


PYRAMID[®]



Issue 3/73 November '14

MONSTER HUNTERS II



TACTICAL SHOOTING: MONSTER HUNTERS

by Hans-Christian Vortisch

THE DEPARTMENT OF OCCULT DEFENSE

by Christopher R. Rice

THE FLOCK OF THE ABOVE

by J. Edward Tremlett

VENATIO

by David L. Pulver

MONSTER HUNTERS 2043: AGENTS OF ORCID

by W.A. Frick

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-2673



CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR	3
TACTICAL SHOOTING: MONSTER HUNTERS ...	4
<i>by Hans-Christian Vortisch</i>	
THE DEPARTMENT OF OCCULT DEFENSE.	8
<i>by Christopher R. Rice</i>	
EIDETIC MEMORY: VENATIO	17
<i>by David L. Pulver</i>	
MONSTER HUNTERS 2043: AGENTS OF ORCID.....	23
<i>by W.A. Frick</i>	
THE FLOCK OF THE ABOVE.	31
<i>by J. Edward Tremlett</i>	
RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE: THREATS GREAT, SMALL, AND UNEXPECTED.	35
<i>by Steven Marsh, Pyramid Editor</i>	
ODDS AND ENDS	37
ABOUT GURPS	38

ARTICLE COLORS

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

Pale Blue: In This Issue

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

Green: Columnist

Dark Blue: GURPS Features

Purple: Systemless Features

COVER ART

Christopher Shy

IN THIS ISSUE

The days get colder, the nights grow longer, and monsters lurk everywhere, ready to kill. It's a good thing there are heroes who are willing to fight against the darkness yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

When you're hunting those who hunt humanity, you need every tactical edge you can get. Hans-Christian Vortisch shows you how to add realism to your battles with the supernatural in *Tactical Shooting: Monster Hunters*. The author of *GURPS Tactical Shooting* presents three shootist styles, each with several weapon suggestions, suitable for those with military or police backgrounds – or anyone who wants to be a “zombie exterminator”!

You can be part of one of the many conspiracies to conceal the existence of monsters from the mundanes by joining *The Department of Occult Defense*. Learn about the history of this secret government organization, its competitors in the field, and some potential situations to deal with. You'll also get a new perk, a new power, new spells, and two new Enemies (complete with *GURPS* stats), all courtesy of Ritual Path magic adept Christopher R. Rice.

Some people hunt monsters out a sense of duty to protect the innocent. Others do it for less noble reasons. In this month's Eidetic Memory, David L. Pulver – author of *GURPS Psi-Tech* – reveals the inner workings of the academic monster-hunting group known as *Venatio*. In addition to its origins, tactics, and secrets, you'll learn more about the key participants (including *GURPS* stats).

The cyberpunk world of tomorrow may be dystopian and bleak, but at least there's a government-formed semi-secret organization to defend its citizens from the supernatural! *Monster Hunters 2043: Agents of ORCID* takes monster-hunting to the future with a PC-perfect paramilitary organization's history, outlook, some of the foes it faces, and *GURPS* details on typical agents.

Beware of *The Flock of the Above*! This otherworldly threat starts with the flu and ends with madness. Fight against the strange workings of the altered-human members of the Flock in this systemless campaign frame that pushes the heroes to their limits.

This issue's Random Thought Table looks at what happens when the heroes outmatch the opposition (*and vice-versa*), while Odds and Ends packs in a few things that were too interesting to leave out, including suggestions on how civilians and monsters can use shootist styles to make or break the peace. With new abilities, organizations, allies, and antagonists, this issue of *Pyramid* is magic for monster hunters *and* hunting monsters!

Editor-in-Chief ■ STEVE JACKSON
GURPS Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH
Assistant GURPS Line Editor ■
JASON “PK” LEVINE

GURPS Project Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH
Art Director ■ SAMUEL MITSCHKE
Production Artist & Prepress Checker ■
NIKOLA VRTIS

Chief Operating Officer ■ PHILIP REED
Managing Editor ■ MIRANDA HORNER
Director of Sales ■ ROSS JEPSON
Page Design ■ PHIL REED & JUSTIN DE WITT

FROM THE EDITOR

THE GOOD FIGHT

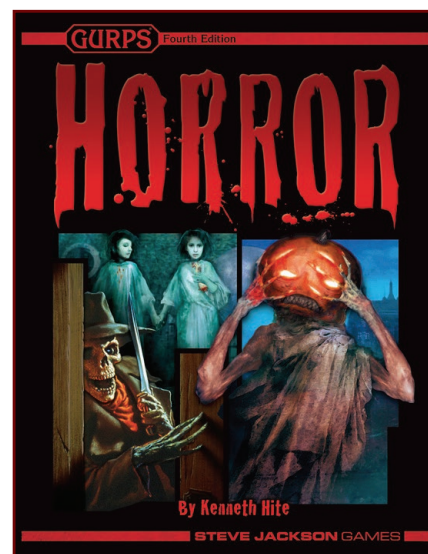
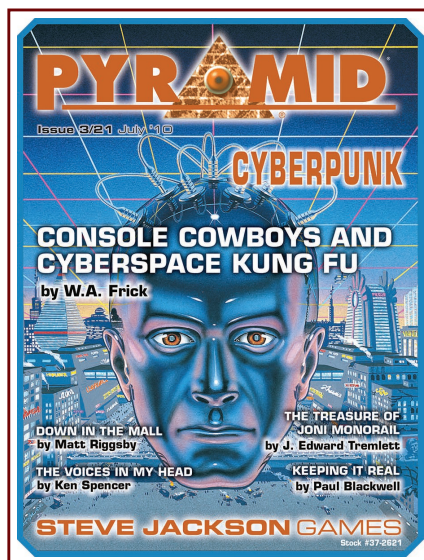
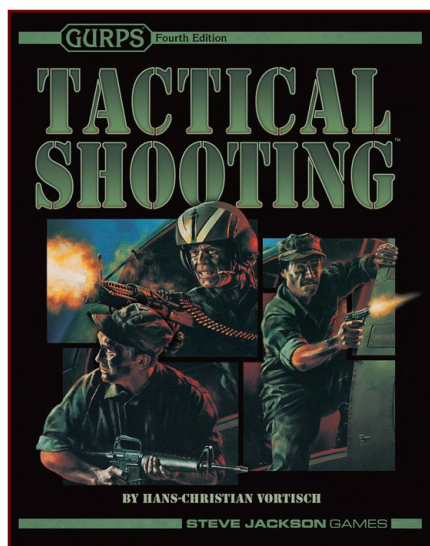
Pyramid has been around in various forms for over 20 years – your Humble Editor has been at the helm for almost 15 years now – so it's seen a *lot* of trends in the world of tabletop gaming . . . not even counting the four (or five?) editions of (*Advanced*) *Dungeons & Dragons* in the intervening eras. One aspect that's been interesting to track has been the rise or fall of optimism. Two-plus decades ago saw the ascension of "grim and gritty" in various media styles: comics, television, and roleplaying games. It became common for "heroes" to do terrible things, in service of a greater good – or even to keep an even *greater* evil at bay.

In contrast, recent years have seen an upswing of more pure, optimistic fare. (I'll leave it to the history/sociology majors to chart these trends against the relatively calm-and-prosperous '90s with modern developments.) I include the *GURPS Monster Hunters* line in that category; even though it has dark elements, the core assumption is that the heroes have

the wherewithal to fight against the darkness and – more often than not – *win*. This core positivity about the future – even in the face of significant problems – is what sets a horror-hunting game apart from a stock *Horror* investigation campaign. Sure, there's plenty of room for terrifying developments in such a world, but with the right training, powers, and friends, you've got better-than-even odds at not only surviving, but making the world a better place. And we've worked hard to ensure this issue of *Pyramid* has a good mix of material to make fighting the darkness more *fun* than it's ever been.

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Speaking of fun, how well did we assemble our troops for this issue? Was there an article that's certain to be a go-to piece in your arsenal from now on? Is there something we should have staked? Let us know via discreet messages passed to pyramid@sjgames.com, or join the electrifying online discussion at forums.sjgames.com.



Pyramid, *GURPS*, Warehouse 23, the all-seeing pyramid, and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are trademarks or registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license. *Pyramid* is copyright © 2014 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. All rights reserved.

Submission of your photos, letters, humor, captions, and marginalia constitutes permission to Steve Jackson Games Incorporated to use them in all media. All such submissions become the property of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated and will not be returned.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this material via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal, and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the authors' rights is appreciated.

TACTICAL SHOOTING: MONSTER HUNTERS

BY HANS-CHRISTIAN VORTISCH

All of them learned how to fight against human beings. Monsters are different.

– Larry Correia, *Monster Hunter International*

GURPS Monster Hunters is a highly cinematic setting that is primarily geared to work with **GURPS Gun Fu** (**GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions**, p. 11). For those who want to hunt monsters but keep everything else – or even just the shooting – realistic in the spirit of some of the source material, the following shooting styles combine **GURPS Tactical Shooting** with **Monster Hunters** and (in one case) **GURPS Zombies**.

The basic premise behind the styles is that guns actually work against a specific type of monster (**Champions**, p. 12). Depending on the style of his campaign, the GM can adjust the difficulty level for the PCs. For example, **Monster Hunters** assumes that *any* silver bullet will put down a lycanthrope. However, according to some myths, only a silver bullet made from a family heirloom of the creature will actually work. This requires that the PCs first find out who the werewolf really is, and then find a piece of silver owned by him to cast a handful of bullets to put him down . . . Then again, in most older werewolf legends, *no* silver is required at all, any lethal bullet being quite enough.

LEECH KILLER

7 points

Michael Colefield: Wooden ammo?

Jack Beresford: Carbon.

Michael Colefield: State of the art.

– UltraViolet #1

Most vampires can only be brought down by a stake to the heart (**Champions**, p. 51) – often, the modern version of a “stake” can be a wooden bullet, carbon graphite projectile, or

silver hollow-point filled with garlic or holy water. The most important technique of the Leech Killer style is therefore Targeted Attack (any/Heart). Since the heart is a difficult target, at -5 to hit (**GURPS Horror**, p. 30), shooters will primarily use aimed shooting (**Tactical Shooting**, p. 14). Cautious hunters might prefer long-range sniper shots using Precision Aiming (**Tactical Shooting**, pp. 26-27), although shooting in darkness (**Tactical Shooting**, pp. 18-21) makes these even more difficult than normal. Quick-Shot may be necessary if a coven of vampires is encountered.

Some vampires can only be truly killed if they are beheaded *after* being impaled in the heart. This requires closing in and some sort of melee skill, such as Knife or Sword. The Beheading Blow technique (**Horror**, p. 30) is exceedingly useful. Most vampire hunters thus will combine their shooting style with a suitable close-combat style, such as Escrima (**GURPS Martial Arts**, pp. 155-156), Kenjutsu (**Martial Arts**, pp. 173-175), Longsword Fighting (**Martial Arts**, pp. 180-182), or Wing Chung (**Martial Arts**, pp. 203-204).

Vampires cannot be killed with ordinary bullets and therefore need to be shot with exotic bullets (**GURPS High-Tech**, p. 168). Most of these have to be hand-loaded (**High-Tech**, p. 174), which requires Armoury (Small Arms). For historical examples, see *A Load of Dimes* (**GURPS High-Tech: Adventure Guns**, p. 24), *Exotic Shotgun Ammunition* (**GURPS High-Tech: Pulp Guns 1**, p. 23), and *Exotic Rifle and MG Ammunition* (**GURPS High-Tech: Pulp Guns 2**, p. 12). For realistic wooden stakes fired from a shotgun or grenade launcher, see *Stakes* (**GURPS Loadouts: Monster Hunters**, p. 12). Detailed rules for realistic silver bullets and grenades can be found under *The Silver Antidote* (**Loadouts: Monster Hunters**, p. 13). Examples of additional rounds can be found under *Special Ammo* (**Champions**, p. 63).

Armoury (Small Arms) can be used to modify or build a gun or its major components. This can even include forging the barrel out of a sanctified church bell.

Less complicated, Armoury (Small Arms) comes in handy to accessorize a gun for vampire-hunting: A tactical light (**High-Tech**, p. 156) emitting ultraviolet light (**High-Tech**, p. 52) might scare away or even do damage (**Champions**, p. 56) to a vampire with Vulnerability (Sunlight); the foldout monitor of a rugged micro-camcorder (**High-Tech**, pp. 43, 10) or “gun camera” can be used to identify a vampire by its absence from images due to Supernatural Feature (No Reflection); and a thermal-imaging sight (**High-Tech**, p. 157) will show a vampire’s lack of body heat because of his Supernatural Feature (No Body Heat).

Hidden Lore (Vampires) or Occultism provides the arcane knowledge required to efficiently combat a vampire (**GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy**, p. 28).

Fearlessness is almost mandatory for a Leech Killer, especially since facing a vampire should always result in a Fright Check (**GURPS Monster Hunters 2: The Mission**, pp. 28-29). Since many encounters will be at night or in darkness, shooters profit from Night Vision, Work by Touch, and/or Green Eyes. A high-stress occupation like vampire hunting almost demands diligent operational security, making perks like Standard Operating Procedure (Always Wears Garlic; Back to the Wall; or On Alert) common.

Depending on the specific nature of the vampires and their place in the universe, Blessed, Clerical Investment, and True Faith make sense. Higher Purpose is also common in Leech Killer stylists.

As to hardware, anything that shoots can be employed. Famous examples of guns used to hunt leeches include the Glock 26 pistol (**High-Tech**, p. 101) and Benelli M3T Super 90 shotgun (**High-Tech**, p. 106) in the film *Blade*; Webley WG revolver (**Adventure Guns**, p. 17) and Winchester Model 1866 rifle (**High-Tech**, p. 110) in *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*; Colt No. 5 revolver (**Adventure Guns**, p. 9) in *Supernatural* #1.20; H&K MK 23 MOD 0 pistol (**Tactical Shooting**, p. 58), H&K MP5A3 submachine gun (**High-Tech**, p. 123), and H&K PSG1 sniper rifle (**High-Tech**, p. 116) in *UltraViolet*; and IMI Jericho 941F pistol (*Pyramid* #3/31, p. 16) and H&K MP5K submachine gun (**High-Tech**, p. 123) in *Vampire\$*.

Skills: Armoury (Small Arms); Hidden Lore (Vampires); and four of Fast-Draw (Ammo, Pistol, or Long Arm) or Guns (any).

Techniques: Close-Quarters Battle (any); Fast-Firing (any); Immediate Action (any); Quick-Shot (any); Precision Aiming (any); Targeted Attack (any/Heart); Work by Touch (Armoury).

Perks: Concealed Carry Permit; Cool Under Fire; Green Eyes; Grip Mastery (any); Lightning Fingers (any); Off-Hand Weapon Training (any); Quick Reload (any); Standard Operating Procedure (any); Sure-Footed (any); Tap-Rack-Bang (any); Trademark Move; Weapon Bond.

Optional Traits

Secondary Characteristics: Improved Basic Speed and Per.

Advantages: Acute Vision; Ambidexterity; Blessed; Clerical Investment; Combat Reflexes; Danger Sense; Fearlessness; Fit; Higher Purpose; Night Vision; Signature Gear; True Faith.

Disadvantages: Hard of Hearing; Nightmares; Overconfidence.

Skills: Bow; Connoisseur (Guns); Crossbow; Forced Entry; Knife; Observation; Occultism; Shield; Soldier; Spear;

Stealth; Sword; Tactics; Throwing; any primary skill not learned initially.

Techniques: Beheading Blow (any); Close-Hip Shooting (any); Double-Loading.

Perks: Armorer’s Gift (any); Battle Drills; Cross-Trained (any); Early Adopter (any); Tracer Eyes.

WERE HUNTER

7 points

The best way to kill a typical werecreature is silver (**Champions**, pp. 50-51). Silver bullets are therefore the primary solution to bring down a were, as they not only overcome the creature’s Regeneration, but normally inflict extra damage – typically *four* times normal damage (see p. B161 and **Champions**, p. 51). This means that no special hits are required, allowing even mediocre hits or low-powered weapons to be effective. Nevertheless, any hunter worth his name uses aimed shots (**Tactical Shooting**, p. 14) if possible, rather than spray-and-pray (**Tactical Shooting**, p. 16).

Silver bullets (**Loadouts: Monster Hunters**, p. 13) have to be hand-loaded (**High-Tech**, p. 174), which typically requires Armoury (Small Arms). For historical examples, see *A Load of Dimes* (**Adventure Guns**, p. 24).

Since uncontrolled lycanthropes are often encountered at night, stylists profit from relevant options such as Night Vision, Work by Touch, and/or Green Eyes. Hunting weapons should be fitted with tactical lights (**High-Tech**, p. 156), night vision scopes (**High-Tech**, p. 156), and/or thermal imaging sights (**High-Tech**, p. 157). A bayonet mount (**High-Tech**, p. 197) accepting a silver-bladed bayonet (**Loadouts: Monster Hunters**, p. 13) for those close encounters is also a good idea.

Fearlessness is nearly ubiquitous for a were hunter (**The Mission**, pp. 28-29). Due to the high cost of silver, Wealth or Scrounging are useful as well. Although many werecreatures are too intelligent to be foiled by ordinary hunting tricks, Camouflage, Stealth, Tracking, and Traps may still be effective, especially against a were in full animal shape.

Hunting guns include the FN FAL rifle (**High-Tech**, p. 115) in *An American Werewolf in London*; Beretta Mod 92FS pistol (**High-Tech**, p. 100) converted to full-automatic (**Tactical Shooting**, pp. 55, 69) in *Underworld*; and H&H Paradox shotgun/rifle (**Adventure Guns**, p. 23) in Joe Johnston’s film *The Wolfman*.

Skills: Armoury (Small Arms); Hidden Lore (Lycanthropes); and four of Fast-Draw (Ammo, Pistol, or Long Arm) or Guns (any).

Techniques: Close-Quarters Battle (any); Fast-Firing (any); Immediate Action (any); Precision Aiming (any); Quick-Shot (any); Targeted Attack (any/Heart); Work by Touch (Armoury).

Perks: Concealed Carry Permit; Cool Under Fire; Green Eyes; Grip Mastery (any); Lightning Fingers (any); Off-Hand Weapon Training (any); Quick Reload (any); Standard Operating Procedure (any); Sure-Footed (any); Tap-Rack-Bang (any); Trademark Move; Weapon Bond.

Optional Traits

Secondary Characteristics: Improved Basic Speed and Per.

Advantages: Acute Vision; Ambidexterity; Combat Reflexes; Danger Sense; Fearlessness; Fit; Night Vision; Signature Gear; Wealth.

Disadvantages: Hard of Hearing; Nightmares; Overconfidence.

Skills: Camouflage; Connoisseur (Guns); Crossbow; Expert Skill (Zoology); Forced Entry; Knife; Occultism; Scrounging; Soldier; Spear; Stealth; Tactics; Throwing; Tracking; Traps; Veterinary; any primary skill not learned initially.

Techniques: Close-Hip Shooting (any); Double-Loading.

Perks: Armorer's Gift (any); Battle Drills; Cross-Trained (any); Early Adopter (any); Tracer Eyes.

OTHER HUNTERS

All styles described here assume that monster hunters have some background with the military or police. Realistically, civilians are much less likely to acquire the necessary shooting and tactical skills, even though many delusional private shooters think they can easily compete with a squad of U.S. Navy SEALs after taking a couple of overpriced "tactical" shooting classes and burning thousands of rounds – and dollars – on their local range.

For guidelines on adapting these styles to fit civilians, see *Civilian Hunters* on p. 37. For advice geared specifically to inhuman hunters, see *Monstrous Hunters* on p. 37.

ZOMBIE EXTERMINATOR

7 points

I saw one of those things take thirty hits and keep on coming. The damn thing had to be dead, but it kept on coming. Until it took a hit in the head. That brought it down. The only way to stop them . . . you have to get them in the head.

– Ben, in *Night of the Living Dead* (1990)

The Zombie Exterminator style is especially appropriate for the more conventional Zombie Slayer templates (*Zombies*, p. 40). Since most zombies have Vulnerability (Headshots) (*Zombies*, p. 65) and/or can't be put down without destroying their brains (*Zombies*, p. 82), the style puts much store into aimed shots (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 14) at both close and far range. Stylists learn either the Targeted Attack (any/Skull) or Headshot (*Zombies*, p. 36) technique for this. As zombies have a tendency to literally come back, double-taps (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 15) are good procedure, at least at short distance. Tactical options that are good for stopping living humans – such as shooting till down and full-automatic bursts (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 16) – are not only ineffective against zombies, they can dramatically reduce a hunter's life expectancy due to their high (and wasteful) ammo consumption (*Zombies*, p. 43).

As zombies tend to attack in numbers (*Zombies*, pp. 112-117), stylists need to learn Quick-Shot. Since being overrun by a zombie horde is a constant threat, improved Basic Speed, Fit or Very Fit, and Running are essential (*Zombies*, pp. 121-122).

For the nevertheless inevitable melee (*The Enemy*, p. 14, and *Zombies*, pp. 108-109), stylists need Close-Quarters Battle, which allows efficient fire on the move at short ranges. They should also learn how to transition to back-up weapons (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 14) with Fast-Draw. Target-rich

environments demand fast reloads (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 20) with Fast-Draw (Ammo) and Quick Reload.

Battle Drills is useful for a team of exterminators. While "peeling" (*Tactical Shooting*, pp. 22-23) and "slicing the pie" (*Tactical Shooting*, pp. 23-24) are effective tactics, the classic counterattack (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 22) is not – zombies can't be surprised or overrun, and closing in is a deadly gamble. A variety of other perks are useful for survival as a Zombie Exterminator stylist, such as SOP (Check the Bodies) (*Zombies*, p. 31).

Firearms that have been successfully employed against zombies include the Enfield L85A1 assault rifle (*High-Tech*, p. 118) in the film *28 Days Later*; Colt M4A1 assault carbine (*High-Tech*, p. 119) and RTE M14 designated marksman rifle (*High-Tech*, p. 115) in *28 Weeks Later*; Beretta Mod 92FS pistol (*High-Tech*, p. 100) and Remington Model 870P shotgun (*High-Tech*, p. 106) in Zack Snyder's *Dawn of the Dead*; Winchester Model 94 carbine (*High-Tech*, p. 111) in *Night of the Living Dead*; H&K G36C assault carbine (*High-Tech*, p. 121) in *The Outpost*; and Colt Python revolver (*High-Tech*, p. 96), Glock 17 pistol (*High-Tech*, p. 100), and Mossberg Model 590 shotgun (*GURPS Mysteries*, p. 116) in *The Walking Dead*.

Skills: Hidden Lore (*Zombies*); Running; and four of Fast-Draw (Ammo, Pistol, or Long Arm) or Guns (any).

Techniques: Close-Hip Shooting (any); Close-Quarters Battle (any); Fast-Firing (any); Headshot (any); Immediate Action (any); Precision Aiming (any); Quick-Shot (any); Targeted Attack (any/Skull).

Perks: Battle Drills; Grip Mastery (any); Lightning Fingers (any); Off-Hand Weapon Training (any); Quick Reload (any); Standard Operating Procedure (any); Sure-Footed (any); Tap-Rack-Bang (any); Trademark Move; Weapon Bond.

Optional Traits

Secondary Characteristics: Improved Basic Speed and Per.

Advantages: Acute Vision; Ambidexterity; Combat Reflexes; Danger Sense; Fearlessness; Fit; Night Vision; Signature Gear; Very Fit.

Disadvantages: Careful; Hard of Hearing; Nightmares.

Skills: Armoury (Small Arms); Axe/Mace; Bow; Crossbow; Connoisseur (Guns); Expert Skill (Epidemiology); Forced Entry; Gunner (MG); Knife; Occultism; Shield; Soldier; Spear; Stealth; Sword; Tactics; Throwing; any primary skill not learned initially.

Techniques: Double-Loading; Work by Touch (Armoury).

Perks: Armorer's Gift (any); Battle Drills; Concealed Carry Permit; Cool Under Fire; Cross-Trained (any); Early Adopter (any); Enhanced Z-Factor*; Green Eyes; Horde Walker*; Tastes Bad*; Tracer Eyes.

* From *GURPS Zombies*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hans-Christian "Grey Tiger" Vortisch is the author or coauthor of *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.



To Do:

- ✓ Kill monsters
- ✓ Loot room
- ✓ Stab buddies
- ✓ Become legend



COMING
IN
NOVEMBER!

STEVE JACKSON GAMES
munchkin.sjgames.com



THE DEPARTMENT OF OCCULT DEFENSE

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

What is the best defense against a monster? Find your *own* monster, outfit him with the best equipment money can buy, and set him loose. Or, even better, gear up a entire *team* of monsters and set them at your enemy. Barring that, bring a ton of guys with as many guns as can be safely concealed and

make sure all monsters are served well-done via a convenient leaky gas pipe.

Although designed for *GURPS Monster Hunters*, this campaign can easily be transported into any setting with supernatural creatures, Van Helsing wannabes, and so on.

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

There are a number of groups participating in the global conspiracy to keep the existence of the supernatural secret – organized monster-hunting has been around a long time. Here are a few of the known players.

THE DEPARTMENT OF OCCULT DEFENSE

Most governments have some form of deniable unit to keep their borders monster-free. Their mission is simple: if it isn't human (or authorized), kill it. Despite their vast resources, they prefer to operate using small, well-equipped, well-trained teams directed by command and support personnel from a centralized base. In the case of the U.S. program, while it is technically a federal program, it receives most of its funding from several private individuals and trusts, as well as a few of America's allied countries that have lower key versions, such as Canada.

History

The Department of Occult Defense – the DOD, not to be confused with *the* Department of Defense (though agents use this confusion to their benefit all the time) – was established in 1919, right after the end of World War I. The founders included Linden del Cage (a Marine who served in World War I and saw many strange things), Irving Stoker (the son of Bram Stoker), H.P. Lovecraft, and Robert Grimm (a descendant of Jacob Grimm, of Brothers Grimm fame). It initially had strong ties to the U.S. Marine Corps and was located on a military airbase in

the Rocky Mountains. Because of the bizarre nature of its mission, this base was instantly dubbed “Home-On-The-Strange,” or “HOTS.” It was here that the DOD began its research into the occult, sending out teams to exterminate and bring back specimens for its para-researchers to dissect.

In 1924, a DOD team led by Capt. Linden del Cage found a newly made vampire, who called himself “Jude.” This vampire, the first to be studied while animate, claimed to have been a Catholic priest before he was turned into a monster. He happily helped his captors with whatever experiments they wished to carry out, not wanting others to suffer his fate. Eventually, they let him wander the facility with another human agent.

In 1927, a large pack of werewolves tracked one of their own back to the base. The attacks were so savage and organized that out of the 500 residents, 300 of them were slaughtered before sunrise the first day. This number probably would have been higher if Jude had not defended the panicked civilians. Capt. del Cage, Jude, and the other survivors made their way to the command post and held off the rampaging lycanthropes until help could arrive a few days later. “Help” came in the form of a company of heavily armed Marines with a few rocket launchers. Afterward, the survivors dug themselves out of the remains of the building they had taken shelter in. With the base utterly destroyed, a new headquarters for the DOD was needed.

For his heroic actions, Jude was given “honorary humanity” and U.S. citizenship. Jude eventually retired after many years of service, when he (with the assistance of the Beatles) retrieved the Maharishi's Dagger of Death from the rakshasa who had stolen it from his keeping.

His deeds proved that not all supernatural beings were evil, and paved the way for Director Lovecraft to obtain a special executive order allowing him to recruit other “special talents” (that is, *monsters*) to the DOD. This order chartered the “Judas Initiative,” which offered amnesty for past crimes and “honorary humanity” to any supernatural being willing to fight their own kind and abstain from killing humans. Lovecraft sent out a call for others to take up his fight – and they did (see p. 11).

Shortly before the beginning of World War II, the DOD moved to a custom-made facility in Chicago, repurposing numerous underground structures to create a sprawling complex directly under the city itself. Halfway through the war, a tear in space-time connected the complex to the Atlantic Ocean, causing massive flooding and an invasion by monstrous gill-men. The DOD had to move again. The next – and current – headquarters was built in New York City.

H.P. Lovecraft served as the chief director until October 1936, when he stepped down, allowing Robert Grimm to take over; Lovecraft died five months later, from cancer of the small intestine (caused by a Romani curse). The current chief director is Professor Ian Grimm, the grandson of Robert Grimm.

Unlike many of his predecessors, Professor Grimm believes the DOD *must* make use of agents with “special talents” to remain effective. In 2000, he reactivated the Howard Phillips Lovecraft Directive, forming a division that would field teams of nonhuman agents. As a concession to the Directive’s many opponents, each nonhuman team is led by a human agent; ideally, each nonhuman agent on a team has a human partner. In 2001, they commissioned their first field team. They have since fielded a dozen more teams, each led by a human agent, who *usually* does not have supernatural powers. After several heated conflicts between the DOD and HPLD operatives, the HPLD was granted *more* autonomy – and a separate headquarters. Director Grimm then placed George Ladon in charge as an assistant director.

Mission

The DOD’s main mission is to protect humanity from supernatural threats and menaces, regardless of border or location. In practice, this rarely extends beyond America. While uncommon, occult agencies try very hard to avoid “turf wars,” as their operatives and targets often have enough power to destroy small towns, which has happened in the past.

VLAD’S VERNACULAR

Bannack: A dimensionally unstable ghost town in Montana used as a sort of trading post and neutral ground by the supernatural. See p. 13.

black science: A modern or antiquated technology that uses magic, alien science, or weird natural laws. Psychotronic technology also falls under this heading.

Combat and Field Operations team: An investigative team of the DOD. Commonly called a CFO team. The HPLD call their CFO teams “Alpha Teams,” as they are usually the first in on dangerous missions that would kill a “normal” team. See p. 10.

Department of Occult Defense (DOD): The United States’ monster-hunting organization. Unofficially called “DoOD,” D-double O-D, or “Dude” among mundane agents. See pp. 8-12.

Fellowship of Wadjet: A loose confederation of magic users and monsters who seek out knowledge and magic lost to the ages. See p. 13.

Gladius Dei: The monster-hunting branch of the Catholic Church. Their name is Latin for “the Sword of God.” See p. 12.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft Directive (HPLD): A branch of the DOD that uses monsters to hunt other monsters.

Judas Initiative: An older term for the HPLD.

Library: An alternate name for the Stacks.

ODA: The Occult Defense Act of 1918, which resulted in the formation of the DOD. Despite being a part of U.S. law, it is kept secret by executive order. The ODA grants the government the power to hunt down and kill *any* nonhuman sapient within U.S. borders. It also puts humans possessing supernatural abilities (psi, magic, etc.) who commit crimes under

the jurisdiction of the DOD, which treats them as nonhumans.

Platform: DOD operatives’ name for their headquarters in New York City.

Rapid Response Tactical Team (RRTT): The broadsword to a CFO team’s scalpel. Sent in last, in any ongoing operation, if at all. Usually pronounced as the “R-square, T-square” or sometimes “Ar-Two-Tee-Two” (because they’re always saving the day). See p. 10.

Sandman: Older slang for a member of the Sanitization Unit.

Sanitization Unit (SU): The cleanup crew for DOD operations. Sometimes called ghouls or janitors – but not to their faces. See p. 10.

special talent: An operative with supernatural powers or otherwise inhuman abilities. Often shortened to just “special.”

Stacks: HPLD operatives’ name for their headquarters in Chicago.

Stoker-Grimm Paranormal (SGP) Classification: A scale used to gauge the risk level of a supernatural creature. See p. 10.

Theurgy: Ritual Path magic “flavored” with faith. Typically practiced by member of the Gladius Dei, but the Fellowship of Wadjet have their own Egyptian-style variety.

Thule Society: Founded sometime in the 1920s, this Nazi group was all but eliminated by the DOD during World War II. Rumors have it that they are thriving in secrecy. See p. 13.

Venatori: The Venatori’s origins are shrouded in equal parts mystery and rumor. Their descendants are more like a network than a truly organized group. See p. 13.

STOKER-GRIMM PARANORMAL CLASSIFICATION

Class*	Threat Level	Description	Example
Class 1	Trivial	Only dangerous if you are untrained or severely impaired.	A single slow zombie or human cultist.
Class 2	Mediocre	Engage target with caution.	A fast zombie, horde of slow zombies, or weak demon.
Class 3	Moderate	Engage if you have your target at a disadvantage; otherwise, work in pairs.	A strong demon, pack of chupacabras, or lone werewolf.
Class 4	Dangerous	Do not engage alone – bring back-up if you can.	A rogue witch, mature vampire, or mummy.
Class 5	Very Dangerous	Do not engage without your full team – request immediate backup. Call in RRTT if all else fails.	An angel, demon lord, or master vampire.

* The GM can determine other foes' SGP class by noting the number of champions needed to defeat a single specimen and comparing it to the examples above.

Recent examples include the “earthquake” that happened in 1964 in Anchorage, Alaska (in reality a rip in space-time opened a portal to hell) and the series of massive tornadoes in Greensburg, Kansas in 2007 (a coven of rogue witches calling storms).

The DOD's secondary mission involves anything to do with the supernatural: paranormal investigations, cursed object retrievals, the rare diplomatic forays to settle disputes between large groups of “friendly” supernatural creatures, and so on.

The HPLD has *all* of the above duties, and adds being first-in against dangerous supernatural threats that would be impossible for human agents to deal with alone. They often make better envoys to the magic and psychic communities, which many “mundane” DOD operatives consider little better than rogue monsters.

Organization

The DOD's current director is Ian Matthias Grimm, grandson of Robert Grimm and descendant of the Brothers Grimm. While his years of service are relatively short compared to his predecessors, Grimm has done his best to modernize the DOD. Combining technology with the paranormal, the department made great strides in psychotronics and other “black sciences.”

Below the director are the assistant directors of special research, combat and field operations, and intelligence and psy-ops. Also reporting to the director is the assistant director of the HPLD.

Since 2001, the HPLD has been led by Assistant Director George Ladon. Ladon is a capable man and is known for being cool under pressure and explosive when the pressure is off. He's nicknamed “the Old Dragon,” but only behind his back; saying it in his hearing can get the speaker assigned a toothbrush, to scrub the unused lower levels of their HQ.

Ladon's second-in-command, Dr. Nemo Dakkar, is in charge of the HPLD's Special Research division. Not much is known about Dakkar, other than he isn't human. However, Ladon trusts him implicitly and he's a genius when it comes to adapting or understanding advanced, weird, or paranormal tech.

Melody Wolfe is in charge of the HPLD Combat and Field Operations division. She handpicks each member of her

Alpha field teams. Spence Merrill is in charge of the HPLD's Intelligence and Psyops division. It consists almost entirely of psis with telepathy abilities and witches talented with Path of Mind and Path of Matter effects.

Core Divisions

Special Research is responsible for performing autopsies, creating experimental tech to be used in the field, testing captured paranormal objects, etc. Because of their fondness for barely tested technology, they are not often well liked by those who have to actually *use* said gadgetry.

Combat and Field Operations forms the bulk of the DOD. Most of its staff are support elements, ensuring the field agents have everything they need to perform their jobs (i.e., hunt supernatural critters).

Intelligence and Psyops gather intel, perform recon, etc. They're also the ones who fabricate cover stories; pay off insurance companies, eyewitnesses, etc.; and oversee the elimination of any physical evidence.

Other Divisions

While most operatives work for one of the three core divisions, there are other, smaller divisions. These are run by a deputy director, but the chief is officially accountable for all their actions. The chief director assigns tasks to and requires reports from these subdivisions on a case-by-case basis.

Rapid Response Tactical Team is responsible for quick offensive deployments when everything goes pear-shaped on an operation. When the zombies are reproducing out of control or a giant colony of ants has taken over a small town, that's when the RRTT are sent out. This team reports to the HPLD Combat and Field Operations division.

Sanitization Unit is in charge of disposing of any evidence (scorched vampire remains, photos of chupacabras, whatever) left behind after a mission. The SU reports to the Intelligence and Psyops division director.

Internal Affairs performs monthly psychological exams on all operatives, checks for moles (usually via a friendly psi), and deals with all other “internal” matters. The IA deputy director reports directly to the chief director.

Location

The main headquarters of the DOD is in Manhattan, New York, in the no-longer used City Hall Subway Station. It branches upward into some of the lower floors of City Hall and downward into areas constructed by the DOD. The main entrance is a set of unused stairs in City Hall that leads to a hidden elevator. The secondary entrance is via the #6 train track from the Brooklyn Bridge Station.

The first floor (actually a subbasement of City Hall) looks mostly normal and has what you would expect of a bureaucracy – except the paper-pushers are filing reports about vampire nests, hauntings, and demonic possessions rather than banal government papers. The second and subsequent floors get stranger: labs for dissecting chupacabras, test areas for magical experimentation, and so on. After a researcher destroyed the majority of the Special Research division's floor, the department was moved further out and downward from the main facility. The bottom-most floor contains a series of purpose-built cells for imprisoning a myriad spectrum of monsters. Silver bars, holy ground in 1' strips, and dimensionally "hardened" areas are typical.

The HPLD's headquarters are underground in downtown Chicago, housed in a group of interlinking secret bunkers, some of which lead to other, more ancient underground structures. There are two main entrances – the first is in the Harold Washington Library, and the second is Turn the Page, a specialty bookstore several miles away. The library is often used

by human or human-looking agents, while the bookstore is used by those who cannot easily pass as human. Due to these entrances, HPLD's headquarters are typically referred to as "the Library" or "the Stacks" by operatives.

The base has 12 floors, but only the first four are currently used. The first floor is almost entirely offices for the various support staff. The second is dedicated to living quarters, used mostly by the nonhuman field operatives, though any agents working overtime may crash in one of the empty rooms. The third floor is mostly laboratories and workspaces for the Special Research division, while the fourth is used for storage.

Since Chicago is riddled with tunnels, unused railways, etc., the HPLD can get almost anywhere in Chicagoland without ever going to the surface. The Stacks are protected by the best technological security money can buy *and* by powerful magic, including a Telluric Seal (pp. 14-15) that covers the *entire* complex.

Agents

The most common character templates for DOD field teams are commandos, sages, sleuths, and techies. Crusaders, psis, and witches are often assigned to Sanitization Units (p. 10). They also, along with experiments and non-humans, show up frequently in HPLD field teams. *Hired gun*, *law enforcement*, *operative*, and *solider* are the common motivational lenses.

THE HPLD AND THE JUDAS INITIATIVE

H.P. Lovecraft is known the world over for his Cthulhu Mythos stories. What he is not known for is his direct involvement in the creation of the DOD. Lovecraft had suffered from night terrors (he called them "night gaunts") all of his life, up until he discovered they were not just psychological – he *was* having visions of monstrous beings intent on trying to destroy the world through earthly agents. He eventually managed to convince some powerful people of the need to contain this threat. Along with a few other people, he created the organization that would eventually be known as the Department of Occult Defense. It would not be until 1935, when the hotbed of supernatural activity began to reach its climax in Europe, that he would put forth his most ambitious idea yet: the Judas Initiative.

The Initiative would endow certain nonhumans with immunity to summary execution under the articles of the Occult Defense Act, as well as a chance to earn citizenship and "honorary humanity." This meant they would be subject to less stringent restrictions, much like human psychics or mages. These nonhumans, called "special talents" or just "specials," would then use their own paranormal capabilities to combat the various supernatural forces arrayed against humanity. At the end of a 10-year hitch, these specials were relocated to a place of their choosing, given a stipend, a new identity, amnesty for any past crimes, and full immunity to being "hunted" (as long as they were law-abiding).

The number of nonhuman recruits for the HPLD was surprisingly high, with many supernatural beings eager to be part of human society, despite the high mortality rate of field operatives.

Fieldwork was not the only way to earn citizenship. Many nonhumans were also a part of research teams and specialist support personnel. Specials in these backup positions take twice as long to "earn their humanity" as field agents do.

After the end of World War II, the Initiative was disbanded and would remain that way until it was called on again during the Vietnam War. It was renamed the Howard Phillips Lovecraft Directive, in honor of its creator. After the war was over, it was disbanded due to allegations of war crimes by some of its members. Recently, the HPLD was again reactivated to assist in the War on Terror. Soon, they were given their own headquarters in the form of the newly renovated (but long defunct) DOD base underneath the city of Chicago. They were also given an assistant director of their own, who reports to Chief Director Grimm and no one else.

Both historically and today, each team of nonhumans is led by a human agent, who has absolute situational authority. These leaders usually have no special powers, and therefore rely on training, wits, and luck. They must be just as tough and resourceful as their inhuman subordinates.

See *A Monster Eat Monster World* (below) for more information on including nonhumans on teams.

All DOD field operatives have the following *DOD lens*: Duty (DOD, 15 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-20], Legal Enforcement Powers [15], and Legal Immunity (DOD) [5]. Duty represents the fact that they are called on for dangerous life-threatening missions, while Legal Enforcement Powers and Legal Immunity denote their standing within the DOD; they have far-reaching police powers, belong to the Department of Occult Defense, and are subject to the DOD rather than regular laws. Many also have the DOD as a Patron, but this isn't *required*; this is either Patron (DOD; Loaded Budget; Heavy Influence) [40] or Patron (HPLD; Large Budget; Heavy Influence) [30].

THE GLADIUS DEI

For the past 2,500 years, the Gladius Dei have protected humanity from supernatural threats. Unfortunately, they view *anyone* with “unnatural” powers as an abomination to be annihilated. Unlike the DOD, the Gladius Dei operate in small autonomous cells (much like terrorist groups) led by a single experienced leader.

History

The Gladius Dei began as a loose confederation of holy men in Galilee, seeking to protect their people from the supernatural. These holy men passed down their traditions over the years, spreading out all over what would become the modern-day Middle East. After the Romans invaded Judea, these holy men banded together and formed the Sicarii to try to expel them. While the Sicarii *did* want the Romans to leave, using any means necessary, this is not the real reason that drove them. Many Romans had been using magic and supernatural creatures to do their bidding for centuries, having learned these arts from Etruscans and Cappadocians.

Unfortunately for the world, in the years before the invasion, many powerful Romans had become “indebted” to powerful demon lords. These demon lords used their Roman puppets to cause all manner of chaos in Judea, eventually culminating in the massacre at Masada in 73 A.D. Though nearly every Sicarius (along with their families) was slain, a few groups made it out and continued their holy mission.

When the First Council of Nicaea was convened in 325 A.D. by Constantine, the remains of the Sicarii were folded into the Church as the Gladius Dei. At the height of their power, they could make bishops and kings tremble. After the disastrous inquisition in Spain, the Catholic Church began to hold a tighter rein on the Gladius Dei, culminating in their current organizational model (small autonomous groups).

Mission

The Gladius Dei's mission is simple: Destroy all supernatural beings. They draw no line between a psychic or a demon. The only

exceptions to this harsh demarcation are those with Mysticism abilities (who they view as touched by God) and Church-trained casters wielding “theurgic” magic.

Once a given area has been “cleansed,” they move on to the next. Since most Gladius Dei have little respect for “the laws of Man,” they also tend to be viewed as criminals by local authorities.

Organization and Location

The Gladius Dei has no centralized headquarters, but instead operate in autonomous groups of four to 10. If going up against a threat larger than they can handle, multiple cells will temporarily join forces. Despite not having a home base, the Gladius Dei *are* led by a cardinal. This specially chosen cardinal is called “the Hand.” He recruits new members, directs the movement of cells when needed, and keeps a log of all cell's activities (gained via dead drops or reported in person by someone transferring to another cell).

Members

The most common character templates of Gladius Dei cells are commandos, crusaders, sages, and warriors. Sages may exchange their Magery and Path skills for a equal number of points in Mysticism talent and abilities. Rarely, Church-trained “theurgists” (e.g., witches or sages with Magery) are allowed to join the Gladius Dei. These miracle workers call on angels and use divine words to perform their magic. Substitute Ritual Magic (Esoteric Abrahamic) for Thaumatology for all magical purposes. Gladius Dei *never* accepts experiments, inhumans, or psis, considering them “the spawn of Satan.” An exception to this rule would require GM permission and a 20-point Unusual Background (Church-Sanctioned).

Avenger, *chosen one*, *clergy*, and *operative* are the most common lenses. The *hired gun* lens is forbidden – the Gladius Dei wants zealots, not greedy thugs! Fanaticism (Gladius Dei) is a very common character trait.

A MONSTER EAT MONSTER WORLD

In a HPLD-focused campaign, players should be encouraged to select different templates; this gives more variety, and allows each player their own monstrous niche. If the GM has **GURPS Monster Hunters 4: Sidekicks**, he might permit players to combine one of the templates on pp. 5-14 with the monstrous lens from p. 21, or use the gifted template with inhuman-blooded, from pp. 8-10. An ambitious GM could even use one of the standard templates from **GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions** plus one inhuman racial template of choice! The GM running such games will find the *Scaling for Monsters* box (**Sidekicks**, p. 19) useful. For further inhuman racial templates, consult *Pyramid* #3/45: *Monsters* (pp. 4-7).

Example: Christian wants to make a vampire – who shoots things. The GM decides the gunman template plus the monstrous lens with the vampire inhuman racial template (**Sidekicks**, pp. 10, 21) will do exactly this.

AND ALL THE REST . . .

The GM can make use of *Monster Underworlds* (**GURPS Monster Hunters 2: The Mission**, pp. 9, 33). This campaign framework assumes that vampires, demons, lycanthropes, psis, and witches have *separate* underworlds, with the rest of the intelligent monster species sharing one mixed underworld – if they congregate at all. The following groups are either too minor or too secretive to know much about and are left up to the GM to flesh out.

Fellowship of Wadjet: This small group consists mostly of sages, witches, and other casters who have banded together for protection and the sharing of mutual knowledge. Despite brief resurgences during the Italian Renaissance and amid the spiritualism of Victorian era, the Fellowship's roster remains small and its chapter houses few. Their reduced membership is countered by their impressive collection of grimoires and other occult texts. Their symbol is the Eye of Horus, which is typically tattooed on the collarbone or back of the hand. Some members practice syncretic magic blending ancient Egyptian practices with modern occultism ones. A number of founders have become mummies (**GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy**, pp. 6-8, and *Pyramid* #3/45: *Monsters*, pp. 6-7), and are still active in the Fellowship.

The *operative* and *philanthropist* lenses are most common among the Fellowship.

The Thule Society: The Thule Society was founded during the Interbellum (the period between the two World Wars) by members of the Nazi party. Despite the rumor that the DOD destroyed the last of their safe houses during the late 1940s, they remain. Funded by vast troves of stolen Nazi gold, the Thule Society finances archeological digs all over the world, seeking more paranormal power. This often leads them into conflict with other organizations, though they avoid the DOD when they can. Any lens is possible, but most members end up with the Fanaticism (The Thule Society) and/or Greed disadvantages. Templates vary, with sage being the most common.

Venatori: The Venatori are a loose network of monster hunters; they prefer to hunt alone, but exchange information and form groups when going after difficult prey. Technically, the Venatori were the oldest organized group of monster hunters, but their centralized leadership was destroyed long ago. The DOD considers most Venatori little better than obsessed, revenge-driven, sociopathic criminals. This isn't far from the truth; most of them become monster hunters due to a "brush with the supernatural" – such as the death of a loved one. While any lens is possible, the accidental hero and avenger/atoner are typical.

DARK PLACES

Operatives might travel anywhere in the world. However, as they are headquartered in the United States, the following locations are good starting places.

Bannack: An abandoned town in Montana rumored to be haunted. Unfortunately, it's worse than haunted – the whole town is dimensionally unstable (it counts as a +5 sacred place for Paths of Crossroads and Spirit magic only). It also attracts the supernatural like moths to flame. Because of this, Bannack serves as a trading post and neutral ground for the supernaturally gifted or non-human. The town is run (as much as it *can* be run) by a crazy rogue angel who calls himself the Governor. He dispenses harsh justice on anyone who violates the laws

he has set down. Since these laws seem to change on a daily basis, locals avoid him when possible.

The Chicago Underground: Chicago is riddled with tunnels, abandoned underground railways, and natural caverns. Despite the fact that the HPLD makes their headquarters in the same area, many unnatural creatures also roam the lightless depths. While most of the local paranormal population keep a low profile, newcomers tend to do the opposite, causing no end of trouble. New DOD recruits are often taken on "bug hunts" in the underground to sharpen their skills. The New York Underground had similar issues (*especially* with albino alligators), but the greater DOD presence has made the area undesirable to the local monster population.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

- The Thule Society has found something in an archeological dig in Maine. When the town of Knockt reports strange atmospheric disturbances, including hundreds of lightning strikes, rumors abound that Mjolnir is now in the hands of Nazis.

- One of the local museums has been closed for renovations but something odd is happening: Workers keep disappearing, only later to be found wandering outside the museum with no memory of what happened. The supervisor in charge of the renovations doesn't seem to mind, because their work output has increased tenfold afterward. Despite all this, the odd scratching and clicking sounds in the walls force the museum director to call a exterminator, who promptly disappears . . .

- When dozens of demons escape a summoning gone wrong, the city begins to experience a heat wave even as the lights go out. The DOD agents have to deal with a hot time in the city tonight *and* the demons who are bent on causing as much chaos possible.

- A seaside town in Florida suddenly goes quiet, though it doesn't seem *too* peculiar thanks to an incoming hurricane. When the agents investigate, they don't find anyone (including bodies) in the town or surrounding area. Carved into a post on the boardwalk is the word "Dagon." That night, something rises from the depths of the sea . . . Can the PCs defend themselves and find out what happened?

Monsters cannot be announced. One cannot say: "Here are our monsters," without immediately turning the monsters into pets.

– Jacques Derrida

NEW TRAITS

Most of these new traits are available only for certain templates. Players should consult the GM when designing characters.

NEW PERK: RITUAL RESISTANCE

You have +3 on rolls to resist a *specific* ritual (see **GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions**, *Defining Rituals*, p. 39). The GM should list rituals that are "common" for the campaign. You must specialize by ritual. This new perk is useful to all champions, but especially those going up against rogue witches.

NEW BIOENHANCEMENT POWER

One of the many experiments from the Cold War era Stargate program resulted in finding a way for human beings to think (and therefore process information) faster.

Cognitive Task-Threading

35 or 70 points

Like Cerebral-Motor Multitasking (**Champions**, p. 41), except you gain one or two additional *mental* maneuvers per turn. This allows you to perform any purely mental task, including using Tactics to assess a potential combat situation, Aim or Evaluate maneuvers, and so on. Bioenhancement Talent does *not* add to any of these rolls.

Statistics: Compartmentalized Mind 1 or 2 (Bioenhancement, -10%; No Mental Separation*, -20%) [35 or 70].

* This limitation means your compartments are just subconscious parts of the same mind. If someone takes over one compartment, they're all affected.

NEW SPELLS

The following new spells might be of use to DOD operatives. The GM might also find *Magical Tradecraft* (Pyramid #3/48:

Secret Magic, pp. 4-9) inspirational for further spells, and *Bottled Magic* (Pyramid #3/43: *Thaumatology III*, pp. 13-16) helpful for information on using alchemy with Ritual Path magic. **GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic** updates the **Monster Hunters** magic system, as well as offering new spells and alchemy guidelines.

Curse of Lethe

Spell Effects: Lesser Destroy Mind.

Inherent Modifiers: None.

Greater Effects: 0 (×1).

This curse causes a specific memory, or series of linked memories, to be permanently removed from the subject's mind. The target of this spell must be within 10 yards of the caster. This makes it especially useful for cover-ups or making someone forget what you did last summer.

Typical Casting: Lesser Destroy Mind (5) + Range, 100 yards (10). 15 energy (15×1).

Telluric Seal

Spell Effects: Lesser Control Body + Lesser Control Magic + Lesser Control Mind + Lesser Control Undead + Lesser Destroy Crossroads + Lesser Control Spirit ×2.

Inherent Modifiers: Area of Effect.

Greater Effects: 0 (×1).

This potent spell is incredibly difficult to cast, thanks to its complexity and the required knowledge of multiple Path skills. It combines multiple warding spells (**Champions**, p. 35) into a single spell affecting all manner of spirits, undead, and lycanthropes. It also protects against hostile spells and divinations (astral projection, clairvoyance, etc.) used on anyone within the borders of the spell. The divination effect protects the area itself, meaning it cannot be scryed upon, remote viewed, and so on. Finally, gating or teleporting into the protected area requires that the being doing so roll against the spell (use the rules for warding). These effects extend 30 yards out from a single focal point, chosen by the caster at the time of casting, and last for one month.

This spell includes the creation of three “telluric tokens,” allowing the holder (usually a friendly caster or other supernatural creature) to bypass the seal and enter the borders of the spell. Additional tokens may be made at anytime by the original caster(s) for +1 energy per two tokens. Use the rules for creating charms to create a token (*Champions*, pp. 38-39).

Typical Casting: Lesser Control Body (5) + Lesser Control Magic (5) + Lesser Control Mind (5) + Lesser Control Undead (5) + Lesser Control Spirit (5) + Lesser Control Spirit (5) + Lesser Destroy Crossroads (5) + Area of Effect, 30 yards (14) + Duration, 1 month (11). *60 energy (60x1).*

NEW FOES

The following new foes should provide plenty of challenge for champions.

Fear is the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind.

– H.P. Lovecraft

GILL-MAN

Gill-men hail from the lightless depths of the ocean floor where they live. Their homes are made in rocky outcroppings or carved into the sides of underwater trenches. Normally, they stay far away from civilization, but occasionally, for reasons unknown, they rise from the depths. Once on the surface, they invade coastal towns, killing men, women, and children alike. Sometimes, even more strangely, they leave some women alive, victims of unwanted advances, now pregnant with hybrid children. These hybrids look completely human until one day when they can no longer resist the call of the deeps, disappearing into the sea never to be seen again.

Two or three gill-men are a fair fight for one or two champions.

ST: 17	HP: 17	Speed: 7.00
DX: 14	Will: 12	Move: 14 (Water) or 7 (Ground)
IQ: 10	Per: 14	Weight: 200 lbs.
HT: 14	FP: 14	SM: 0

Dodge: 11 **Parry:** 11 (Brawling or Spear)
DR: 3 (Tough Skin)
Fright Check: -2

Bite (14): 1d+1 cutting. Reach C.

Claw (14): 1d+1 cutting. Reach C.

Spear (14): 1d+4 impaling (one-handed) or 1d+5 impaling (two-handed); Reach 1 or 1-2. If thrown: 1d+5 impaling, Acc 2, Range 17/25.

Improvised Weapon (9): Based on damage 1d+2/3d-1.

Traits: Amphibious; Appearance (Hideous); Combat Reflexes; Doesn't Breathe (Gills); Nictitating Membrane 3; Pressure Support 3; Sharp Claws; Subsonic Hearing; Temperature Tolerance 4 (Cold); Vibration Sense (Water).

Skills: Aquabatics-12; Brawling-14; Spear-14; Stealth-15; Swimming-16; Thrown Weapon (Spear)-14.

Notes: Interfertile with humans.

GIANT ANT

Giant ants are about 1' long and weigh 10 lbs. each. They can chew holes in solid steel beams and concrete and have poisonous stingers. The following statistics are for worker ants. There should be at least 10 to 15 giant ants per champion.

ST: 7	HP: 7	Speed: 5.00
DX: 10	Will: 10	Move: 6
IQ: 4	Per: 12	Weight: 10 lbs.
HT: 10	FP: 10	SM: -5

Dodge: 8 **Parry:** N/A **DR:** 2
Fright Check: -0

Bite (14): 1d-4 cutting. Reach C. Made as an All-Out Attack (Determined).

Poisonous Sting (14): 1d-4 impaling; Reach C. Made as an All-Out Attack (Determined). Those injured must roll HT-1 or take 1d-3 toxic damage *and* 1 point of corrosion damage, then HT-1 every 10 seconds for one minute or suffer another 1d-3 toxic damage and 1 point of corrosion. Successful resistance at *any* point, or antivenin, stops the damage.

Traits: 360° Vision (Easy to Hit); Attribute Substitution (Engineer (Mining) defaults to Perception); Clinging; Discriminatory Smell; Extra Legs (Six Legs); Flexibility; Horizontal; Indomitable; Lifting ST+3; No Fine Manipulators; One-Task Wonder (Engineer (Mining) defaults to IQ for creating tunnels); Slave Mentality; Terrain Adaptation (Sand); Tunneling (Move 3); Unfazeable; Vibration Sense (Air); Wild Animal.

Skills: Camouflage-11; Climbing-14; Forced Entry-12; Stealth-12; and either Survival (any) or Urban Survival-12.

Notes: Sterile.

Giant Warrior Ant

Giant warrior ants are nearly four times as big as their worker brethren and better equipped to actually fight. These statistics can also be used for male drones. There should be at least three or four giant ants per champion.

ST: 14	HP: 14	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 12	Move: 8
IQ: 4	Per: 14	Weight: 40 lbs.
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: -3

Dodge: 9 **Parry:** N/A **DR:** 4
Fright Check: -1

Bite (18): 1d+1 cutting. Reach C. Made as an All-Out Attack (Determined).

Poisonous Sting (18): 1d+1 impaling; Reach C. Made as an All-Out Attack (Determined). Those injured must roll HT-3 or take 1d-1 toxic damage *and* 2 points of corrosion damage, then HT-3 every 10 seconds for one minute or suffer another 1d-1 toxic damage and 2 points of corrosion. Successful resistance at *any* point, or antivenin, stops the damage.

Traits: As for Giant Ant plus Combat Reflexes and High Pain Threshold.

Skills: As for Giant Ant plus Brawling-14.

Notes: As for Giant Ant.

Giant Queen Ant

The giant queen ant is a huge wriggling mass of flesh. Unlike her children, she has human-level intellect – in fact, she is actually smarter than most humans. Along with this, she has several mental abilities enabling her to direct her children and other beings. This allows her to conceal the efforts of the colony to dominate a given area until total control is assured. It also enables her to influence the local human population by having her children kidnap them and bring them to the lair, where she brainwashes the captives. Brainwashed humans are considered part of the colony; other giant ants won't attack them unless they attack first.

Despite her ungainly appearance, a queen is a match for three or four champions by herself, *and* usually has hordes of progeny to protect her.

ST: 18	HP: 40	Speed: 6.00
DX: 10	Will: 18	Move: 3
IQ: 14	Per: 18	Weight: 1,600 lbs.
HT: 14	FP: 14	SM: +1

Dodge: 10	Parry: N/A	DR: 6
Fright Check: -3		

Bite (12): 1d+2 cutting. Reach C-1.

Poisonous Sting (12): 1d+2 impaling; Reach C-1. Those injured must roll HT-5 or take 1d toxic damage *and* 3 points of corrosion damage, then HT-5 every 10 seconds for one minute or suffer another 1d toxic damage and 3 points of corrosion. Successful resistance at *any* point, or antivenin, stops the damage.

Traits: As for Giant Ant, plus Combat Reflexes; Compartmentalized Mind 1; High Pain Threshold; Injury Tolerance (Unliving); Mind Shield 2; Mind Control (Based on Will, Own Roll); Mind Reading (Based on Will, Own Roll; Long Range 1; Sensory Only); Mindlink (The colony); Telesend (Based on Will, Own Roll; Long Range 1).

Skills: As for Giant Ant plus Brawling-12; Stragety-14; Tactics-14; other appropriate skills assigned by the GM.

Notes: A queen ant can produce dozens to hundreds of eggs per day (depending on available food sources), which are mature within 1d days. Once a month, a queen lays a “queen egg” that will mature in 1d weeks. Queens require their own territories, but daughters and sisters in adjacent territories can be cooperative. Queens from different lines compete.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher R. Rice deals mostly in occult texts and magical grimoires, providing his services for a top-secret government organization he isn't allowed to name. From Portsmouth, Virginia, he pretends not to notice the chupacabra in the sewer near his house. He dreams of being able to write full-time, or at least eke out a living doing it. He wishes to thank L.A., his own personal muse, as well as the rest of his gaming group; his good friend Antoni Ten Monró; Beth “Archangel” McCoy for her amazing patience, snarky editing, and guiding hand; and Emily “Bruno” Smirle, for being most excellent sounding boards.

Keep The Thrills Coming – Subscribe Today!



pyramid.sjgames.com/subscribe

EIDETIC MEMORY

VENATIO

BY DAVID L. PULVER

Monster hunters are often organized, as there is safety and efficiency in numbers. Some are casual groups, while others create formal associations or even businesses. Rivalry between monster-hunting organizations is common, especially when there is a profit motive involved. Mercenary monster hunters that exterminate their enemies in exchange for bounties or paychecks may be looked down upon by groups who fight out of a sense of duty or vengeance, or who serve the government or faith-based bodies. In the end, there is usually a sense of brotherhood among all who stand against the forces of darkness. A bright line that says “here is humanity, and those are the monsters.”

But sometimes, monster hunters cross that line . . .

This introduces Venatio, also called the Faculty, a group of monster hunters intended as possible adversaries or rivals for player characters. Or as monsters themselves.

VENATIO: ORIGINS

Venatio, or the Faculty as its members more frequently call themselves, did not start out as a professional organization. It all began with a chain of mysterious disappearances of students at the local university. Two of the school’s professors noticed there was something wrong.

The first to discover the problem was Dr. Clarence Abrams, a mild-mannered middle-aged English professor – and secretly a skilled sexual predator and budding serial killer. His twisted passion for underage students turned to anger when one of his own victims was snatched from him by an even older predator – a master vampire called Mavrikadis. In seeking vengeance (and to eliminate the competition), Doctor Abrams discovered that the thrill of hunting monsters was almost as satisfying as that of people. But the vampires were too powerful to take on alone – he needed an ally. Chance soon provided it.

That was Professor Vic “Rusty” Irons, a doctor of mechanical engineering with a checkered military background. While serving as a young lieutenant in command of a combat engineering platoon in Iraq, Vic Irons was relieved of command for excessive force and brutal tactics (including blowing up a mosque full of civilians, and the unsanctioned torture and assassination of terror suspects). His defense – that he was

following the orders of the ghost of his dead commanding officer, killed a month before by a terrorist ambush, and who had haunted him ever since – managed to get him a mental-health discharge instead of a court martial. After returning from the war, the former lieutenant rebuilt his life and sanity. He earned a degree in mechanical engineering on the G.I. Bill and secured a teaching position, but he never lost his belief in the supernatural. On campus, Irons acted as an advisor to a student “ghost hunting” club, even helping them acquire such military-surplus gear as thermal imaging devices.

Sadly for them, the majority of the Ghost Hackers (as they were called) uncovered something more substantial than a mere spirit – the same vampire pack that Abrams was stalking. Rusty Irons wanted to avenge his young protégés. After the authorities once again didn’t believe him, he did what it took, using his “all necessary means” tactics to hunt down and punish the bloodsuckers one by one. Professor Clarence Abrams first encountered Irons while the latter was slowly dripping holy water onto a chained-up vampire to induce her to reveal the master’s location. Abrams was excited to find a kindred soul who appeared as ruthless as he was.

Using their specialized knowledge, the two hunters shared information and combined their efforts. Abrams lured the vamps into a mechanical “killing house” that Irons had created in an abandoned warehouse using his combat-engineering knowledge. After an epic battle, Irons finished off the master vampire with a flamethrower he’d made himself – although the monster warned them that he was “not alone.”

As it turned out, their city seemed to be a nexus of supernatural activity. After their first hunt, the pair found evidence of other horrors that needed dealing with. Over the next few years, they fought other monsters and found like-minded allies, including biology professor and cryptid hunter Dr. Zoe Zoolittle. Although Dr. Zoolittle enjoyed the hunt, her main interest was scientific, and she sought specimens for her personal laboratory. Dr. Abrams was keen to assist in the live dissections she preferred, especially when her research moved from cryptids to lycanthropes.

With Zoe’s flare for the dramatic, they named themselves the Faculty of Monster Hunting, or “the Faculty” for short. They also began to expand their hunting operations beyond the city into the town’s rural hinterland.

When the group ran into trouble battling a Satanic sorcerer and the things he had called up from the lower depths, a visiting Classics professor uncovered their organization, but chose to join their ranks. This was the witch Valeria Gigliardi, who turned out to be a former Mafia assassin and no stranger to eliminating targets. She also had a taste for the good life, with several ideas for professionalizing their organization, charging customers for services, and policing “their” territory. These ideas were adopted by the rest of the group, especially the cash-starved Zoolittle, who needed money to support her own scientific experiments.

VENATIO PROTECTIVE SERVICES

The stress of risking their lives in secret (on academic salaries) has given the Faculty a sense of entitlement. They feel the world – or at least the university – owes them for their work in keeping the community safe from paranormal threats. Monster-hunting related bills forced Irons to mortgage his house. Professor Zoolittle was nearly denied tenure because her hunts gave her little time to keep up with academic work in the publish-or-perish environment the university fostered.

It was Gigliardi who suggested various ways that the Faculty could arrange “justified” compensation for themselves – checking to see if any members of the public with potentially deep wallets were threatened, and offering rates for kills. She also suggested providing Monster Insurance (see below) to victims after they responded (very reasonable rates, we continue to patrol your neighborhood . . .) and creating the Green List (see p. 19), which allowed some monsters to pay for the privilege of roaming free – until the group had time to deal with them.

A typical example of their new tactics to drum up new Monster Insurance contracts was the Churchill Cross School Goat Sucker Case. Zoe Zoolittle had tracked down a pair of chupacabras that were eating livestock in a rundown village several miles outside the city, but they only got \$1,000 from a local farmer for it. Zoolittle captured one of the goatsuckers alive, and tagged it.

A few weeks later, Zoe was persuaded to release the captive critter near Churchill Cross High School . . . just before the big game. Nesting under the bleachers, it appeared in time to eat Porky, the football team’s mascot pig, and disfigure two cheerleaders and the quarterback who tried to catch it. After the cops and animal control fumbled the ball, the school board and PTA were approached by the Faculty, who offered

to exterminate it for a reasonable price. They had, of course, radio-tagged the chupacabra, so it was easily tracked down and recaptured. The grateful school board quickly signed a monster protection contract.

At Gigliardi’s suggestion – to facilitate charging customers for their services (and make payments on her Maserati) – the group adopted a more formal name: Venatio, after the beast hunt in the Roman gladiatorial arena. The two names are used interchangeably by club members – usually they refer to themselves as the Faculty among themselves, and Venatio when dealing with outsiders.

VENATIO’S HEADQUARTERS

As an ironic joke, Venatio is also the name by which the group is publicly known in the university’s society. Realizing that meeting at member’s homes was somewhat awkward and that a justification for their own association beyond being “friends” was needed (which they weren’t), the Faculty decided to establish a cover identity at the university. This would allow them to meet together without attracting suspicions.

Professor Gigliardi suggested something boringly mundane and donnish: a private society for professors who met weekly to hold vigorous debates on the merits of Latin and Greek literature. (If anyone asks about the name, Gigliardi says that it refers to the fierce literary debates that occur at the club’s meetings.) Having bored numerous individuals – mostly unwanted suitors – to tears on this subject herself, Gigliardi was fairly sure any such description would ensure a total lack of interest in their meetings from anyone remotely interesting. It did.

The club meets weekly at the University Faculty Lounge, an attractive three-story building on the edge of campus. Club rooms can be reserved by university professors and staff for academic or private events throughout the year. It has a well-appointed dining room, a bar, a couple of reading rooms, a small member’s library, and a private upstairs boardroom and conference room (the Milton Room) where private functions can be held. Venatio uses the Milton Room as its headquarters, having arranged to reserve it for meetings every Wednesday night. In the guise of some “upgrades to the wiring” from the Faculty of Engineering, Irons installed a few hidden compartments with ready-to-access guns and the like. Gigliardi also added magical wards to further protect it. Irons regularly “sweeps” the room to ensure it isn’t bugged.

THE COMPETITION

Venatio considers other monster hunters to be competition – poachers operating in the territory it has staked out. Ostensibly, this is framed as “we don’t want people we don’t trust interfering in our ongoing investigations or getting civilians hurt.” Actually, the Faculty doesn’t want people taking a slice of its pie. If you’re not with Venatio, you’re against them. “Monster” as professor Abrams likes to say, is a term that can easily be applied to anyone. What really matters is the hunt . . .

Monster Insurance Policies

The Faculty in the form of Venatio Protective Services (a shell company) offers security for businesses and institutions that are already aware and afraid of monsters. The typical “Venatio Gold Shield” contract (\$1,500 per month for an institution like a department store or school) includes a security review, subscription to a bi-monthly Threat Briefing, and a priority phone number to call in the event of attack. Venatio promises to have “its team” respond within 10 minutes to any emergency. All of this seems very much on the up-and-up – or it would be if the Faculty had not set up the threat in the first place . . .

They warn weaker groups away, or insist the group accept an associate membership with the Faculty. An associate membership has a cost of \$500 a month per member the encroaching group has, plus 25% of any fees the group earns. Individuals who have compatible attitudes and academic backgrounds (doctorates or graduate students) may be encouraged to join Venatio for a lower fee or as a contractor (depending on how independent the individual wishes to be). If a hunter refuses to join up, or is hostile, the Faculty tries to discredit them or run them out of town. If all fails, they may decide to eliminate them (something favored by Gigliardi and Abrams).

The Faculty presently has several "Venatio Associates," including "Alligator" Magee, a cryptid hunter who specializes in eradicating urban threats such as albino alligators, and Sze Wai Ho, a computer hacker with magical abilities who deals on her own with supernatural cyber-threats in the area.

PROFESSOR CLARENCE ABRAMS

Abrams is 56, with curly white hair, a large nose, and piercing eyes. He favors frilled shirts, a velvet smoking jacket and shiny dress shoes. He hides a pair of sharp knives in his jacket. He enjoys smoking a pipe, and owns a vintage automobile (a Diamler Roadster). A teacher of freshman English, he is a scholar of Poe, a connoisseur of detective novels, and plays the violin. Outwardly charming if a bit awkward and foppish, there is nevertheless an aura about him that is not quite right.

The rest of the Faculty are aware that Abrams has stalker-ish tendencies and takes a sadistic glee in the kill, but they do not suspect the depth of his depravity. In fact, he is wrong to the bone: a sociopath whose voyeurism and stalking behavior gradually escalated to serial murder. He had stalked and killed four victims – all young and attractive students – before his life changed when a vampire took his intended target.

He had long feared his "urges" would get him caught. Since joining the Faculty, he feels he has been granted a new lease on life, sublimating his instincts by targeting monsters rather than humans. Even so, he prefers those in human form, such as lycanthropes and vampires. Especially young, attractive vampires – those he has a lot of fun with.

Occasionally, he will spare (or "Green List") one out of a pack, to ensure a steady supply of new victims within the city. He is always nervous that he will "run out" of monsters and either go on the road (he hates long-distance travel) or go back to killing humans.

The professor's favorite weapons are a pair of matched very fine knives and a silver garrote.

ST 11; DX 14; IQ 15; HT 13.

Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 15; Will 15; Per 16; FP 13. Basic Speed 7.00; Basic Move 7; Dodge 11; Parry 12 (Knife). 5' 10"; 152 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Bloodlust; Combat Reflexes; Contact Group (Sexual predator network; Skill-13; Unreliable); Charisma 2; Compulsive Snooping (12); Craftiness 2; Danger

THE GREEN LIST

There are often more monsters in town than the Faculty can dispose of. But the monsters don't always know that – hence the Green List.

Green List monsters are mid- to low-level threats that can be communicated with and possess funds. They tend to be creatures who may kill periodically but who do not engage in rabid slaughter. This includes various mature vampires, rational lycanthropes, a few demons, and so on. Some are informers. Some are trying to control their urges. Some are things the Faculty just haven't gotten around to killing.

In exchange for \$1,000 a month, the Faculty gives such monsters a "warning" to behave and a green card printed with the image of the coliseum in Rome. As long as they pay up and don't make a fuss (e.g., kill only street people, for instance), Venatio won't (actively) hunt them.

Sense; Disciplines of Faith (Ritualism); Discriminatory Taste; French (Accented); Honest Face; Intuition; Luck; Night Vision 3; Odious Personal Habit (Undresses people with his eyes); Peripheral Vision; Photographic Memory; Rapier Wit; Sadism (12); Secret (Serial killer); Signature Gear (Knives); Silence 2; Status 1; Tenure; Wealth (Comfortable); Weapon Bond (Knife).

Skills: Area Knowledge (Campus)-15; Cloak-16; Computer Operation-15; Connoisseur (Music)-15; Current Affairs (High Culture)-15; Brawling-15; Climbing-15; Detective!-15; Disguise-14; Driving (Automobile)-14; Escape-13; Fast-Draw (Knife)-14; First Aid-12; Forced Entry-15; Garotte-16; Knife-18; Knot-Tying-17; Literature-16; Musical Instrument (Violin)-14; Occultism-14; Photography-13; Psychology-14; Streetwise-15; Talker!-15; Teaching-15; Tracking-15; Stealth-18; Wrestling-14; Writing-15.

PROFESSOR VIC IRONS

Professor "Rusty" Irons (age 35) is a big, muscular man with red hair, a few facial scars, and a military bearing. He dresses neatly when lecturing but is equally at home in sweat-stained overalls with a welding torch or chainsaw. He's the Faculty's ranged combat powerhouse and acknowledged leader, but he's not just a gun-toting commando. He's also a decent engineer and someone attuned to the spirit world. He often feels the unquiet dead are constantly whispering to him, urging him to avenge them. He especially hears them in the voices of "the kids" – student members of the Ghost Hackers club he was involved in, and young soldiers who served under his command and died in Iraq.

As a monster hunter, Irons is a hybrid of commando and techie. This is a result of his background in the U.S. Army, where he served with the rugged warriors of the 14th Combat Engineer Battalion. He feels monsters are simply another form of terrorist, and takes an almost sadistic glee in luring them into elaborate "kill zones" established in derelict buildings. Where time permits, he fills these with trap doors, pits, and mechanical traps involving spikes, falling blocks, swinging pendulums, explosives, acid, holy water or fire sprays, and the like. Many of these are specially designed for monster killing, e.g., a house intended against lycanthropes would have silver blades.

The last time I checked, the sheriff was pretty pro-zombie.

*– Sam Winchester, in **Supernatural** #5.15*

Ironically, many of the individual devices are built (unwittingly) by undergrad students as class projects in his Mechanical Engineering course. As such, they are paid for using university resources. He'll often recycle elements from one "kill house" to the next. (The GM may wish to borrow some ideas from the **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy** line). Some of his traps are lethal, but most are intended to slow and delay opponents, allowing Irons and his companions to personally kill (or capture) them. When possible, he prefers to finish off a foe with a grenade, hot lead, or an even hotter jet from his flamethrower.

Vic's favorite weapons are a .40 auto pistol, a 12-gauge auto shotgun (with a wide variety of special ammo, such as dragon's breath or holy water), a machete, and occasionally, a backpack flamethrower. In action, he usually wears a long coat and a concealable vest. He often carries a large number of grenades in hidden pockets of his coat. He owns a set of thermal imaging goggles used for nighttime operations, and a tricked-out Hummer.

ST 14; DX 16; IQ 13; HT 13.

Damage 1d/2d; BL 34 lbs.; HP 18; Will 12; Per 14; FP 13.

Basic Speed 7.00; Basic Move 7; Dodge 11; Parry 12 (Brawling). 6' 5"; 190 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Combat Reflexes; Gadeteer; Gizmos 1; Gunslinger; Rapid Healing; Medium; Phantom Voices (Disturbing); Sense of Duty (Teammates); Spirit Empathy; Tenure; Trademark (Kill houses); Very Fit.

Skills: Architecture-12; Armoury (Small Arms)-14; Brawling-17; Blind Fighting-13; Carpentry-12; Camouflage-12; Chemistry-13; Climbing-15; Computer Operation-13; Driving (Automobile)-16; Driving (Construction Equipment)-16; Engineer (Civil)-12; Engineer (Combat)-14; Fast-Draw (Pistol)-16; First Aid-13; Forced Entry-16; Gun!-16; Intelligence Analysis-13; Hazardous Materials-12; Hidden Lore (Restless Undead)-12; Interrogation-13; Intimidation-14; Inventor!-12; Leadership-13; Liquid Projector (Flamethrower)-17; Machinist-13; Mathematics (Applied)-13; Mechanic (Clockwork)-13; NBC Suit-13; Shortsword-16; Soldier-13; Stealth-16; Streetwise-13; Swimming-15; Tactics-13; Teaching-12; Throwing-17; Traps-19; Tracking-13; Wrestling-16.

PROFESSOR ZOE ZOOLITTLE

Professor Zoolittle (age 32) is a petite woman whose small stature belies her intense energy. She rarely stops talking (Abrams has referred to her as a "little killer bunny rabbit"). She grew up in a survivalist-militia compound in Montana

and learned to hunt and shoot at her daddy's knee. Home schooled, she was the only one of her six siblings (all brothers) to get a formal college education. While she initially trained as a vet, her father's obsession with conspiracy theories and an investigation into a mysterious series of cattle mutilations on a neighbor's farm soon led her to develop her true interest: cryptozoology and preternatural biology. This passion drove her to excel in the academic environment even as it gained her a reputation as an eccentric among her peers. Her pursuit of various unnatural creatures led her to this part of the country, and she found a position as an assistant professor of biology.

Zoe prefers to hunt cryptids, although she also has a fascination with lycanthropes and exotic parasites. Unlike most monster hunters she is more interested in studying them, and has no particular desire to protect the public. She often urges her team to take targets alive, although this is not always possible. If she can capture a cryptid, shapeshifter, or the like, her preference is to dissect the specimen to find out what makes it tick. In the case of known creatures she is already familiar with, however, she may opt to give it a radio tag, and release it – often as part of an "experiment" to see what it will do, since the behavior of these entities is always fascinating.

Cryptids often lurk in wilderness areas, sewers, and other places where they don't do much harm (only eating the occasional traveler, vagrant, or farm animal). Since capturing such critters provides little in the way of profit, the Faculty will sometimes "relocate" them to more populated areas where paying customers can be found. This allows Zoe to observe their behavior under more "controlled" conditions, and the Faculty to extract kill fees from said customers who hire them to eliminate the creatures. Most of her profits from monster hunting go to purchasing better research equipment for her lab and allowing her to take time off from work to write.

Unlike the other Faculty members, Zoe has a more public identity, making her a possible point of contact. She is a frequent guest on radio talk shows that discuss the paranormal and has self-published five books on cryptids. She also has strong anti-government views, and is a true believer in numerous conspiracy theories. In her public persona she does not mention her activities as a monster hunter, instead adopting an air of "informed speculation."

Besides her scientific calling, she's an enthusiastic hunter, fisher, and cook. She also wrote a minor classic called *Cooking with Cryptids*, which was marketed as a humor book. It wasn't.

She owns a pickup truck, a collection of long guns, a net, a tranquilizer rifle, and a fierce pack of hounds. In addition to university facilities, her house is equipped with basement laboratory and holding cells. She also has a hunting lodge in the countryside.

ST 11; DX 13; IQ 16; HT 12.

Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 15; Will 16; Per 16; FP 12.
Basic Speed 7.00; Basic Move 7; Dodge 10; Parry 10 (Judo).
5'4"; 122 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Attractive; Bad Sight (Mitigator, Glasses); Bad Temper (12); Brave; Contact Group (Radio show audience and militia underground, Skill-12; Supernatural; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable); Curious; Delusion (Most conspiracy theories are real); Greed (12); Higher Purpose (Acquire Knowledge); Obsession (Discover and understand cryptids) (12); Reputation +4 (Authority on cryptids; To fringe academics); Reputation -2 (Eccentric; among mainstream academics); Sense of Duty: Team-mates); Workaholic.

Skills: Area Knowledge (Local rural areas)-15; Animal Handling (Dogs)-15; Armory (Small Arms)-15; Biology-17; Camouflage-14; Computer Operation-16; Cooking-15; Crossbow-14; Diagnosis-17; Driving (Automobile)-16; Driving (Motorcycle)-16; Ecology-15; Electronics Operation (Media)-16; Electronic Operation (Medical)-16; Electronics Repair (Media)-17; Fishing-14; First Aid-17; Guns (Pistol)-13; Guns (Rifle)-15; Hidden Lore (Conspiracies)-15; Hidden Lore (Cryptozoology)-16; Hidden Lore (Lycanthropes)-16; Hiking-15; Intelligence Analysis-15; Judo-14; Lore-17; Naturalist-18; Net-15; Photography-16; Poisons-15; Physician-15; Physiology-15; Riding (Horses)-15; Stealth-14; Surgery-14; Survival-15; Teaching-16; Thaumatology-14; Tracking-16; Traps-16; Veterinary-17; Weird Science-14; Writing-17.

*For a list of monsters
that the Faculty has
subdued, see **Notable
Venatio Cases**, p. 37.*

PROFESSOR VALERIA GIGLIARDI

Professor Gigliardi teaches Latin, classical studies, and archeology courses at the university. She is secretly a powerful witch, specializing in necromatic and crossroads magic – family traditions handed down from her grandmother in the Old Country, she says with a sly smile.

At 29, Valeria is the youngest of the professors in the Faculty. A black-haired, elegant, somewhat androgynous beauty, she shows up at university functions dressed in the latest Milan, Paris, or Tokyo fashions. She drives a sports car and is often pursued by the town's most eligible bachelors – most of whom she treats as bugs beneath her notice.

In fact, her real name is Chiara Strangio; her family were *stregheria* (witches), who were also *sorella d'omerta*, women in service to 'Ndrangheta, the Calabrian mafia in Italy, mistresses of poison and dark magic. Caught on the losing side of a power struggle between rival crime lords and their magical

associates, Chiara managed to escape the bloodbath, fleeing to America and changing her name.

With the help of a few family connections in the American Mafia, she was able to adopt the identity of Valeria Gigliardi, visiting professor of Latin and archeology at a local university. However, spending time in hiding did not suit her high-strung disposition. When her own wards detected the activities of the Faculty on campus, she revealed herself to them and offered to join their monster-hunting group.

Besides boredom, she has a few ulterior motives. One is financial – her own funds were running dry, and she saw several ways that the Faculty's operations could be made lucrative. Her other motive was operational – she fears that eventually the Calabrian coven and its Ndrangheta masters will track her down; having local allies would be useful.

In combat, she prefers to avoid direct conflict, providing magical support. She will kill ruthlessly if necessary, though usually indirectly (e.g., via slow-acting curses). She owns a variety of edged weapons, including a ceremonial but very sharp sword and a knife that is often poisoned with exotic cryptid venom (courtesy of Zoolittle). She also keeps a "collection" of zombies – victims of the Faculty or people killed by monsters ("a shame to waste their bodies") squirreled away in spots that she can call up as needed.

ST 10; DX 12; IQ 16; HT 12.

Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 14; Will 17; Per 16; FP 12.
Basic Speed 6.00; Basic Move 6; Dodge 10; Parry 11 (Broadsword) or 10 (Knife or Unarmed).
5'11"; 119 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Appearance (Beautiful); Combat Reflexes; Contact Group (Mafia; Skill-15; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable); Enemy (Hunter; Rival Mafia witches or assassins; 6 or less); Fashion Sense; Italian (Accented); Latin (Native); Magery 5; Odious Personal Habit (Latin quotations); Ritual Adept; Secret (Scion of a Mafia family); Signature Gear (Grimoires); Greed (12); Higher Purpose (Acquire knowledge).

Skills: Archeology-15; Broadsword-14; Carousing-14; Connoisseur (Fashion)-15; Dancing-14; Diplomacy-15; Driving (Automobile)-14; First Aid-16; Guns-12; Hidden Lore (Rogue Witches)-15; Hidden Lore (Sacred Places)-15; Knife-14; Meditation-17; Merchant-15; Naturalist-14; Occultism-15; Path of Chance-17; Path of Crossroads-16; Path of Magic-15; Path of Matter-14; Path of Mind-16; Path of Spirit-15; Path of Undead-16; Research-15; Sex Appeal-14; Singing-14; Stealth-15; Streetwise-14; Teaching-15; Thaumatology-17.

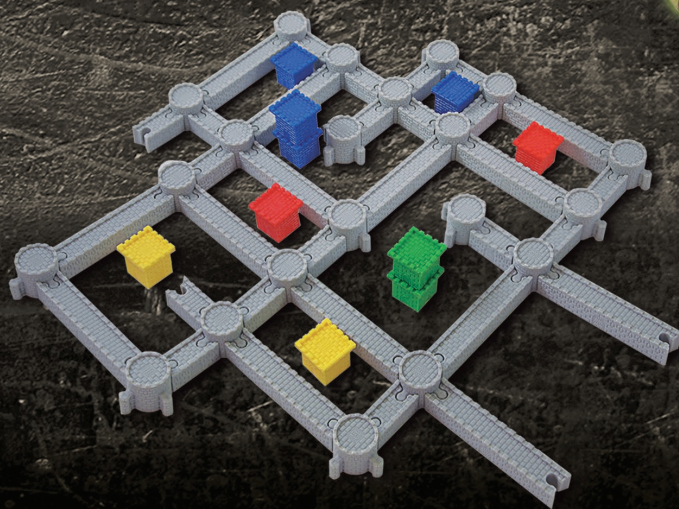
ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

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*, *GURPS Ultra-Tech*, and the *GURPS Spaceships* series.

Your castle won't save you!



Can you
SURVIVE
the night?



MASTER the CASTLE

STEVE JACKSON GAMES
sjgames.com



MONSTER HUNTERS 2043: AGENTS OF ORCID

BY W.A. FRICK

Crazed cults enact twisted rituals in the crumbling ruins of the inner city . . . malign intelligences haunt the back-servers and byways of the global Internet . . . blood-sucking fiends make unspeakable deals in the shadows of the board room . . . Never doubt for a moment that monsters still stalk the neon-tinged shadows of the dark future. And just as in the world of today, the future has those who hunt the monsters, who *bump back* against things that bump in the night.

One such group is ORCID (pronounced “orchid”), the “Occult and Religious Counter-Intelligence Division,” a semi-secret paramilitary organization that responds to supernatural threats with state-of-the-art technology and full government authority. Whether nihilistic cults in the depths of the Null Zone, unspeakable monsters in the labyrinthine sewers and subways beneath the sprawl, or dangerous experiments in corporate black labs, the agents of ORCID are intensively trained, cybernetically enhanced, lavishly equipped, and *fully authorized* to track down the supernatural, put a decisive stop to it – and make sure the public never finds out.

Agents of ORCID is a tech-noir infusion of **GURPS Monster Hunters** into the dark future of **GURPS Cyberworld**. The material here also makes heavy use of ideas and chrome from

GURPS Ultra-Tech. The PCs have bleeding-edge weaponry and extraordinary legal powers in the pursuit of their dual Missions – to save the world from Ultimate Evil, while simultaneously helping to maintain order in a dystopian futuristic dictatorship. With a little tweaking, the ideas here could also be used to help port other **Monster Hunters** campaign-frames into the cyberpunk milieu.

*The real world is
where the monsters are.*

*– Rick Riordan,
The Lightning
Thief*

THE DARK FUTURE

It is 2043. Violent new weather patterns, economic collapse, global pandemic, and general future-shock throughout the early 21st century have brought the world to the proverbial edge. Despite the dire predictions of doomsday-enthusiasts, however, technological megadeath has not yet been unleashed upon the world (although *something* seems to have depopulated Australia . . .). Humanity continues its parabolic climb up the technology curve, leaving society stratified across plateaus of generation, social class, and tech-savvy. Multinational

megacorporations call at least as many of the shots as national governments. The reality is that the ones with the Money run the Show . . . and that means the megacorps.

The definitive guide to the gritty dystopia of 2043 is **Cyberworld**; most of the organizations and “future-historical” events mentioned here are covered in greater detail there. Although not required to make use of the material here, that volume can add greatly to the depth and detail of an ORCID game.

Tech Level

The world of 2043 is at the incipient edge of TL9, and early TL9 infrastructure is just beginning to take hold in the First World. Legacy TL8 tech (even some TL7 and earlier) is still common in most places outside corporate enclaves and the (gated, patrolled) communities of the ultra-rich, mixing freely at street-level with cheap consumer electronics, gray-and black-market knockoffs, and the occasional state-of-the-art corporate toy or prototype. See the *Cyberpunk* technology path (*GURPS Ultra-Tech*, p. 9) and *GURPS Cyberpunk* for more on appropriate tech.

ProGov AND THE NERCC

Adam Hammond is the Provisional President (read: Dictator for Life) of the United States, unitary head of “ProGov,” the Provisional Government. Due to a state of affairs referred to in press releases and media-bytes as the “Permanent Emergency,” democratic elections – along with the Constitution as a whole – have been suspended since the 2020s. Despite ambiguously optimistic rhetoric from the Hammond Administration’s press secretaries, no one seriously expects the “emergency” to end any time soon. ProGov rules without official opposition; through policy and executive fiat, much regional administrative authority has been sold off to megacorporations and other “local powers,” under a political philosophy called neofeudalism.

The NERCC – National Emergency Resource Coordination Commission – was formed before ProGov’s takeover, an extraordinary agency commissioned during the Grand Slam (a severe global economic depression) to consolidate and replace a slew of alphabet agencies concerned with national security, domestic counter-intelligence, and emergency management. Using its unprecedented powers, the NERCC consolidated several U.S. companies under the banner of North American Technologies (NATCorp) – incidentally, the nascent megacorporation whose CEO, Adam Hammond, was appointed to head the NERCC.

When martial law was declared in response to widespread civil unrest in 2024, it was the NERCC who secured and held key power and communications facilities, placed National Guard units and local authorities under direct executive control, and oversaw brutal “urban counterinsurgency operations” to pacify a restive public.

Now, in 2043, the NERCC is ProGov’s Secret Police and Stormtrooper Corps in one. Wherever there are food riots or protest demonstrations, NERCC enforcers are there, gassing crowds and machine-gunning malcontents. Wherever there’s a random stop-and-search checkpoint, NERCC enforcers have body-scanners and rubber gloves at the ready. The flat black visor of the NERCC Enforcer’s standard body armor has become the featureless, reflective face of ProGov’s ruthless dictatorship.

ALTERNATE ORCIDS

Agents of ORCID certainly isn’t the only possible frame for a futuristic paramilitary monster hunters campaign – nor is a paramilitary strike force the only option for monster-hunting in the dark future.

ORCID, no NERCC: No matter how many monsters they kill or apocalypses they avert, some players (and GMs) may find it objectionable to work for a brutal secret police organization that supports a ruthless dictatorship. But what if ORCID (or something like it) existed *without* the NERCC and all the gestapo-tactics? For a kinder, gentler ORCID – more futuristic *X-Files*, less *Fahrenheit 451* – simply reduce Legal Enforcement Powers from the ORCID agent lens (p. 28) to the 10-point version, and play the team’s Patron a little softer. (*Just* a little, though . . . the FBI was Mulder’s enemy almost as often as his patron.) They still have federal jurisdiction, but no more disappearances or “enhanced interrogations.”

Corporate Assets: What if there’s some profit to be extracted from the supernatural? Perhaps vampire dust makes a great base for “youth-restoring” cosmetics, or R&D has figured out how to save money on smart electronics by embedding minor demons instead of microprocessors. Of course, they’ll need a team of well-equipped goons – er, *operatives* – to find, obtain, and test these rare ingredients and technologies . . . all without the public (or government) knowing, of course. For a corporate-sponsored team, use the standard operative lens, and build the team’s Patron

as a megacorporation. Probably no Legal Enforcement Powers, but possibly some *Legal Immunity*.

Freelancers: Whether the PCs are grim champions against the near-triumphant darkness, or opportunistic hunters-for-hire, a freelance campaign could be *even grittier* than an ORCID-based game . . . with a motley assortment of street samurai warriors, ultra-techies, futuristic (or anachronistic) inhumans, and technoshaman crusaders, the team can be a slightly Darker and Edgier version of a standard *Monster Hunters* lineup. Use any appropriate motivational lenses *other* than operative or ORCID agent, and likely no Patron at all. This *could* mean that they’ll have a harder time getting their hands on fancy gear – but it’s still the dark future, so there’s plenty of chrome to be had by more “unofficial” channels.

Black Ops and Dirty Laundry

Fans of *GURPS Black Ops* and/or Charles Stross’ *The Laundry Files* series may notice that ORCID is very similar to both the Company and the Laundry . . . and may further note that, by filing off the serial numbers of the material here, and rolling back *mainstream* society and technology to contemporary TL8 (though quite possibly keeping various ultra-tech gadgets in the hands of the PCs), they could arrive at a very similar setting to those works. What these readers do with such realizations is, of course, up to them; if questioned, the secretary will disavow all knowledge of their actions.

THE OCCULT AND RELIGIOUS COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

Originally formed even before the NERCC, ORCID started as a special national security/counter-terrorism task force, charged with investigating a presidential assassination (a president who, incidentally, stood in the way of Adam Hammond's ambitions), by a shadowy group identified in the news as the "Army of Satanic Order." A large-scale crackdown of occult organizations ensued, with ORCID gradually taking over various unsolved and "occult-related" cases across the country, at every level of jurisdiction. The unit was absorbed into the newly created NERCC around 2018, and they must have convinced *someone* of the continued need for a nationwide witch hunt on the government dime, because the substantial ORCID budget is approved every year.

Public Face

According to its published mission statement, press releases, and website, ORCID is simply a specialized domestic counter-intelligence and national security organization. The supernatural isn't *real*, of course, but there are fanatics out there who *believe* it is – sick, sick people who will stop at nothing to destroy our way of life, and everything *you* hold dear. ORCID is there to stop those Very Bad People, to find them where they hide, and keep them from doing Very Bad Things.

Because of their PR, ORCID agents have broad latitude in their conduct – they don't have to hide *who* they're working for in most cases, and have badges to wave that can get the general cooperation of loyal U.S. citizens and civil servants. Of course, loyal citizens may not be the majority in many places that ORCID agents find themselves – the depths of the sprawl, the top-secret occult-research facility of a rogue corporation, or the monster- (and guerrilla-) infested jungles of South America.

The Awful Truth

Behind this facade, of course, ORCID is fully aware that there are Things out there that the public, modern science, and even the bureaucrats and petty lords of ProGov and the NERCC don't know about – and *mustn't* find out about. The agency has a sizable black budget (nothing unusual for a secret police organization), and some of the most advanced research facilities in the government . . . all bent to *concealing* what they actually do, behind the false pretense that it's all a put-on that they only take seriously because "one of these nut-groups might get their hands on a nuke or something someday."

Or worse, maybe someone up the chain *does* know the Truth, and is using ORCID for their own nefarious purposes.

SHADOWS OF THE SPRAWL

The options for an ORCID-based monster-hunting campaign might seem somewhat limited: an operative strike team, with deluxe Legal Enforcement Powers, a heavy-duty Duty, and one lulu of a Patron. Missions will be directed From Above – the PCs don't write their own agenda; they

work for the government. They get cool toys and a license to kill, but all that depends on them doing as they're told by an organization that amounts to a 21st-century American KGB.

Even within that framework, however, there's still an important choice to be made – just *who* is the Enemy?

Cults

The nominal, publicly acknowledged mission statement of ORCID is to investigate and prosecute "satanic cults," and by extension, any fringe-religious or occult-oriented group that might be scheming to subvert the fabric of society. Cynics and conspiracy theorists say that this literal government witch hunt was fabricated in support of the eventual suspension of the Bill of Rights, an excuse to apply the screws to a social group that few others would stand up for, and thus quietly begin to sweep civil liberties under the rug of McCarthyistic fear-mongering.

But ORCID agents know better. There *really* are nefarious cults out there, and the Things they worship – the things they do at their Sunday picnics – are horrible enough to make even the most uppity malcontent thank Uncle Sam for breaking it up, whatever the cost in lives, personal freedom, and runaway national security budget.

In many ORCID campaigns, especially those featuring Things Man Was Not Meant to Know, "cults" may make up a large portion of the enemies faced by PCs. Cults, of course, can take many forms: satanic street gangs, techno-mystical deckers possessed by net entities, half-human sewer morlocks who make sacrifices to *something* under the city, even successful corporate executives who call upon demonic forces in service of their ambition. ORCID's commission is quite clear: if it invokes the Elders of the Pit, Abyssal lords, Things From Beyond or anything else that wants to destroy the world, they're duly authorized and duty-bound to put lots and lots of bullets in it.

Things Man Was Not Meant To Know

The *real* threat isn't the cults themselves, of course, but the Things they worship – the slaving entities from beyond time and space, which long to enslave or devour the known universe. These are the things that the public must never know about, lest all hope (and civil order) be lost to the knowledge that the entire planet is little more than a tiny cosmic snack bar for creatures that devour human souls like grapes. See *GURPS Horror* (pp. 73-76) for further discussion and basic stats of such tentacled, horrible Things and their insectile, pustulent minions.

Lovecraftian Horrors

The most well-known Things Man Was Not Meant To Know are the Cthulhu Mythos, the ancient alien gods and monsters that haunted the writings of H.P. Lovecraft, his colleagues, and his imitators. ORCID agents are at least as comfortable doing battle with the Great Old Ones and their vile servants as they would be staking vampires or exorcising demons. In fact, in a Mythos-based campaign, there may not be *any* "classic" monsters, only creatures of the Lovecraftian tradition. In this case, even if the agency's origins and administrative superiors are a tad sketchy, their primary purpose is to battle the creeping influence of the Old Ones.

Apart from adjusting the Enemy (and the skills used to fight it – see *Know Thy Enemy: 2043 Edition*, pp. 28-29), little needs to be done to accommodate the Mythos in an ORCID campaign.

The Qlippoth

For the GM who doesn't want the Mythos (and all They imply about the universe) mixed in with his cyberpunk monster hunters, but still wants the PCs to battle Elder Evil from Beyond, the *Qlippoth* (**GURPS Cabal**, p. 123) are an ideal stand-in. Horrifically alien in appearance and mentality, thoroughly inimical to humanity, older than the known universe, and downright eager to devour/defile/destroy us all: qlippothic creatures, cults, infestations, and ur-deities can be everything the GM could want from the Mythos, without all the baggage and expectations that may come with using the *actual* Mythos. For one take on qlippothic magic, see *Daath* (**GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic**, p. 37).

THE CABAL

If they exist in the dark future of 2043, the Cabal is a natural enemy for ORCID – a vast secret society of “Satanists,” occultists, and monsters, all conveniently conspiring together (or, just as often, against one another). They almost certainly haven't taken well to ProGov's ruthless consolidation of power, to say nothing of the all-out witch hunt prosecuted by ORCID. And even if they haven't declared open war on ORCID and its parent organizations, simply disrupting the day-to-day scheming of various Cabalists could be a full-time job for a hundred ORCID teams.

That is, of course, unless someone high up in the Cabal is *behind* the Division, the NERCC, or possibly even ProGov and the Hammond Administration. After all, the Midwinter Aton (the secret Cabalistic lodge behind the Nazis' rise) purged all other occult organizations in Germany when consolidating their power . . . and the Cabal themselves created the militant anti-occult society, *Exodus 22* (**GURPS Cabal**, p. 22), a very similar outfit (possibly even a predecessor) to ORCID.

Creature Feature

ORCID could exist in a world where there are more kinds of monsters than just slimy-tentacled elder things. (Or even a world *without* slimy-tentacled elder things – just don't ask me to live there.) There's no particular reason that the full Universal Studios Monster Movie cast can't make an appearance in the dark future: werewolf eco-terrorists, vengeful South American mummies, even angels and demons walking the Earth in anticipation of the End Times (which must surely “be nigh” *by now*) – not to mention the zombie plague that may be loose in Australia!

In this case, simply use the monsters from **GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy** as-written, perhaps updated with some ultra-tech chrome – or not, for conspicuously anachronistic or timeless creatures. Apart from the fact that TL9 hardware can do *even more* damage to “invincible” monsters, this campaign

won't be terribly different from a normal **Monster Hunters** game of the operative/strike team variety.

ProGov, the NERCC, and ORCID

Even in a standard campaign, an ORCID team is likely to spend a lot of their time maneuvering through various bureaucratic brush wars and administrative vendettas – all a part of life in the NERCC (see *ORCID Basics*, pp. 27-29). It may eventually be that the PCs decide they've had a belly full and want to strike off on their own. Or, they may discover that ProGov, the NERCC, or ORCID itself is part of some larger conspiracy, and they're just puppets. They *thought* they were fighting evil, but they've actually been *helping* the plans of the Biggest Bad of All, by eliminating supernatural rivals and suppressing plucky occult rebels!

If the PCs decide to try to leave ORCID, it's probably a *development* of the campaign. The GM should begin with focus on another enemy, and run the game as though it were a typical ORCID strike team . . . until the Big Reveal, at which time the PCs have an important choice to make. Leaving ORCID will not only cost them their Legal Enforcement Powers, Patron, and steady access to above-top-shelf equipment, but will gain them a powerful Enemy to replace their lapsed Duty. (And they'd best disable their standard bomb implants *before* attempting any kind of defection.) Even if they decide to stay, it may be that *someone* behind the scenes decides that they've become too much of a liability to be allowed to live . . .

Technological Terrors

Perhaps the “monsters” that ORCID agents fight *really* are just human. Well, mostly human, or the product of human engineering, miscalculation, and hubris. Outlaw cyborgs, combat-drug gangs, berserk assassin drones, renegade AIs, android super-soldiers, perhaps even alien parasites – there are plenty of scary things in the dark future that could vex humanity and consequently need a-killin'. Such enemies might replace supernatural threats altogether in a “no-magic” campaign, or PCs could face them alongside more traditional creatures . . . a Monster of the Week game could easily feature homicidal robots in one adventure, alien puppet-masters in the next, and then the return of a recurring vampire villain.

GURPS Ultra-Tech features appropriate robot templates (*Combat Robots*, p. 167, among others), and **GURPS Bio-Tech** can provide biological androids (*Gengineered Human Racial Templates*, pp. 66-74) and enhanced animals (*Sample Gengineered Animals*, pp. 89-93); TL isn't important – these are *prototypes*! The resourceful GM can find other technological terrors scattered across the *Transhuman Space* line, or in **GURPS Black Ops**, **GURPS Robots**, **GURPS Reign of Steel**, and **GURPS Zombies**. In a pinch, stats can be scrounged up by selecting a similar creature from **GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy** and swapping out “undead” or other supernatural traits for appropriate tech-traits – Digital Mind, Electrical, and the Machine meta-trait for robots; Injury Tolerance and Unusual Biochemistry for bio-tech monstrosities; etc.

In campaigns with *only* technological threats, agents will likely want to trade Occultism and similar skills for more scientific studies (see *Know Thy Enemy: 2043 Edition*, pp. 28-29).

ORCID AGENTS

Although there can be little doubt that agents of ORCID are monster hunters in every sense, they're a peculiar breed – many of their capabilities come from state-of-the-art chrome and mil-spec toys, rather than the supernatural powers and generous helpings of luck that other champions rely on.

By default, only the “mundane” templates from **GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions** are allowed as PCs in an ORCID campaign – the *commando*, *sage*, *sleuth*, and *techie*. The NERCC's hiring policies tend to discriminate against non-humans, and the overall goal of the whole enterprise is to *destroy* monsters, freaks, and witches, not offer them cushy government jobs. Even so, the GM can always decide to allow supernatural PCs. They are informants and turncoats, helping to hunt down their own kind. See *Other Champions*, p. 30.

ORCID BASICS

Working for the Cyberpunk/Supernatural Secret Police has its benefits and drawbacks. First and foremost among the benefits, of course, are the *toys*. ORCID agents are provided with the best that cutting-edge TL9 has to offer, from cybernetics to weapons and armor – although they *aren't* allowed to use their

ORCID gear in personal endeavors, any more than a fighter pilot gets to take his \$150 million jet home on the weekends. See *Black Budget*, p. 30, for more details.

In the course of duty, ORCID agents can also do all the things that make ProGov and the NERCC so unpopular among bleeding hearts and civil libertarians: conduct investigations and surveillance under secret open-ended warrants; perform cop-show interrogations (often “technologically assisted,” with Crediline – **Ultra-Tech**, p. 205 – or similar means); arrange disappearances, “accidents,” and “suicides”; and generally ignore even the tattered shreds of due process that remain under ProGov's rule. They can attempt to call for backup, requisition special gear, and commandeer aid from local jurisdictions, although dealing with the faceless bureaucracy of the NERCC can make such attempts more trouble than they're worth.

This brings up the largest drawback of working for ORCID. In addition to that nagging sense the agents are helping to prop up a brutal, corporate-sponsored dictatorship, there's the NERCC itself – a seething hive of red-tape, soulless bureaucrats, sociopathic pyramid-climbers, and the whole sordid cast of a typical secret police organization.

ORCID AND THE SUPERNATURAL

In the default ORCID campaign frame, the agency doesn't employ psis, witches, or *any* kind of non-human – sages make it under the radar because they're *mostly* just “occult experts.” If the GM wants to allow full-on supernatural PCs, see *Other Champions* (p. 30); alternatively, he may allow mundane characters to purchase minor supernatural abilities with their discretionary points.

Magic

If magic exists in the campaign (and is available to PCs), nothing needs to be done to allow an ORCID agent built from the magician or sage templates to use Ritual Path magic as-written. If desired, the GM can even allow other templates to buy Magery, Thaumatology, and Path skills with spare points. However, it may be that such magic is *too* powerful – too flexible, too reliable, too light on nasty consequences – for the grittier flavor of the monster-infested dark future.

In this case, Chapter 5 **GURPS Thaumatology** can come to the “rescue” . . . Path/Book Ritual magic can be used with the basic mechanics for Ritual Path magic, but it spreads the occult out across esoteric paths and rare tomes – quite suitable for a more Lovecraftian (or otherwise “horrific”) campaign. Simply switch out the magical Path skills from pp. 32-33 of **Champions** for the Paths and/or Books from pp. 140-165 of **Thaumatology**, use the *Energy Accumulating* values for specific ritual costs,

and consult the *Diabolic/Horrific Table* (**Thaumatology**, p. 258) for inspiration on critical failures. . .

Psi

More so than magic, psionic powers are a common feature in dark-future sci-fi. Even if the GM doesn't want full psi champions (or psi-gifted sidekicks), he may decide to allow other characters to buy limited psychic powers (often *without* any power talent) – no more than two or three related abilities, usually something helpful to the character's primary role. For instance, a field agent might possess Aura Reading and Psychometry, or a combat agent might be able to maintain a PK Shield. If using the expanded psionic abilities from **GURPS Psionic Powers**, Cyberpsi is *perfect* for a gifted techie. It's also not hard to imagine a para-science agent who trades his magical abilities for psionics, *without* giving up his role as general paranormal expert – especially in a campaign that features psionics but *not* magic.

Other Powers

If such powers exist in the campaign, Bioenhancement might be the result of a new kind of implant technology, and Mysticism could represent street voodoo or net-shamanism. New abilities could be drawn from **GURPS Bio-Tech** for the former, **GURPS Thaumatology** for the latter, and **GURPS Powers** for either. As with psionics, wild talents are possible, but entirely at the GM's discretion.

DESTINY, LUCK, AND THE DARK FUTURE

The material here conspicuously dispenses with one typical feature of *Monster Hunters* – luck-based and “plot protection” advantages (Destiny, Luck, Serendipity, etc.). The ORCID agent lens (p. 28) replaces such traits with cybernetics, and luck-based choices should be *removed* from each template’s optional advantage lists – Daredevil, Destiny, Prophetic Dreams, Serendipity, Wild Talent, and *any* level of Luck. Extra Life can stay – TL9 medicine is pretty miraculous – but a PC “returning from death” this way is apt to have a lot more bionic parts than before, e.g. *Bionic Organ Transplants*, *Ultra-Tech*, p. 210.

It’s up to the GM whether to allow other cinematic options, such as those listed under *Other Uses for Points* (*Champions*, p. 31), but it would be in-keeping with the grittier tone of ORCID (and cyberpunk in general) to forbid most or all of them. *Hyper-Competency* (*Champions*, p. 28) is a feature of wildcard skills, however, and should be kept as long as such skills are used.

This is a *stylistic* choice, to highlight the role of cybernetics and ultra-tech hardware, but one that the GM can easily reverse by simply ignoring it. Leave Luck, allow PCs to buy the other traits above, and use any or all cinematic options desired.

And while the agents officially have authority over all federal, state, and local jurisdictions, many non-NERCC officials (and many people in general) are secretly or even openly hostile to anyone with a NERCC badge. Any attempt to call for help from ORCID or the NERCC, or to use their power to “pull jurisdiction” on a local organization, etc., requires a reaction roll (see *Minimal Intervention*, p. B73). Any result of Poor or worse indicates an administrative turf battle, obstinate local official, or other *bureaucratic* problem that the agents have to deal with, in addition to their current monster-hunting assignment. This can even be a source of recurring villains for the team – vindictive bureaucrats, inside the NERCC or out, who don’t like the way the operatives roll. See *GURPS Social Engineering: Pulling Rank* for extended rules.

New Motivational Lens: ORCID Agent

15 points

This is the motivational lens for *all* ORCID agents. It includes the basic cybernetic implants given to agents during training. It also *removes* the template’s mandatory Luck (see *Destiny, Luck, and the Dark Future*, above, for why), represented via the custom disadvantage No Luck. If the GM would rather keep Luck, he can increase the lens cost by 15 points (using optional advantage points to pay for it) or drop both Chip Slot and Bomb Implant to compensate.

Advantages: Chip Slot 1* (4) (Temporary Disadvantage: Electrical, -20%) [14]; Legal Enforcement Powers (NERCC Enforcer) [15]; *and* Patron (NERCC/ORCID: Extra-Loaded Budget†; Heavy Influence; Minimal Intervention, -50%) [25]. • Add all TL9 Body Modifications* and Brain Implants* (*Ultra-Tech*, pp. 208-218) to the list of optional advantage choices for all ORCID agents.

Perks: Bomb Implant*‡. [1]

Disadvantages: Duty (ORCID: 12 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-15]; No Luck [-15]; *and* Secret (ORCID actually does deal with supernatural threats, not just eccentric terrorists and deluded fanatics) [-10].

Skills: Templates with access to the Ten-Hut! wild-card skill should select it over other options. Where possible, choose optional skills from among those listed under *ORCID Basic Training* (below).

* Cybernetics; see *Ultra-Tech*, p. 207.

† See *Black Budget* (p. 30).

‡ The bomb is implanted in the skull, and is under the agent’s conscious control – a final measure against capture, assimilation, or worse; it qualifies as a Dramatic Death perk. Rumors persist that it can also be triggered remotely, in the event that an agent’s will is subverted by the Enemy, or he otherwise acts against the interests of the division. Management categorically denies any such thing.

ORCID Basic Training

All ORCID agents go through a rugged training program to prepare them for the rigors of monster hunting. If any skill listed below *isn’t* included in a PC’s selected template, *or* covered by one of his wildcard skills, it should be chosen where available from skill options, taken as a background skill, or bought with discretionary points (from quirks, leftover advantage points, etc.). One way or another, all ORCID agents should have at least 1-2 points in each of the following:

- *Athletics:* Climbing, Jumping, Running*, Swimming, and Throwing.
- *Background/Tech:* Computer Operation, Driving (Automobile), and First Aid*.
- *Covert and Urban Ops:* Forced Entry, Gesture*, Hold-out†, and Stealth*.
- At least *two* of Guns (Pistol, Rifle, Shotgun, *or* SMG)†, with at least one at DX+2 or better.
- Fast-Draw (Ammo)†, and *optionally* Quick Reload (Detachable Magazine) [1].
- Judo, Karate, and Knife.
- Soldier* and Tactics*.

* Overlaps significantly with Ten-Hut!

† Overlaps significantly with Gun!

Know Thy Enemy: 2043 Edition

The dark future brings new threats – or in some cases, very *old* threats – for monster hunters to fight. The following skill sets are intended for the various ORCID campaign frames, but other games which feature these enemies can use them as well.

• *The Cabal:* Hidden Lore (The Cabal) (A) IQ [2]; History (Esoteric) (H) IQ-1 [2]; Thaumatology (VH) IQ-2 [2]; and any skills relevant to the particular Cabalist(s) in question – who could be faeries, “rogue” witches, vampires, etc.

• *Things Man Was Not Meant To Know:* Hidden Lore (Things) (A) IQ [2]; History (Things), Literature (Things), and Physics (Paraphysics), all (H) IQ-1 [2].

• *Cults:* Psychology and/or Theology (Cult beliefs), both (H) IQ-1 [2].

- *ProGov*, *ORCID*, and the *NERCC*: Savoir-Faire (Secret Police) (E) IQ+1 [2]; Administration and Politics, both (A) IQ [2]; and any skills relevant to the “Hidden Truth” behind ORCID or its parent groups.

- *Qlippoth*: Hidden Lore (Qlippoth) (A) IQ [2]; Theology (Kabbalah) (H) IQ-1 [2].

- *Technological Terrors*: Varies depending on the specific technology being used to terrorize, but some good bets include Current Affairs (Science & Technology) (E) IQ+2 [1]; Hazardous Materials (any) or Hidden Lore (Extraterrestrial), both (A) IQ [2]; Computer Programming or Engineer (Electronics, Robotics, etc.), both (H) IQ-1 [2]; and Biology (Earthlike or another planet type) or Weird Science (with GM permission), both (VH) IQ-2 [2]. For these specific problems, Lore! is useless; relevant wildcards include Inventor! (sometimes), Science!, and Tech-Wiz! (p. 30).

TEAM ROLES

Most ORCID field teams are trained and deployed together, with at least one agent filling each essential role – *combat*, *field/covert ops*, *para-science*, and *technology*. They may, of course, be assigned temporary assistance (or work with “outside contractors”) on special cases, and may even receive permanent roster changes based on deaths or retirements on the team, etc.

Combat Agent (Commando)

The backbone of the team when the *shstuff* comes down, a combat agent is one of ORCID’s foremost specialists in directing high-tech firepower against monsters and occult revolutionaries. A consummate soldier, he’s also the one most likely to be in tactical command when the inevitable firefight erupts with cyborg cultists. Choice cybernetics for the combat agent include boosted reflexes, cyberclaws, and subdermal armor.

Field Agent (Sleuth)

Face man, investigator, spy, social engineer . . . the field agent deals with the team’s *mundane* intelligence (and counter-intelligence) needs, and likely coordinates many non-combat operations. That isn’t to say that he’s no good in a fight, just that if he has his druthers, he and his teammates will not only shoot first, but theirs will be the *only* shots fired. Common cybernetic upgrades include computer implant, flesh pockets, gyrobalance, memory flesh, and silvertongue implant.

Para-Science Agent (Sage)

Although ORCID has no formal “witchcraft department,” they do recognize the need to understand (and occasionally, employ) the dark

and arcane forces which they’re fighting. The para-science agent is a specialist in such things – armed with encyclopedic knowledge of the Enemy, he heads research and lab work, and assists in the field with practical theorizing and occult know-how. Para-science agents often take an additional chip slot, a computer implant, or occasionally, other cybernetics to improve combat effectiveness.

Of course, campaigns that don’t feature the supernatural won’t have a para-science agent. For a *science* agent, replace Magery, Lore!, and magical/occult skills with brain implants, Medic!, Science!, and/or other scientific skills.

SIDEKICKS

Sidekicks – whether allies or junior agents – might be trainees or lab techs, often individuals who remain behind in the lab or field base rather than accompanying agents into danger. ORCID doesn’t make a habit of sending support agents into demon-infested sewers or fire-fights with vampire sprawl-gangs (although, a 200-point gunman in full TL9 tactical loadout is nothing to scoff at). Of course, *all* agents have access to such NPC assistants – paying points for an Ally means that the NPC is actually *loyal* to the PC, a rare and precious thing in the treacherous halls of the NERCC.

For a sidekick’s motivational lens, use the ORCID agent lens (p. 28) *without* the Chip Slot and Bomb Implant. (Sidekicks have no Luck to sacrifice, so the cost comes out even.)

. . . as Agents

In many ways, it’s easier to create a well-rounded (and *less* over-the-top cinematic, if desired) ORCID agent using a template from *GURPS Monster Hunters 4: Sidekicks*, rather than one from *Champions*.

To do so, apply the following lens to one of the standard sidekick templates – replacing *both* the motivational lens *and* champion-upgrade lens. For the default ORCID campaign, which features limited (or no) exotic/supernatural abilities among agents, choice templates include the *fixer*, *geek*, *gunman*, *occultist*, *scout*, and *whitecoat*. The *gifted* and *magician* templates work for campaigns that allow the PCs a little supernatural power, while the *brother* and *muscle* might show up in games that feature a lot of religious themes or hand-to-hand combat, respectively.

Agent of ORCID

+200 points

Attributes, Secondary Characteristics, and Disadvantages: As for the Enhanced lens (*Sidekicks*, p. 21).

Advantages: Combat Reflexes [15]. • ORCID agent lens (p. 28) *replaces* the usual motivational lens, for a net 15 points.* • *Either* DX +1 [20] or IQ +1 [20]. • Another 30 points chosen from the template’s advantage options, choices from the Enhanced lens, or additional cybernetics.

Skills: Another 12 points to add or improve skills under *ORCID Basic Training* (p. 28) or any skills from the template.

* The ORCID agent lens includes the disadvantage No Luck [-15], but sidekick templates have no Luck to begin with. This effectively makes “ORCID agent” a 30-point lens for a sidekick – and thus a net 15-point upgrade from the standard motivational lenses.

New Wildcard Skill: Tech Wiz!

You're a natural at tinkering with wires, circuits, computers, and cybernetics. This skill replaces Computer Hacking, Operation, and Programming, as well as Electrician, all specialties of Electronics Operation and Repair, Engineer (Electrical, Electronics, or Robotics), Mechanic (Cybernetics or Robotics), and any other skills that you might need to operate, repair, or modify any electronic, cybernetic, or computerized device you get your hands on – though *not* to invent completely new devices, nor to work with alien, occult, or otherwise unfamiliar tech. For that, use Inventor!

Technology Agent (Techie)

Technology is the main trump card that ORCID has against the Enemy, and the technology agent is the often underappreciated hero of the ORCID team. He not only maintains, calibrates, upgrades, and deploys almost all of the toys that allow the other agents to do their jobs, but often controls reconnaissance drones, acts as the team's computer hacker and surveillance expert, and generally does the technical wizardry needed to succeed in the dark future. If the campaign features netrunning, most technology agents will probably have a Neural Interface Implant; many also get an additional Chip Slot, Computer Implant, or other brain-mods.

If the GM allows the Tech Wiz! wildcard skill (above), the technology agent can move some or all of the 48 points designated for Inventor! in the techie template to Tech Wiz! instead. Science! is also a good choice.

Other Champions

Although the vast majority of ORCID agents will be one of the above types, some campaigns might feature other types of champions, either working with ORCID as independent contractors (read: deniable/disposable assets), or maybe grandfathered into the agency somehow. *Crusaders* could be street shamans or techno-houngans; they, along with *psis* and *witches*, could be members of the para-science department of a more open-minded ORCID. *Experiments* (cutting-edge android replicants), *inhuman* turncoats of various description, and *warriors* (martial-arts masters or chromed-up street samurai) could make particularly cinematic combat agents – especially with monowire swords! Players should make sure that such characters fit the GM's vision for the campaign before getting *too* excited, of course.

BLACK BUDGET

ORCID has access to the best – full TL9 military-grade hardware, with all the options, and the training to match. When outfitting for a mission, PCs may be allowed to comb through *Ultra-Tech* and *Chrome Commandos* (on pp. 13-17 of *Pyramid* #3/55: *Military Sci-Fi*) for TL9 devices that they want, preparing a list for the GM to review. They're not *buying* these items, but requisitioning them from Supply, so personal wealth is irrelevant. (If using the *Budgeting* rules from *Champions*, p. 53, ORCID is *Extra-Loaded*, giving a budget of \$200,000 starting and \$20,000 replacement.)

If the list seems reasonable for the mission – generally nothing more outlandish than military small arms and ammo (but possibly heavier weapons for heavier targets), tactical or concealable body armor, and other easily portable field, survival, or covert ops gear – the GM can approve it outright. Otherwise, he can make a reaction roll (see *ORCID Basics*, pp. 27-29) to see if any unusual requisitions make their way through the red tape.

Alternately, the GM can prepare general and/or mission-specific loadouts – usually at least a full tacsuit and assault weapon for a combat-heavy mission, concealable ballistic suit and stealth/intrusion gear for covert ops, etc. Special requests still have to go through the requisition process (and consequent reaction roll), of course. Look to *GURPS Loadouts: Monster Hunters* for inspiration, starting with the legendary kits for TL8 monster hunters and swapping in *Ultra-Tech* versions of weapons and gear.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The L.E.X. Anomaly (Latency Error eXternalization) is a glitch in the system, seen in aperiodic cycles manifesting around an as-yet unknown strange attractor, somewhere in the bistables and back servers of the Wild Internets. Accepting mail under pseudonyms such as "W.A. Frick," "A.J. Hiddell," and "C. Armitage," the Anomaly mostly keeps a low profile, occasionally entertaining itself by causing dropped cell phone calls, Internet video buffering, and progress bar lag.



THE FLOCK OF THE ABOVE

BY J. EDWARD TREMLETT

The Baldies. No one likes to talk about them, but they're real and dangerous.

The "fad" started in Richmond, British Columbia, in the Metro Vancouver Area. Then it went down to White Rock. Three months later, it was over the Washington border, in Bellingham. Mt. Vernon got hit six months later, and then Everett two months after that.

Thus far, the authorities have done their best to cover it up, or play it down. No one wants to hear about the strange behavior of criminals and the less fortunate, or the weird things they get up to. Elected officials don't want to be asked questions about transformed urban landscapes, reports of missing pets – and people – or gruesome attacks on those too foolish to stay out of the truly bad parts of town.

But this is no mere street gang or religious movement, as some have said. These are the victims of a strange spiritual plague – an otherworldly derangement of mind, body, and soul, sent by a powerful force known only as The Above. It turns humans into its grotesque pawns, for reasons only it knows. When the Flock of one city is destroyed, the entity just moves to the next one.

It goes without saying that the singular and noxious activities of the Flock should gain the attention of those intrepid souls that hunt down dangerous creatures – hopefully *before* it reaches the next, in this case, Seattle. To that end, this systemless campaign frame should help the GM incorporate these creatures into a series of adventures where protecting the innocent from monsters is the main goal. The article reveals how The Above infests a human community, and what happens to the stricken. It also explains how the Flock lives, how they leave, and the hazardous things that remain behind. It also gives story ideas that could tie into an ongoing campaign, or start a whole new one focusing on the spoor of the Above.

WIND, FLAG, MIND MOVES

In each town, the infection pattern was exactly the same.

First, there was a strange noise at sunset – a raging cacophony of overlapping, birdlike noises. Accompanying this dissonance was a strange light in the clouds, described as lightning playing between them, but yet neither moving nor pulsing. Some even say they saw things *moving* within that light, but before anyone could get a clear view of what they were, the sound and light were gone.

A day or so later, people began to trickle into emergency wards and care clinics, suffering from severe flulike symptoms. Some were so out of it that they were hallucinating – speaking of men with eyes like birds, or birds with eyes like men. Others complained of being surrounded by invisible but noisy creatures intent on pecking out their eyes. Still others claimed they had been pulled up to the sky by wings as they begged not to be taken "there."

With proper care and rest, most people made a full recovery from this strange disease. But many within the cities were too poor to see a proper doctor, or too distressed to seek self-treatment. Junkies and criminals, the homeless and the insane, societal dropouts of every stripe – such persons never fully recovered and soon began to change.

In some Egyptian creation myths, a bird was the first living being.

– Geraldine Pinch, *Handbook of Egyptian Mythology*

The Same Understanding

First, they gathered in dark and silent places: old, abandoned warehouses, mostly disused tenements, ancient and rusting shipyards, and other forgotten locales. They didn't need to be told to go there – they just *knew*, somehow, and silently obeyed the call of The Above.

Silently, they began the process of transformation. They tore off their clothing and exchanged it for makeshift robes of stolen sheets and worn blankets. They used whatever they could find to paint their faces white and their eyelids a pale blue, and tore their hair out in ragged clumps, so as to have pates as smooth as vultures.

Then they paired off to pull now-loosened teeth from each other's mouths, until their smiles were empty and black. Only once this was done did they finally began to speak to one another – their voices the rattling and hisses of strange carrion birds.

Vocal at last, the Flock began to form the structure of their new community. Some among their number scrawled on the walls of their sanctuaries with blood, mud, and filth, inscribing sprawling texts in an unearthly language they all now knew. Some scavenged for food to bring back to the others, the more putrid and vile the better.

Still others felt called to sit before the sunset, fling their broken teeth at the sky, and raise their new voices until the darkened heavens above answered. Revealed to them was a cacophonous, blacklit cloud just like the one that had wrought this change of mind and soul. But this time something came *down* from the light: an invisible, flapping congregation – the Divine Swarm – that hissed and clicked as they transformed these souls even further.

Such persons came back with eye sockets as black and blank as their mouths, but somehow they didn't need eyes to see. These became the leaders of the new community, and they shed long, brown feathers. The other followers faithfully gathered these tokens, sticking them into their clothes.

Dark miracles became the order of the day. Members of the Flock competed for the right to become closer to The Above – engaging in contests of food gathering and spontaneous prophecy. The winners of these ritualistic challenges were touched upon the brow and breast by their leaders, at which point, they became both gravid and prophetic.

These Egg-Bearers then sat beneath a wall of text for 30 days and nights, slowly producing from their mouths both puzzling insight and big, black eggs. The former was carefully copied down onto whatever surfaces were handy, and the latter lovingly gathered up, placed in makeshift containers, and lined up below the walls of their prophecies.

After that time, further changes happened. Whenever the former Egg-Bearers passed their personal wall of prophecy, the eggs assembled there shuddered, as though something inside them was preparing to hatch. Such people occasionally uttered prophecy, and could sometimes see another's actions before they were made.

They could also open their mouths incredibly wide and, with a disgorging of feathers, vomit forth a Divine Swarm to harry any antagonists. Such unfortunates would be chased, pecked, and ultimately carried off into the sky – there to be fed upon until only blood and bits rained back down.

When the Mouth Opens

The Flock could not subsist on faith alone, and thus periodically sent out small groups of three to five to search for food or other usable materials. This is how the first “Baldies” were encountered and brought unwelcome attention to their door.

These parties tended to waddle from shadow to shadow, so as to hide from onlookers, and would not attack unless provoked. Interlopers who proved belligerent were killed by the gatherers, who raked the victims' flesh with ragged fingernails that sliced like talons, and pecked them to death with invisible beaks.

The same fate befell any who came across a sole member of the Flock, out competing for the right to become an Egg-Bearer. However, lone members would *not* wait to be provoked – instead attacking outright, so as to claim their body for the Flock. Such would-be champions might even venture

well outside the wasteland, and bring their prizes back to the warren, there to ripen for a few days before being consumed.

Such reckless behavior almost guaranteed that, sooner or later, friends or the authorities would look for the missing. The Folk could ward off a small, unprepared attack, but the only thing that could result from a large confrontation would be a fight they'd never be able to fully repel.

When faced with such a crisis, the Flock would consult the Egg-Bearers' many prophecies. If they agreed that the end was near, their leaders would work one last, dark miracle, so as to deny victory to their would-be-attackers.

When the invaders finally came, they found only an abandoned warren. All that remained to mark the passing of the Flock was a high surface spattered with flecks of bone, goblets of flesh, and blood that never fully congealed.

That and a warren full of mysteries, many of which could still kill.

*And under the firmament
were their wings straight, the one
toward the other: every one had
two, which covered on this side,
and every one had two, which
covered on that side, their bodies.*

– Ezekiel 1:23

ALL ARE WRONG

The Flock's members have been seriously altered by The Above, which infects humans with a highly communicable, flulike illness. Those who have had flu shots are mostly immune, and those who seek medical help or follow a sensible regimen of self-treatment (rest, hydration, and medication) can usually shake it off. But those who don't will either die or join the Flock.

The illness removes its victims' memories and personality, overwriting them with something alien. It causes their eyesight and sense of smell to be better than the average human's, and makes them able to hear the subtle sounds their deity makes. They also have “invisible” weapons: their long, jagged fingernails do the same damage as bird talons, and their toothless maws act as though they have beaks, allowing them to literally peck someone to pieces. However, they aren't any stronger or tougher than the average human.

Egg-Bearers have two distinct advantages. They can make short-term predictions (very useful in combat) and can summon up a Divine Swarm. Doing the latter takes one second of concentration, and can only be done on someone who's in line of sight *unless* the target has a feather on them, as such persons can be marked for death from anywhere. Leaders can also call down a Divine Swarm, but can do it to *anyone* they have seen, no matter where the target happens to be at the time; it would seem there's some advantage to having no eyes.

A Divine Swarm acts like a massive flock of invisible, deadly birds. They can be outrun or outwitted, and can be fought off with considerable damage of any kind (especially fire). But if they're not, the Swarm quickly surrounds its victim, and alternates between pecking, slashing, and trying to overcome his mass with its strength. If the creatures succeed in the latter, they lift the victim up into the sky and consume him whole and alive – leaving only rags, blood, and small gristly pieces to fall back down to the ground.

The Warrens

Any area where a flock has set up a home is irrevocably altered by their presence, even if they've left the premises. All mammals, reptiles, and birds flee the location and will not return, leaving only a surfeit of insects, spiders, and other scabbling things behind. An *otherness* lays over it like a shroud, bringing with it a palpable silence, coupled with the sensation of being watched from above.

Inside the warren, there are a few areas of interest. One is the putrid larder, where bodies are left to ripen before being dragged out to eat. Anyone killed and brought here has their belongings tossed onto a pile, making some identification of the Flock's victims possible. Those who enter a currently occupied warren and need more weapons might find one here, too, as the Flock doesn't consider human weapons "useful."

Another area is where the seemingly blind leaders sit in silence, attended by the Flock. There, they listen to the strange, swirling speeches of their followers, and the petitions to compete to become Egg-Bearers. They are also groomed by those seeking feathers to weave into their robes or their remaining hair.

Communal meals happen here as well. Afterward, the bones and hair of the devoured are gathered up, along with the leaders' stray feathers, and used to make wind chimes of varying sizes and proportions. These strange things are hung from all surfaces within the warren, but only make noises at sunset, when The Above sends a special, loving wind down to touch its altered children.

There are also the walls where the Egg-Bearers sit. These outlandish shrines are decorated in the Flock's otherworldly script, and festooned with the Bearer's prophecies. Behind and around them sit cups and containers, each holding at least one egg. Usually, when the Flock leaves for good, these eggs are all gone, but occasionally a handful or two are inadvertently left behind.

The Writing

If the rest of the Flock isn't sleeping, eating, or attending their Egg-Bearers or leaders, they're writing something down. The strange script is *everywhere* within a flock's warren – painted on walls, slathered across the ceilings, or sketched down in books and scrap paper. Staring at it for too long causes one to feel vertiginous and ill.

Research indicates that it most closely resembles Lepcha script, an offshoot of Tibetan, used by the Lepcha people of central Asia. However, it's not mutually intelligible. Those who try too hard to understand it tend to disappear.

The Eggs

The eggs are made of heavy, smooth, black basalt. They measure about 4.5" in diameter at the widest point, and are 6" high. Geological tests indicate they most closely match rock samples brought back by a single Tibetan expedition (Sir Charles Throckmore-Addington, 1894). But these samples are troubling, as no similar ones have been found in Tibet since, much less anywhere in the world.

If an egg is cracked open by a normal person – perhaps with a sledgehammer – it's nothing but solid rock. If a member of the Flock cracks one open – as easily as one might crack a chicken's egg – its thin, rocky shell is full of black, watery goo. The thin slime coats the skin quickly, evaporating within the hour, provided it's not used in a ritual.

It is *not* a good idea to take these eggs home. Those who remain in close proximity to an egg for more than eight hours suffer strange hallucinations – the same kinds of feverish, bird-man visions that afflict people when The Above arrives in town. At night they *cannot* dream, and their sleep is totally physically unsatisfying. This cycle continues until the person either dies of exhaustion or goes mad and does his best to emulate being a member of the Flock without having been touched by The Above.

The eggs have further uses, all of which are not good to dwell upon. The Flock vies among itself to perform a kind of premature sky burial, as they believe being consumed by The Above is the best way to truly know it. To do this, Egg-Bearers slather themselves with the yolk from their own eggs, suffusing their bodies with the essence of The Above. Thusly altered, they remain conscious and aware of each and every thing that happens to them, even when their bodies are sliced and pecked apart by a Divine Swarm.

The next morning, lying in his sickbed, Enkidu tells Gilgamesh about another terrible dream. In the dream, he was all alone on a dark plain, and a man with a lion's head and an eagle's talons seized him. They fought furiously, but the man overpowered him and changed him into a birdlike creature. Then he dragged him down to the underworld.

– SparkNotes, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablet VII

Egg-Bearers smear themselves with the goo if they know the Warren is to be invaded, and they desire to fight well past the point of death to defend it. But if the Flock realizes it *can't* win the upcoming fight, they'll gather on the highest point, paint each other with egg goo, and hold up their feathers to the sky. This massive show of devotion brings numerous Divine Swarms, which take the Flock up to their waiting god.

There's one more hideous use for the eggs. The Flock will take a pesky normal who's seriously messed with it, lovingly paint him with egg goo, and offer him up to The Above. If their deity minds having this most sacred of rituals profaned like this, it says nothing, simply accepting what's offered.

The Feathers

The long, brown feathers are similar to the Himalayan griffon vulture (*Gyps himalayensis*). They might be from a hitherto-unknown offshoot of the infamous, large, and blue-skinned species, well-known for being the primary feeders at Buddhist sky burials (*jhator*). However, this is unlikely, as they don't migrate outside of Asia.

These feathers are extremely dangerous in the wrong hands, as they are a direct conduit with The Above. That's why the leaders are always dropping them, and why their followers desire them, and make their eerie wind chimes from them.

They also have a direct connection with the Divine Swarms. A leader or an Egg-Bearer can summon those swarms without any extra help, and if enough feathers are held together, even a lowly member of the Flock can bring one down. So, too, can a normal human who just ponders a handful for too long.

THE ABOVE

A rather obscure entity, The Above is mentioned in only a few, hoary tomes, and then only in passing. Its true face is unknown, and its desires not easily understood. The legends indicate that it's a god of revelation, transition, and plague – all of which are somehow connected.

Supposedly, its earthly worship is confined to the Lost Plateau of Durtro, lying somewhere in the south of Tibet. There, in a fabled, charnel monastery, its eyeless monks sing birdsong praises and practice extreme asceticism by eating filth and regurgitating black eggs. Ultimately, they offer themselves up to the heavens through *jhator* while still alive – laughing.

THE GATELESS GATE

There are many ways to use the Flock and The Above. They could be a direct threat, worthy of a long campaign as the PCs track them up and down the Pacific Coast, either starting or ending in Seattle. They could also be a tangential problem that exists in the background for a long time, as the PCs slowly find out where these dangerous stone eggs and brown feathers come from.

The Silent City

Since those Baldies moved in, the poorer areas of this town are like ghost towns. Normally they're filled with the homeless, drug addicts, criminal lowlifes, and the less fortunate.

Now they're deserted, especially after dark. Maybe this is a sign that the Baldies are some kind of nocturnal beast, preying on people that can't fight back. Or maybe they're in league with them? Either way, someone should gear up and check it out.

The Whirlwind

A housing inspector vanished in broad daylight today. The bag ladies say he ran screaming down the street, bleeding from cuts all over his body and shouting "they're after me!" They heard what sounded like a flock of birds flying right after him, but they couldn't see anything. He ran down a blind alley, but his screams still seemed to get further and further away. When they went to look, they found blood and scraps of his uniform, but nothing else.

The Lights in the Sky

Bob "Nosey" Haskell of Atlanta, Georgia, belonged to at least six different UFO organizations. He was happy to drive across country to talk to anyone who claimed they saw something. So when word came of lights in the sky over a couple cities along the West Coast, he geared up and drove to Everett, Washington.

Authorities found his panel van illegally parked by some abandoned piers on the north end of town. His chicken-scratch notebooks speak of strange lights, a weird sickness, missing people, and what he was convinced were "Grays" operating in town. His last journal entry said he planned to make first contact on behalf of the human race. Maybe he did.

The Egg of Dreams

His name was John Knowlton, and he *had* to possess the stone egg. He knew it had caused the death, suicide, or disappearance of everyone who'd had it, but he didn't care. So he bought it for 10 large from a shaky "art dealer," and began to unravel its secrets.

He traced its provenance from a strange crime scene at an abandoned pier in Richmond, British Columbia, and studied all the lives lost. He wrote of his waking dreams, and how he couldn't sleep. He tried to put a name to the things he saw when he closed his eyes, and could only quote Ezekiel's descriptions of angels, or write "Above."

His notes are in the PCs' hands, now. He mailed them less than a week ago, just before he set himself on fire to stop the angels from coming for him. The stone is at his house – waiting.

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.

RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE

THREATS GREAT, SMALL, AND UNEXPECTED

BY STEVEN MARSH, *PYRAMID* EDITOR

Part of the challenge of a *GURPS Monster Hunters* game is keeping those titular hunters on their toes. Designing good dangers for harrying (and harried) heroes is ticklish, and it can take a lot of effort to balance appropriate threats. However, in much the same way that critter-killing investigators poke dark corners searching for what ought not be disturbed, so too may new avenues exist for the GM to provide new surprises for the players. Here, then, are a few broad ideas of possibilities that you might not have considered before now.

THE THREAT OF NOTHING

As I'm sure I've noted before, I'm a fan of *Doctor Who* in all its various permutations . . . including the *really* old episodes. One style of episode that was relatively common (if not popular) in the show's first few years in the 1960s were what would become known as the "pure historical" episodes. Such adventures are set in the historic past, and there is nothing alien, otherworldly, or supernatural going on (outside of the arrival of a time machine and its passengers). These types of episodes were among the least popular of the series, and they became less and less frequent, until the last one aired in 1967 (not counting a forgettable two-parter in 1982).

I swear I'll be tying this to *Monster Hunters* shortly.

Replacing the pure-historical stories in *Doctor Who* were the quasi-historical stories – stories that were mostly period pieces, but with the addition of an alien, monster, or other terrible threat.

One theory I've had about the historical episodes' lack of popularity is that it's all-but-impossible to tell the difference between a *historical* and a *quasi-historical* story. Just about all of the quasi-historical stories start out as "pure" historical stories, right up until the moment when they open the closet door and discover a *face-sucking alien hellbeast!!!* And given the demands of narrative tension and escalating plot developments, it's just as feasible they'll open the closet door and discover a *totally normal assassin, prepared to kill!!!*

Waiting for an alien attack that never comes is frustrating, but this same tension – this *lack* of revelation – can actually be a benefit to a *Monster Hunters* GM. One of the core assumptions of most monster-hunting (and other horror) games is that there *is* a central supernatural threat to deal with. However, that clearly doesn't need to be the case. Just about any episode of basic-cable "let's explore a haunted house" foolishness provides a template for an investigative adventure that *doesn't* lead to a climax against demons/were-wolves/vampires. What if the heroes encounter something that has all the earmarks of being a supernatural threat, but it turns out to have a totally mundane (if somewhat unusual) explanation? Some examples:

- A group of neighborhood children has gone missing after becoming heavily involved with the *Deathcarnage X-Treme* online video game. The heroes eventually track down the tykes to some nearby woods, where they had the brilliant idea to play dart-gun tag (X-TREME!) and got lost. The hunters just need to wrangle them all up and escort them home. (If the GM wants to up the stakes, one of the kids might have brought a real gun, which may lead to mundane-but-dangerous complications if the heroes go in guns a-blazing.)

- Certain priceless unusual books have gone missing from local rare-book dealers. It turns out that the books have been stolen by an antiquarian with a gambling problem because they're worth a lot of money.

- A charismatic rabble-rouser seems to have an almost preternatural ability to rile up people's emotions – especially in tense or volatile situations within the city. (The key word there is "almost" . . . but that still makes him a powerful foci of a dangerous situation.)

The possibilities become even more endless if the rest of the world knows that supernatural threats exist – or at least a large-enough pool of people know that there are supernatural threats, and that supernatural agents investigate those disturbances.

- Bodies are turning up in alleyways almost completely drained of blood, with puncture wounds in the neck. The culprit is a (mundane) man who killed his spouse, then drained the body, and killed and drained *other* random victims, to throw the scent off the original kill and onto area bloodsuckers.

- A bad trip caused by an impure batch of LSD convinces a group of students that lycanthropes have infiltrated their group. The heroes stumble across their bloodily incompetent efforts at revealing the truth.

- This sarcophagus seems to curse anyone who spends time with it to wither away and die; efforts at determining the thaumaturgic source of the scourge are futile. (It's made of a highly radioactive alloy, but otherwise mundane.)

Heroes who make a habit of assuming the worst and going into situations with maximum force may make things more difficult for themselves – especially if they otherwise attempt to keep a low profile in the mundane world. (Without caution, a group of 400-point heroes could have a decisive-but-deadly confrontation with a group of paintball-playing college students in the steam tunnels.)

However, there's another reason the threat of nothing can be an incredible boon for the monster-hunter GM. Unlike with *Doctor Who* – where the viewer can be reasonably certain a story doesn't have any supernatural elements if they haven't appeared by the third act – the players can never quite be sure. After all, there's little difference between “weird situation with a mundane explanation” and “weird situation with a mundane explanation planted by a hidden supernatural force”; in both cases, the heroes won't find an otherworldly explanation right away.

WHEN SUDDENLY . . . CTHULHU!

The possibility of a mundane explanation to problems may cause the heroes to approach situations more cautiously. So, too, may *more* danger than the investigators realize. There's nothing in the rules that says threats need to always be balanced against the firepower of the PCs; they could become embroiled in tracking down a cult and discover its leader is a 1,500-point archfiend. In that case, the heroes might consider themselves lucky if they can escape with their lives.

This may not seem fair, but it's certainly realistic; when you're picking a fight, you often don't know for certain the offensive or defensive capabilities of your target. In addition, it's dramatically exciting. One of the reasons *The Empire Strikes Back* resonates so strongly for viewers is that the hero – Luke Skywalker – unequivocally gets his butt kicked by Darth Vader at what feels like *should* be the dramatic triumphant point of the heroes. (In fact, in the original Star Wars trilogy,

the good guys never had a clean win in any climactic lightsaber battle; Obi Wan dies, Luke should have died, and then Luke wins, but not before he comes within a hair's breath of losing his soul . . . and even then, he had no other resources left to confront the Emperor.) So having the heroes bite off more than they can chew is often dramatically satisfying; if they need to beat a hasty retreat, regroup, and form a Plan B, then the campaign has a ready-made subplot. If the good guys somehow buck the odds and defeat the overwhelming opposition, they'll justifiably feel like total top-dog heroes.

A (BAD) SOLUTION

There is always a well-known solution to every human problem – neat, plausible, and wrong.

– H.L. Mencken

Of course, the obvious interim between these two extremes is a supernatural threat that is significantly below the heroes' capabilities: “You kick open the door and mow down Sparkles McVampire in a predictable second of gunfire.” However, what can be interesting for heroes is for the obvious and simple solution to exist, but be the wrong one. As examples:

- This alleyway is the home of a specter that kills mortal passersby. It can be dissipated by the heroes without *too* much effort, but will continually reform upon the next full moon. Thus the heroes may believe they have a new problem they need to thwart every four weeks (lest the body count of innocents racks up). However, the problem can be resolved permanently if the heroes can figure out the unsolved murder that lead to the formation of the specter in the first place. (Again, just about any power-level threat could be the *real* reason for the baddy's origin, from a mundane mugging gone wrong to Cthulhu in a fedora.)

- A certain part of town is periodically threatened by vampires. The heroes can treat them as a minor-but-significant nuisance they need to clear out periodically, but it's probably best to resolve the underlying issue that leads to their ability to thrive . . . which may involve ensuring there are no hiding places, encourage the gentrification of the area and thus increase the number of mortal eyes watching, or tracking down the Big Bad Vampire who keeps creating children.

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 over 10 years; during that time, he has won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Nikola Vrtis, and their son.

We create monsters and then we can't control them.

– Joel Coen

ODDS AND ENDS

ALTERNATE MONSTER HUNTERS

by Hans-Christian Vortisch

Although the styles described in *Tactical Shooting: Monster Hunters* (pp. 4-6) are designed for humans with military or police backgrounds, other kinds of hunters are possible.

Civilian Hunters

Despite the militant nature of most monster-hunting styles, there may be hunters with a strictly civilian – if somewhat unusual – background. Some perhaps were trained by an ancient secret organization dedicated to hunting a specific type of monster. Others might be self-taught loners, who have come by their knowledge and skills the hard way. For such hunters, the GM can modify the styles by removing secondary skills like Soldier and Tactics. Gunner (MG) and Guns (GL, LAW, LMG, and SMG) as well as perks like Battle Drills or Cool Under Fire might also be unavailable.

In order for these civilian hunters to still be effective against monsters (but not humans), the GM can allow Per-based Hidden Lore or Occultism rolls in place of Soldier or Tactics when rolling for situational awareness (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 11).

“But what if the monsters come?”
“Fancy.” Kit looked away from the
drama to stare at her sister, surprised.
“We are the monsters.”

– Dia Reeves, *Slice of Cherry*

Monstrous Hunters

Monster hunters can themselves be monsters (*GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions*, pp. 13-14). There is also no reason why certain monsters shouldn't or couldn't use modern guns to protect themselves *against monster hunters* or indeed other monsters – as in the *Blade* and *Underworld* movies. In general, monstrous shooters shoot exactly like human shooters, using the same tactics and techniques, including those suggested in *Tactical Shooting: Monster Hunters* (pp. 4-6).

Depending on the type of monster, there may be differences. For example, vampires (*Champions*, p. 51) are both stronger and more agile than humans, allowing them to use heavy weapons with ease and giving them an edge in *Who Draws First?* situations (*Tactical Shooting*, p. 10). Since they are Unkillable, they might forgo the use of cover and soak up

shots by the opposition – although this only works until someone has found out about their Achilles' Heel . . . Their Night Vision makes many technical and tactical solutions to shooting in the dark superfluous.

NOTABLE VENATIO CASES

by David L. Pulver

Venatio Protective Services is the public face of a group of monster-hunting academics. For more details about this organization, see pp. 17-21. These are a few of the creatures and entities that Venatio has defeated, which can be used as adventure inspiration for other monster-hunting campaigns.

The Abortion of Lavinia Bell – Eradication before it could trouble the world of a demonic “moon child” fetus sired via ritual magic.

Churchill Technical Institute Goat Sucker Case – A release of a tagged chupacabra leads to a lucrative contract to protect a local high school.

Damon Pyke – Satanic sorcerer responsible for the Bell incident. After his capture – which brought Gigliardi into the group – he was Green Listed (see p. 19) in exchange for a sizable payment, although eventually, he left town.

Dorothy Dane – The “nurse witch” responsible for the shadow twins (see below). Lured into the killing house (see p. 17) and eliminated.

Hopping John – A one-legged cannibal killer that haunted a biking trail.

The Life and Death of Mister Puddle – Mysterious cases of people drowning in a few inches of water are traced to a self-aware water elemental created by a “heavy water” fusion experiment at the university's physics department. The Faculty successfully persuade the Physics Department to buy a Monster Insurance contract.

Mavridakis the Vampire – A master vampire whose pack operated out of a Greek restaurant near campus and preyed on students.

Monk Farms Chupacabra Incursion – Incident at a dairy farm on the edge of town.

Rose Shoemaker – Exorcism of the malignant “laughing ghost” of a suicidal undergrad that haunted a particular dorm room.

Shadow Twins – Thanks to a vengeful witches' curse, night births at the hospital resulted in creatures of darkness being born alongside their live siblings. They were destroyed by exposure to ultraviolet light.

The Six Pack – Battle with beer-swilling lycanthropic frat boys. Most ended up making a nice set of rugs for the Milton Room; one (from a rich family) was Green Listed.

Tsering Dolma – A foreign-exchange student who used her Yeti servant to wreak bloody revenge herself against a group of bullies. Caught by the Faculty and surrendered after a battle; scraped up enough funds to be Green Listed.

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 email: info@sjgames.com. Resources include:

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow – see what’s new at gurps.sjgames.com.

Warehouse 23. Our online store offers *GURPS* adventures, play aids, and support in PDF form . . . digital copies of our books, plus exclusive material available only on Warehouse 23! Just head over to warehouse23.com.

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at sjgames.com for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more.

To discuss *GURPS* with our staff and your fellow gamers, visit our forums at forums.sjgames.com. The Pyramid web page is pyramid.sjgames.com.

Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we’re putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book’s web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

STUCK FOR AN ADVENTURE? NO PROBLEM.

**Warehouse 23 sells high-quality
game adventures and supplements
in print and PDF formats.**

- Free downloadable adventures for *GURPS*, *In Nomine*, and *Traveller*!
- Fun gaming accessories – shot glasses, shirts, specialty six-siders, and more!
- PDFs from Atlas Games, Amarillo Design Bureau, Pelgrane Press, Goodman Games, and many others – plus gems from the up-and-comers.
- Original material for *Transhuman Space* and new *GURPS* supplements from Kenneth Hite, Phil Masters, David Pulver, Sean Punch, and William Stoddard!
- Fully searchable files of *GURPS Fourth Edition* supplements.
- Digital editions of out-of-print classics, from *Orcslayer* and the complete run of *ADQ* to *GURPS China* and *GURPS Ice Age*.
- Buy board games and roleplaying PDFs in the same order! Download digital purchases again whenever you need to.



STEVE JACKSON GAMES
warehouse23.com