once per round it can spend an action to regenerate one Wound.
- **Size +2:** Conglomerate horrors could come in any size, but the standard one is about the size of a horse.
- **Slam:** Melee attack against all within Small Burst Template, Str+Str damage.
- **Stretch:** Has Reach for its slam attack equal to its current Size (if greater than +0).
- **Spirit Sight:** Ignores darkness penalties.

GARGOYLE

A large animated object, typically encountered in large numbers, and made of a solid material resistant to damage. The archetypical example would be gargoyles from a building that have torn themselves off to swoop down on the Ghostbusters team, though it could just as easily be animated suits of armor or statues.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (2 Armor)

Special Abilities

- **Armor:** +2 to Toughness.
- **Construct:** +2 Toughness; suffers no additional damage from called shots, but may still be hindered by dismembered limbs, unable to see if its head has been knocked off, etc.
- **Fear Attack:** Once per encounter, the entire gargoyle group may collectively make a Fear Attack (typically in the first round as they animate), forcing all witnessing victims to make a Fear check at -2.
- **Flight:** If the object form has “wings,” it flies with a Pace of 8, but it cannot “run” when flying.
- **Lumbering:** Cannot run.
- **Paranormal Entity:** Not technically a ghost, and hence can't be trapped, but can still be affected and detected by Ghostbusters gear once active.
- **Smash:** Deals Str+d6 damage in melee.
- **Spirit Sight:** Ignores darkness penalties.
- **Swarm:** Instantly destroyed by a Wound result.

PHANTASM

This is your basic “focused, non-terminal, repeating phantasm.” Once a phantasm manifests in areas of high concentration of psychokinetic energy, it is faintly visible, typically as a gross caricature of its appearance in life (as over time the spirit's sense of self-image becomes corrupted). Phantasms rarely talk; if they do, it is usually out of phrases they spoke in life, or raw expressions of emotion, rather than an ability to hold a meaningful conversation.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidate d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- **Capture Resistance:** +2 to Spirit rolls to resist being caught in a Ghost Trap.
- **Fear Attack:** Once per encounter, may spend an action to put on a horrific display; all witnessing this are subject to Fear tests at -2.
- **Flight:** Moves at a Pace of 8, and rolls a “Running” die of d10.
- **Limited Telekinesis:** Able to knock over, pick up and throw small objects (typically range 2/4/8, Str+d4 damage).

- **Nonsolid:** Unaffected by physical attacks. Must pass a Spirit check to pass through solid obstacles. Enemies are at -2 to target the ghost without Paragoggles or similar, unless it has been “tagged” with slime, due to its partly transparent form.

- **Slime Attack:** Deals Str damage on a touch.

- **Spirit Sight:** Ignores darkness penalties.

- **Technically Undead:** “Undead” for purposes of special abilities, equipment, etc., that affect and detect undead.

WISP

Small, “minion” spirits tied to a greater haunt, or generated by a cursed relic. Typically less defined than and even harder to see than a typical apparition.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting —, Guts d6, Intimidate d4, Notice d4, Stealth d4

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 2

Special Abilities

- **Fear Attack:** Once per encounter, the entire wisp group may collectively make a Fear Attack (typically in the first round), forcing all witnessing victims to make a Fear check at -2.
- **Flight:** Moves at a Pace of 8, and rolls a “Running” die of d10.
- **Nonsolid:** Unaffected by physical attacks. Must pass a Spirit check to pass through solid obstacles. Enemies are at -4 to target the ghost without Paragoggles or similar, unless it has been “tagged” with slime, due to its nearly transparent form.
- **Size -2:** Attackers subtract 2 from attempts to hit this tiny creature. It gains a +2 bonus to attacks against other creatures.
- **Slime Attack:** Deals Str damage on a touch.
- **Spirit Sight:** Ignores darkness penalties.
- **Swarm, Mook:** Instantly destroyed by a Shaken or Wound result.
- **Technically Undead:** “Undead” for purposes of special abilities, equipment, etc., that affect and detect undead.

CASE FILES: GHOSTS IN TOYLAND

Here is an example haunt that the heroes might investigate, intended to be “fleshed out” a bit to better fit your campaign.

The team must rescue a child abducted by a lonely ghost—a ghost-child whose body is, unknown to the current inhabitants, on the premises.

THE CALL

The Jeffersons have called in, convinced that a ghost has abducted their child (Nicole Jefferson, age 8). Their case has been in the news, but the police naturally have been focusing on more mundane explanations for her disappearance.

Since the child has been missing for several days now, this doesn’t necessarily warrant sliding down a fire pole, rushing to the Ectomobile and rushing, sirens blaring, to the scene, but a prompt arrival will still impress the parents (+1 to negotiation rolls at end of adventure).

INVESTIGATION

Alternatively, the team can take time to do some Investigation before heading out; a Cooperative Investigation roll can be made for anyone participating. Whether the heroes spend time to investigate, or rush to the scene, anyone with Knowledge (Local Area) may roll that skill, with a chance to yield the same information.

A simple success yields basic information about the property: The house was built in the suburbs in 1972. There have been occasional reports of disturbances, and the house has gone through many owners. There are no reports of any deaths on the premises or other obvious tragedies that would help to explain a haunting. The Jeffersons moved here earlier this year (1989 or thereabouts as needed for your campaign).

On a raise, the team learns that there were two houses previously on the property; the original was built in 1954, but it burned down in 1962. Attempts to rebuild were plagued by various mishaps, and the second house was extensively damaged in a fire in 1970, then demolished; the new house was eventually built in 1972, with new owners.

On two raises, at the time the original house still stood, the Cold War was a big concern, and fallout shelters were built for several houses in the area from 1954-1957. There’s a high probability that one was built for the original house (though there are no public records to verify this), but the present house does not have one.

THE BACKSTORY

In the height of the Cold War, a fallout shelter was indeed built for the house in 1956. However, the original family moved out in 1960, and the new owners were an elderly couple who cared little about the fallout shelter. Some

neighborhood kids managed to open the lock, and it became a “secret hideout” unbeknownst to the owners.

Tragedy struck in 1962 when the owners were on a trip visiting family, and the gas stove line had been left on. The resulting fire destroyed the house, and blew debris into the yard. A young boy, Thomas (“Tommy”) Gilbert, age 10, was playing in the shelter when the blast happened. He was trapped inside; although there were stores of food and water, the shelter’s air-intake vents were blocked, and he eventually died.

Records in the house were destroyed, there were no public records of the fallout shelter, the owners were anxious to just let the insurance company deal with details while they sought a new house somewhere else, and demolition crews bulldozed right over any trace of the shelter’s entrance. It was forgotten, with Tommy entombed inside.

Occasionally, his ghost has stirred when a new family moves into the house, if there’s a child somewhere around his age when he died. Generally, the child in question has become scared, and events led to the family deciding to move. However, Nicole was different, quite fascinated with her strange new friend; the trouble is that her new friend has lured her to his secret hideout, buried in the back yard, and has absolutely no intention of ever letting her leave.

THE SITE

Use a floor plan of a modern suburbs house with a basement, with a playset and a sandbox in the back yard. The sandbox is actually over the lost bomb shelter; Tommy used telekinesis to create a burrow up to the sandbox, and this is where he lured Nicole, then sucked her down through the sand into the buried fallout shelter.

THE INTERVIEW

Interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson indicate that Nicole has always been adventurous, even a little tomboyish, and doesn’t scare easily. She’s outgoing and makes friends easily—perhaps *too* easily in this case. She’s always had an active imagination, so at first when she would talk about her (presumably imaginary) friend “Tommy,” they thought nothing of it. Nicole got into trouble a few times when things were moved in places where she wasn’t allowed, or cookies were missing and such, and she’d claim that Tommy did it, and promise to chastise him for breaking the rules; she got in trouble, of course, for lying.

In retrospect, Mrs. Jefferson admits to toys popping up in places where it would’ve been hard for Nicole to reach, and at times when she was off at school, but at the time it was just much easier to rationalize that Nicole had been behind it, rather than attributing it to some mischievous spirit.

It was immediately after another chastising of Nicole, and when she had been tearfully sent back to her room, that

she vanished. Her window was open and the screens removed, even though that would require a screwdriver for a child to have the leverage to pop the latches, and there's none to be found. The police have been going under the assumption that Nicole just got upset and ran away, and she'll turn up sooner or later.

The Jeffersons, however, have been plagued by strange incidents; it seemed as if the more they searched, the more *something* was getting angry with them. Flashlight batteries flicker and die, things unexpectedly fall off shelves, toys end up in odd places, they hear odd thumps at night—but more disturbingly, each reports incidents in which he or she heard a small voice whispering things along the lines of, “Go away. We don’t need you,” or “No grown-ups allowed.”

If a hero has Knowledge (Local Area), or takes the time to do some Investigation about “Tommy” (taking a trip during normal work hours to visit Town Hall to check public records, or the library to check newspapers, etc.), a simple success yields a report of a child, Tommy Gilbert (age 10), who lived in another house in the neighborhood, and was reported missing in 1962, right around the time of the house fire. He was never found.

If the heroes decide to pursue this angle outside the house, they can do some sleuthing to track down his family; his younger sister, Tracy, was 8 at the time, and now works as a librarian at the City Library. It takes a successful Persuasion or Streetwise attempt to get her to talk about the event, though if the heroes bring up the fact that this information could be useful to help another missing child, that grants a +2 bonus to the attempt. Basically, she can share that her older brother sometimes boasted of having a “secret hide-out,” where he had lots of food and water stashed away, and he was going to recruit members into his “secret club.” But he vanished around the time of that fire, and there were rumors that he might have started the fire, “playing with matches,” and then run away because he was ashamed of what he’d done.

THE OMENS

Assuming the heroes first visit the house, PKE readings will lead them to Nicole’s room, where Tommy manifested most often while playing with his mortal friend. This is likely to make it a focus of further investigation. If anyone also checks the back yard, PKE readings will pick up in the play area out back, mostly focused upon the sandbox.

If this is an early adventure for the team, and PKE levels haven’t spiked to “imminent apocalypse” levels, the heroes will need to stake out the house, as there is no immediate paranormal activity, and paragoggles don’t detect any free-roaming vapors lurking in the shadows. Typically this would involve setting up video cameras, brewing plenty of coffee and planning to stay up into the wee hours to watch for signs of paranormal activity at night.

If for some reason there is a child “dependent” with the team (or even a very young team member who is either

a child, or young enough to pass for one), he or she is likely to draw Tommy’s attention, and to be the focus for any curious events involving toys being moved around (he wants another friend to play with!).

Otherwise, you might have a few incidents where someone—perhaps the oldest or most “grown-up” seeming of the team—hears a child whisper something to the effect of “Go away. Grown-ups can’t join my club!”

There are some PKE traces around the window, and a thin trace of ectoplasmic slime that is only picked up by paragoggles on the latches, and on assorted toys in the room; remnants of Tommy’s activity, so this is likely to attract some attention for the stake-out.

BAD TOYS

Eventually, the paranormal activity gets out of hand, preferably at night. Look for an opportunity for someone or something to make Tommy “angry.” Perhaps it’s when someone is poking around in Nicole’s room, investigating how she got out, and Tommy doesn’t want anyone poking around. Perhaps someone hears Tommy’s voice, and tries to respond. Or, perhaps the heroes have been too well at gathering clues, and decide to investigate the yard.

Ideally in Nicole’s room, but potentially anywhere else on the premises, several of Nicole’s toys are imbued with pseudo-life by Tommy. Of course, this would include some dolls with pull-strings that let them say things, or which say “Ma-ma!” when you tilt them over. Start off with a Notice check for some hero (preferably alone) with a toy out of place, or if the heroes have set up video cameras, there’s finally a disturbance and some toys are seen creeping across the floor. If the heroes rush to investigate, this is a prime opportunity for mayhem.

Wherever the event happens, toys spring to life and attack: 2 “Knickknacks” per hero. The trouble is that even though individual toys may be destroyed, they are replenished by other toys joining in at the rate of up to 2 per round.

Keep track of how many toys are destroyed; if a total of 6 per hero are destroyed, there are no more reinforcements (for now); area effect attacks should be assumed to take out several of the “passive” toys as well, thus reducing the ability to call in reinforcements; for such attacks, double the number of toys destroyed for purposes of keeping track of how many of the “reinforcements” are used up. Taunts, Tricks and Intimidation attempts can be used to Shake (and therefore destroy) an individual toy at a time, but the hero needs to explain what he’s doing with the action; for instance, a baby doll might be Taunted or Intimidated so it just sits there “crying” and hence is out of the fight. Or, someone Tricks a toy into attacking right as the hero holds up a wastecan, then slams it to the floor upside-down, trapping the toy. Another possibility to bring a temporary end to combat is to flee whatever room it started in, and slam the door behind.

Bad Toys (2 per hero): Use Knickknack statistics.

SANDBOX

PKE readings are peaking, and anyone who takes the time to try to track the activity (either in the middle of the toy fight, or once it's all over with) can potentially track the readings, which are leading back to the origin in the vicinity of the sandbox.

Tommy doesn't like the Ghostbusters being so close to his secret hide-out, and this is manifested in the form of a conglomerate horror that rises out of the sandbox, with a few assorted toys that were buried in the sand. One of those happens to be a battered rusty toy truck that belonged to Tommy, and which now serves as the focus for the sandbox/toy horror; anyone using Paragoggles or a PKE meter (etc.) can spot the focus point with a simple Notice or Tracking check. If it's removed (via snare or sufficiently damaging shot), the conglomerate horror explodes outward, leaving a large crater ... and burrow large enough to crawl through on hands and knees.

The sandbox is the only source of sand in the yard, so the conglomerate horror cannot regenerate if it moves away to attack the heroes.

Sand Horror (1): Use Conglomerate Horror statistics.

SECRET HIDEOUT

PKE readings indicate that there's more to be found inside that tunnel. If that's not enough, the team can hear the voice of a young girl: "Hello? Is anyone there? Please, be careful—Tommy will get angry. He—" And then she makes a sharp scream, as the PKE readings spike. Something is down there, and it's already quite angry.

The earthen tunnel leads to a broken-in section of the fallout shelter, where its structure was broken during demolition of the original house.

Cans crunch underfoot, and there is no light source save what the Ghostbusters team brings along. Any ordinary flashlights and other electronic devices flicker out and die, but the Ghostbusters' standard and special equipment is specially shielded against such paranormal disruption. There are several toys—some antiques that date back from the early 1960s, some more recent—that have been hoarded down here, and crayon scrawls on the walls.

In the corner is Nicole, looking disheveled and dirty, as she's been pulled through the burrow and held prisoner down here for several days, living off of what stocks haven't gone bad.

Tommy soon reveals his presence, materializing as a faintly glowing boy in tattered jeans and shirt, but as he sees the intruders, his mouth opens wider than would be natural, and his features become more grotesque. "This is my secret hide-out! No one else is allowed—especially GROWN-UPS!" By the end of his statement, he looks nearly skeletal, with sunken, green-glowing eyes, protruding ribs, bony claws, and a lower torso that melts away into nothing. He starts with a Fear Attack, and

doesn't participate in any further conversation aside from occasional cries of things such as "Get out!" and "You're not wanted here!" and "This is MY hide-out! You can't take it away from me!"

Tommy (a Phantasm) attacks. Now that this is his actual manifestation, he can be caught in a Ghost Trap, but he'll do his best to make that a tough task. He is capable of fleeing the fallout shelter if necessary, hiding anywhere in the house or on the grounds.

Worse, Nicole is likely to flee the shelter at the first opportunity, but if things are going bad for Tommy, he'll chase her down, intending to "help her escape" with him—by turning her into a ghost as well. Fortunately for the heroes, she's unwilling to give up without a fight, and her cries and screams should help them locate her (and Tommy) wherever they've gone off to, on the property. If Nicole can be escorted off the house property, she's safe from any further danger, as Tommy is too closely tied to the vicinity of his body to pursue.

Even if Tommy simply hides where the heroes can't reach him, his mortal remains are still in the fallout shelter. His body is hidden behind a "fort" of boxes and cans he assembled; if those are disturbed, Tommy can't help but return to express his displeasure, no matter how outmatched he is.



Tommy: Use Phantasm statistics.

THE AFTERMATH

The "environment" is treated as having a Toughness of 6 for any errant shots inside the house. Any errant shots outdoors are put against an abstract Toughness of 12 (as there's the ever-so-slight chance of hitting a neighbor's house, or knocking down a tree). Any mishaps inside the burrow or the fallout shelter won't count as "Wounds" against the environment for purpose of final damages, since the Jeffersons didn't even know there was a shelter there in the first place, and it's not exactly in prime condition anyway.

In this particular mission, it's very hard for the heroes *not* to come out ahead, eventually. Even if Tommy somehow escapes capture, all that really matters to the Jeffersons is that their daughter is rescued, and they'll even overlook the house being torn apart by proton streams; they're willing to blame everything on the ghost.

Therefore, no matter how many "Wounds" are dealt to the environment, the team is guaranteed to get 5 Requisition Points once it's all over with. However, the party's spokesman will still have to deal with the standard negotiation procedure in order to try to get a bonus out of the job.