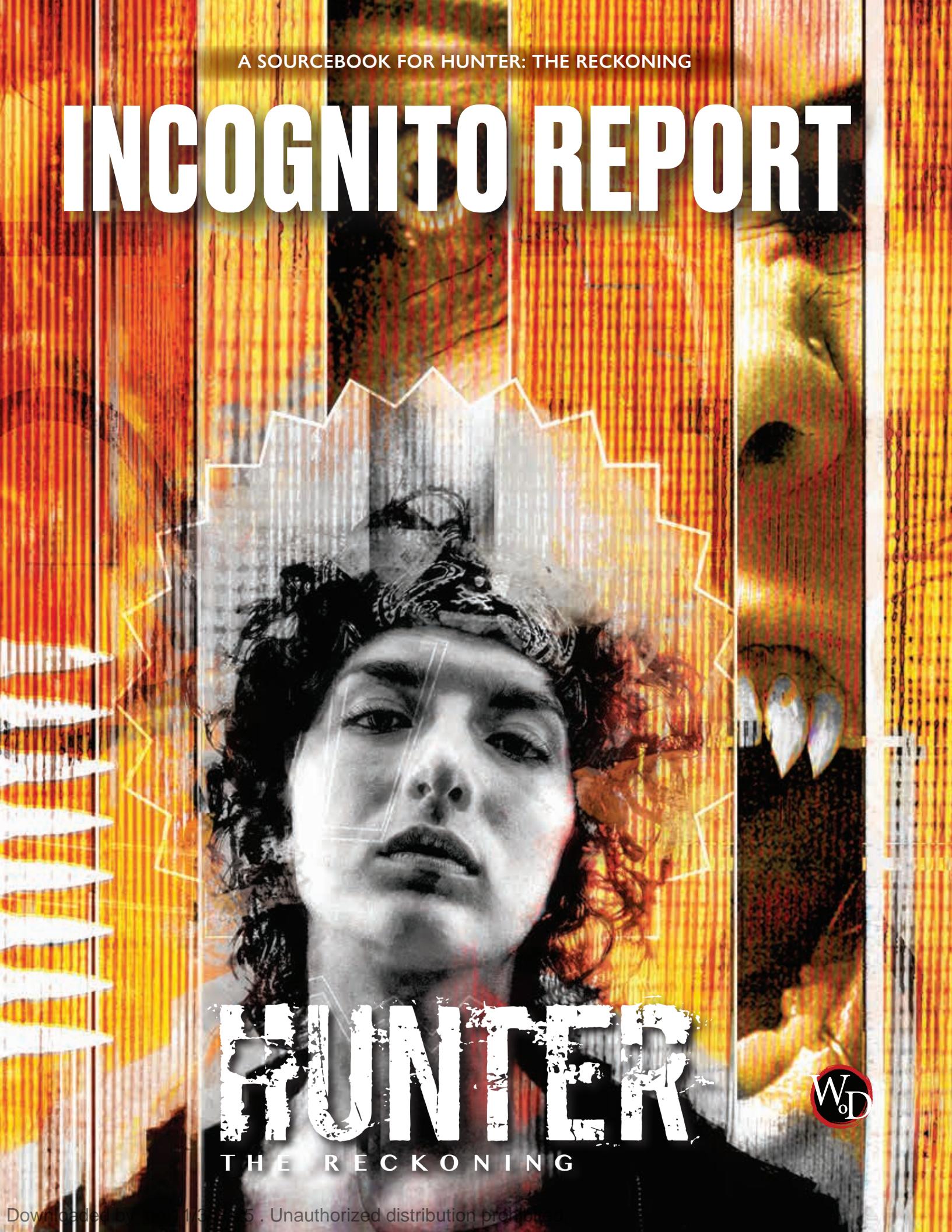


A SOURCEBOOK FOR HUNTER: THE RECKONING

INCOGNITO REPORT



HUNTER
THE RECKONING



HUNTER

THE RECKONING

CONSPIRACIES ABOUND!

They call him Cog and he knows the truth. Dig deep into the conspiracy running the world and hunt the monsters that serve the unseen masters. Whether you believe Cog, or think he's insane, his collected conspiracy library is a treasure trove of clues for any aspiring monster hunter. This book collects twelve Quarries featured in Cog's strange missives, complete with handouts to be used as clues to get the players' Cell onto their spoor. They can be used separately or linked together into a grand conspiracy.

- A collection of 12 fully detailed quarries for **Hunter: The Reckoning**
- Use each Quarry as a "monster of the week" or link them to create a campaign
- 12 new Perks and 1 new Edge tied to the Cog Conspiracy and the quarries
- Storyteller advice on how to run a conspiracy game where the players' characters follow a trail of clues
- A host of tools to help develop any campaign

Incognito Report is a sourcebook for **Hunter: The Reckoning**, a Storytelling Game of Desperate Measures



RENEGADE
GAME STUDIOS

renegadegames.com

WORLD OF
DARKNESS
www.worldofdarkness.com

paradox
INTERACTIVE®

[f /PlayRGS](#) [/renegadegamestudios.com](#) [@Renegade_Game_Studios](#) [/RenegadeGamesStudios](#)

Manufacturer: Renegade Games, LLC 153 Sugar Belle Drive Ste B #166, Winter Garden, FL 34787 Importers: Renegade France 52 Avenue Pierre Semard 94200 Ivry sur Seine France. P:+33 (0)1 77 37 60 47. Renegade Games, LLC. Solar House 915 High Road London, London, England N12 8QW.

© 2025 Renegade Game Studios. All Rights Reserved.

© 2025 Paradox Interactive® AB. Vampire: The Masquerade®, and Hunter The Reckoning® are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Paradox Interactive AB in Europe, the U.S., and other countries.

Made in China.

R18+ CE UK CA

Mature Advisory: contains graphic and written content of a mature nature, including violence, sexual themes, and strong language. Reader discretion is advised.

Lot #: 040125-01 \$50.00
ISBN 978-1-957311-58-6
55000>



9 781957 311586

HUNTER

THE RECKONING

INCOCGNITO REPORT



Incognito Report

Authors: Chant Evans, Jose Garcia, Saskia Liddick, Andrew Peregrine and Camdon Wright,
with Khaldoun Khelil, Kevin Schluter and Juhana Pettersson

Developer: Khaldoun Khelil, Andrew Peregrine and Juhana Pettersson

Producer: Kevin Schluter

Art Director and Graphic Designer: Sarah Robinson

Cover Art: Mark Kelly

Illustrators: Nevzat Aydin, Peter Bergting, Matthew Fisher, Mark Kelly,
Maichol Quinto, Erling Saevarsson, Adam Vick, and Egle Zioma

Copy Editor: Nathan Gerber

Cultural Consulting: Stephanie Cohen

Rules Editor: Chris Jones

Proofreader: Brendan Rabon

World of Darkness Brand Management

EVP World of Darkness: Marco Behrmann

Head of Creative Management & IP Alignment: Karim Muammar

Art Director: Tomas Arfert

Brand Marketing Manager: Jason Carl

Licensing Manager: Nikola Filipov

Marketing Manager: Viktor Bovallius

Community Developer: Martyna "Outstar" Zych

Community Manager: Debbie Lane

Renegade Game Studios

President & Publisher: Scott Gaeta

Vice President of Finance: Robyn Gaeta

Vice President of Operations: Leisha Cummins

Vice President Sales: Andrew Lupp

Senior Producer, Board & Card Games: Dan Bojanowski

Sr. Marketing Manager: Jordan Gaeta

Sr. E-Commerce Manager: Nick Medinger

Director of Visual Design: Anita Osburn

Creative Director, Games: Jeanne Torres

Creative Director, RPGs: Sarah Robinson

Producer, RPGs: Kevin Schluter

Associate Producer, Board & Card Games: Kane Klenko

Producer, Heroscape: Lee Houff

Associate Producer, RPGs: Ben Heisler

Senior Game Designer: Matt Hyra

Game Designers: Alex Davy, Christopher Chung,

Dyllan Fernandez, & Sarah Rowan

Lead Developer, World of Darkness: Juhana Pettersson

Playtest Coordinator: Marcus E. Burchers

Finance & Customer Service Manager: Jenni Janikowski

Finance Specialist: Madeline Minervini

Marketing Events Manager: Courtney Furey

Organized Play Manager: Trevor McGregor

Project Manager: Rachel Del Rio

Creative Production: Noelle Lopez & Gordon Tucker

Community Coordinator: Anais Morgan

Sales & Marketing Coordinator: Sophia Gambill

Community Specialist: Rina Amaranthine

Customer Service: Bethany Bauthues



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
How to Use This Book	6
A Thousand Shadows	6
The Cursed	7
The Puppeteers	7
Using Existing Quarries	8
Using Handouts and Player Aids	9
CHAPTER ONE: THE CONSPIRACY CHRONICLE	11
Call Me Incognito	12
Mysteries and Conspiracies	15
Finding Clues Without the Dice	20
Dealing with Authority	21
Mood Shifts	22
Chronicle Danger Effects	22
Rewards	26
Hunting Partners	27
CHAPTER TWO: A THOUSAND SHADOWS	35
Consuming Panics	37
Moonlorn	46
Nightcinder	54
The Fear-Eaters	62
The Radiant Dead	68
CHAPTER THREE: THE CURSED	77
The Betrayed	79
The Turncoat	88
LilMissMurder	96
The Harbinger	105
CHAPTER FOUR: PUPPETEERS	113
Eugenia	115
The Prophet	123
Timor, The End of Hope	131
APPENDIX: CHARACTER MECHANICS	140
New Perks	141
New Endowment: Unnatural Changes	143



MK
2022

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

What is a Hunt without monsters? There are horrors in the darkness that the players' characters have sworn to fight. But a monster needs to be more than just a set of combat statistics. They need a reason to do what they do, and details on the clues they might leave behind. They need a compelling backstory to make them feel real, and all the more terrifying. That is the premise of **Hunter: The Reckoning**.

What if things are much worse? What if someone is controlling the monsters? What if there is something deeper in the shadows, and the players' characters have just become its target? With this in mind, we have included a collection of tools and options to turn this book, or any set of Quarries, into a chronicle. Such a chronicle may be centered around a conspiracy of some form, or simply a collection of Quarries with a similar theme.

The guide into this world is the mysterious figure, Cog, who first appeared in the *Vampire: The Masquerade* sourcebook *Second Inquisition* (p.122), although that book is not a prerequisite to use this one. Cog is not a Hunter by any means, but he hears things, he sees things—dark things—out in the wilds of the internet. Some things he reports might be hoaxes or worse, but other terrors are all too real. Cog's files are extensive, a legion of reports of mystery and horror. If even a small percentage of them are true, then no one is safe. It's up to the players' cell to find out the truth. Cog can only give them a place to start.

How to Use This Book

This book presents twelve creatures and villains of various power that Cog's files might lead the players' characters to investigate. These Quarries could serve as the adversaries of a chronicle or could be used as a monster of the week for a cell of Hunters to face. Each Quarry profile details not just their statistics and abilities, but also some of the clues they leave behind. They also come with a host of story seeds to help the Storyteller craft a way to bring them into their story. Storytellers should be able to sit down with this book and quickly prepare their next session.

Being focused on new Quarries, this is a book largely for the Storyteller. The appendix contains consolidated options for players' characters, but the Storyteller is well within their rights to ask that players refrain from using that as a shopping list for experience expenditures. Players should check with their Storyteller before going any further, even if you just want to check out some new Perks for Edges. But, there is no reason someone else can't take one or two of the Quarries here and take over as Storyteller for an interlude.

These Quarries need not be lone terrors. Something else might be controlling them from the shadows, who may even be a puppet for yet another entity. So, the creatures in this book are divided into three distinct types:

- A Thousand Shadows,
- The Cursed, and
- The Puppeteers.

Within these classifications are all manner of creatures. Each is fully detailed in the book, but the following is a quick summary to help the Storyteller pick the right creature to challenge their Hunters with.

A Thousand Shadows

These creatures might be encountered multiple times. They are more like a creature type, species, or even a spell that might be cast again and again. The players' characters might defeat one incarnation, but another version or aspect might return to haunt them again one day. While the Hunters may be prepared for a new encounter, such creatures are never entirely the same. A new twist in a familiar enemy may be deadly if the Hunters become complacent.

Shadows are a good first point of contact with a conspiracy as a real-world threat for a Hunter cell (and a good single-session Quarry). A seemingly straightforward hunt can suddenly become entangled in multiple layers of intrigue. Not to mention, the threat level can increase far beyond what was anticipated as powerful actors higher up in the conspiracy move to protect the agents integral to their future personal power or plans.

Consuming Panics, p. 37 (Sorcerous Creation), are more of a force than a creature. They are fear, anxiety, stress, and moral outrage given a form of sorts. As there are plenty of people already in thrall to those emotions, it is hard to spot when a Consuming Panic has taken hold of a group. Once the violence erupts, it very quickly becomes clear that something needs to be done.

The Moonlorn, p. 45 (Werewolf), is the result of an attempt to get rid of the curse that afflicts shapechangers. Instead of finding freedom, the Moonlorn are changed, their circumstances arguably even worse than they were before.

Nightcinder, p. 53 (Werewolf), is a type of werewolf with fire in its blood, drawn to emotions and conflict. Being pack animals, they tend to destroy the lives they had before transforming into beast and moving on to destroy and burn the lives of others.

The Fear-Eater, p. 62 (Vampire), is a type of undead who has tried to exorcise their hunger for blood with magical tattoos, only for the nature of their curse to become awful in a different way.

Radiant Dead, p. 68 (Vampire), are vampires, perhaps more unfortunate than usual among their kind. In addition to being undead, they're highly radioactive, making them even more deadly to everything around them. Some use their toxic nature consciously, while for others it just adds to their misery.

The Cursed

Cursed are unique individuals. They are often the right hand of the real villain, or one of many lieutenants. Those who serve another often do so for the promise of an end to their suffering or just more power. Some Cursed are plagued by what they are, and others have sacrificed their humanity for power. But all of them are dangerous and clever and might lash out in pain as much as fury. The Cursed most closely resemble the Quarries listed in other **Hunter** releases.

When they are discovered, they rarely have the raw power to easily crush a group of Hunters that come after them but might prove more than a match for a lone Hunter. Cursed are not just mindless minions, nor are they always driven by instincts and drives they cannot control. They can be negotiated with if the cell has something they want. They might even become an ally to a Hunter cell, especially one that might free them from either the bondage of a Puppeteer or their own tortured existence. Of course, a deal with such a proverbial devil is one many Hunters would come to regret.

The Betrayed, p. 79 (Ghost), is a vengeful spirit given form. Cai was a scientist-turned-whistleblower on a secret science installation. But he trusted the wrong people and ended up dead before he could tell anyone what he knew. That wasn't enough to stop him, though. He became a revenant, hell-bent on destroying those who killed him and revealing the secrets they killed to protect.

The Turncoat, p. 88 (Corrupted Hunter), is more of a weapon than a person. A former org Hunter, Renee Gibbs is constantly seeking new ways to improve herself by taking what powers and abilities of the supernatural she can. She has betrayed almost everyone she has met to achieve her goals.

LilMissMurder, p. 96 (Ghost), is an influencer who has amassed a huge following. Her cute chibi filter and

cool reputation makes her fans want to be like her. She has weaponized this adoration and when she asks her fans to do something violent, they are eager to prove their loyalty.

The Harbinger p.105 (Werewolf), thinks she is doing good, but she leaves anger and torment in her wake. She passionately believes the Earth and humanity are heading for a fall, but that it can be stopped. So, she joins all manner of groups as an agitator, using her sorcery to help them spread their word and somewhere along the way that word gets angry. Peaceful protest groups turn to starting riots soon after Rhea gets involved.

The Puppeteers

Puppeteers are among the most threatening Quarries, with the power and influence to affect an entire city if not grow to threaten life on a regional or even national scale. They rarely act directly, preferring to use agents and creatures to do their work for them. These monsters can be positioned at the heart of their own conspiracy. They have a plan and a goal they have often worked toward for decades or even centuries. They are hard to uncover, having spent years in the shadows and letting others take the blame for their actions. It is unlikely any group of Hunters will sway them from their purpose with a few honeyed words. Finding their way to a Puppeteer may be the goal of a chronicle, with the Hunters coming close many times before finally cornering the true heart of the conspiracy.

Eugenia, p. 115 (Fae Spirit), appears to be a kindly soul who finds accommodation for those who have fallen through the system. She has helped many who thought there was nowhere to turn, but Eugenia does not just offer cheap housing. Those who default find she has a different side. By then it is too late to back out of the deal without risking their soul.

The Prophet, p. 123 (Sorcerer), has seen a vision of a world in torment and flame. It will come to pass, his prediction is infallible, and he knows humanity will not survive it. But there is hope. There may be a way to adapt humanity to a new form that will survive the coming apocalypse, and The Prophet has spent decades researching what it might be. However, along the way their

scientific curiosity got the better of them, and now there is no atrocity they will shrink from in the name of saving humanity.

Timor, The End of Hope, p. 131 (Sorcerous Creation), is a secret experiment that may manage to end the world. A group of sorcerers was tasked many years ago with manifesting fear in a physical form, and they conjured Timor, a being far more powerful than they could have ever imagined. The ritual killed or drove mad everyone involved. Now Timor sits in an otherwise abandoned facility learning about the world through the internet, quietly driving everything toward destruction.

Using Existing Quarries

Whether starting a new chronicle or adapting *Incognito Report* to an existing one, Storytellers may wish to use or reuse Quarries found in the core book. You can tie other Quarries into an *Incognito Report* chronicle by repurposing them as a type, using them as individual Shadows, or making them into the Cursed.

CRYPTIDS AND URBAN LEGENDS

Most of the Quarries presented in this book are creatures that live on the edges of civilization or prey upon the people who live on the fringes of society. The Shadows in particular are likely known as local legends or cryptids, monsters whose lore and capabilities are well known but whose existence is doubted. This can complicate investigations by Hunter cells as they have to disentangle the truth buried in local knowledge and possibly avoid thrill seekers and amateurs also on the hunt for their Quarry. This also makes it easy to include cryptids that already exist in your chronicle as creatures connected to the Hunt.

In general, legends about such creatures tend to come in one of three forms:

Unseen (e.g., Loch Ness Monster): Very few (if any) people have ever directly seen the creature, but local legends insist it exists. There might even be a thriving tourist trade built around the creature, one the locals will not take kindly to losing.

Remains (e.g., Chupacabra): No one has ever seen the creature, but it has left evidence of its existence in the remains of its kills (usually local livestock). Legends about this creature's appearance are based on an analysis of what evidence it leaves. So if it kills with large bites, it is assumed to have large teeth; if it leaves no footprints, it is assumed to fly. All of its attributes are based on supposition. But the remains of its hunts are real and otherwise cannot be explained.

Eerie (e.g., Mothman): There have been plenty of sightings of this creature, but they leave more questions than answers. It might stare in the window of a house or even lead a lost person home. It appears to have some sort of intelligence, but its thought process and agenda appears alien and unfathomable.

The Storyteller can also use legends of cryptids to mask the presence of a Quarry. When the players' characters come to the authorities talking of a mysterious beast, the local sheriff dismisses them as more jokers getting hysterical about the local "beast of the moor". Oddly, it is very hard to convince people their local legend is actually a different monster, but a very real one.

Retrofitting Unique Shadows

To work as a Shadow, a Quarry from other sources needs to fit into the conspiracy you're planning for your story. When preparing a story, simply look for ways that other monsters may manipulate the Quarry and add evidence to help lead the cell to the next enemy. Naturally, this is easiest if you're planning the enemies you're going to use at the start of the chronicle. You can put together an intriguing mix of Quarries from different sources, this book and *Hunter: The Reckoning* included. Figuring out the connections between them then makes up the substance of the play.

But what if your Hunter chronicle is already underway? Your players have been investigating individual Quarries and you want to expand your game by having them tackle a conspiracy. Is it possible to retroactively make the first Quarries they hunted part of this overarching narrative?

Obviously, yes.

After the fact, Storytellers can still plant new evidence that relates to a previously Hunted Quarry.

Receipts for purchases or payments to the defeated Quarry are one clear way to indicate that the cell has discovered a new link between Quarries that they may have missed previously. When retroactively adding links like this, Storytellers should be wary of adding too many details that players missed. Players may remember a critical win and question why the information wasn't discovered then. To preserve verisimilitude, use the technique sparingly.

Good Quarries to use as unique Shadows include Splinterfang (*Hunter*, p. 180), Footpad (*Hunter*, p. 182), or Efrain, Luminous Vampire (*Hunter*, p. 169).

A Type of Shadow

Another way to link a Quarry to the conspiracy is to create a new instance of a previously Hunted Quarry to establish a *type* of Quarry. If the players' characters have previously hunted Efraín (*Hunter*, p. 169) and found him memorable, the Storyteller can adjust the same basic Traits to create a new Quarry that is the same type of vampire as Efraín. The new Quarry, Gertrude, may have a very different backstory (she's a 62-year-old, retired great grandmother of 14), and evidence could be found to not only link her to Efraín (Did Efraín create Gertrude, or did Gertrude create Efraín? How and where would they have met?), but also Quarries higher in the conspiracy.

Good Quarries to use to create a type of Shadow include The Lost Girl of Little Baguio (*Hunter*, p. 196), The Eye Thief (*Hunter*, p. 211), or La Celestina, the Bloody Mannequin (*Hunter*, p. 172).

Higher in the Conspiracy

The Storyteller might consider using an existing Quarry as a Cursed or Puppeteer. This is a difficult task if the Quarry has already been defeated. Not because the Quarry couldn't have survived somehow, but because the players in the troupe may feel cheated out of their victory. Looking forward, however, using other Hunter Quarries in the role of Cursed or Puppeteer is viable with preparation.

Quarries that may make good Cursed include Gunshop (*Hunter*, p. 185) or Kieren Gray, Whatsisname (*Hunter*, p. 188).

Quarries that may make good Puppeteers include Mga Hari ng Ilog ni Magwayen (*Hunter*, p. 175), Will Foster, the Burning Captain (*Hunter*, p. 205), or Johnny Sweets, the Everloved¹ (*Hunter*, p. 208).

Using Handouts and Player Aids

Every Quarry in this book provides handouts and player aids to give Hunters something to interact with at the table during play. These handouts help express how the information released by Cog relies on rumors, media reports, and paper trails to illuminate conspiracies and the monsters that are its foot soldiers and masterminds. If your table is not using a conspiracy, these handouts are still perfectly usable as they are focused on the methods, capabilities, and history of the individual Quarries. They need not all be one hundred percent true (see No Red Herrings, p. 17).

While the handouts can be used as-is for any game, the various clues described in each Quarries' entry can be used as a guide for a Storyteller on how to create their own handouts or player aids. Websites and audio files also make for great clues for the players' characters to interact with and use in play to create a deeper investment in their Hunt and the shared world your table is creating.

The most important thing to keep in mind when creating or giving out player aids is not to overwhelm the players' characters with information that's not pertinent to their current Hunt. Giving the Hunter cell information that can help in future Hunts or that points to a larger plot element can add a lot to a story, but it shouldn't distract from the current Quarry they are pursuing. While foreshadowing is a powerful storytelling device, it can lead the players' characters astray if the information is seeded in too subtle a manner. However, foreshadowing can also help gauge the comfort levels of the players before the monster actually appears. ■



Chapter One: THE CONSPIRACY CHRONICLE

While this book is about monsters and Quarries, it is also about what links them together. It's bad enough to think there are monsters in the world, but so much worse to think someone, or something, is guiding them with a plan. This is what a conspiracy is all about, and it can be a useful frame for any **Hunter** chronicle. The mysterious Cog feeds the players' characters information, and each Quarry takes them closer to learning a dreadful truth about who is behind it all. To facilitate this sort of chronicle we offer an array of tools for the Storyteller to use as they like.

We look at Cog himself and the culture that has built up around him. This following of *Cognistas* is a mixture of armchair activists, gossips, investigators, thrill seekers, conspiracy theorists, and the odd hunter (or even Hunter). Some just like to chat about what Cog reveals, some take the revelations very seriously, others find this so-called evidence both ridiculous and funny—few *Cognistas* are entirely alike. As such they and their chat groups, meetings, and network can be a boon or an obstacle in a cell's Hunt.

There's an art to running a chronicle based on investigation. What to do if the players' characters miss that one single vital clue? The solution is to make sure that there are always multiple ways forward so that an individual obstacle won't stop the story from progressing. In this chapter, we consider this and other essential Storyteller options for making sure that the conspiracy in your game won't remain entirely obscure.

There are also a few allies the Hunters might make who might help them out as a chronicle progresses (see Hunting Partners, p. 27). The sort of people who know how valuable their expertise might be, but prefer to give it over the phone than get too involved. As part of this we also offer the Storyteller a guide for dealing with authority and managing Danger across a chronicle.

So, as always, it is up to you as the Storyteller to decide what to take or leave from this book. Everything is modular to include or throw out as required by your chronicle and game style. There should be enough here to help you craft memorable stories together, whatever way you choose to use it.

Call Me Incognito

Cog has quite a large but oddly decentralized following on the internet. Most of his posts seem to be secondhand screenshots, reported on one of the many communities that follow conspiracies or strange occurrences, rather than directly from an official site. When he does post, many of the forum's followers argue if that was the real Cog or not. Some would love to uncover Cog's true identity, but most of his followers are not that interested in who he is. What hooks most of them are the mysteries he presents.



Posts by Cog generally refer to a single case. They come with all manner of files, grainy photographs, scans of newspaper clippings, and more. There is often no apparent order to the evidence, nor any apparent conclusion. Cog simply drops everything he has found on a subject and lets those who read the documents make up their minds. Many times, the posts are just a collection of files, but sometimes Cog offers a few words of wisdom. This might be how long he's been collecting details on this particular case, and sometimes a warning about how dangerous it is. Oftentimes, Cog's post is simply a single document or small set of documents with a cryptic phrase about what it might imply.

Whenever a new case drops, even the ardent fans of Cog argue vigorously about the veracity of the case. Cog shares everything with no filter, so many photos or reports are clearly doctored or faked. But not all of them. Many Hunter cells make use of the information he leaks to pursue their own investigations, but they do so in the full and certain knowledge that no matter how extensive the documentation, it is only a starting point. One thing is clear about Cog: He does not investigate any further than his computer. What is actually out there is a mystery even he hasn't solved.

Unmasking Cog and his real name and goals are only important if Cog sees the Hunters themselves as a threat (or potential allies). In a story that uses a Quarry from one of Cog's cases, the Storyteller can assume Cog himself becomes aware of the Hunter cell whenever the Danger level reaches 5. The exact nature and detail of his knowledge of the Hunter cell is up to the Storyteller

Even with the car's heater on, it has been punishingly cold tonight. Sally took off her gloves in the hope that the cheap cup of late-night diner coffee she was drinking would warm her hands up. She'd been wrong. Jed had finished his in moments, even when hers was still too hot for her to drink. It was just yet another thing that made her wonder if he actually felt anything at all.

They had sat in silence together for most of the evening. Only the heater fan rattling gave them something to listen to. Every now and again, Jed would bang his fist on the dashboard and it would stop for a few minutes. That always made Sally jump, reminding her how on edge she was. Not that she really needed reminding.

The old warehouse they were watching through the grimy windshield was still dark. Not a single light on anywhere, but Jed's gaze was fixed on it unwaveringly. Sally passed some of the time counting the seconds between Jed blinking. It was usually more than 20.

"You bored?" asked Jed, without taking his eyes away from the warehouse.

"No, sorry, yes, you know," flustered Sally, feeling caught.

"Bored is good," Jed replied with a hint of a smile. "Exciting gets you killed."

Sally nodded and took a gulp of coffee, remembering their last mission. Jed said that had been an easy one.

"It's not the fighting that makes me nervous; I've seen action when I was in the army. It's just these things. You never know what they're going to do next. You never know how they are going to come at you."

Jed nodded. Neither of them really wanted to be here. But once you've seen monsters, you can't unsee them. You have to decide if you are going to try to bury yourself in denial or do something. Like most people, Sally had tried denial, but it didn't stop the nightmares. So she figured hunting them might be the only way she'd ever feel safe.

"At least they're not organized," Sally rambled. "When I was on tour, the street gangs or the lone insurgents weren't too hard to deal with. It was the organized fighters that were dangerous, even the ones without too much training."

"Yup," muttered Jed, still staring at the warehouse. "Damn straight. We should count our lucky stars no one out there is running this horror show."

He probably meant it to be comforting. On another day it might have been. But something in his tone made Sally shiver, and it wasn't the cold.

to determine, but it's best to assume that Cog only gleans surface level information on the players' characters unless they've publicly exposed themselves to federal authorities. These are a few options that can guide how Cog's true persona can affect a story.

The Hunter

Cog being a Hunter can seem almost obvious to other Hunters, but it's certainly not a common idea among his fans. Positioning Cog as a Hunter in your table's story makes him a great potential ally or friendly rival for your players' characters. In this option Cog is most likely a veteran monster Hunter that no longer has a functioning cell of like-minded Hunters. No longer able to hunt Quarries on his own, he instead began to disseminate his knowledge to the world at large.

To hide his intentions, he mixes his encyclopedic knowledge of monsters and cryptids with conspiracy theories and other nonsense. This makes this version of Cog fit best in a scenario where the conspiracy is false—a smokescreen that allows Cog to tell the world about the monsters in their midst without becoming a target for the Second Inquisition or other organizations that might want to suppress such information. If the conspiracy is real, then Cog's relationship with it is more complicated than just a whistleblower or inside man.

In this scenario, Cog has spent years of his life infiltrating the conspiracy just so he could betray it in dribs and drabs. Perhaps Cog knows the conspiracy is far too large and powerful to be taken down or exposed by a handful of Hunters. It will take the concerted effort of multiple cells to topple the conspiracy at its weakest points. Players' characters that draw Cog's attention or discover his identity would have to decide if they wanted to aid Cog in his singular purpose or distance themselves from his obsessions.

The Fed

The most common theory concerning Cog's identity is that he's a highly placed agent within the U.S. government or possibly a retired general with a deep web of contacts. There is also no common agreement

about which agency Cog works within, but many hypothesize that he is a veteran of America's FBI or the CIA.

This option for Cog's identity works best if your table's story plans to position Cog as a rival or antagonist. Placing Cog within a government hierarchy means that he is likely motivated by a desire to purge all world governments from unwanted supernatural influences and sees anything linked to the supernatural as a threat. While this could initially position Cog as an ally to a Hunter cell, it's not a relationship that is likely to last unless they completely subordinate themselves to Cog's directives. Hunters that use supernatural powers or are allied with supernatural creatures could find themselves targeted by Cog and the community that looks to his pronouncements for guidance.

Getting on the wrong side of Cog could quickly see a Hunter cell being falsely branded as stooges in league with the grand conspiracy to dominate the world by alien beings.

The Crank

An option that presents Cog as something of a wild card, a man that enjoys leaking the truth of the conspiracy but mixed with enough lies and innuendo that it can be damaging. This persona can fit in well regardless of the reality or motives of the conspiracy.

Instead of presenting Cog as an ally, rival or antagonist, he can rotate through all three roles as the story requires. The players' characters may find Cog's information spot-on one session, and then completely off the next, possibly even leading the Hunter cell to make critical mistakes.

While subverting the players' expectations can be a powerful storytelling device, if done too often it can destroy their interest and investment in the story as a whole (See *No Red Herrings*, p. 17). This option is likely better suited for a story that plans to use Cog as a jumping-off point into exploring the conspiracy but not as a long-term ally or story point. Cog opens the door for the Hunter cell to explore and confront the conspiracy, but ultimately can't help them defeat the great plot.

INCOGNITO INFALLIBLE?

One question the Storyteller should consider is, how reliable is Cog's information? Is everything he passes on fact-checked and solid, or is it supposition and hearsay? It should always be reasonably reliable, otherwise the players' characters may dismiss the information, and hence dismiss the main lead in the chronicle. But the Storyteller can make sure Cog leaves the odd gap, or isn't always absolutely correct in his analysis. After all, that's why he needs someone like the players' characters to investigate.

In this way Cog can be the helpful driving force to push a slightly clueless or directionless group forward. But if the players' characters keep using him as a crutch or take everything he says as truth, the Storyteller can pull out the rug from under their assumptions from time to time.

Mysteries and Conspiracies

Each Quarry the cell takes down may fit within the mystery genre, with individual scenes linked together until the cell has enough information to take on the Quarry. When you run a conspiracy, each Quarry in the conspiracy functions like those scenes in a smaller investigation, and eventually a set of three or more Quarries lead to solving the mystery of the conspiracy.

There's no one proper way to run a mystery story or conspiracy chronicle, but the advice below presents a variety of ideas any Storyteller might adopt. Where some of it may be contradictory, the Storyteller should choose to follow or avoid advice based on their specific troupe, venue, and session.

A Hierarchy of Quarries

A conspiracy-focused chronicle is often structured like a single story writ large. Rather than moving from scene to scene, the cell moves from Quarry to Quarry, with clues leading up the chain—or down the rabbit hole—to the ultimate Puppeteer. Such a chronicle

might use a few levels of adversaries. For ease of use, we call them Shadows, the Cursed, and Puppeteers, as discussed in the Introduction. In many cases, regular people are drawn into the plots of a conspiracy, replacing monsters whether they occur at the bottom or top of the hierarchy.

Shadows are the foot soldiers of a conspiracy: they're a means toward an end or the tools that higher-ranking Quarries use and abuse. In **Hunter**, the assumption is that they're potential Quarries in their own right, but there's a reason why a conspiracy might make use of such beings. In your chronicles, you can completely ignore them or use mundane humans (or even some org members) in the same way. Shadows are among the first Quarries a cell might encounter.

The Cursed are lieutenants or generals, capable of self-direction. Most have their own goals or ambitions: they are capable of manipulating lesser beings as well as being manipulated themselves. They may even become Puppeteers in their own right, given time. The Cursed may be encountered at any time, but only a small number may link back to a Puppeteer. Mundane humans may fulfill this role for a Puppeteer, though they are often uplifted or empowered by their unnatural masters. Some Quarries may be able to lend a portion of their strength to their minions or lieutenants, or simply equip them with appropriate gear.

Puppeteers are the masters behind a conspiracy. They cannot reliably be the first Quarry Hunted by a cell. Doing so would likely either ruin the conspiracy prematurely or necessitate the first Hunt fails. Puppeteers can influence a city or region. With time, they might grow to threaten the entire world. A Puppeteer's manipulations mean they may have one or more Cursed serving them directly, or simply functioning as a distraction to throw others off their trail.

DIFFERENT MOTIVATIONS TO JOIN A CONSPIRACY

- ▲ **Coerced:** Left with no choice, the Quarry participates out of threats, blackmail, or sheer desperation.
- **Tricked:** This Quarry participates because of another conspirator's duplicity.
- **Unwitting:** Manipulated or used by conspirators, this Quarry is merely a participant but not a conspirator themselves.
- **Willing:** Adequate compensation or aligned beliefs are enough for this Quarry to aid the conspiracy.
- ▼ **Eager:** This Quarry is a true believer in the conspiracy's ultimate goal.

The Three Clue Rule

In the past 20 years, advice for running games has blossomed into a small industry, but some of the best advice for running a mystery is Justin Alexander's Three Clue Rule. In a nutshell, always create three different clues to point the players in the direction they should go. Players can miss clues, they can misinterpret a clue, or they might just ignore one. But with multiple clues that each point in the right direction, the Storyteller can be more certain that the players make it to the end of the story.

It's important to ensure that each clue is also suitably distinct. If a set of clues link off one another, they're not really distinct clues at all. For example, assume the Storyteller includes the following clues in a scene to point the players' characters toward a werewolf:

- A set of footprints consistent with women's shoes,
- The soil found in the footprints matches the color of soil near a reservoir, and
- The footprints change to resemble handprints.

In a sense, that's only one clue if players fail to find the footprints in the first place. Such clues may be well suited to account for a high margin of success or a critical success on a test, but unless they can be teased apart the clues may be found or missed as a group.

Listen to the players. If they seem lost or directionless, ask them to summarize what they know and what leads they might follow to learn more.

Sometimes that's enough to get the group unstuck. If it isn't, they probably need some more clues.

Work Backward

Often, the idea for a story or a Quarry points to a grand confrontation, an epic showdown in the creature's lair. But how does that become a complete story you can run at the table?

It can be a good idea to work backward from the end toward the beginning. The characters need to find the lair of a vampire burrowed deep into the organization of the FBI, a safehouse located in an innocuous suburb.

Working backward, you come up with clues that the characters can find on corrupt agents which point to the safehouse. More than that, maybe you decide that the nature of the enemy suggests a surprise twist in the story: At first, the characters think they're working with government monster hunters only to realize that their ostensible allies are controlled by a vampire who's using them to destroy rivals.

This way, working backward through the options inherent in your concept for a Quarry may lead you to create an interesting structure of twists and turns. First the agents provide the characters with clues toward weaker vampires, then the characters start to think there's something wrong with their allies, and finally they make their way to the safehouse. You might even have one final twist, where it turns



out that the characters' contacts in the FBI's Special Affairs Department knew what's going on all along but decided to let it happen because the vampire was doing their work for them.

The reality of creative work is that initial ideas can be all over the place. Sometimes you have an idea for an intriguing opening, and other times you come up with a cool ending. Your idea might force you to start in the middle, having to work both toward the beginning and the end of your story. Usually, it pays to go through the chain of clues and connections forward and backward to make sure that every link makes sense and there's enough redundancy to follow the clues to the Quarry.

No Red Herrings

As a literary device, red herrings work in mystery novels and cinema. They lead the audience to make certain assumptions which are twisted or reversed later in the narrative. The audience for those mediums is much more passive than the players in a roleplaying game like **Hunter**.

Players typically don't need the distractions or dead ends that are red herrings: they create them on their own. As such, it's often best to avoid intentional red herrings. When they seem useful, consider using one early in a story or conspiracy where they're easily seen for what they are.

Some scenes, locations, characters, or events in a game session may seem like a red herring to players. Storytellers may include scenes which are intended to reinforce the mood or theme of a session, keep Relationship Map connections active in the players' minds, and other scenes that may not directly drive the narrative forward, but weren't intended to lead the players in a particular direction. Some Storytellers may be able to use a *yes, and...* improvisation technique to keep the plot thread moving, but sometimes the heavy-handed *it's obvious that...* is more useful to rein in red herrings or other distractions.

With the *it's obvious that...* technique, the Storyteller uses those exact words or a paraphrase to stop the players from going too far afield.

- It's obvious that... there's no connection between the cursive handwriting on this note and the mirror.
- It's obvious that... you don't have enough time to read the whole book.
- It's obvious that... the clown's makeup isn't cocaine-based.

Use the *it's obvious that...* technique sparingly, and try to use it to shut down only the worst avenues of investigation. Overuse tends to make players feel like they don't have the ability to make meaningful choices.

Let the Players Succeed

In the same way that red herrings may strip the enjoyment from a session of **Hunter**, foiling an attempt to solve the mystery early can leave a bad taste in players' mouths. This is particularly important to keep in mind with the Edges and Perks the cell has access to.

When an Edge stops working, such as Sense the Unnatural, players may feel cheated, and rightly so. While it may make narrative sense that the sneaky vampire can remain hidden from the cell until the final confrontation, it doesn't make sense to players given the economy of character creation and advancement. The player chose Sense the Unnatural with the Precision Perk at the expense of other options. If they aren't able to locate their Quarry they'll probably begin to regret making that choice.

Instead, keep track of Edges and Perks, alongside other options of the players' character sheets and connections of the Relationship Map. Use these when preparing scenes to anticipate potential choices. If there's a very obvious solution to a problem in a planned or improvised scene, let the players feel like they made good choices and get past it. There are other obstacles they can encounter which won't be so easily solved.

Likewise, attempting to outwit players or delay them from discovering solutions can lead to other *feels-bad* moments. While **Hunter** is a game of the players' cell vs. their Quarry, it's not one of the players vs. the Storyteller.

5 WAYS TO FAIL FORWARD

Failing forward or Winning at a Cost (*Hunter*, p. 116) is a great method for avoiding roadblocks. During any investigation, consider using one or more of the following options to let the cell make progress after a failed test. The Storyteller may wish to distinguish between a total failure—no successes at all on the test—and failure which could provoke Winning at a Cost (1 or more successes but not passing the difficulty of the check). When winning at a cost, the cost may be higher based on a greater margin of failure, just as a win may be more resounding on a critical win or winning with a high margin of success.

- **You Know a Guy:** The characters don't know the answer, but they know someone who does. The cell may need to leverage a Relationship Map connection to uncover what they need to move forward. The greater the failure, the greater the cost to get the information from their connection. Contacting an Ally, Contact, or Mentor may require more than a phone call or text message. Storytellers may leverage any established characters or use the opportunity to introduce a new one.
- **Realization Comes With Time:** Crucial minutes, hours, or days may pass but eventually the characters piece together the information they need. The cell may be delayed long enough for the authorities or their Quarry to come around, or information may simply be revealed after a scene or two has passed in a flash of insight.
- **One Piece of the Puzzle Short:** The characters learn they're close but can't quite solve the issue. Finding one more clue—or a couple if the margin of failure is high—will give them the answer they're looking for without requiring another test.
- **Banging Your Head Against the Wall:** Whether through frustration or literally injury, a solution presents itself at the cost of damage to Willpower (representing mental fatigue and frustration) or, more rarely, Health (representing injuries sustained during the investigation). The margin of failure may represent how many levels of Damage are sustained.
- **A Dangerous Situation:** The Danger increases. Similar to Overreach (see *Hunter*, p. 128), the cell has tipped their hand in the course of the investigation and their Quarry grows more aware of the cell's presence. Increasing the Danger by more than one should be reserved for the most extreme situations or failures.

Chekhov's Gun

The 19th century Russian playwright Anton Chekhov suggested that a gun shouldn't be placed on stage unless it will be fired. Adapted to tabletop roleplaying games, that concept can be used to spotlight important things. For example, when a barista or police officer gives a name, the Storyteller may be signaling that they're important characters, intentionally or not.

A tabletop roleplaying game differs from a stage in that the set dressings rely merely on the creativity and eloquence of the Storyteller, not any physical props per se. If a Storyteller does use props, however, such as the handouts liberally included in this book, players will assume they need to read the text and that they're 100% relevant to the story in some way. The very fact that a Storyteller handed something out puts the spotlight on that prop.

Chekhov's Gun relates to red herrings (see p. 17, No Red Herrings), as there is a very strong chance that lingering on any particular details will make players assume those details are vital. This leads to unintentional red herrings. Avoiding over-description is a difficult task, because what counts as too much detail can vary from Storyteller to Storyteller, player to player, and troupe to troupe.

One method of narrative decluttering is to reuse what's already been established. A Puppeteer doesn't need dozens of different types of lackeys when they already have an established Shadow. A café the characters previously met one Storyteller character at can be used to meet with new Storyteller characters.

Another way to simplify is to link rewards to established elements of the narrative. Mystical items don't materialize from nowhere. A Nightcinder's blood or gear from Telset Pharmaceuticals has an origin within the narrative, without need to spotlight new characters, orgs, or Quarries.

5 WAYS TO SPOTLIGHT A NARRATIVE ELEMENT

- **Images:** There are lots of images that can be found online and repurposed, including in specialized databases from focusing on museum pieces, stock art, and others. They can easily be shared via a group chat so all players can easily view them. All the art in **Hunter** books can be used to illustrate antagonists, scenes or scenarios in your game.
- **Props:** These can be time-intensive, but being able to touch an item makes it stand out.
- **Descriptions That Engage Different Senses:** Most elements Storytellers describe are simple visuals. Describing something's texture, temperature, smell, or sound can set things apart easily.
- **Names:** It's a trope in roleplaying games that named characters usually are more important than nameless ones, but this also applies to books, buildings, streets, and other setting elements. Even a character's name written on the tag of a jacket or a journal can make players think something is important.
- **Motion:** Humans naturally fixate on moving things, and a little bit of movement from a light breeze, a flickering light, or scurrying vermin will draw players' attention.

Foreshadowing

The city is in the grip of a heatwave, and rolling blackouts mean people are sweltering without air conditioning. The characters even see a news item of a citizens' group accusing a local power utility of exploiting the crisis to raise prices.

Early on, this feels like an incidental detail designed to set the mood for the events to come. But much later, it turns out that the vampires who seem to be behind all the characters' troubles are hiding among the old money families who own the local utilities. The final showdown happens at a ramshackle, dangerous coal plant that would have been decommissioned ages ago if not for the monstrous corruption spread by the dead.

Foreshadowing is a technique where you subtly seed elements and themes, the full significance of which only becomes apparent later. When the finale arrives, the players hopefully go: "But wait, wasn't this mentioned..."

It feels cool when it lands. The trouble is, roleplaying is a co-creative medium and sometimes things don't go as planned. There are methods for taking this into account:

Recurring Symbols: Evoke mystery and curiosity. Draw folks in. As the symbols are repeated, players realize this means something. Conveniently, the exact meaning can be subtly changed on the fly to account for what happens.

Vagueness: The best friend of every fortune teller. "Something important will happen tonight. The powerful fall and the downtrodden take their revenge." What does that mean, precisely? If you're lucky, the players find a way to make the pieces fit themselves.

Ties to the Characters: Someone in a character's Backgrounds or on the Relationship Map comes up early in the story, seemingly unconnected to what's going to happen. This works well because sometimes the players themselves involve the character just because they were reminded of their existence.

Brute Force: An almost foolproof method that may not be as satisfying as the previous ones is to simply foreshadow events that are 100% under Storyteller control. An aging Hunter worries about the legacy they're going to leave behind. Later, the players' characters find that the Hunter has been murdered.

When it works, foreshadowing and dropping clues makes the end result feel earned and integrated into the world. The players feel that events naturally follow from what came before.

You can use specific clues, enemies, and events to foreshadow what's to come.

Dire Prophecies: The players' characters discover that the Quarry they're after has been following prophecies of doom and destruction. Are they fated to come true, or is there a chance for a different future? And is there any leeway in interpreting the text?

Mysterious Warnings: The cell receives an anonymous warning that's difficult to decipher yet portends something ominous. Much later, they discover who sent it. Perhaps the Quarry has servants with conflicted loyalties who decided to reach out.

Rumors Among Hunters: Other Hunters tell stories of their Quarries, Hunts successful and not. Somewhere in these stories there lies a tidbit that proves important to the players' characters.

Thematic Henchmen: The nature of earlier Quarries points to what comes later. First the characters meet weak vampires, then strong vampires. There can be more nuance to it than that. Perhaps the characters discover that the monsters they have been killing all seem to be former med students. Later, they find out the real enemy, a body-stealing magician conducting strange experiments at the local medical school.

Supernatural Phenomena: Rain of blood. Viridian lightning. Flash floods. Supernatural phenomena can be local or even regional, pointing to some sort of threat that has to be addressed. Who knows what kind of ambient effects the presence of powerful evil may cause?

Importantly, there's a distinction between foreshadowing and clues. Foreshadowing consists of elements that snap into place in retrospect. Clues point the characters to the next scene in the story.

Finding Clues Without the Dice

While **Hunter** does present the option of Winning at a Cost (**Hunter**, p. 126) and Trying Again (**Hunter**, p. 127), it's worth dwelling on the ramifications of these. When Storytellers hide hints and clues behind a test, the dice *will* prevent the players from succeeding on some checks to find clues. This in turn may stop the story in its tracks. There are a few solutions to this problem.

- **Clues Without Tests:** Especially combined with the Three Clue Rule (see p. 16), Storytellers should consider ensuring at least one of the clues is found without a test. This could be because the clue is easily accessible: when taking half, it's hard to miss a clue if there's no roll.
- **Fail Forward:** Even a failed test might reveal the clue, eventually (e.g., Winning at a Cost). The margin of failure—or how badly the player failed a roll—can influence the narrative impact of finding the clue. On a physical test, there may be Superficial damage to Health or Willpower based on the margin of failure. On a failed social test, a Relationship Map connection may be unwilling or

unable to assist the cell again for a number of scenes or even sessions based on the margin of failure. On a failed Mental test, the information might percolate in the character's mind for a number of hours or days before they realize the right answer.

- **Success Brings Clarity:** Combined with clues that come without tests, this solution rewards successful rolls with more and more information. When the characters enter the abandoned apartment, they'll discover the dry-cleaning receipt they need to confirm where the missing jacket might be. Each point of the margin of success on such a roll might give more information: The date on the receipt is consistent with when the jacket disappeared. The dry cleaner's last name is the same as the restaurant owners' who threatened the cell. The dry cleaner is in an upscale neighborhood, suggesting the Quarry that wore the missing jacket isn't bound to this neighborhood. The price on the receipt is very high, so the Quarry must be wealthy or didn't pay for it. The jacket is listed as a small men's jacket—can the Quarry alter their size or appearance? For every point or two points of the margin of success, provide one additional and relevant detail above the basic clue.

These methods can be combined, alternated, or ignored as fits the chronicle and the troupe.

Exceptional Success

Sometimes a test results in an exceptional success. This represents a problem if it was made to find a clue. Should the Storyteller give more information, letting the characters move through the story faster? or should they tell the players that there's nothing more to be found, no matter how good the roll?

Neither choice is good. For reasons of pacing, it's better if the players' characters move through the story without skipping to the end. Critical successes should mean something for the mechanics of the game to feel satisfying to players.

With these issues in mind, there are several solutions to make it work.

Unrelated Revelations: The characters do find more clues, just not to the mystery they're currently working on. This can be practical because

it foreshadows future events and gives the Storyteller time to prepare if the players' characters start to plan something surprising in response. For example, while hunting for a mysterious fae, they unexpectedly find a letter from someone on their Relationship Map.

Future Advantage: The characters discover a clue pointing to the next scene, and also something that gives them an advantage once there. Perhaps they realize that an ambush is waiting for them.

Tools: In addition to a clue, the characters find weapons, money or equipment that's useful.

Looking Cool: The character finds the clue in a way that looks so cool a supporting character comments on it. Perhaps the local cop who agrees to show them the crime scene is in awe of their prowess.

Whatever the case, the main thing is to make the dice result feel impactful while maintaining the integrity of your story.

Dealing with Authority

As the players' characters Hunt Quarry after Quarry, they may run into a host of local authorities that won't take kindly to them. Few people delight in hearing that a group of well-armed outsiders are wandering their town, trying to hunt a monster. If the players' characters aren't subtle or they get unlucky, they could find themselves trying to explain a situation few people believe.

To prepare for this almost inevitable turn of events, the Storyteller should establish how credulous the local authorities are. In some towns they get a lot of this sort of thing and have learned to listen. Others maintain flat-out

TABLE 1: AUTHORITY ATTITUDE

You can use the dot value as a guideline for how local authorities approach the concerns of the Hunters.

Value	Attitude
•	Hostile: No one in this town wants to hear about monsters, aliens, or any other kind of nonsense. If they see it at all, it's clearly a trick and the sheriff would rather lock the players' characters up than listen to them. Don't even try looking for help.
··	Cynical: While they won't accept there are such things as monsters, the authorities might entertain the idea that the players' characters might know something they don't. If they say a monster has taken a child into the hills, they'll hear it as 'some sicko' has taken a child into the hills. They'll still take a lot of convincing, but they listen if presented with evidence. If the players' characters can frame everything as mundane, they may get a lot of help. But that help won't be ready to face what they are likely to encounter.
···	Lone Allies: While the authorities in general are unhelpful, there is at least one or maybe two people among them that do question what is going on. It might be a lone beat cop, the mayor's secretary, or a local teacher. They can't do much on their own, and don't entirely believe it themselves. But they do know that things don't add up in this town and the players' characters might have the missing pieces. If they overhear the right conversation, they will try to contact the players' characters quietly. They can help the players' characters get what they want, often in terms of access to important clues, locations and records. But they can't do much more in terms of backup.
····	Underground: While the people at the top won't listen to talk of monsters (and certainly not in an election year) there are many who will. Anyone working on the ground knows the real truth, and if the players' characters seem like decent folks, they'll do all they can. In some cases their hands may be tied, but in terms of equipment and personnel they can bring a lot of vital assistance.
·····	Believers: While they won't let on at first, this town knows exactly what is going on. Once they trust the players' characters they open up and give them any and every form of assistance they need. But even if the players' characters seem to be on to something, they still might be slow to trust outsiders. After all, the players' characters might be con artists, fanatics, insane, or just plain wrong, and they might not have the experience to deal with what the town has known about for years.

denial, even when they see a monster face-to-face. There isn't always a logic to it, and while some folks can handle it, others can't. But sometimes you get lucky and there is at least one person that'll listen to you.

Local authorities could be anyone in charge, most often law enforcement. But local authorities could also be the local school board, the mayor's office, city council, or anyone that might have power, resources, and information the players' characters need. Table 1 offers the Storyteller a guide for the general attitude in the local area the players' cell is investigating.

Mood Shifts

The mood of the story is vital in a horror game. A sense of impending dread increases the tension before their characters face something awful. When the mood escalates to panic, however, the Storyteller might want to hit the brakes to ensure the climax is saved for the finale. It may seem counterintuitive to decrease the tension in a horror game, but too much tension too early can ruin the mood and leave the Storyteller with nothing left to build toward. It is also important to have a few options to get players back on track if they are joking around or give more anxious players a break from the tension for a moment. All tension, all the time is exhausting, and is more likely to lead to jokes and fooling around by the players to break it.

Table 2 provides ideas for minor encounters the Storyteller can throw into just about any story to scale the mood up or down. However, the Storyteller should avoid using the same Storyteller characters in each encounter (there are plenty of people in the World of Darkness). Otherwise, the reversal of fortune for the Storyteller characters may undercut the mood from the previous one. Often, these scenes take only a minute or two to resolve.

Sometimes an incidental scene acquires unexpected prominence in the chronicle. New Relationship Map connections may be forged as Backgrounds or Merits. Get creative: a stray dog adopted as a cell mascot might count as Security for someone's Safe House or a home-cooked meal may count as a one-off use of the Cell Chef Merit. A poor interaction with an antagonistic character could result in an Enemy or Stalker Flaw. See the Rewards sections for Chapters Two, Three, and Four for more ideas and a discussion of temporary rewards.

Storytellers may wish to create their own scenes to help modulate the tension. A good rule of thumb is to review established Chronicle Tenets (*Hunter*, p. 132), mood (p. 139), tone (p. 140), Relationship Map (p. 84) and Shadows used by their conspiracy for inspiration. Consider keeping a list of scenes that could easily fit in most stories, with one scene tailored to each member of the cell. Replace any that get used with new ones, and try not to focus on any one character too much.

Chronicle Danger Effects

The standard Danger track works well for each individual Hunt, but in a chronicle, each time the players' characters face a Quarry they may alert the secret Puppeteer behind the scenes to what is going on. A Puppeteer will eventually discover that their minions haven't reported in or have disappeared. But if the Danger track increases, they recognize it was interference, not an accident, and that an enemy may be getting close to them. Other Shadows and pawns in the conspiracy may also be alerted to watch out for

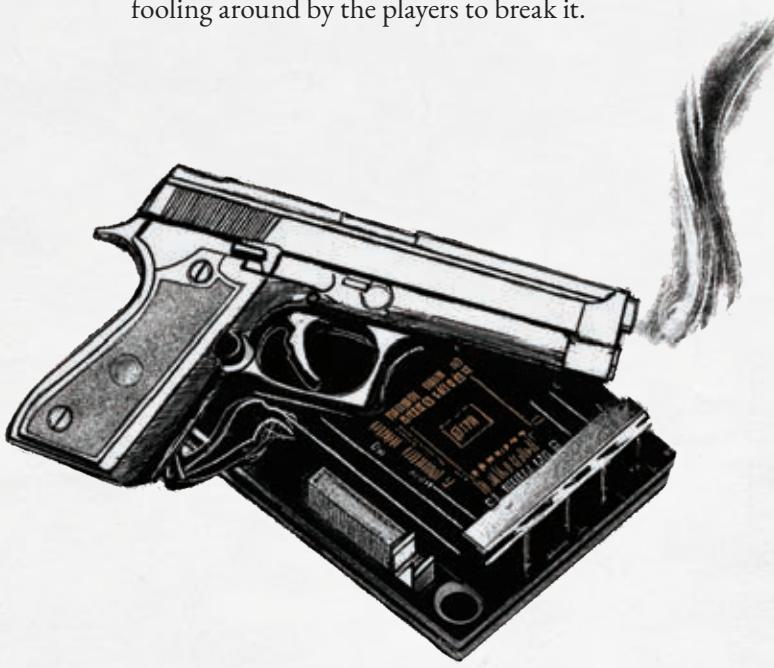


TABLE 2: MODULATING THE TENSION

DROPPING THE TENSION

These are the types of scenes you can insert into play to lower tension.

- ↓ A small child runs over to the players' characters to retrieve a ball, but pauses a short distance away out of fear.
- ↓ A group of young people are dancing in the street. They might be spilling out of a nightclub and can't stop dancing, or be a street crew practicing. They don't mind the players' characters watching their moves, and might even let them join in.
- ↓ An elderly lady in a grocery store (or similar) enlists one of the players' characters to help her with her shopping. She has a heavy bag and needs help with it. She is unlikely to take no for an answer. In return for their help she'll offer them tea when they get home, maybe even a home-cooked meal if they look hungry.
- ↓ Someone kind flirts with one of the players' characters when they interact. It might be someone waiting for the same bus, a store clerk, server, etc. If the player's character responds well, yes they would like to swap numbers and go on a date later.
- ↓ A stray dog approaches the players' characters. If they give it food, it'll hang out for a while longer. It is a bit dirty, but there is something cute about it. The players' characters might potentially adopt it if they keep feeding it.

INCREASING THE TENSION

These are the types of scenes you can insert into play to raise tension.

- ↑ The players' characters receive a note with a simple message. The note might be in their pocket, in the bag with their groceries, or maybe handed to them by a child doing a "strange man" a favor by giving it to them. The note is from the main adversary saying something threatening such as: "I can always find you," "I can see you," "Stop before you get hurt," or worse.
- ↑ A group of young people in the street are staring at the players' characters, clearly and openly. Some might be talking on their phone to someone, reporting in perhaps. If challenged they claim they aren't interested in the players' characters, but they keep staring. They run if attacked, threatened or even questioned harshly. Maybe they are working for the main adversary; maybe they just don't like the players' characters in their neighborhood.
- ↑ Someone is following the players' characters (or one in particular). They seem to always be around, but at a distance. A few times they take photos. If caught and challenged they reveal they are a private investigator hired to watch and take notes. They don't know who for, they were just going to post the results to a dead drop. They were paid in cash.
- ↑ Someone the players' characters have never met (such as a server in a restaurant, or a store clerk) casually drops some piece of minor information about a player's character into a conversation. It might be their name or their old school or the name of a pet. If the player's character challenges them they just say "Sorry dude, you just looked like a Bob. Lucky guess, man". But they might be smirking as the players' characters leave.
- ↑ A local animal (like a cat or dog) takes an unreasonable dislike to one of the players' characters, barking or hissing angrily at them. It might follow them a little to chase them away from the area. If they attack or hurt the animal then its owner, a small child, appears to take the animal away. As they leave, the child tells the animal (with a glare at the players' characters), "You should be more careful, you know they are bad."

the players' characters. Storytellers may use a Chronicle Danger tracker (*Hunter*, p. 125) to build tension and dread at the chronicle level.

Each time a Hunt ends with a Danger of 5 (or more), the Storyteller should add 1 to the chronicle Danger track. If the Danger is less than 5 but there was a major public disturbance or a Quarry had a reason and opportunity to send word to its Puppeteer, consider rolling a die. On a 1–5 (failure), increase the chronicle Danger tracker or just decide if it's appropriate. Once the players' characters start dealing more directly with the final Puppeteer of the chronicle, the chronicle track no longer increases (you have the Puppeteer Danger track for that now). But its effects may still apply, representing the preparations the main villain has made. If the Storyteller doesn't want to use a second tracker, these results can be used as alternate Danger tracks instead.

Tracking Danger at the chronicle level, these effects and associated events may happen between Hunts, but they could just as often occur early on in the next Hunt. These events could drive the cell closer to the ultimate Puppeteer. The effects in Table 3 can be used in a number of ways.

- **Down the Line:** When the Danger increases, consider applying the listed effect or use it as inspiration for a similar event. This works best for a chronicle Danger tracker, or one extremely dangerous Hunt.

- **At Random:** When the Danger increases, roll a die. On a 1–5 (failure), apply the effect or use it as inspiration for a similar event. These effects may happen whenever the Danger increases, but need not. To greatly reduce the chance of the effect, roll a Desperation die, and on a 1 (!), the effect takes place.

- **As Needed:** The Storyteller chooses whether or not to apply an effect. In this case, a chronicle-level Danger tracker mainly serves to help the Storyteller record how often the cell has been noticed, and a Quarry-level Danger tracker is mainly used to adjust Difficulties related to the Quarry.

Usually, the chronicle Danger track doesn't drop, as the main adversary won't suddenly forget who the players' characters are. However, the actions of the players' characters can cause the villain to scale back their attacks and slink back into the shadows. Essentially the more successful the Hunters are, the more of a risk they pose. This initially makes the Puppeteer keen to destroy them before they become a problem. But if that fails and they have become a problem, the Puppeteer risks exposure by focusing their attention on them. They scale back their plots and reconsider their plans before coming after them again. If the chronicle Danger decreases and then increases again, don't apply the exact same effect a second time unless it makes sense in your story. Use the effect as inspiration for another of similar magnitude.

As such the chronicle Danger track might be reduced by a point if:

TABLE 3: SAMPLE CHRONICLE DANGER EFFECTS

You can use these guidelines to help you figure out how a particular level of Danger affects play.

Danger	Effect
•	No additional consequences. But the players' characters have been noticed, even if they have not been deemed a threat.
••	Some aspect of the players' characters' resources dries up mysteriously. Each player must pick one Background to temporarily reduce by 1 point for the duration of the next Hunt.
•••	Locals have been warned into silence around the players' characters. Any <i>Dealing with Authority</i> track (see p. 21) is reduced by 1 level anywhere the players' characters go.
••••	The Puppeteer starts making plans against the players' characters. Each new Hunt begins at Danger 1 automatically instead of 0 (or +1 if there is already a base Danger level).
•••••	The Puppeteer takes clear notice of the players' cell. Begin the Hunt of a Puppeteer behind the conspiracy. Alternatively, the main Puppeteer starts shutting down the players' characters' resources. Each players' character must reduce two Backgrounds of their choice by 1 for the rest of the chronicle.

- The Hunters decisively destroy a Quarry loyal to the main adversary.
- The Hunters manage to gain important information about a Quarry or the Puppeteer, despite interference from the authorities.
- The Hunters turn an ally or agent of the Puppeteer to their side.
- The Hunters leave an area having destroyed a Quarry without causing any trouble or alerting the authorities.

Alternative: Danger Affects Relationships

If the chronicle focuses on a more realistic and personal approach, then the main villain resorts to harming the friends and family (including Relationship Map connections) of the players' characters to make them stop. Through notes and momentary contacts (like a whisper from a stranger on a train or a note passed with their beer napkin at a bar) they are warned to desist.

Table 4 provides a set of effects that might be used in conjunction with the Danger track for either an individual intelligent Quarry or a chronicle Danger track. Pursuing this track instead makes the game

more personal as people who the players' characters care about are on the line. This might be upsetting for your troupe, so take care with using it. It can also derail the chronicle as players' characters tend to refuse to stop or compromise and turn the Hunt into a hopeless rescue mission. So, the Storyteller should use what they think works best for their group as the chronicle develops.

It is important to note that while the conspiracy attacking the Relationship Map connections, allies, and contacts is more realistic, it is both more emotionally intense and destroys resources players' characters have paid experience points for. This is an alternative system you can use if you specifically wish to run a more brutal game. Whether that's a good idea or not is something you can discuss with your players so that their expectations are aligned with how you envision the game.

To alleviate the loss of Backgrounds, you may give the players the option of replacing lost Background dots narratively and without having to expend Experience Points by taking over resources from the enemy. Once a Quarry has been vanquished, its Resources can be transferred to a player's character and its former allies may align with the players' cell instead.

This might even be a way for Hunters to switch up their resources. An Ally killed by a Quarry need not be replaced by another Ally. The Hunters might instead make a new contact, or invest in equipment,

TABLE 4: RELATIONSHIP-FOCUSED DANGER EFFECTS

This is an alternative to Table 3. You can use this table for the effects of a rising Danger if you wish for the effects to be mainly seen in the relationships of the players' characters.

Danger	Effect
•	The players' characters get a message they are in over their heads and they need to stop. The message is also clear there will be no further polite warnings.
••	Some of the players' characters' resources are broken or go missing. Essentially, one of their Backgrounds or assets is damaged or destroyed. It can be replaced or repaired, but possibly not for some time. The Background in question goes down by one dot permanently.
•••	A contact, friend, or family member of one of the players' characters gets hurt in some way. It appears to be an accident or a random attack like a robbery or theft. But to the player's character, it should be a warning.
••••	A close friend or family member of a player's character is kidnapped or badly hurt. The player's character receives a video call with them to see how they are suffering. If the players' characters at least pause their investigation or appear to capitulate, the abductee is released alive—although badly hurt.
•••••	The Puppeteer kills someone close to one of the players' characters fast and painless. If they do not stop investigating, the villain promises more deaths, and that they will be more brutal. Each time the chronicle Danger track should increase from this point, it means another death.

vowing never again to get too close to someone who might get killed.

As the Storyteller, you should consider whether you want to offer this option to the players. If yes, give them the option to replenish their lost Backgrounds after a Quarry has been defeated and explain their narrative options. After all, the story of your game has to make sense. If the players' characters manage to hunt down a mangy werewolf hiding in the sewers, it's unlikely they'll be able to get their Resources back up. Destroying a vampire hiding in an opulent mansion makes it much more logical.

All the players' characters should be treated equitably in this loss to maintain balance in the group. The Storyteller should also ensure they are not taking anything away that makes completing the story impossible.

Rewards

A story may grant the players' characters additional rewards beyond Experience Points for a successful Hunt. Defeating certain Quarries might grant new supplies or create new allies and opportunities. These story-based rewards may form a justification for players to spend Experience Points, but they could be broader than that.

Potential rewards are detailed with each Quarry in this book, but the Storyteller is not limited to those listed (and might award rewards listed for other Quarries if circumstances allow). However, the Storyteller need not grant anything at all if they do not suit the story. Rewards might also form inspiration for new alternative progression options (see *Hunter*, p. 83).

Temporary Assets

Many rewards come in the form of provisional bonuses to Backgrounds called Temporary Assets. They represent a lump-sum payment, a gift of new equipment, a favor owed by a new ally, or help hiding evidence by someone with leverage. Essentially, they are one-time offers of assistance or gear that give the character a bonus to one of their Backgrounds for a short time.

Temporary Assets can generally only be used for the remainder of the current Hunt, or only for the next Hunt if given as a reward for a completed Hunt. The Storyteller

may even decide they are removed if the players' characters move too far away from the last Hunt, beyond the influence of their new Ally. Outside those general rules, these bonus points vanish when the Storyteller says they do. However, the Storyteller should explain when and how such boons expire so the players can manage them efficiently. Such assets are also either available or gone. They don't gradually reduce their level with time, they are simply removed completely when they expire. The cell is either owed a favor, or they are not.

Temporary Assets can be made permanent by spending Experience Points (or via the alternate progression system in *Hunter*, p. 83). This represents the character taking the time and effort to make sure the new Ally or investment lasts a little longer or is willing to make more of a commitment to the player character's cause.

The Storyteller may give the player a small discount on the Experience cost if they feel the assets might be quite easily exploited to convert into something permanent (generally one Experience point is enough). However, as the character is locking down something they already have, the Storyteller should not require any further narrative reason for the new increase in a Background. The player should also ideally note the reasons for the new increase to create more narrative backstory for the points they have acquired.

Perks for Edges can also be awarded in a similar way. They might be bestowed by the Storyteller for a time for free, or access to a new option that players can add to their sheet later. Perks for Asset Edges might make more immediate sense as they usually represent gear the characters have access to. Even Endowments like Sense the Unnatural might have temporary causes, such as a character being bitten by a Quarry gaining an unexpected Sense the Unnatural Perk for that particular Quarry.

When tracking Temporary Assets, players might note these on their character sheet by putting a slash through the dot, instead of filling it in completely.

Giving out Temporary Assets in this way can provide greater verisimilitude for players or the Storyteller but is also a way for players to help signal what they've enjoyed in a story. Making a temporary Contact permanent could show that they provided a benefit the player found useful or represent a character they'd like to see repeated in future stories.

Hunting Partners

Not every cell hunts alone. Officer Reynolds, Agent Hastings, and Dr. Herrera are designed to be the sort of people that the players' characters turn to for assistance several times during a chronicle. While these people don't have the Drive to become Hunters, they aren't simple bystanders. They might join the Hunt one day, but at the moment they are still trying to get to grips with what they have discovered. Each one has access or expertise the players' characters may find useful. The Storyteller can add them into a story and see if they make a connection, or make them Contacts or Allies of the players' characters from the start. The relationship they have with the cell might develop and change as time goes on. They could be (or become) Touchstones or even casualties in the fight against the dark.

Each character comes with background details to help the Storyteller slot them into the chronicle. However the Storyteller can just keep the statistics and create a whole new background if they need to.

Unwitting Pawns

Each of these characters (or any other connections on your chronicle's Relationship Map) may recur in bizarre ways in a chronicle, whether or not they are being manipulated by some mastermind behind a conspiracy or Cog himself. Bringing these or other connections back again and again can add complexity to the narrative, mystery, and a sense of someone to fight for. The Storyteller may need to decide ahead of time whether someone is pulling the strings to move the connections around, or if it's just dumb luck.

Some ways to help connections recur include:

- **Transferred, Promoted, or Demoted:** As a reward or punishment for their involvement in a Hunt, the connection is moved directly into the way of the cell again.
- **Happenstance:** The cell's connection meets the cell again out of a seemingly fortuitous event. Winning an all-inclusive vacation, a spouse being

transferred to a new city, a loved one's new hobby, or any number of other reasons might bring the cell and the connection back into contact.

- **Recruited:** Many organizations may recruit from those involved in unnatural incidents. Characters might serve as contractors, unofficial advisors, trainees, or fully-fledged members of an org. The Special Affairs Division, and its ties to Cog, makes for an obvious choice. The connection might accept (or at least consider) a contract with Monster-X or another Corporate org, or be pulled by their faith to a Religious org. The Real Cognistas (see *Apostates*) provide another possibility, but any of the orgs might find a willing ally with the character.
- **Coerced:** A tragic twist might see one of the cell's Relationship Map connections recruited into the conspiracy as an adversary. They may be charmed by a vampire, blackmailed by a sorcerer, or turned into one of the Puppeteer's Shadows. The cell may encounter difficult choices in determining whether the connection can be saved or is too far gone.

Tragedies

A horror game doesn't work if absolutely everything in it is miserable. Points of light make the shadows deeper and tragedies feel more meaningful when bad things happen to good people.

One thing you can do with Hunting Partners is showcase the danger posed by the Quarry. It's not a good idea to treat these characters as disposable — that's wasting their potential. They work better if the players' characters get to know them, perhaps across multiple Hunts. Then, when the cell is closing in on their Quarry, the Quarry attacks the Hunting Partner first. Perhaps physically, or through their loved ones, or by getting them fired from their job. It all depends on the nature of the Quarry. This acts as a warning for what happens to the players' characters if they persist in their foolish quest. If you've done the groundwork of establishing the Hunting Partner, their tragedies are felt by the players' characters too.

Officer Alison Reynolds

I may regret this, but I think I believe you...

Alison grew up in a family of cops. With so many people she called uncle or aunt, the force always felt like home and Alison knew how difficult being a cop could be. She'd seen what the job could do to people. Some of her colleagues tried to turn the streets into a war between the police and the criminals. That wasn't how Alison ever saw the job. It was always about people to her. She wasn't a soldier, she was a police officer. Policing a community meant working for and alongside that community.

Alison has a good investigative mind, and she loves to figure out puzzles. A few times her superiors have suggested she try out for detective, and she's given it serious thought. But detective work would take her from the community she's come to know. Still, sometimes she helps out. Some detectives find her insightful, but more often their egos get in the way and she gets told to remember she's just a uniform.

When Alison finds something odd, it's hard for her to know who to take it to.

General Difficulty: 3 / 2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 4, Mental 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Athletics 5, Firearms 5, Investigation 6, Persuasion 6, Streetwise 5

Description: Alison is a young woman who keeps herself in mental and physical shape by burning off stress in the gym. Most people think she looks a little naive, wearing her optimism on her sleeve. Those who know her better can see she has experienced the streets as they are and is no pushover.

Introducing Alison to the Chronicle

Alison might be a city beat cop or a part of the local rural sheriff's station in any chronicle. She is the low-ranking officer who overhears the players' characters arguing with her superior or one another. She wonders if they might have some clue to crack the case. If the players' characters run afoul of the law or are just in the

area, they might get to talking. They won't have long to convince her they are telling the truth, but she listens if they don't cause her any more trouble.

How Can They Help?

While Alison doesn't have the authority to release the players' characters from jail, she can be very valuable. There is an array of police resources she can make use of on their behalf. This includes checking criminal records, looking for a car registration, and reviewing evidence. These are all things that she should not do for just anyone, but if she can be convinced it can give her vital information to solve a case she may offer quid pro quo.

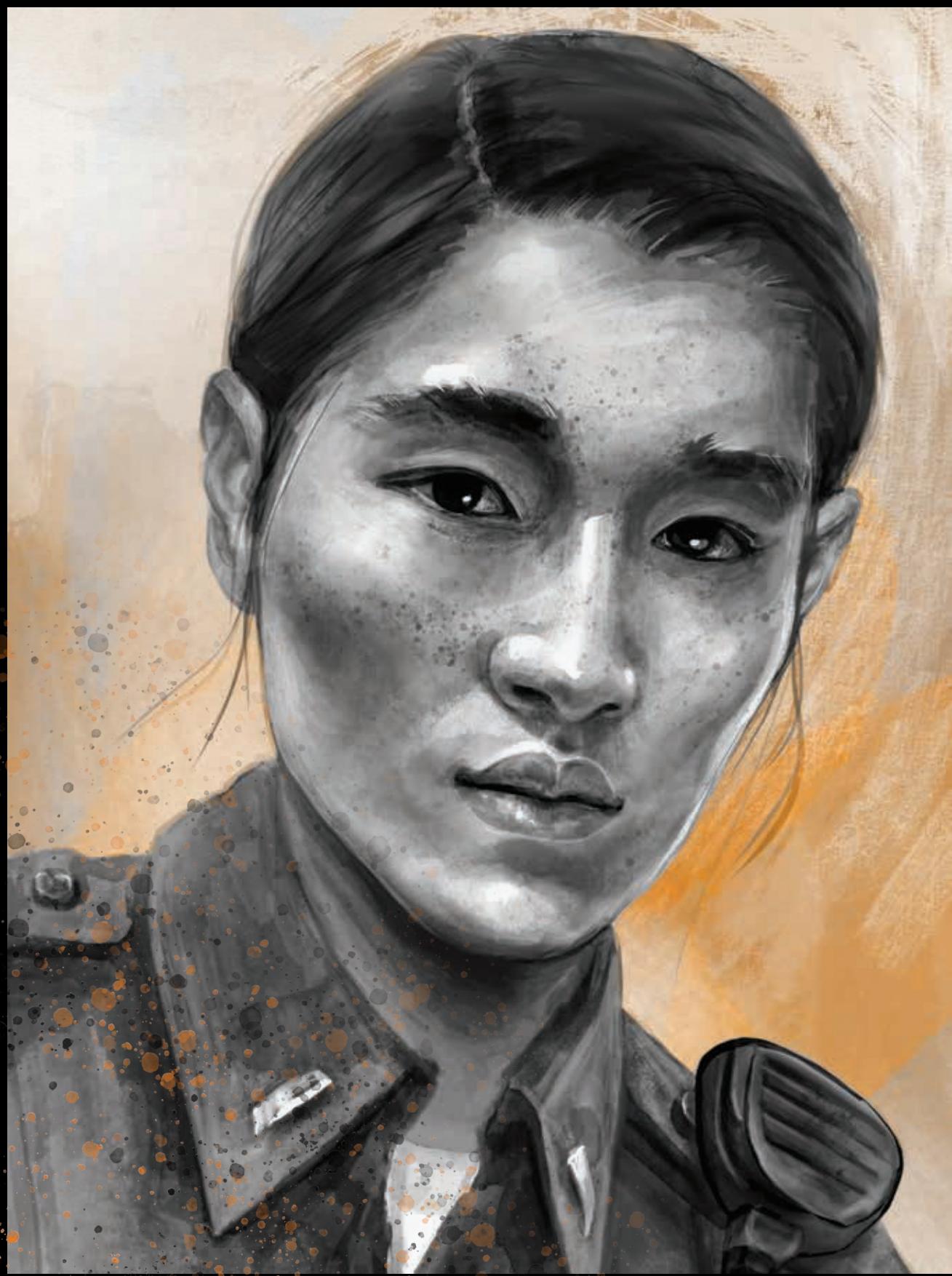
If she can be persuaded it is in the community's interest, she might look the other way over minor illegal activities. This could allow the players' characters to look at documents they shouldn't see and even 'accidentally' leave a cell door unlocked if they need to escape custody. Any of these interactions could endanger her job, so it'd better be important.

Another important bonus to making friends with Alison is that she has a good relationship with the local community. She knows who the criminals and the innocents are. She knows the dodgy areas and the wealthy people no one touches. She also knows where to find the best coffee.

Meeting in Later Stories

As someone who patrols the local community, Alison is reasonably easy to make contact with. She might have given the players' characters a personal number if they're friends. While Alison is most useful in her local area, she does have access to a number of national databases. She may also have friends in other areas of law enforcement if the players' characters need someone to vouch for them.

If she ends up losing her job, she may turn to a corporate org, such as Monster-X or Re:Venge to try to make ends meet while also making a difference. If, on the other hand, Alison excels at her job, she may draw the attention of the Special Affairs Department.



FBI Analyst Gerry Hasting

I'm not sure I see the connection here, but I'm hoping you can help me figure it out...

Gerry is no James Bond, and he doesn't want to be. While life as an agent in the FBI could be exciting, Gerry goes to work every day in a small field office where he looks for patterns in files. But that's fine with Gerry: agents who are out on the field more than him get into all kinds of danger. He has a wife at home, Carol, with a baby on the way. He wants to catch bad guys, but he's in no rush to be an action hero, even if seeing *Silence of the Lambs* at the movies made him want to join the Bureau.

The problem is, Gerry is good at his job, good enough to see patterns no one else seems to notice. There are a few things about these sorts of patterns that just don't make sense, but he can't figure out why. He's scared by these odd configurations, because whatever he is missing might be a terrorist plot, a drug ring, or a hundred other nightmares. So, he often asks fellow analysts to look over his numbers but they rarely see what he sees in them. With limited resources, his boss isn't going to waste time and money following yet another analyst hunch, not when there are a hundred other more credible threats. But what if he's right?

General Difficulty: 3 / 2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 4, Mental 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 4, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Academics 7, Finance 8, Insight 8, Investigation 8, Streetwise 6

Description: Gerry looks more like an accountant than an intimidating black-suited FBI agent. He's just a working Joe in a stressful job. He needs an energy drink to get started in the morning and his eyes are worn out from staring at screens and papers all day. But the work matters so he takes the time to get it right, even if he has to pull the odd all-nighter.

Introducing Gerry to the Chronicle

Gerry isn't a field agent, so the players' characters won't run into him by accident. When he visits a crime scene, he's with other agents and doesn't stay long. Unless he runs into them in a coffee shop, he is likely to contact the cell initially as an anonymous informant. The cell's names keep coming up in the reports he looks at. Even if the reports aren't substantial, the cell is often in the area when weird stuff happens. He might initially contact them just to rule them out of the investigation. If they get in trouble with the law, he might use his badge to get a chance to interview them while in custody. But as he gets to know them, he realizes they have key information he needs to put the pieces together.

How Can They Help?

The FBI has a lot of resources, but Gerry is most useful for the big picture. He is the professional version of the wide-eyed guy with the conspiracy wall. He's linked all manner of information together with facts and real data, backed by FBI sources. Chances are, Garry knows more than the players' characters, but he's not expecting the unnatural. The players' characters hold the keys to him understanding it all, a truth he'd never in a million years imagine.

Meeting in Later Stories

Once the players' characters have established trust, Gerry calls on them again and again. They become his unofficial field agents, looking into cases Gerry can't take to his boss. He can push them in the right direction, and in turn get him the details he needs to get FBI backup for the case. Although the FBI may not agree to hunt monsters, potential terrorist activity often gets the Bureau's attention (and resources).

If the cell convinces him of unnatural activity, the Special Affairs Division recruits him. If he's driven out of his position, he may find a desperate home within Re:Venge, Monster-X, the Orpheus Group, or even the Arcanum.



Doctor Isabella Herrera, Forensic Pathologist

Now that's something I haven't seen before. I wonder...

Dead people are much easier to deal with than the living, and they are also much better at sharing their secrets. Isabella had always found the human body more fascinating than people. It's not that she can't understand people; it's just that she can't really be bothered to, as her two previous husbands attest. She prefers the company of the dead, as they don't insist on talking all the time. Her lab is a beautiful haven of peace and quiet.

While Isabella loves her job, it is starting to bore her. She can spot a bullet wound a mile away and a mere glance tells her the cause of death in most cases. Not only does she tend to see the same old wounds and murders, but there are few mysteries left. What she really wants is for a body to surprise her, show her something new. If she runs across the players' characters, she might just get her wish.

General Difficulty: 3 / 2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 3, Mental 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 4, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Academics 7, Investigation 7, Medicine 7

Description: Isabella is a woman in her mid-50s and has been alive long enough to just be goddamn tired of everything. She is professional, if terse, and doesn't suffer any fools. By the end of the day, her lab coat has more ink stains than blood stains.

Introducing Isabella to the Chronicle

Isabella is the most experienced member of the Medical Examiner's office. When a mysterious body turns up with unexplainable wounds, it finds its way to Isabella. Whether the cell can get hold of her report or not, they'll need to talk to her to get the real story. There are some things she knows are not

worth putting in a report. If she thinks the players' characters have an angle she's missed, she'll be willing to talk, as she wants answers when she finds a mystery. She might be interested in exchanging information for answers to some of her questions. The answers she gets might not be what she is expecting but they open up a whole new world of mysteries for her. It doesn't take much to get her to abuse her authority in the service of solving a mystery.

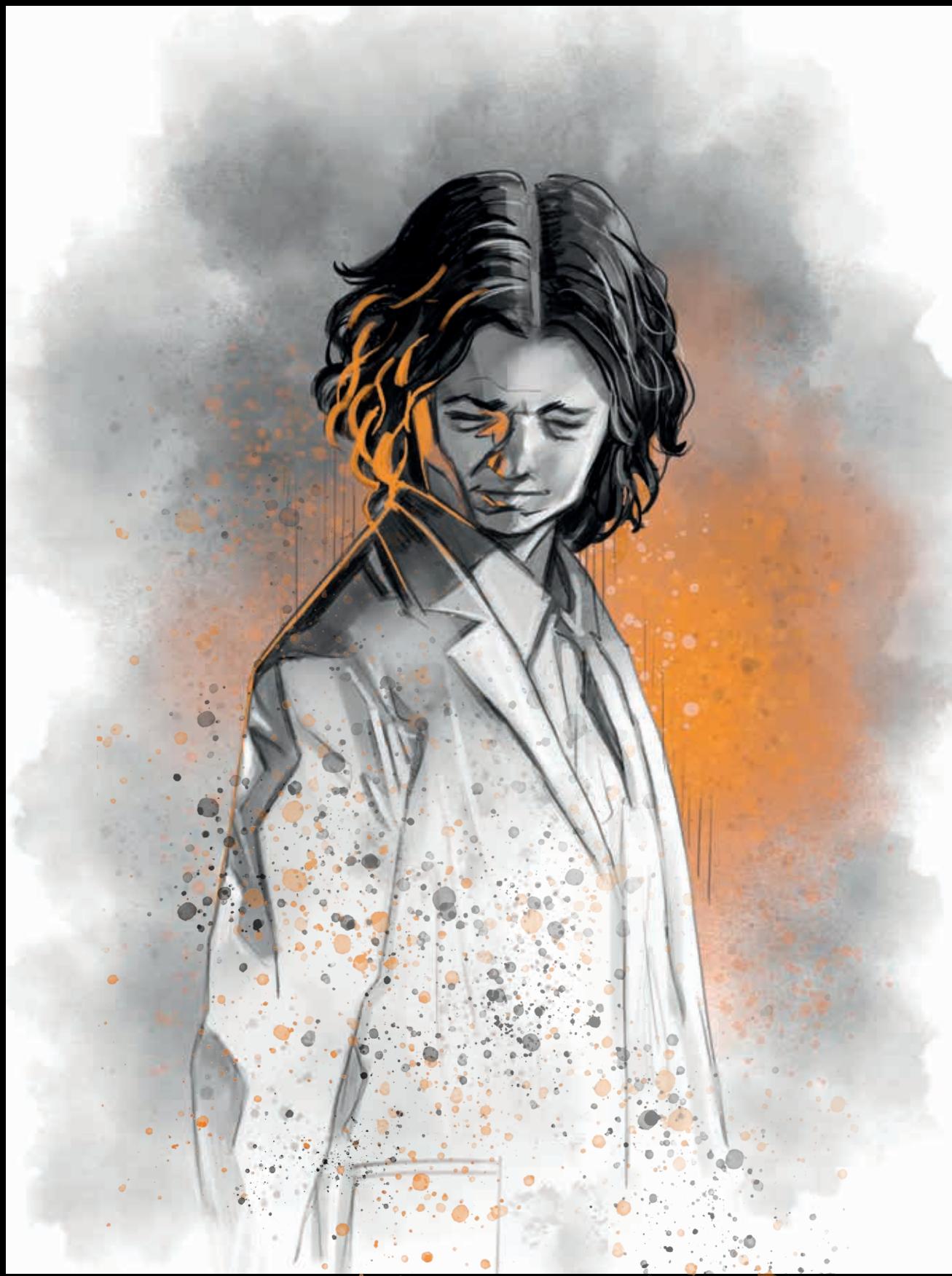
How Can They Help?

Isabella is a medical expert first and foremost: she can determine a variety of wound types and causes of death. Her advice might stop the players' characters following a wild goose chase or help them find the trail of a supernatural predator. As a pathologist, Isabella is also a skilled chemist, familiar with all manner of toxins, venoms, and pharmaceuticals, as well as their effects. She may also have some access to crime scenes. While she lacks much of a bedside manner, she is also a qualified medical doctor — so she knows how to patch up the sort of wounds that raise questions in a hospital.

Meeting in Later Stories

If she is introduced to the world of the supernatural, Isabella wants to know more. She is likely to offer her services as a freelancer just to get a look at what the players' characters are up to. She won't try to get too close to any deadly creature. But she will want to take apart any bodies to see how they work. Not only is she keen to do the lab work, but she has access to a lab for anything else the cell might need. She is very bored with the usual work of a pathologist, and the players' characters may be able to use her renewed interest to their advantage. The weirder the case, the better.

If Isabella is convinced the unnatural exists, she may find future employment with the Arcanum or the Orpheus Group, or even Monster-X. Her current job doesn't provide a challenge anymore and she's been looking for something more fulfilling. She has plenty of options if her involvement with the cell gets her fired. ■





MK
2024

Chapter Two: A THOUSAND SHADOWS

This chapter collects several Quarries that might be used again and again. Some are a type of new species, and others are invoked by a certain spell or magical effect. While this doesn't mean the Storyteller should threaten the cell with a group of such creatures, it does mean they can return to the same type of Quarry again. However, each time they encounter the same Quarry it may have a slightly new twist, just in case the players' characters think they know what they are dealing with.

Shadows are monsters with eclectic origins and abilities. Among their number can be found lab experiments, escaped biological weapons, captured cryptids, and other creatures that straddle the line between the horrific and the tragic. This isn't to say all these monsters lack sentience or are incapable of being cunning or ingenious. Shadows are monsters that have limited agency within the conspiracy at large. When using Shadows in a story, it's best to keep these limitations in mind without portraying them as mindless or feral beasts.

Most Shadows are simply the tools of a higher-placed Puppeteer, foot soldiers in their designs. Sometimes a Shadow might be the target themselves, harvested by other agents of the conspiracy for the magical properties of its internal organs. Others might be the rejected results of a failed attempt at world domination. A Shadow could even be the template for a new species of monster that might be used to carry out the Puppeteer's future goals. Shadows are also the easiest of the monsters in this collection to use in a story that is completely divorced from any conspiracy.

In terms of play, Shadows could be resolved in two to four hours of play: a single session. These can be a great introduction to the World of Darkness, and a single session might constitute the whole story. In a conspiracy-focused chronicle, the Shadows could be merely the first evidence on their corkboard. At first, the cell may not even realize what they just defeated. The Shadow could be

what awakened their Drive in the first place. By the time they encounter another Shadow they may learn of a conspiracy.

Rewards

Shadows usually reward a Hunter cell with a powerful but limited tool that enhances their ability to tackle other monsters. If a suggested reward is inappropriate for your cell, then the Storyteller should feel empowered to change it as they see fit. A good substitute reward from defeating a Shadow would be improving a Relationship Map connection that came up in the story (or adding one of the Hunting Partners from Chapter One). Shadows are also a great way to introduce a Hunter cell to a conspiracy. Their links to other aspects of any conspiracy can allow a cell to gradually unravel the truth as it exists in your game.

It had started to rain, of course. The ripples on the glass made it harder to see out of the windscreen. Jed didn't seem bothered, but Sally couldn't see a thing. She dug out her phone from her pocket.

"I should see if Glenn has found anything yet," she said, receiving a grunt of affirmation in reply. She called Glenn's number and he picked up in moments. He must have left the ringer on.

"Sally? How are you guys doing?" Glenn whispered. "Tell me you haven't gone in there yet."

"No, all quiet here. That is, when I can get Jed to stop talking—you know how he is."

"Don't make me laugh; the security guys might be coming back soon," Glenn joked. "But we've found the files after some mild breaking and entering. The warehouse building hasn't been actually owned for decades. It's just been passed along with company assets a few times, and no one has done anything with it. If I were a monster, I'd think it would make a pretty good lair."

"That all you got?"

"Sorry, just the place. No way we're getting into any of the police files without some help. But we checked into another couple of places nearby and that warehouse is still the best fit. Everywhere else that's empty has some development interest. That means a lot of people in suits visiting at random times to check things over. Not so quiet. If something in that area took those kids, my guess is they took them there."

Sally cut the call, and angrily stuffed her phone back into her pocket.

"Dammit. Glenn got nothing. What a waste of time it was, getting that access."

"We didn't get lucky this time, but that doesn't mean the research was a waste. You need to know what you're dealing with—they're all different."

"A monster is a monster..."

"No it goddamn well ain't," Jed said, raising his voice for the first time since she'd known him. "I suppose you're going to say all politicians are the same next, are you? They might look alike and do things alike, but there is not a single one that's the same as any other. They've all got history, and knowing that history is often the only way you might find a way to kill the damn thing. Before it kills you, that is. You can strap on as many guns as you like, but if you head in without some understanding, you're going in unarmed."

Consuming Panics

Sorcerous Creation



u/Anonymous

...

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself, they say. Bullshit. I say embrace fear. Fear will keep you alive.

118

2.1K

41K



Elements: Beliefs, Politics, Fear, Manifestation of darkness, Infection, Gun violence, Grooming/Pedophilia, Child abuse, Violent crime, Harming mundane humans, Teen suicide

Consuming Panics are fear. No more, no less. Fears so condensed, they take form. That's clearly not a natural process, because Consuming Panics were first documented eight years ago in the case notes of a Hunter named Ema Zaikauskaite. The one Ema encountered was a fear of strangers. It made a nice, safe, middle-class suburb terrified of outsiders creeping into their orderly lives to upend their existences and prey on their families.

The encounter started with a neighborhood watch group, which Ema spoke to a couple of times about animal attacks (her primary targets, at the time, were a couple of local wolf-like cryptids). Over the course of three months Ema watched them turn from useful allies into jumpy obsessives scared of everything. Emails circulated about the identity of a so-called prowler in a white van, who turned out to be a neighbor driving a rental vehicle. A recently bereaved widow bought a firearm for self-defense and three weeks later shot her teenage granddaughter dead after mistaking her for a burglar.

Since Ema shared her experiences with her contacts, the number of documented instances has grown. Documented is, of course, used loosely since Hunters don't exactly work off a wiki. Mentions of entities like the one Ema christened *Stranger Danger* crop up as hearsay and rumor, but it's difficult to tell from secondhand accounts whether they're the entirety of a manifestation, a symptom, or just part of the normal

range of human emotion amplifying in the echo chamber of a community.

Other Hunters have reported fear of an intercontinental nuclear attack driving formerly reasonable people into bunkers, fear of fires prompting communities to set firebreaks that ended up destroying their homes, and even a group of new moms who became so scared of flushed baby wipes congealing into a fatberg that they went on a witch hunt for irresponsible flushers.



Consuming Panics have all the hallmarks of sorcerers and their creations: abstract, immaterial, hard to define. That's sort of true. They seem to be the progeny of **Timor** (see p. 131), who is really a sorcerer's creation itself. In practice that doesn't mean much to Hunters except that sorcerers, if they know any, might have a handle on how to fight them. Panics are not just manifested, they are self-perpetuating and self-replicating.

Each generation of Consuming Panic is a little different from its parent. Some are facets of a fear, the fear of coastal flooding rather than climate change, or fear that immigrants are reducing available housing stock instead of the fear of their presence. Others are developments of a fear, incorporating new evidence, not necessarily real or accurate evidence for a new twist on an old theme.

Consuming Panics exist to corrupt those who share some of the fear they are made of. They seek out a group of human beings who are naturally inclined to believe them, burrow in among them, and fan the flames of those fears. They latch onto a specific, often extremely niche fear but they don't start out so tightly defined.

The more communities a Consuming Panic works its way through, the more focused it becomes, and the more similar manifestations look to one another. It works faster, but that extra power is offset by the relative ease of identifying and tracking it. For example, a fear of outsiders might zero in on unfounded fears about a child pornography ring among the global elite. The next time it crops up, it's grooming gangs. The next time, it's a fear that a specific middle school teacher is molesting kids. Once a Consuming Panic finds its niche, it stays there; it doesn't have a choice, its manifestation and the fears that feed it become its nature.

Very broadly, the top-level taxonomy of Consuming Panics includes outsiders, apocalypse, invasion, disease, predators, and manipulation. Panics never manifest as anything so generalized; the more specific a fear is, the more it weighs on people's minds. This taxonomy's only useful for classifying what fear might be at the heart of a community that beckons and then feeds Consuming Panics. It can help Hunters resolve Consuming Panic encounters too; understanding that a fear of gentrification arises from a fear of invasion (of destruction and forced change rather than outsiders themselves or the fear of the presence of something

alien) can help a Hunter figure out how to deal with it.

Once Consuming Panics are fully embedded, taking root in the minds of a group of people, they become all-consuming. Thinking about the fear, discussing it, or taking action to address it all feed the Panic. It encourages victims to communicate their fears to one another almost endlessly; a mixture of human nature and the Consuming Panic's powers turn them into a victim's entire personality.

The fear itself poses no threat, it's what people do in the name of assuaging it that causes harm. They turn on their perceived enemy or commit great harm in the name of preventing the danger they fear may come to pass. There was, for instance, a group of farmers whose firebreak burned down their homes. Another cell encountered a bunker-building network that killed off every contractor who knew where their secret shelters were.

Consuming Panics have a physical form, albeit an invisible one, and that means they can be hurt and killed just like anything else. They're resilient, but especially vulnerable to the power of language, and while they can be destroyed, they don't feel pain and they're not scared of destruction. They'd prefer continued existence, and they do their best to escape from physical confrontations when they're losing but they're not motivated by fear. A cell can't use fear to force a Consuming Panic into bad decisions, for example.

The best way to destroy a Consuming Panic is to argue it into nonexistence. They thrive on arguments, so initiating a social conflict is entirely possible. Once the Consuming Panic has lost all its Willpower, it fades away. If the opposite happens and their opponent loses instead, they're infected and turned into an Ideologue (see p. 40). Sometimes ignoring a Consuming Panic is the best way to be rid of it, but that doesn't destroy them and just makes them move onto someone else. They are especially hard to ignore anyway, being very good at needling their targets into engaging with them.

Here's the real problem. Just because a Panic is dead, the idea it coalesced around isn't. Unless the damage that killed it was reasoned argument it will be back.

Consuming Panics don't present a deadly physical threat. They use people for that. More powerful Consuming Panics, or those that are deeply embedded in a community, have humans at their command who

are willing to die for them. The Consuming Panics might not even have to ask.

General Difficulty: 3/1

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 6, Mental 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 4, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Leadership 8, Persuasion (Debate) 8, Politics 7

Notes/Other Traits:

For more detail on Command, Invisibility, and Terrify see **Hunter**, p.167–168.

Infectious Ideology: Humans regularly exposed to the Consuming Panic become Ideologues. Each time a target engages with the Consuming Panic in a social conflict, the loser reduces their Willpower by 1. If the target's Willpower reaches 0 they become an Ideologue under the control of the Consuming Panic. If the Consuming Panic is reduced to 0 Willpower, it dissipates. For Storyteller characters, it usually takes one week per point of Willpower for a human's conversion to be complete, at which point they're obsessively in service to the idea the Consuming Panic represents and willing to die or kill for the cause. A Consuming Panic also loses 1 Willpower each time one of its Ideologues is killed or freed (and regains 1 when it claims a new Ideologue). For this reason, few Consuming Panics risk having more Ideologues than they have Willpower.

Command (7): A Consuming Panic's Command only works at full strength (7) on Ideologues committed to it. But it can affect Ideologues who serve a related Consuming Panic at a lower strength (4). It cannot command other beings. Consuming Panics can also use this ability at full strength to force any target to continue to engage them in a social conflict.

Invisibility: Consuming Panics are naturally invisible. However, they become visible for a round every time they lose a point of Willpower. It can also become visible at will (to use its Terrify power).

Intellectual Immortality: Destroying a Consuming Panic's body is possible, but only a temporary solution. To fully erase it from existence it must be reduced to 0 Willpower and starved of support. Removing its support means freeing or killing its Ideologues (and each one freed or killed reduces the Consuming Panic's Willpower by 1). If its physical form is destroyed and it still has an Ideologue, it reforms in (6 minus the current

Danger) weeks in another location, within a few miles of its last manifestation. The Consuming Panic might instead be carried to an entirely new area via a simple conversation with someone traveling outside the area in the moments of its death.

Terrify (4): The Consuming Panic must be visible to use its Terrify ability, but once it does the effects linger until the end of the scene even if the Consuming Panic becomes invisible. Use of this power is considered social combat.

Whisper: A Consuming Panic can send telepathic messages (and use its Command ability) to its Ideologues. Every Ideologue it can see receives the same message at the same time through the group mind.

Goals and Objectives:

- Consuming Panics aren't sapient. They don't make careful plans with numbered items and sub-items. It's not clear whether they have goals at all, any more than a rainstorm does. That doesn't mean Consuming Panics operate randomly. Their actions are just products of instinct rather than rational thought.
- There are regular, predictable consequences of having a Consuming Panic around, and other monsters (or humans) can profit from them. Using Consuming Panics in stories is usually more a matter of deciding what the person using them wants, and how that person tries to manipulate Consuming Panics to achieve those goals. Remember, these people don't have to be correct. They don't know what Consuming Panics are and they're operating on their best guesses at how they work.
- Consuming Panics seek out large groups of people, the larger the better. Their powers work best when they're bolstered by repetition, so they're attracted to communities. An audience where information flows one way (speaker to listener; writer to reader) isn't as germane to Consuming Panics as a network where information is constantly passed to-and-fro between members, amplified, adapted, and reinforced in the process. Consuming Panics seek out networks. Schools and colleges, workplaces, extended families, hobby societies, and religious congregations all attract Consuming Panics. Online communities make Consuming Panics

IDEOLOGUE

Ideologues are the people infected by Consuming Panics. They range from avid supporters to people willing to die for their completely unfounded beliefs, and the progression from one end of the spectrum to the other can be rapid. We're talking weeks, not months. However dangerous an idea the Consuming Panic infects others with, it's abstract. That goes for Consuming Panics too. It's the people serving them who are most likely to hurt and obstruct Hunters.

Ideologues don't know what they are. They don't recognize any external influence on their thoughts. As far as they're concerned, they, and their group of like-minded peers, are the only people thinking clearly. Everyone else has bought into lies and refuses to see the truth.

They look like normal humans because, fundamentally, they are. They like signs that they're part of the in-group, so they often wear identifying markers: badges, similar outfits or colors, or even adopting similar aesthetics that indicate they're part of something. Feeling threatened by anyone in uniform might help Hunters avoid Ideologues and Consuming Panics, but it's not a particularly nuanced definition. The easiest way to identify an Ideologue or group of them is their talking points. They say the same things, in the same ways, and they often can't articulate the opinion in any other way.

These traits are for a "standard" Ideologue, if there is such a thing. The Storyteller might use any standard Storyteller character Traits that match the occupation of the Ideologue and just apply the additional powers and abilities. Not everyone under the influence of a Consuming Panic is an Ideologue, only those whose Willpower has been fully overcome. Among any group of humans who seem under a Consuming Panic's thrall, only one or two will be full Ideologues.

General Difficulty: 3 / 2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 4, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 9

Exceptional Dice Pools: Choose two, at 7 dice.

Notes/Other Traits:

Groupthink: The difficulty to change an Ideologue's opinion on a matter influenced by a Consuming Panic is equal to the number of Ideologues present in the scene.

Free Your Mind: To break free of the Consuming Panic's influence, an Ideologue must have no contact with the Panic itself or any of its fellow Ideologues for 1 week per Willpower. Stronger-willed victims are harder to hook initially, but more loyal and stubborn once inducted. Those who have not become full Ideologues recover 1 Willpower per day instead.

Devoted Servant: To represent their fanatical devotion, Ideologues add the current Danger to the dice pool on any test to advance the Panic's agenda, including hurting people who stand in their way.

particularly difficult to root out. Information travels fast, and it's not confined to one physical location.

- To the extent they can be said to want anything, Consuming Panics want to be heard. If the network they're embedded in ignores them, they often move on. There are literally billions of other targets in the world. Anyone trying to control them can only try to keep the Consuming Panics around by making their desired audience more receptive (by softening them up with real or fake evidence, repeating relevant talking points, and otherwise bringing group conversation and focus back to the Consuming Panics).

- Cog has posted theories that Consuming Panics want to be *true*. For example, a Consuming Panic born of the fear of violent crime is drawn to places where there is actually violent crime.

Appearance: When visible, Consuming Panics appear broadly human. They're about six feet tall, bipedal, with limbs in roughly a human configuration. They're chalk white, rubbery things that clearly do not have real human muscular and skeletal structures under their skins. They don't have faces, just faint topography suggestive of eye sockets, a nose, and a mouth.

Consuming Panics feel a certain affinity with humanity, so they gather clothes and accessories haphazardly; ill-fitting garments that serve to exaggerate rather than obscure how unnatural they are. They

often acquire the same indicators of group membership as the Ideologues who unwittingly serve them: wearing the same religious symbol or carrying the same holy book; traces of a school or employment uniform; the same brand of upmarket athleisure wear everyone in the Homeowners' Association wears. A Consuming Panic that's made its way through several communities may have traces of all of them.

AN ALTERNATE INTERPRETATION

Rather than a creation per se, Consuming Panics might be manifestations of fear that exist... somewhere. Summoned to the world by a sorcerer, or perhaps a vampire or werewolf with similar powers, the spirits feed and grow until their purpose has been fulfilled or they are dismissed.

In Stories

Corrupting a cell's own information and support networks with Consuming Panics is very effective. People who work with Hunters are often a little on edge, so a new conspiracy theory or cause is easy to miss. In fact, those looking for conspiracies are often more susceptible to the whispers of a Consuming Panic confirming their paranoias. The Ideologues might even look like useful allies; fear of a vampire preying on the campus, for example, is a fear that could look very well-founded to a cell.

While the Storyteller should take care not to unduly remove the players' agency, the Hunters themselves might become the target of a Consuming Panic. Some characters might have views or weaknesses a Consuming Panic can exploit, creating a very personal plotline for that character. In a storyline like this, they probably need an outsider—a trusted Relationship Map connection, for example—to get them to critically inspect their own behavior.

Consuming Panics work best, and are most insidious, when they're based, not on a total fiction, but a fear with a grain of truth in it. If there really is a Peeping Tom watching local teens; if there really is a nasty virus going around that could become an epidemic; under those circumstances the initial fear seems reasonable. It can take players, let alone characters, longer to see there's something unusual about its escalation.

Fully destroying a Consuming Panic is hard, as it is difficult to tell their influence from many fringe group ideologies (although such groups are fertile ground for Consuming Panics). The key to hunting them is seeking out Ideologues. Those under the thrall of a Consuming Panic become almost obsessive about consuming media that backs up the twisted view instilled by the Consuming Panic. They are drawn together in groups to protest or discuss these ideas. So where people are becoming radicalized, and more reliant on social media and fringe websites for their news (often to the exclusion of all other sources), a Consuming Panic may be near.

Encountering a Consuming Panic

- A train wreck saturates a several-mile radius in toxic chemicals. People naturally fear groundwater contamination and an impact on crops and livestock. Soon there's a campaign for an investigation led by scientists from a local nonprofit. Investigation soon becomes pure fear, amidst increasingly implausible claims that contaminated crops and water could do anything from increase cancer risk (entirely valid) to rapidly mutate living humans into toxic monsters (...less valid). The situation very quickly escalates first to harming farmers, salting and burning their land, and finally to a quasi-occult blood cult attempting to purify farmland through human sacrifice. It's the kind of fear that could easily grip an entire rural community for a classic folk-horror feel. For an added kick, the train wreck is collateral damage from one of the cell's previous Hunts, such as one that had a climactic fight scene near a railway line.
- Another day, another threat of global conflict, another minute to midnight. A high school history class learns about the horrors of various nuclear futures; the threats, the policies, the chance that diplomacy might fail to avert disaster, and what the world might look like afterwards. At first they're just morbid, and most people would agree, looking at the



COMMUNITY SAFETY MEETING

Saturday 6pm—Oakley Park

CONCERNED ABOUT:

Streetlight Situation
Been followed at night
Missing pets

ARE THESE CONNECTED?

Join Linda, Pete and others
for a FRANK DISCUSSION of our concerns

chances of imminent global apocalypse they have a right to be. Unlike the other fears Consuming Panics prey on, there's nothing the teenagers can do about this one, or so they think. Eventually the feelings of powerlessness and depression begin to get the better of them until they feel there is only one way to make it all stop. A spike of teen suicides, the victims all adamant the world was imminently about to end in a mushroom cloud and radiation sickness. It could look like prophecy, sorcery, or a number of other supernatural interventions, whatever the Hunters attribute it to it's likely to get them paying attention. This threat can be made more widespread by focusing it around players of a new post-apocalyptic video game rather than a school class. Just remember the less location-centric a Consuming Panic's power base is, the harder it is to fully eradicate. You can limit the scope by putting the game in closed beta testing.

- With so much information coming from the TV and the internet, it is hard to know what to believe. This is especially true when it comes to complex issues and science that seems to contradict the tenets of a community's faith. This time it's the fear of playing God. A church group holds a charity drive to get a parishioner into a private hospital where they can receive experimental treatment for a rare, terminal illness. It's successful, and while the patient is undergoing treatment the church newsletter is full of positive news. Then, just before the patient returns to the community, people start whispering that maybe it's not right to preserve life at all costs, maybe if God wants to call someone unto Him that should be allowed. First the patient is shunned, then insulted, then threatened. It soon becomes abundantly clear their life is in danger, but they're not the only one. Once they've dealt with this monster, they're coming for the entire medical team who treated them. It's less torches and pitchforks, more hunting rifles and improvised explosives, and the armed mob is marching on a hospital. If there's an opportunity to do so, the Storyteller should make the patient who receives this miracle cure an Ally or Relationship Map connection of the cell.

- The fear that you can't ever really know someone is a classic. In this small, densely populated city district where every neighbor is a stranger, the Consuming Panic mutates into the fear that those strangers aren't even humans. It starts with the local cops: they go from believing criminals are barely human to believing the blank, hostile stares they see every time they respond to a call don't belong to humans at all. They believe there are aliens among them. The belief spreads through the whole community, with everyone alert to possible alien infiltrators among them. Anyone who deviates from the mainstream is a target, and the community fractures. The Ideologues eventually divide until it becomes every person for themselves; families even turn on each other as they see more alien features everywhere. In that sense, this problem solves itself, but it does so at an immense cost. And if the Hunters don't deal with the Consuming Panic, they face an entire group of people trying to murder them.
- Remember that if the Hunters fail to fully isolate the Ideologues and prevent the spread of the idea, any of these Consuming Panics could manifest again in future. When that happens, Hunters get a horrible sense of history repeating itself. Maybe when they face the enemy again they'll act faster and more decisively, wiping it out for good.

Additional Dangers and Victims

- Compilations of social media messages are often the first sign of a Consuming Panic's presence. Usually, the language in social media movements changes over time. People come up with catchier slogans, point out problematic language, or just tailor talking points to their own backgrounds and speech patterns. That doesn't happen when Consuming Panics are involved. The core message is always repeated in the same words as the first time it appears, no matter who's parroting it or what medium it appears in. Note that exposing players to

a phrase they associate with a Consuming Panic they thought they'd defeated is a great way to get them engaged in a story (and maybe a little afraid).

- Because Panics often embed in communities, those groups' archives are often excellent places to spot their presence. Minutes from church group meetings, the messages pinned on a dorm's noticeboard, or even an email chain from the HOA can show evidence of Consuming Panics' presence. Juxtaposing evidence with the mundane content of those documents can be exceptionally unsettling, especially if they're formats your players are familiar with.
- News coverage of riots or rallies are relevant pieces of evidence. That's true for any Quarry, but coverage of Consuming Panics usually focuses on the speed and intensity with which the driving idea behind the movement took root.
- The Abstracts (short summaries) of academic journal articles are a rich source of evidence. Sociolinguistics, media analysis, and political research may all stumble across Consuming Panics. Mock them up as a web page if possible, complete with frustrating requirements to register and pay a hefty fee to read the whole, tantalizing article.

Breadcrumbs

- One of the traditional methods for following the conspiracy is to see who it benefits. While the Consuming Panic is causing trouble, what other entities use the resulting chaos to make their moves? Some of these might be entirely human fronts for supernatural Quarries, such as politicians or businesses benefiting from the hysteria.
- The most obvious connection Consuming Panics have is to Timor (see p. 131), which may have been responsible for their creation. Still, it may be more interesting to have steps in between, intermediaries and other puppets who advance Timor's agenda in a better planned, more conscious manner than what the Consuming Panics are

capable of. Such intermediaries might be found among a community, recognizable by the way they seek to expressly shoot down any resistance to the Consuming Panic.

- The presence of a Consuming Panic must often be deduced from the increasingly paranoid, frantic communications of a group falling under its influence. Such communications, sometimes openly available on social media, may also contain hints to other entities.

Rewards

Potential Recruits: Once a Consuming Panic is defeated, it leaves behind a cult-like network of believers with a sudden vacuum of belief. Once someone's been so committed to an idea it's hard to go back. Monster hunting could be their next cause. They'll probably never be Hunters, but they're a network of informants, gun-wielding backup, places to crash, or potential cash cows. This might provide a narrative reason (and Experience cost reduction) for a gain in Contacts, Resources or Watchmen for a Safe House.

New Fleet Perk (Wagon Train): If a large community has been freed from a Consuming Panic they might not have much, but they'll probably have a lot of vehicles and drivers. They're typical, but what they lack in strength they make up for in numbers. Having a bunch of similar, discreet vehicles is extremely useful for laying multiple false trails, discreetly moving goods, or making a Quarry so confused they don't know where to look.

Researchers (Library): The Hunter can call in their network of loyal supporters to help slog through large volumes of information. These might include some new followers who aren't ready for fieldwork yet. A bunch of untrained enthusiasts are better at volume than nuance, but still helpful. For the next two Hunts the cell gains a two-dice bonus to any test involving the Library Asset, but this does not grant any Perks for research.

From: vicky.c@bartlettgrosvnor.co.uk
To: Laura M; James Llewellyn; all-headoffice@bartlettgrosvnor.co.uk
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: New Cleaners

Laura, James,

I have passed on your very reasonable questions regarding what Sunshine Services is in their chemicals. They have not addressed our concerns and I think you were right in your original course of action. If you have to ask more firmly rest assured these reasonable questions concerns will not result in HR getting involved.

Vicky

From: lauram@bartlettgrosvnor.co.uk
To: Vicky C; James Llewellyn; all-headoffice@bartlettgrosvnor.co.uk
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: New Cleaners

I have asked several reasonable questions and I would like to know what is in their chemicals.
Laura

From: james@bartlettgrosvnor.co.uk
To: Vicky C; all-headoffice@bartlettgrosvnor.co.uk
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: New Cleaners

Vicky,

Maybe if they would simply answer our reasonable questions about what is in their chemicals we wouldn't have to resort to these measures.

James

From: vicky.c@bartlettgrosvnor.co.uk
To: all-headoffice@bartlettgrosvnor.co.uk
Subject: Re: Re: Re: New Cleaners

Hi everybody,

I'm very disappointed to have to send this email after my previous message on the subject. Our new cleaning contractor, Sunshine Services, have passed on several more reports of Bartlett Grosvenor staff interfering with their staff's work on the premises. These contractors are our colleagues, please treat them with the same respect you would wish to receive.

For the avoidance of doubt please do not:

Prevent cleaners from accessing any areas

Prevent cleaners from LEAVING any areas—this is grounds for immediate escalation to HR

Interact or tamper with any of cleaners' equipment or chemicals—THIS IS A HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUE

Moonlorn

Werewolf

Elements: Hunting, Despair, Torment, Violence, Cursed, Suicide



"She says she can set you free, but she never deceives you about what that means. It's like she can smell the desperation on you, sense the torment and the ache for it to all be over. They say she weeps as she takes your soul, but whether that's for you or because that's when the killing begins is hard to say."

Moonlorn are an uncommon form of werewolf many of whom believe that they suffer under a curse from Selene, Goddess of the moon. This curse restricts their shapeshifting ability, which some believe might be due to a flawed attempt to "cure" them by repressing

the beast within. Others believe it is an early form of punishment for those Werewolves who had broken faith with Selene, or betrayed their peers, or who could not be trusted to maintain some control over their more murderous urges. Whatever the origin, the existence of the Moonlorn makes one thing clear, you cannot completely suppress a being's true nature, and sooner or later, it finds a way out.

3 REASONS TO BECOME MOONLORN

- They killed another Werewolf, which could be over territory or leadership.
- They reject Selene and refuse to offer her supplication for the gifts she has bestowed.
- They leave their pack and reject other Werewolves.

In most respects, except for their ability to change form, Moonlorn are identical to werewolves. While the Moonlorn ("Selene's") curse suppresses their ability to change forms, it doesn't change the nature of the werewolf in question. They are still driven by an instinct to embrace their animal nature, but unable to change form and express it. That is unless they can make a "blood covenant" to trade the life of a willing partner in return for a promise to deliver them vengeance. If the Moonlorn cannot make such a pact the fury can no longer be constrained by the curse and

THE CURSE SPREADS

Many among the Moonlorn believe that Selene's curse is magical or spiritual in nature. As it stops a Werewolf shapeshifting, it may have been an attempt to release a Werewolf from their bestial nature or as a punishment for Werewolves who abused their gifts. But it doesn't work especially well given the way a Moonlorn can circumvent it for a brief time with a blood covenant, and that the longer they spend between transformations, the more their animal nature asserts itself in their appearance and mannerisms. Whatever the reason, the flaws in the curse suggest it was an early attempt to suppress transformation. But as there seems to be no further upgrade, most occultists believe this is as good as it gets. No matter what you try, or how powerful the magic, the true nature of things always reasserts itself.

Unfortunately, this wisdom is often ignored by those who think they can be the one to succeed where others have failed. So Selene's curse has been bestowed or imposed in many different forms in many different lands, for centuries. While the forms of the ritual and the intentions may be very different, the effects often turn out the same, although some may have additional or even more twisted results.

In the modern age, scientific experiments with Werewolves sometimes end up creating Moonlorn. Injecting them with a new special serum, or subjecting them to painful experiments can have the same effects as a powerful shaman performing a ritual. Just as with anything involving humans, the scientists might be genuinely trying to help what they think are tormented individuals or simply trying to experiment and control a supernatural force they do not truly comprehend. Either way, they rarely understand what they are dealing with and Moonlorn or some even more tormented variant are often the result (if the Werewolf survives).

the Moonlorn's nature finally breaks free. They lose all control, assume their most dangerous form and, led only by feral instinct, hunt and kill until they are sated.

Freedom from Selene's curse is bought with a life, and then only briefly. To take that life the Moonlorn must create a blood covenant with the person offering themselves. In return for their life, the Moonlorn will kill someone for them. To make such a deal there must be real hatred on the part of the sacrifice. They must burn with righteous fury over this need for vengeance or it will not be strong enough to seal the blood covenant. Once the deal is made the Moonlorn regains their ability to change and hunt, but must execute the agreed target.

Unfortunately, finding someone with the right levels of anger and vengeance to make the blood covenant is difficult and can take time. Preferred targets tend to be people already dying of an illness who seek revenge on their rivals, or even the medical establishment. It might be an abused spouse who wants to ensure their ex-partner can't hurt anyone else again. Moonlorn also look among the lost and the desperate who might be convinced their lives are not worth anything more than the revenge they can take. So most Moonlorn prowl the darker parts of the streets looking for the lonely and the desperate, and push them towards a final despair.

General Difficulty: 6 / 2 (werewolf form), 3 / 2 (human form)

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 10: 4, Social 5, Mental 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 10: 4, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl 12: 6, Insight 7, Persuasion 7, Subterfuge 6

Notes/Other Traits:

Evaluation: Moonlorn are good at spotting the weaknesses of others. Once per scene, when a player's character is in conversation with a Moonlorn they must make a Composure + Subterfuge test (Difficulty 3) to hide their weakness. On a failure the Moonlorn will know one of the Hunter's Flaws. Subsequent conversations can reveal further Flaws.

Whisper: If a Moonlorn knows a character's Flaw, they can use it against them. This might be engineering a situation where their Flaw might be relevant (such as giving drugs to a character with the Flaw Substance

THE BLOOD COVENANT IS STRUCK

When an agreement is reached, the Moonlorn consumes the bargainer's life essence by literally consuming their body, or at least a significant parts of it. The experience for the bargainer is painless, sometimes even euphoric as they let go of everything in their life. They may leave behind a mutilated corpse, but the expression on its face is often joyful. Bargainers who die in this way cannot become ghosts or spirits.

Abuse). But if they are talking to the character they can batter their self-confidence with reference to the Flaw and how the character cannot overcome it. When in such a situation the Moonlorn gains a one die bonus to all test pools against that Hunter.

Werewolf: Moonlorn have all the same powers as a Werewolf (see *Hunter*, p. 180) with the exception of shapeshift: Vulnerability (Fire), Vulnerability (Silver), Claws and Fangs, Onslaught, Regenerate (1), Resilience and Terrify (8). Apart from Regenerate and Vulnerability, all these abilities can only be used in their non-human form.

Blood Covenant: The Moonlorn may make a bargain with a willing victim to take their life-force in return for a promise to take revenge on someone of their choosing. Both parties must be aware of the nature of the deal, and it must be made willingly and not under duress. So the bargainer must be aware they are giving their life and the Moonlorn must know the nature of the revenge they are agreeing to. However the bargainer need not reveal every aspect of the target, and the Moonlorn may manipulate the insecurities of the bargainer to get their consent.

If the conversation is between Storyteller characters it is up to the Storyteller to determine the result rather than a dice roll. If a player's character is involved it should be roleplayed and the player decides if their character is convinced instead of a dice roll.

Killing Compulsion: Once a blood covenant is struck the Moonlorn regains their power to change shape, but the time is limited. Every other day from when the blood covenant is struck but remains unfulfilled, the Moonlorn loses 1 Willpower. If the vengeance is fulfilled this loss becomes one Willpower every four days. None of the standard ways to replenish Willpower will function during this time. Once the Moonlorn's

Willpower drops to 1 they lose their Regenerate ability. Once the Moonlorn's Willpower reaches 0 they lose the shapeshift ability again and must make a new blood covenant at which time they regain their Regenerate ability but their Willpower then replenishes normally. If the vengeance is still incomplete before this time their maximum Willpower is reduced by one permanently. They also lose 1 Health level until they can make a new blood covenant.

Goals and Objectives:

- Moonlorn burn with a growing, gnawing hunger to transform and run free, and it is a constant drive to everything they do. For them, their body is just wrong and they want to tear open their skin and escape it. The longer they go without being able to change, the worse the feeling gets. They become more animal; act more on instinct. The more powerful the urge to transform the more their bloodlust grows as well. The more they have been denied a change, the more they let go of their conscious mind to instinct when they do. By this time, their instincts are hungrier and so more driven to hunt prey and tear it apart.

SIGNS A MOONLORN NEEDS TO UNLEASH THEIR FURY

- They're eating meat. Lots of meat.
- They leave a trail of property damage in their wake.
- They spend time watching people, potential victims, with a predatory gaze.
- Their hair becomes thicker, fuller, and unkempt.
- They stare at the moon longingly. They deface images of the night sky, particularly the moon.
- Prey animals within a city block are on edge and attempt to flee.

- To make a deal with someone, Moonlorn need to know where to look, and it isn't easy to find a target. It is difficult to talk someone into giving up their life, even for heartfelt revenge, even for someone without any hope. Even a peaceful death is still a death, and the urge to hold on and hope something will improve can be powerful, even in people on the edge. They will never see the promised revenge either, so to be convinced by a Moonlorn to give up their life, the person must

hate the target of the revenge to a pathological degree or trust the Moonlorn explicitly. This means that Moonlorn very often need to talk to lots of people before they find someone they might have a chance at convincing to take the deal. Even then, they will have to invest time and effort, which might take a few nights.

- To get someone to agree to give up their life, a Moonlorn needs to be highly manipulative. They can't outright lie, but they can twist the truth. To convince someone to take the deal, they need to convince them that their life is either meaningless, hopeless, or both, which requires the destruction of any remaining self-confidence. While they might talk calmly and pleasantly, every sentence will play to their target's flaws, weaknesses, and despair. In game terms, they spend their time reducing the target's Willpower until the target is incapacitated.

The other option for the Moonlorn is to target someone suffering a painful death from a long-term illness. The option of a peaceful and painless death can be a tempting offer to someone in chronic pain. However, the Moonlorn still needs to get the victim to trust that they can deliver what they promise. There is also the added problem that people in this situation are usually under medical or family supervision and care, making it hard to get time with them alone.

Appearance: When they are not in their wolf form, Moonlorn look just like anyone else. However, as the fury gradually builds, they become more animalistic and prone to violence. They get hairier, more unkempt, less concerned about social niceties like politeness and not growling at people. Most try to fit in with the communities where they will find prey, often those who live on the street. The constant cycle of hunger, stealing life, and transforming makes it hard to keep a job anyway, and so many keep on the move and stay in one place only for a few days. Most find they have to move on when they start to get recognized as the last person to talk to several people who have recently died.

When a Moonlorn transforms, they are truly terrifying. They rarely have enough control to take on a pure wolf shape, so they usually become a horrific and more dangerous half-wolf. However, their cursed heritage is obvious in this form. Their fur is matted and often

patchy and thin. They appear emaciated and hungry, ravenous like a wolf in winter desperate for something to eat. Nevertheless, despite their more desperate appearance, they are just as strong as any other werewolf.

In Stories

Moonlorn offer a certain duality as a monster. The first clues about the existence of one will be someone talking to the lonely and the desperate. They might even pose as someone friendly, although those they speak to will remember the conversation bringing up all their past traumas. Moonlorn don't have a supernatural ability to uncover flaws, just great experience and empathy. Even so, they might initially appear to be a magician or an energy vampire.

Then, without warning, there is a trail of bloodshed and bodies. Once they have stolen the life they need, the Moonlorn becomes violence incarnate, cutting a swathe through anything between them and their new mission. The approaches are so different that Hunters might believe they are dealing with partners rather than a single creature.

Individual Moonlorn can also be very different, as can their goals and objectives once they make a deal. While the motives of the Moonlorn are clear, gaining power to shapechange, the revenge they agree to perform for their victim might be anything as long as it involves killing. But it is possible for vengeance to be subtle, and if the Hunters have enough clues, they might be able to get ahead of the Moonlorn before it completes its promise. Time is not on their side, though. A Moonlorn is desperate to hunt and run free, and every day they have not fulfilled their blood covenant, they lose power and energy. So they tend to leap into action the moment they can.

A Moonlorn can also be cast as a victim as much as a monster in the chronicle. Taking a human life to fulfill their needs is not especially moral. But if they are truthful and find the right people, they might convince themselves they are offering a peaceful relief and not committing murder. They might consider what they do a service, not a sin. However, there may also be a certain amount of self-deception. It is much easier to convince yourself to carry on taking life if you can deceive yourself that it's all for the common good. Even if a

Moonlorn knows what they are doing is wrong, they may be trying to simply do the least amount of harm. If they don't take life to allow themselves a controlled transformation, they will cause more murder and harm with an uncontrolled one when the hunger has built up too much. They may rationalize this as a necessary evil to prevent them doing something worse. But the idea that the wolf will eventually break free might not be true. Certainly the hunger and fury might increase, even to a painful level, but that still might not force a transformation. The Moonlorn might not have tested the premise, scared of what they might do. What might they do if they discovered the truth?

All of this also depends on what the Moonlorn themselves believes. Those who are the result of a curse or some form of experimentation may have little idea how it all works. Some may have additional quirks depending on the science or magic that created them and their experiences. What they have established as a pattern might be just what works for them. With a little more understanding they might be able to make some changes, or discover they have been deluded all this time. Those who have had the curse imposed on them because of a crime may be far more knowledgeable but less repentant. Are they seeking revenge on those who cursed them, reveling in the torment they cause or actually trying to find a way to make amends?

Finally, the question the Storyteller needs to ask is, "Can they be cured?" Is there a way to lift the curse and restore them to a "normal" werewolf or even make them fully human? If they regain control over their transformations, will they use that for good or evil? Will the Hunters have freed an innocent person or created another monster they will need to face?

Encountering Moonlorn

- The Hunters are asked to help a rich businessman defend himself from a monster haunting his property. For the last two nights his mansion out of town has been attacked and several of his bodyguards killed in especially brutal ways. Most have been torn apart, and pieces of them left across the grounds in artful arrangements. If the Hunters agree to help they might catch sight of the

monster, but it doesn't attack that night. Instead, during the day the Hunters are contacted by the Moonlorn who is the source of the attacks. They say the businessman is actually a mob boss and a thoroughly unpleasant person and they plan to kill him. The Moonlorn was happy to kill the guy's goons but realized the Hunters might not know who they are protecting, so it is offering them a chance to step aside. Before the hunters make any decision, they might like to find out more about the businessman, and they will discover he is indeed who the Moonlorn says he is. But is it still alright to let him die? The Moonlorn cannot be convinced to stand down though. Not only are they following their blood covenant but they have a limited time to complete the mission. They have already used up too much time with previous attacks, but they wanted the businessman to be scared before finishing him off. Whatever the Hunters decide, they are going to have to pick a side very soon.

- Amanda Lewis, a social worker, asks the cell to investigate someone who has been talking to the homeless she works with. Amanda is a psychologist and counselor and is involved in an outreach program to help homeless people's mental health. Unfortunately, someone is visiting some of her most at-risk clients, making them worse. With only a conversation, they are increasing their anxieties and depression, and Amanda wants them to stop. However, she is worried this is a drug dealer trying to make desperate people feel worse so they can peddle "something to make life easier". However, the weird thing is the person doing this never offers anyone any drugs. Whatever the reason, Amanda is worried the person she is after will be dangerous or connected to organized crime, putting it out of her skill set to deal with (to say nothing of being quite scared). The person Amanda is after is indeed a Moonlorn looking for a victim, but this Moonlorn has no consideration for who they might hurt. They just want to find someone, transform, and cause mayhem. If the Hunters can't find them before they find a willing victim, the streets will become very bloody.

Additional Dangers and Victims

- As they are Werewolves, the presence of a Moonlorn can often mean other werewolves may be operating in the area. They might be some sort of pack that the Moonlorn used to be a part of, or they might be there to make sure the Moonlorn doesn't go too far. As far as Hunters go, they might be unlikely allies if the Moonlorn becomes a common enemy of both. However, the werewolves are quite likely to want the Hunters removed after any alliance to make sure no one knows a Moonlorn was even there.
- Some especially cruel Moonlorn are known to create victims themselves. Instead of searching for the right type of person, they decide to engineer them. They pick someone with moderately low self-esteem and systematically destroy their lives. Some even befriend them so they can strip away all the other aspects of their support network before taking away the last one (themselves) and pushing them over the edge. While this process takes longer, it is more precise and leaves less of a trail. Such Moonlorn are usually sociopaths, and when they transform, they delight in the violence they cause.

Breadcrumbs

- Moonlorn who know about Consuming Panics find them very useful. Panics are good at breaking people down so they can infect them, effectively doing a lot of the preliminary work for a Moonlorn. While Consuming Panics are not cognizant enough to make plots or plans with a Moonlorn, they can both benefit from the activity of the other. So the Hunters might think there is an alliance in place when actually they are just feeding at the same watering hole. Of course, it may not be a coincidence if a Puppeteer is influencing both.
- It is possible the Prophet was responsible for creating a Moonlorn, he certainly knows of their curse and understands how it works. For his own amusement

Dear Mum and Dad

I'm sorry. I know it may be hard to forgive me for what I've put you through, but I really am. I needed to get away from those bitches at school and the church crowd who only ever told me "it would be so nice to see me in a dress one Sunday as I'd look so pretty." I thought I needed to get away from you too. I was right about them but I was wrong about you. I ran away because it felt like the only way I could be me was to tear my skin off and leave it all behind. Turns out I just needed to find a place that didn't tell me what to be, so I could figure it out myself. I know now that you might have listened if I'd felt I could have come to you. Maybe that's on me, maybe it's on you, maybe we all fucked up. I don't know, but I do want you to know I'm sorry.

I've made a lot of mistakes since I left. I know I should have got in touch months ago, if only so you knew I was ok. I wanted to write or call, but the truth was, I wasn't ok. Every time I picked up a phone I realized I'd have to lie and say I was fine, and I'm trying to stop the lies, to me as much as anyone else.

I know this is going to hurt, but if you got this letter, I'm gone. I met someone who can help me, her name is Rachel, but she says the only way she can help me means I won't be around anymore. It feels harsh to say it, but I have to be clear, I'll be dead. I hope the police will find me and let you know, but don't think we are going to be together again.

You see, Rachel has helped me realize I was broken from the start. Some things can't be fixed, not when they have grown so wrong for so long. Rachel helped me see that there wasn't any way to come back from the drugs, and the things I've done to get the drugs. She put it all into perspective for me. My life was over a long time ago, I'm not going to be any use to anyone now. Maybe once I could have been, but there isn't really any time any more. Rachel can give me a way out. It's not going to hurt, she promised. It'll just be like going to sleep. When we do it she can take my life and do something useful with it, something powerful, something good. She's going to tear it all down, all the dealers, all those pusher bastards, before they can mess anyone else up like they messed me up. It's going to be ok, it means I'm going to count for something, and I'm going to be free.

I love you both. I'm sorry
Alex

AUTOPSY REPORT

Mark, this sort of conspiratorial work is beneath you. There's no mystery to this case and you're grasping at straws! I thought you were ready to take the lead on a case but I can see I will have to rethink that assessment. My observations are noted below.

The trauma from animal bites seems like the obvious cause of death does it not? Ascribing it to heart failure is an overreach. The simplest explanation is the best. Even if the physical damage of the missing flesh doesn't seem sufficient to lead to immediate death, the reality of the human body is messy. Sometimes we die from shock and general trauma.

I know you talked to Sarah in toxicology and she specifically flagged to you the unusual absence of vitamins and minerals, as if something had drained the nourishment from the subject. I know you're trying to reach for a narrative that suggests a mystery cause for this death. This makes no sense. Individuals matching the profile of the deceased are often malnourished.

Case Number: #59202/34R
Examining Physician: Dr. Mark Dorries
Name of Deceased (age): Samuel Clegg (45)
Gender/Ethnic Origin: Male/White
Occupation of Deceased: Transient
Identified by: Mary Clegg
Relation to Deceased: Sister

This is about the only observation you managed without pointless elaboration!

Case of Death: Heart Failure

But what of the missing face? Really, maybe that contributed as well?

External Examination:

The body was discovered in a makeshift abode. He was living in a box, is that what you meant to say? among the homeless community with no indication of the time of death. Other community members reported the death to local PD, who brought the body to our department within a matter of hours.

The body showed significant trauma. It looked as if it was been partially eaten by a wild animal, making precise observation of specific injuries difficult. Apart from the poor condition of the body, there were a few cuts and bruises conversant with living in the homeless community, in addition to emaciation and malnourishment.

How many hours? Precision Mark! The police will have at least made some sort of note. Come on, this is basic! You reach for shadows while missing the obvious!

Internal Examination

Significant trauma to the face and right arm. Much of the flesh of the face, including lips, nose, tongue and eyes have been torn away by force. The right arm is largely missing, torn off from the shoulder. There are no clean incisions that would indicate a knife or other sharp instrument.

General appearance upon primary incision is that all organs are present and correctly placed.

Initial appearance matches the expectations for a subject of this age and condition.

Heart appears healthy with good color

Look, I get it. You want to say that there's something strange about this death. That there's a possible explanation for the death that's not just having most of your face and arm eaten away. That this body was too healthy to die so quickly. But really, the trauma was extreme. Even the healthiest person can die from that.

Liver has slight discoloration and is small but not abnormally so.

Lymph nodes are in good condition

Lungs in good condition but show signs of wear and possibly asthma

Spleen, gallbladder, kidney all as expected

Digestive system shows signs of acid damage consistent with malnutrition but otherwise undamaged

Bone structure and skeleton all appear complete and undamaged. Evidence that left arm has been broken in the past and not healed correctly, but not enough to cause subject any further problems

Toxicology

Samples of blood, urine and spinal fluid were sent for testing. Report shows trace amounts of low quality narcotics. Low amounts of vitamins and minerals show a general malnourishment of the subject.

Conclusion

Despite the significant external trauma to the body, I have to conclude a heart attack of an unknown cause was the cause of death. Further investigation is warranted as the lack of nutrients in the body is abnormal and suggests contributing factors that we're not capable of analyzing.

This is a ridiculous, overreach. You have a mangled body. What more do you need? Maybe the heart attack was from fear. We don't need this sort of theorizing in what's obviously an open and shut case!

and education, he might either try to duplicate the Moonlorn curse scientifically or simply experiment on existing Moonlorn to learn more about their ability to steal life energy. If the Prophet could gain that power, immortality would be easier to maintain. However, it is also possible the Prophet has enough understanding to undo the Moonlorn curse, either making the Moonlorn fully a werewolf or human. With the promise of freedom from the curse (either for a life of peace or unfettered violence), most Moonlorn would do anything for him. After all, if they have already killed so many people, a few more to never kill again seems like a decent trade.

Rewards

Temporary Contacts (• to ••): Moonlorn tend to move among the street and homeless community, which can be very tight-knit. Investigating that community in search of the Moonlorn might put the cell in touch with a variety of people and help them figure out the right way of dealing with potential information brokers.

Temporary Allies (• to ••): Just as the cell might gain experience dealing with the street community, they might also make allies of those who work with them. There are all manner of outreach programs, drug rehabilitation programs, and local medics trying to help those in need among the homeless and drug addicted. If the Hunters can take a predator off the streets, even if it's unclear exactly what that predator was, they will have proved they are on the same page.

Supernatural Endowments: Depending on how close they get, an encounter with a Moonlorn has the potential to awaken supernatural abilities in a Hunter or perhaps infect them with a similar werewolf curse. Endowment Edges such as Sense the Unnatural or Unnatural Changes (p. 143) may make sense, or Perks for Endowments relating to werewolves or other shapeshifters.

Blood and Bone: While not innately magical, the blood and heart of a Moonlorn can be used in a variety of mystical rituals by those who know how to use them. The sorcery they are most suited for is any spell suppressing the true nature of something, or supernatural powers. They might also be used as a general sedative for powerful unnatural creatures.



Nightcinder

Werewolf



u/Anonymous

...

I just saw this quote the other day. Maybe it's just the way the last hunt went down for me, but man, it's been ringing in my head since I read it.

"Bitterness is like cancer. It eats upon the host. But anger is like fire. It burns it all clean."

—Maya Angelou

138

2.8K

47K



Elements: Werewolves, Rage, Transformation, Revenge, Power, Violence, Domestic Violence

The werewolf is a creature of emotion. Bitterness and rage burn bright in their hearts, and in the case of Nightcinders, that it is to be taken literally. Their hatred is such that it keeps smoldering as the fire you may glimpse in the dark as the creature draws closer. When a Nightcinder assumes the form of a wolf, its eyes burn bright and it exhales sparks with every breath. When its rage is fired up, its whole body ignites.

The wolf is a social animal in general, and so is the Nightcinder. They often travel in packs of two or three, latching onto emotions of hatred and vengefulness. Knowledgeable Hunters have wondered at the differences between Nightcinders and other werewolves. A common theory is that the Nightcinder is a cursed strain of lycanthropy, granted the fell power of fire in exchange for an obsession with the most ruinous of human emotions.

It's hard to say whether Nightcinders occur spontaneously or if the curse is transmitted from creature to human. They spread like a contagion, where individuals who survived a Nightcinder-related incident later manifest the curse themselves. It's unclear whether the proximity to the Nightcinder infected such people or if they were werewolves already and caught the curse because of that. If every human who came into contact with a Nightcinder became one, there'd be a lot more of them.

There's a typical cycle Nightcinder lifepaths seem to follow. At first, they try to hold onto their ordinary human lives and keep the curse under control. They avoid transforming into wolves and seek to control their bitterness. Still, none of us lead a life completely free from everyday annoyances, and soon, they'll start to dwell on all the people who wronged them.

Soon enough, the Nightcinder goes on a rampage, targeting the people who used to be part of their life. After all, to know someone is to hate them, at least according to the fires that burn in the mind of the Nightcinder. As they kill and maim, they become more and more comfortable with the wolf form. The incendiary nature of the creature works to its advantage as it often seems as if the victims died in fires, not because a shapechanging burning wolf tore them apart.

After these initial victims, the Nightcinder's human life is left behind and it adopts a wandering lifestyle, forming packs with others of its kind. Often they live for long periods in wolf form, passing off as wild dogs.

The Nightcinder is attracted to bitterness, rage and fury. It is sensitive to these emotions in humans and zeroes in on them. When a human hates someone, the Nightcinder may just show up and eviscerate the target of that hate. The creature is not sophisticated so this tends to happen when there's an argument in progress and the target of the hatred is clearly in sight.

A couple leaving a bar in the middle of a screaming argument, domestic violence, these are the types of situations where the Nightcinder may suddenly barge in. There's something in the type of bitterness typical of relationships and intimacy that it finds particularly compelling. Perhaps it sees itself as the hero of its own story in some animal way because it tends to side with the weak and disembowel the strong.

Sometimes this means that a spouse who has suffered under domestic violence has a sudden reprieve as a burning wolf barges in to kill their partner. Other times, a perfectly loving couple experiencing a sad drunken spat gets their lives torn apart by a Nightcinder who is uninterested in the specifics of their issues. Murder is always the solution to troubles of the heart.

As the life of the wolf consumes them, Nightcinders become increasingly divorced from human existence. They still take a human shape sometimes, but have a hard time coming across as anything other than twitchy and violent.

Despite their volatility, Nightcinders are surprisingly easy to manipulate if you know how. They're not very useful as servants to greater unnatural powers, but they can be talked into attacking specific victims. After all, every human has a drop of bitterness in their heart. All it takes is a little exaggeration to make a Nightcinder see it and become attracted to it.

General Difficulty: 5 / 2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 8, Social 3, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 9, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 8, Stealth 8, Survival 8

Notes/Other Traits:

For more detail on Onslaught, Resilience, Rush, Shapeshift, Terrify, and Vulnerability see *Hunter*, p.167–168

Claws and Fangs: The natural weapons of the Nightcinder are considered brawl weapons that inflict +1 Aggravated damage to Hunters. These attacks are available in both wolf forms.

Burning: In wolf form, when the Nightcinder attacks it may ignite into fire. The fire adds +1 Aggravated damage to attacks made by the Nightcinder. It also means that those making unarmed attacks against the Nightcinder suffer a level of Aggravated damage regardless of the success or failure of the test. In addition to these effects, the presence of the burning Nightcinder is likely to ignite a conflagration around it if flammable materials are present. The Nightcinder is immune to fire and explosions.

Regenerate (1): A Nightcinder heals most damage in a matter of seconds (see Vulnerabilities).

Resilient: In its wolf-creature form, a Nightcinder isn't easily damaged. She treats all damage as superficial damage unless it belongs to one of her Vulnerabilities (see below).

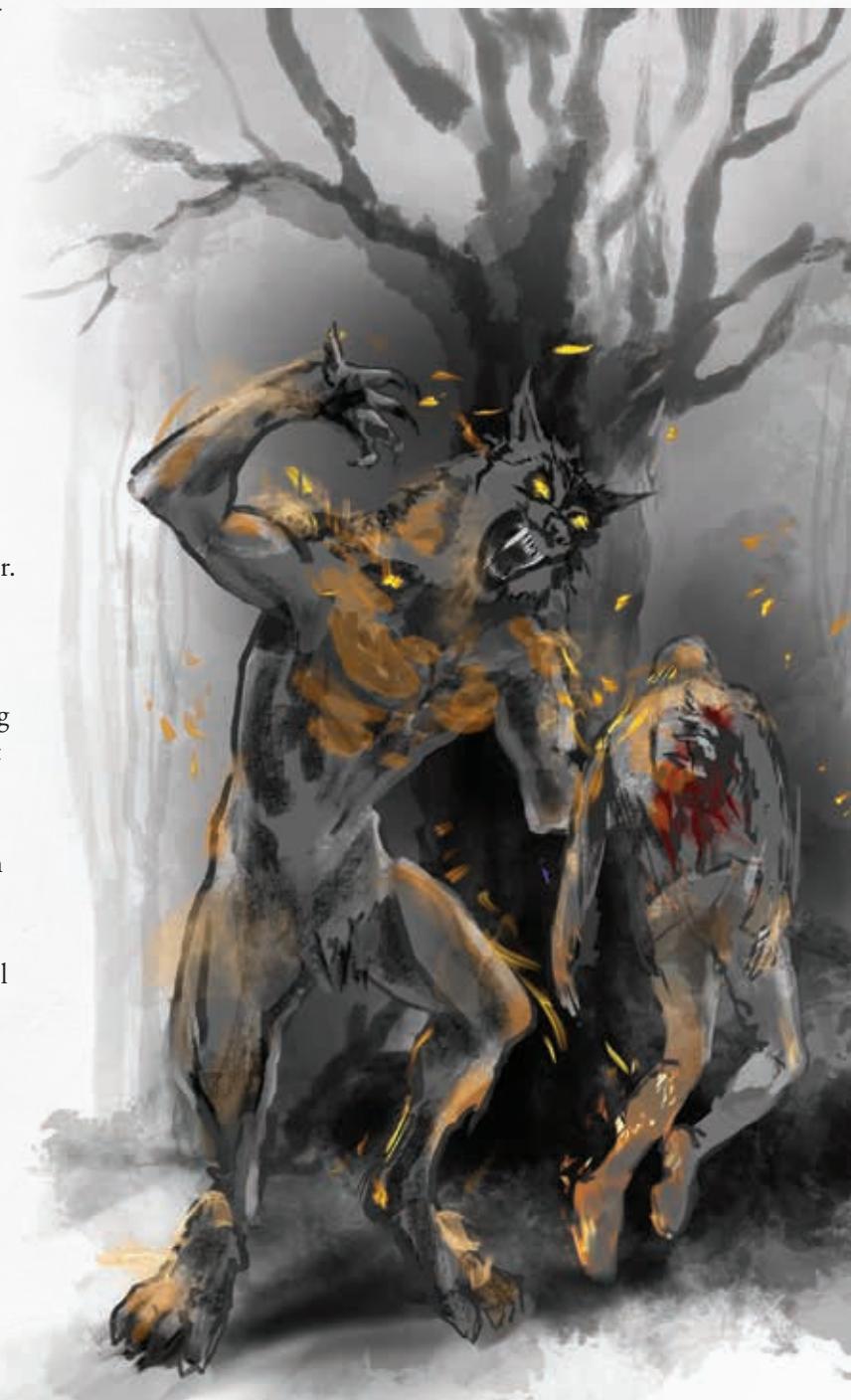
Rush: A Nightcinder is preternaturally fast.

Shapeshifter (Wolf Creature): Nightcinder can shift into a very large wolf or a monstrous, humanoid wolf creature. All damage done to the Nightcinder is Superficial as long she is in her wolf-creature form.

Terrify (8): A Nightcinder's gruesome transformation and intimidating form can scare even the bravest Hunters.

Goals and Objectives:

- Although Nightcinders are sentient, they're largely driven by instinct. First they act on their own feelings of bitterness and rage, and then latch onto those of others. This can lead to seemingly random behavior as the Nightcinder acts on conflicts and emotions that it has nothing to do with.



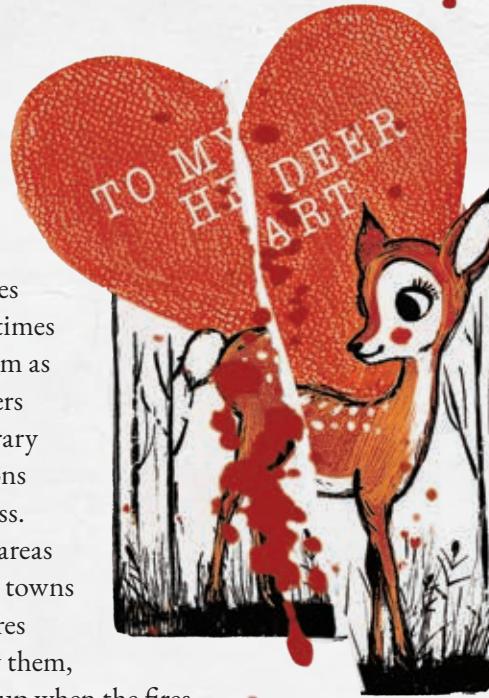
- Apart from its personal motivations and urges, the Nightcinder is a pack animal. It feels lonely without others of its kind, but fortunately when it goes on a fiery rampage it sometimes prompts others to transform as well. A pack of Nightcinders tends to establish a temporary territory, usually in locations between city and wilderness. Warehouse and industrial areas and underpopulated small towns are good. They love wildfires and often choose to follow them, staying wherever they end up when the fires burn out.

- Although the Nightcinder's first choice is usually violence, sometimes when they encounter conflict driven by bitterness in human form, they try to engage verbally. This looks like a particularly intense, ragged person suddenly intervening in a private discussion with a lot of emotion and very little ability to articulate a position. Such incidents often happen in cheap bars late at night, or at gas stations and truck stops.

Appearance: Nightcinders are usually most comfortable in their wolf form. They appear dark brown or grey, almost as if they were black with soot. As wolves go, they come across as large, mean and suspicious. In daylight, the fire in their eyes is not as readily apparent, but at night they're never completely invisible. At minimum, their gaze glows bright orange and often fire seems to emanate from their jaws as well. Their body temperature is high although it's rare to get close enough to notice.

When a Nightcinder ignites, all of its fur is on fire, making it look like a dark ghost wolf emerging from the flames. It suffers no ill effect from this fire. The creature is also capable of transforming into a large humanoid wolf creature with the same fire effects.

In human form, Nightcinder tend to appear fit but filthy. Because they often find themselves in the aftermath of great fires, they are sooty and their clothes may be half burned.



In Stories

A local story speaks about two young lovers and the bloody fate that awaited one of them last year. The boy, Henry Ling, was young and handsome. He was very popular with the girls and had his eyes set on Melinda Schope. Melinda was as pretty as could be. But her younger sister, Goldie, was enamored with Henry too. Melinda and Henry started dating and Goldie got very jealous. At a dance one night, Goldie approached Henry to ask him out. Henry rejected her, walked away laughing, and was last seen alive with

Goldie chasing him through the back exit to the school lunchroom. A group of students found Goldie screaming over Henry's mutilated and burned corpse. She seemed confused when questioned by the police but later escaped from an unlocked police car. Locals say she stalks the high school grounds at night looking for people that remind her of Henry.

Asani Okeke's broken and burned body had been tossed from the building where he worked to the next one, smashed through the skylights, and landed in the boardroom below. No one knows what happened, but it's suggested the mob was involved, because Asani's wife, Shaniqa, was missing as well. His wife had vanished just a day before the murder, leaving Asani calling and messaging friends and family to try to find her. A police report wasn't filed; but a series of suspicious emails surfaced between the couple. Shaniqa was never found, and Asani's murder remains a cold case today.

Ellen Dorian, the devoted wife of the mayor, was beloved by the city. She was kind, generous, and a well-known philanthropist. One night, she happened upon her husband in the park where he was meeting his mistress. Shocked and overcome with anger, his wife flew into a rage and cut him open with a knife, ripping his heart out.

The girls at school whisper to each other that if you write the name of a boy you hate on a piece of paper, take it to the woods, and burn it while chanting the

word "Nightcinder", the spirit of a witch comes to curse the boy. He will be haunted for days by the witch ghost, getting closer to him every time he sees her. When she can finally touch him, he spontaneously combusts and dies, screaming.

At a local high school, a principal died in a horrific school fire. A few students are now claiming that she is back, as some sort of revenant haunting the halls at night. The smell of burning flesh and the cries of her pain can be heard echoing through the rooms. She roams the gym where her body was found; searching the locker rooms for the boys on the football team whose awful prank resulted in her death. Nobody has reliably seen anything, but when one of the boys from the football team is gruesomely murdered, a few people start to believe something supernatural is afoot.

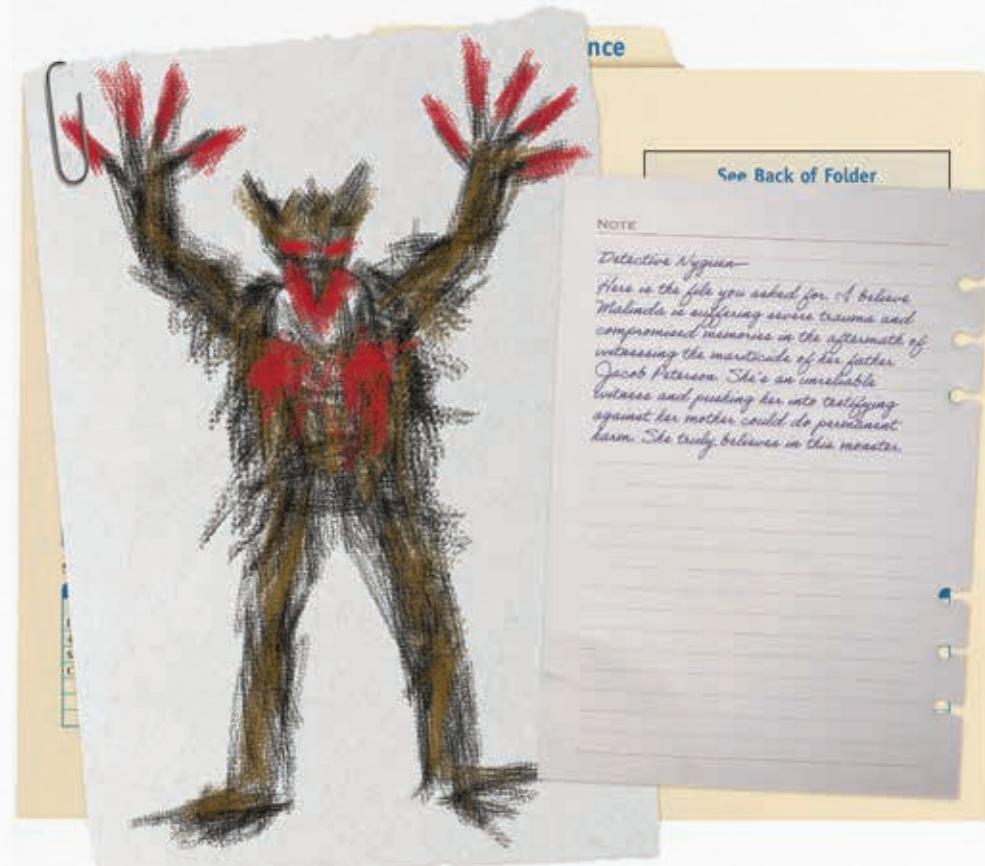
Encountering a Nightcinder

- Gala Park spans many acres and is said to have regular visitors to its lush hills, including joggers, youths, families, tours, sporting teams, neighbors, celebrations, weddings, memorials, summer tourists, a healthy transitory population, and delinquents. Lately residents have complained about a weird, sooty coyote that is haunting the woods, snarling and growling as it hunts. The coyote is likely rabid, but authorities can't seem to find it. The beast has been sighted four times in the last six weeks and now, a local teen boy has gone missing after jogging in the woods at night.

- **Preston Ortega** and his girlfriend, **Selena Herrera**, say they got into an argument at a movie theater and walked home to their nearby apartment as the fight went on. Their path home went through several back alleys to avoid the noisy and crowded downtown. In the alley behind their house, the argument escalated when they heard a deep

growl coming from the dark of the alley and saw eyes burning as if aflame. Knowing there were feral dogs in the city at times, the two ran into their apartment. For two weeks now, Preston reports hearing growling outside the apartment and refuses to leave. The couple has reported the issue to the superintendent, but other than putting movement sensing lights outside, nothing has been done. The lights turn on and off all night whenever Preston hears the growling.

- **Anika Kaur** has been cared for in hospital for a week. Her tragic story made the local news as a vicious dog attack and family tragedy, but Anika claims that they keep leaving out the details of what happened. In a long and rambling Facebook post, Anika details how she and her father were in a parking garage when her father started shouting at her for leaving her husband and how he unfairly accused her of being promiscuous. Anika then describes how a terrifying burning wolf demon came from the shadows and attacked her father, cutting him open with huge claws.



A THOUSAND SHADOWS

She tried to stop it but got burned and thrown to the side while the creature fed on her father. She claims the wounds were healed when she cried out for Saint Raphael to save her. The police claim she was drunk at the time of the attack and invented the monster. They assure the public that there are no dangerous dogs on the loose. They are investigating all possibilities in the attack, including her potential involvement.

Additional Dangers and Victims

- An anonymous online diary has regular postings from a user named silentstalker. The user appeared four months ago talking about a bizarre encounter they had with a weird dog in the park. They came across the dog while jogging on a trail and seeing a fire through the trees. The fire was someone's body, so silentstalker grabbed a branch to scare the dog off and it swiped at them. Sparks landed on their leg and burned them. Silentstalker has noted that things have gotten weird since, and their posts have started to sound increasingly paranoid and angry. They've been quiet for six weeks.
- A downtown corridor is closed to public and private traffic due to a strange accident that left one car completely destroyed and officials puzzled. The news is reporting that the body of a man plummeted down thirty-six stories from the top of the Cheshire Tower and onto a car below, destroying the car completely. The body was eviscerated and aflame when it landed. Emergency crews arrived on scene to extinguish the body and car, retrieve the body, and examine what happened. Witnesses are encouraged to call the police if they have information about what happened.
- Elena Pérez has been missing for a week. Her mother, Rosa Maria, has been pleading with

whomever has taken her beautiful daughter to return her. The police have no leads and are asking for anyone with information to come forward. Last night at two in the morning, Elena appeared at home, knocking on the door because it was locked. The eight-year-old told her mother and police that a bad man put her in a van and took her away. He brought her with him to a store that night and she didn't want to and wanted to come home, so she started crying. In the parking lot a monster came and attacked the man, eating him. Elena says she ran away while the monster was attacking the man and can't remember where it was.

- A teenage girl, Miskomin Kewayosh, has been sharing regular videos on social media on foraging and caring for the land on #nativetiktok. Her following is in the millions, and she now has a book on urban foraging coming out from Brite Sky Publishing. Her TikToks have lately changed to talk about dreams she keeps having about hunting and killing Europeans. The dreams are vivid and in the short videos it's clear she's beginning to get worried about herself. She looks exhausted and thinner than she has in months. In some videos, she's crying and confessing she thinks some of her dreams might actually be real and doesn't know what's going on anymore. Several commenters are commending her on her amazing storyline in these horror shorts, and asking her for more.
- Dretti Shipman, a prominent local government official, has been reported missing by officials. The story broke three days ago after a series of murders took place near city hall. Officials are claiming that Shipman's disappearance may be unrelated, but they are treating it as a related incident just to be sure. Shipman is actually wanted in connection to the murders for questioning, as before he went missing there was a suggestion he was about to reveal key information about them. Anyone who sees him or is sheltering him is asked to come forward with the information.

Breadcrumbs

- A single Nightcinder may come across as a simple cursed Quarry, a monster for Hunters to hunt. However, its connections to a conspiracy may be more apparent if you zoom out and see what kinds of victims it targets. Do they have a common pattern, perhaps even one the Nightcider itself is unaware of? It might have been manipulated to attack someone else's enemies.
- In its more lucid moments, the Nightcinder talks about dreams and visions guiding it to move to new towns and settlements. Are these part of the curse, or have they been inflicted by another power entirely, using the Nightcinder's instincts for its own gain?
- A Nightcinder may be an anathema to vampires and werewolves the same as it's to the Hunters. The players' characters may discover a connection to the conspiracy not because they control the Nightcinder but because they seek to destroy it. Maybe one of the men killed was actually important to the conspiracy and the Nightcinder, in its own twisted way, working towards the same goals as the Hunters.

Rewards

Protective Soot: A little known fact about Nightcinders is that it instinctively assumes that anything covered in soot from its own fires is harmless or irrelevant. Such soot can be gathered on purpose and smeared on clothes and skin. Nightcinders are not instinctively hostile to someone wearing soot. Actively threatening behavior stops this effect.

Artifact Ingredients: Nightcinder blood and saliva has many other strange properties. It is a useful component in transformation science or sorcery. It also carries the ability to track prey if placed on a needle and the correct rituals used. Because of this, it might become the base for an Artifact Perk.

Unnatural Changes: Consuming the heart of a Nightcinder might grant access to the Unnatural Changes Endowment (see p. 143). Less cannibalistically, someone who's been doused with Nightcinder blood may also develop the Unnatural Changes Endowment until she begins to turn into a Nightcinder herself...

“The Dog Did It!” Wife Blames Dog in Husband’s Death

Dorothea Tremblay has been arrested in connection with her husband's death. Levi Tremblay was found murdered in his home two days ago. The brutal murder included multiple stab wounds, cutting open his chest, throwing acid on him, and burning his body. Detective Karissa Rioux is investigating the crime, calling it the most heinous murder she has ever seen.

Police were called to the scene of the crime by neighbors who reported screams coming from the house. When police arrived, the

door was ajar. “We went inside,” Rioux said. “It smelled awful. Burning flesh always smells really bad. He was dead when we arrived.” Tremblay was not at home when authorities arrived. She was reported missing by police that night. Police received an anonymous tip that Tremblay was seen wandering around a local park looking dazed and with burns on her hands and arms. She was brought in for questioning after being recovered peacefully by the police.

Rioux states that Tremblay is a suspect in the case. Tremblay's lawyer, Ricardo Jimenez, released a statement today stating that his client is innocent. Tremblay claims that a dog broke into the house and attacked her husband, killing him. She also claims that she tried to stop the dog but it burned her, likely from something corrosive on its fur. So far, Tremblay has not been charged with murder but is a strong suspect in the case, Rioux claims.

Transcript of 911 Emergency Call

- 1 **Caller:** Hello?
- 2 **Dispatcher:** Hi.
- 3 **Caller:** Can you hear me?
- 4 **Dispatcher:** Yes, I can.
- 5 **Caller:** Hello?
- 6 **Dispatcher:** 9-1-1. This is Aaliyah. How can I help you?
- 7 **Caller:** Aaliyah. I'm... I'm trying to keep quiet.
- 8 **Dispatcher:** Are you hiding from someone?
- 9 **Caller:** Yes.
- 10 **Dispatcher:** Can you tell me your name?
- 11 **Caller:** It's Jakub.
- 12 **Dispatcher:** Can you tell me where you are?
- 13 **Caller:** I'm in a warehouse off Grant.
- 14 **Dispatcher:** Let me get you mapped. Do you know the cross street with Grant?
- 15 **Caller:** Shit. I don't know. I don't know.
- 16 **Dispatcher:** It's okay, Jakub. Are you near a window? Can you look outside?
- 17 **Caller:** It's dark as shit down here, Aaliyah. Shit.
- 18 **Dispatcher:** Do you remember where you were before you went into the warehouse?
- 19 **Caller:** Let me think. Maybe near 9th?
- 20 **Dispatcher:** There's a few warehouses near 9th and Grant. Can you tell me about the warehouse?
- 21 **Caller:** It's big. Two stories. Big machines left over.
- 22 **Dispatcher:** Jakub, are you safe?

page 1 of 2

Transcript of 911 Emergency Call (Cont'd)

- 23 **Caller:** No, shit. I'm not. Can you hear it? Can't you hear it?
- 24 **Dispatcher:** Jakub, can you move to a room where you can close the door to get away from the growling?
- 25 **Caller:** There's a room across the hall. It has a door. But it'll hear me.
- 26 **Dispatcher:** Jakub, it sounds like there might be a dog near you. Dogs will already be able to hear you. Just move calmly and slowly to the room with a door. Close the door so that the dog can't be in there with you. Okay?
- 27 **Caller:** It'll get me if I do that. Don't you get it? Did you send help?
- 28 **Dispatcher:** I'm sending help already, Jakub. People are on the way. But you need to get away from the animal.
- 29 **Caller:** It's here. Fuck.
- 30 **Dispatcher:** Jakub, please
- 31 **Caller:** Fuck. Okay.
- 32 **Dispatcher:** Good job, Jakub. That door sounded heavy. Are you okay?
- 33 **Caller:** Yes.
- 34 **Dispatcher:** Jakub, is it scratching to get inside?
- 35 **Caller:** Oh, my god! Oh my god! Help me!
- 36 **Dispatcher:** Jakub, can you get out? Can you run?
- 37 **Caller:** Oh, god! Oh, god! Please stop! Please stop! Please!
- 38 **Dispatcher:** Jakub, you need to get out of there! Help is coming!
- 39 **Dispatcher:** Jakub? Are you there?
- 40 **Dispatcher:** Jakub?
- 41 **Dispatcher:** Jakub?
- 42 **Dispatcher:** Jakub?
- 43 **Dispatcher:** Oh, my god.

page 2 of 2

The Fear-Eaters

Vampire

Elements: Sorcery, Tattoos, Hunger, Violence, Death, Murder, Abduction, Dead children, Terrorism and Fear tactics

JD

Another happy couple dead south of the river.
Did you see this? Serial killer or...?

EP

Or. Meet me at our place tomorrow after work. I've got something on this one

JD



The fear-eaters are at once a specific coven and a strange type of vampire that has attempted—and failed—to restrain their thirst. Now, that thirst is focused through tattoos crafted from their own unnatural blood. They only thirst for the blood of the fearful, and only murder can satisfy their growing thirst. The fear-eaters may still be a small group of unknown vampires, but their numbers may grow as they recruit more of their kind or the recipe to create more of them spreads to new hands.

In one sense, a fear-eater is the personification of hunger and terror. It is a poisonous legacy of an ancient and foolish sorcerer called Bora Orren, who imprisoned a hungry spirit in the form of a tattoo. The fear-eater terrifies its victims and then feeds upon them. It is a nightmare of legend first mentioned in the so-called Goba Parchment, an incredibly fragmentary Greek copy of some unknown original oral source that likely predates writing. Two complete translations survive, however, in Latin and Coptic with minor differences, presumably inferior to the earlier Greek copy. The two fragmentary scrolls have lain untouched, waiting for scholars to analyze them, but time and again, the legend of the Bora Orren, the fear-eater, survives across time and cultures throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

Very few authentically ancient myths of the Bora Orren survived to recent memory beyond the knowledge of the Goba Parchment. In modern times, the Bora Orren is said to be a monster of folklore used to warn children away from the dangers of greed, vice, and overconsumption. In morality tales and scary stories, the young are told about a man of enormous hunger who walks the streets at night looking to make a meal of the gluttonous. Musicians have taken those tales and made them a warning to the establishment. Both hip-hop and punk have occasionally embraced folklore and transformed it into a lyrical parable that shouts the power of the hungry is coming to consume the rich. There's even a three-issue comic from the '90s lionizing the Bora Orren as a superhero origin story that never took off.

Thaddeus "Thad" King was always hungry. He and his two sisters were raised by a single father who could barely put food on the table. That hunger drove Thad. He wanted more than food. He hungered for an escape, for a more comfortable life for his family. He hungered for an

education when teachers told him a college degree was the solution. A term paper for a modern folklore liberal arts requirement led him to the Bora Orren, the fear-eater. A chance encounter with a monster led him to become a fear-eater himself.

That Bora Orren is simply a myth, however. Like others, Thad stumbled upon the legend. With four semesters of college Latin under his belt, he became fascinated with the legend and proud that he seemed to be the only person to truly read the oldest copies of the ancient tales in decades if not millennia. He probably has the most complete English translation of the stories in a binder of notes with every academic article he could access. A fascination with the legend he had begun to study for a term paper grew into a new hunger.

THE BORA ORREN

The Bora Orren provides insight into Thad's psychology and possibly a tool against him. Fragmentary references to the Bora Orren can be dug up with relevant tests (including Academics, Investigation, or Occult) or Perks like Library.

This could lead characters astray as a red herring (see p. 17) as they search for an ancient Bora Orren. The Storyteller can call for tests such as Intelligence + Occult or Resolve + Insight to realize that Thad has adopted the moniker of the Bora Orren, a personal quirk. Alternately, attempting to use a bit of folklore or history against Thad may fail spectacularly, but it may disarm him momentarily as the cell has gained a modicum of respect and Thad may be willing to call off an attack or strike a deal with the cell if they leave him and his coven alone.

A chance encounter with a bloodsucking monster two years later left him undead and regretting it. He met up with other monsters, looking for a way out. Back to humanity. Thad and his crew experimented with their blood in secret, hiding themselves from humanity and others of their kind. Surviving off the blood of animals and the occasional mistake as their hunger grew uncontrollable. They discovered that their blood reacted to their will, and they could coax it into giving them unnatural power with the right blend or incantation. Remembering the fear-eater legend, he used his newfound blood to attempt a cure: by copying the Bora Orren's tattoo on his own flesh, he could force all his hunger into it, returning him

to his normal human state. It didn't work. History, or perhaps myth, repeated itself. Now, Thad stalks the night, terrifying his victims until he can taste their fear, just like the Bora Orren of legend, and he's brought friends with him.

THADDEUS "THAD" KING'S COVEN

Use the following members of the fear-eaters coven or create your own:

Thad King, Black male, age 26 (looks 22)—Founding member. His bloody alchemy turned his crew into fear-eaters. He's come to terms with his condition, assuaging his guilt by feeding from those he claims deserve it.

Deborah Williams, Black female, age 29 (looks 18)—Thad's mentor. A tattoo artist, she helped develop the formula hoping it would make them human again. Instead, she's lost whatever was human about her and feeds to excess.

Mai Lee, Asian female, age 22 (looks 22)—The newest member and an illustrator. Eager for a cure, she's uncertain she received one and is beginning to regret her association with the fear-eaters.

Jesus Rodrigues, Latino male, age 33 (looks 26)—A recent recruit, Jesus terrifies those who have privileges he felt he never had in life.

Sebastian Thomas, White male, age 38 (looks 24)—The oldest member of the coven, he wanted a cure, not to become a different type of monster. He's made a pet project of stoking more wholesome emotions for a few human associates while turning his fear-eating towards the church that rejected him.

The fear-eaters, as the coven of blood-suckers calls themselves, have distinct motivations. Thad, or the Bora Orren, hunts what he senses is the most gluttonous of humanity. He preys upon the wealthiest, happiest, most fulfilled, or fully content, whatever form fullness takes. From someone on their wedding day to corrupt city inspectors to the wealthy elite, Thad finds a way to instill terror in them and then consumes it. When he feeds, he rips his shirt open or off entirely to reveal his intricate chest tattoo of an enormous elephant. The tattoo oozes with ensorcelled vampiric blood that yearns to absorb more fear. Without the fear, the feeding is worthless to a fear-eater. The victim, however, is paralyzed and unable to move or even scream. Their only hope is for someone to interrupt the

feeding, and even then, they might suffer nightmares for the rest of their lives.

Unlike other vampires, the fear-eater needn't drain a victim dry of blood, and their bite wounds rapidly heal from victims. Most cunningly take a few sips as their victim dies, leaving them only a little lighter, and coroners none the wiser. Detectives, however, are often left with a baffling record of a terrified victim who seems to have scared themselves to death. It's the activity before the feeding that the fear-eaters rarely hide; sometimes, it is the signs of struggle that give them away.

As a new phenomenon, the fear-eaters regularly discover new facts about their condition. They have a few humans they've pushed to other emotional states, which they can use to develop new abilities (see Prepared Meals, under Notes/Other Traits, below). They've recently discovered they can all feed from the same victim at a mild cost to their safety and leaving the victim drained of more blood than usual. They suspect it doesn't matter how much blood they take, and it merely enables them to feed on their fear. Thad wonders what that might mean for non-vampires who could gain a fear-eater tattoo through his recipe. If other vampires learn of the coven's recipe, they may take it through violence or compel Thad to recreate his process on them.



General Difficulty: 4/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Social 4, Mental 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Occult 8, Streetwise 7

Notes/Other Traits:

For more detail on Vulnerability see *Hunter*, p.167–168

Terrifying Bite: Fear-eaters can perform a bite attack against a grappled opponent. The bite deals 2 levels of Aggravated Health damage and 1 level of Superficial Willpower damage regardless of margin and a flat one Aggravated Health damage each turn thereafter if they continue feeding. Struggling free once bitten requires the expenditure of a Willpower point, as the victim yields to the horrific effect of the vampire's feeding.

Essence Drain: A victim killed by Bora Orren's essence is drained completely and the fear-eater can go for up to three weeks before needing to feed again.

Scent Tracking: The fear-eater can track the fearful by scent. The more terrified the human, the stronger their scent is. This ability doesn't usually require a roll, but clever Hunters aware of this power could fool this ability with proper knowledge usually requiring a Difficulty 4 Wits + Occult or Technology test.

Vulnerability (Fire): Fire burns a vampire like a mortal.

Vulnerability (Sunlight 1): The bane of the undead, direct sunlight burns them like fire but not to the extent of other vampires.

Percolate Emotion: The fear-eater is adept at wearing down their victims and bringing their fear to the fore, but the techniques can be used for other emotions as well. Whether they align a victim's living space with the geomantic energies of the planet or force-feeding them a concoction to put the victim in the right mood, they can take one action per night to affect a victim, forcing a Willpower test against a Difficulty equal to the current Danger. If the victim fails, they suffer one Aggravated Willpower damage. Should the victim be incapacitated while they suffer Aggravated Willpower damage in this way, the victim's blood resonates with terror, and the fear-eater is ready to feed. If another emotion is evoked or the fear-eater fails to feed, the victim is left near catatonic with the emotion until they are no longer incapacitated from Willpower damage.

Prepared Meals: The fear-eater has experimented with other emotions and found they can grant unusual

powers. By evoking another strong emotion in a victim, they can develop a new power until they feed on another victim with an emotion other than fear. The Storyteller can select from any power they choose from **Hunter** (see Monster Abilities, p. 167).

VARIATION: THE MASK OF BORA ORREN

The variant of Bora Orren is a dangerous and distorted mask featuring exaggerated animalistic features. The mask is cursed, imbued with ancient sorcery. Unlike Thad's pseudo-science, the mask creates a fear-eater without requiring them to be vampires already. Once worn, the mask fuses to the face of the host, becoming part of their anatomy. The host gains the ability to track by scent and a newfound hunger for flesh or blood. When feeding, the mask comes to life, growing to devour the victims it has chosen. Every time it consumes, it takes part of the host's essence as well. Eventually the host's dried husk of a body sheds the mask and it is passed to the next body. All that remains of the host is a thin layer of dried skin on the inside of the elephant mask, the most recent in a long and sad history.

Special: With each use of the mask, the host becomes increasingly weak, the body slowly being consumed by the mask's need for power to function. The wearer loses 1 dot of Stamina for every nine victims consumed. They may recover this with rest (treating it as one level of Aggravated Health damage), but not if they keep feeding. This limits the functionality of the mask depending on the strength of the host's body, before death occurs.

Goals and Objectives:

- Fear-eaters must feed, but unlike other vampires they seem to require less sustenance so long as it's the correct sustenance. This requires elaborate traps, stalking, or searching for victims with pre-existing phobias.
- Every fear-eater is unique. While they must feed, an individual fear-eater may have different moral codes (or a complete lack thereof). Once they become a fear-eater, however, they feed less often but only on the fearful.
- The fear-eaters shun other vampires. They know there are other monsters in the world, but don't want to share their recipe for creating more members of their coven.

Appearance: Fear-eaters created through Thad's bloody concoction are known primarily for one unique and captivating feature: a large and intricately-inked tattoo of an animal or mythical beast. On casual inspection, the fear-eater appears otherwise normal-looking until they reveal the tattoo inked on their skin. Over time, each feeding augments the tattoo slowly as it spreads, gains detail, and adds horrific features.

The tattoo, when the fear-eater feeds, takes on an astonishing semblance of reality. As the fresh, fear-filled blood empowers the tattoo, it seems to come alive. Eyes appear to follow observers or look for victims, mouths open in anticipation, and the visage may even calm momentarily after it's sated. These hallucinations are all in the mind of the observer, however, and video recordings would show nothing more than a bestial attack.

As the fear-eater is unable to feed, they grow ashen and their flesh appears more and more dead the longer they abstain. For some, their hair even begins to fall out as nails or teeth are shed and bits of the altered flesh gradually separate from the host, leaving open wounds that don't bleed. The area tattooed always remains untouched by these injuries. Only feeding heals these wounds.

In Stories

A grandmother chides her granddaughter for eating too much. She warns the girl of what lurks out in the night, waiting to eat her. This bogeyman of excess haunts the stories of places where starvation is a real possibility and the pain of having too little is felt in one's bones. The Bora Orren becomes a warning to the young as to what might happen should they be irresponsible and eat or drink just a little too much.

In old tales of sin-eaters, the Bora Orren is whispered of as the beast that haunts the city's back alleys. There, it's a monster that can smell sin. Its jaws drip with saliva when the most sinful people are smelled, and like the hounds of hell, invisibly hunts them as the victim runs home. Once home, the monster breaks inside, slowly devouring the sinner until all their sins are swallowed.

Rumors fly at a local high school about the death of a classmate. Police investigate whether one or more of the bullying victims of the deceased hired a hit from the dark web due to the gruesome nature of the death.

The astonishing number of centipedes in the victim's house is evidence of foul play, as someone must have unleashed or bred them there, and the trail of squished centipedes is clear evidence the victim wasn't alone.

Encountering the Fear-Eaters

- The cell looks in on a string of disappearances near St. Mary's Church. The church is large and busy, with a steady congregation, even in the heat of summer. But as busy as Sunday mornings are, the church is swamped with weddings. The church ladies let the cell know that every person who's gone missing or shown up murdered has been either a bride or groom, and disappeared right before their wedding ceremony. Most folks joke about one of the not-so-happy couple getting cold feet, but a few whisper that the soon-to-be weds were afraid of something else.
- Residents in a coastal city neighborhood have been disappearing steadily. Every week, a new resident vanishes without a trace. The neighborhood is gentrifying, with new families moving in regularly. Local shops and businesses are being bought out and prices are being driven high. Those original residents that remain complain that they can't afford to live there anymore. Along the beach, a few corpses have been found covered in crabs and being pecked at by seagulls. None of the bodies have been identified, but the newer residents are beginning to suspect their "unsavory" neighbors are murdering them.
- A karaoke bar downtown is under fire for allowing minors into the bar after the local high school football team's captain was found dead in the parking lot after-hours. The team was celebrating winning their season, the first in three decades, when the captain went out back to vape. She didn't return, and when fellow students went to find her, they discovered she had hit her head and bled out. Several team members report feeling like they're being followed, though no one else has gone missing.

Additional Dangers and Victims

- Sawyer, a travel blogger, presents a feature on an old diary they bought at a weird market that they can't find anymore. The book is ancient and written in a language the blogger doesn't know, but they showcase several alarming photos of the drawings inside the book. The first piece of art shows a person drinking from a cup. The second demonstrates a person's chest with swirls on it. The third indicates an elephant head on the person's chest. Sawyer indicates that Google Translate doesn't work on the diary, but they found a local historian who may be able to translate it. It is the last post they made, and it was originally posted 18 months ago.
- Jazmin Miller, a crime podcaster, begins diving into the Kensington murders on her show Killer Couture. The Kensington murders explore the 25 bodies found in the metro subway system over 2 years. The killer was never found, but the last body was discovered about six weeks ago. In the 15th episode, she mentions the curious state of the bodies that slowly began to be found in a long closed-off subway tunnel. She goes into great detail about how the victim suffered injuries from falling and suspects they had been chased, as though they were being hunted for sport.
- A local newspaper releases controversial photos on its website of a recent string of crimes in order to help the police find the killer. The photos are leaked crime scene evidence of three corpses left seemingly at random on rooftops throughout the financial district. Community members are demanding the newspaper take them off of the website because of the graphic content. The website pulled the pictures and issued an apology, but not before crime fanatics pulled the pictures and posted them on Reddit, where hobbyist crime-solvers have continued to theorize what happened to the victims.

- The Medical Examiner's report of a local celebrity indicates that the victim was bitten by numerous, non-venomous snakes. The report also indicates that the victim had seemingly just given blood, which may have left them less aware that they had let all their snakes loose. The local gossip is the celebrity was overcoming a terrifying fear of snakes by amateur exposure therapy.
- Prominent social media influencer @metrolinx records daily videos of his rides on the bus, reporting on the most mundane to surreal experiences he's had there. He rides the bus daily from his home to his job at the pharmacy. @metrolinx's most recent video, a shaky nighttime shot of a conflict between two men at the bus stop, has gone viral. The video shows one man standing over another, blazer open, with a strange tattoo on his chest. The man on the ground is screaming, begging for the other man to stop. The bus @metrolinx is on starts to pull away before the video can catch what happened, but the sounds of screaming suddenly cut off. @metrolinx turns the camera to his face which is filled with fear as he asks anyone if they can send help.

Breadcrumbs

- Fear-eaters have a knack for leaving behind confusing evidence. Because of this, clues pointing to other Quarries may go unnoticed at first because they're just more pieces in a puzzle that's hard to fit together to begin with. However, if the Hunters have cause to return to these clues later they may realize their true significance.
- Hunger and ambition go hand in hand. The kind of a person who'd seek power through association with some of the other Quarries may also tattoo themselves with Thad's concoction linking it into the rest of the conspiracy.
- Those carrying Thad's tattoos are rarely content to be servants to greater power. They may have their own plans to betray other nodes in the conspiracy,

and by unearthing these plans the Hunters may gain valuable information.

- Thad's reputation as the Bora Orren spreads to unsavory elements. He wasn't careful when he did research on the Goba Parchment and it may not be difficult to locate Thad based on his academic trail. Other monsters have heard of the Goba Parchment or Thad's "cure" for vampirism and hunt it down, harrying the cell if they were the ones who took Thad's notes.
- Thad's recipe, or a copy of it, is found by another Quarry. They attempt to use it, either become a fear-eater themselves or hold a "cure" for vampirism over other Quarries.

Rewards

Temporary Allies, Contacts, or Retainers (••):

Stopping a fear-eater from feeding stops it from hurting a lot of people. New contacts or even Allies might be made of potential victims who were rescued. However, other vampires seeking the power of Bora Orren or Thad's tattoos might become enemies of the cell.

Unnatural Changes Edge: Tattooing oneself according to Thad's recipe could grant a Hunter the Unnatural Changes Edge (see p. 143). To make this option apparent in the game, the Storyteller may feature non-vampires who have survived the process with other unexpected powers.

Endowment Edge or Perks: While applying Thad's recipe to mortals may not lead to the desired result, mere proximity to the ingredients could awaken a supernatural endowment in any Hunter, particularly the Creature Specialization Perk for Repel, Sense, or Thwart the Unnatural.

Thad's Notes: All of Thad's research either on the Bora Orren or the recipe for the fear-eater tattoos may be worth temporary dots of resources (two for one, or three for both) to many orgs. Refusal to relinquish them may be grounds for flaws like Adversary or Shunned.

The Radiant Dead

Vampire



u/Anonymous

...

"I knew this Hunter, an old woman who'd emigrated from Belarus in the nineties. She swore that her old dosimeter let her spot vampires.

That's bullshit, of course. Radioactive vampires? Give me a break.

Until one day, when we had the ashes of a vampire who'd burnt in the sun and she took her old Soviet dosimeter to them and it made that sound you recognize. The ashes were radioactive.

She was so pleased with herself. She'd been right all along!

Me, I thought—'This can't be right. There must be an explanation.'

138 2.8K 47K

Elements: Vampires, Radiation, Radiation sickness, Body horror, Cancer

Hunters in various parts of the world, particularly in the U.S. and Eastern Europe, have sometimes encountered vampires who appear to be radioactive. It's a baffling phenomenon, made all the more so because there doesn't seem to be a unified cause. It's difficult for a Hunter to interrogate a vampire and often the fact that they're radioactive is only apparent from their remains or ill effects on humans close to them.

So who's doing it? Why? Is it a naturally occurring phenomenon? Are all vampires radioactive?

The answer to that last question is no. The vast majority of vampires cannot be detected with a dosimeter, which must be a disappointment to Hunters hoping for an easy portable vampire detector.

Radiation is always tied to the presence of radioactive particles. There are specific substances, such as the strontium-90 or iodine-131 released into the

environment by the 1986 disaster in Chernobyl which left large areas of Ukraine and Belarus contaminated. These substances vary in terms of how dangerous they are. Some emit low-level radiation for a longer distance while others, such as plutonium-241, emit powerful radiation only for a very short distance.

Because radiation is tied to matter, it's possible for one spot to be highly radioactive while just a couple of steps away it's completely safe. This is why Hunters who brave the site of a nuclear accident have to keep a dosimeter ready: You never know when the radiation levels suddenly spike.

The effects of radiation on living tissue can be severe. Radiation affects the ability of cells to replenish themselves, which is why nausea and vomiting are often the first symptoms of radiation poisoning. The stomach and the intestine replenish their cells rapidly, and when that process is disrupted, the result is acute sickness. This is also why old people don't suffer from radiation as much as the young: Their cells are replaced at a slower rate, making them less susceptible.

This brings us back to vampires. The undead are, well... dead. Their cells don't replenish through biological means. Instead, whatever vile mystical forces keep them going ignore the effects of radiation entirely, meaning that they're largely immune to radiation. The direct cellular deterioration caused by radiation may affect a vampiric body to a minor degree, but their mystical healing abilities take care of such problems.

All this leads to an unfortunate outcome: A vampire can be extremely radioactive and still hide among the living. The monster might not even be aware of their poisonous presence, occupied as they often are with the particulars of their undead curse. A vampire may imagine that the humans around them get sick and die as a result of their predations, when in reality blood loss is accompanied by radiation poisoning, making the Radiant Dead even more of a danger to the communities around them than vampires usually are.

The reason the origins of the Radiant Dead are so hard to pin down is that they've been invented multiple times by different malignant groups and organizations. The world is full of dangerous waste that can be weaponized for fell purposes. Radioactive materials, and even nuclear waste, can be used to crudely poison people and land, all the more deadly because radiation



is invisible. It cannot be seen by the naked eye, meaning that its presence must be detected by analyzing its effects or by using specialized equipment.

Another such waste product is the bodies of captured vampires. That's not how most Hunters think about them, but the fact remains that the undead are not always destroyed. If their bodies remain intact, eventually someone is going to wonder whether they could serve a purpose instead of just being left in the sun.

Sometimes there's an entity or an organization with access to both: Vampire bodies and radioactive materials. Put the two together and you have the Radiant Dead, often by simply embedding highly

radioactive matter in the abdominal cavity of the vampire. There are stories of Radiant Dead being created when vampires drink the blood of extremely irradiated humans or animals, but who knows how true they are. Although it seems many vampires are capable of making more of their kind, it doesn't look like the radioactivity of a Radiant Dead is a quality that transfers to vampiric progeny.

The most recent case of someone inventing the Radiant Dead involves researchers working for the U.S. Information Awareness Office, one of the clandestine Government orgs which also shows up on the radar of Hunters from time to time. They figured that they could suffuse the bodies of captured vampires with

THE DYING HOSPITAL

When you're a Hunter, sometimes you end up in the hospital. Cost of doing business, I suppose. We brought down a werewolf but not without paying the price. I lost a bit of intestine and the nurses were gossiping about what kind of a wild animal could do something like this to a human being.

Lying there trying to stay alive, I became aware that there was something wrong in this hospital. People looked sick, and not just the patients. A doctor vomited and had to leave just before surgery. Understaffing was a constant issue. Patients kept showing new symptoms, nausea, weakness, sores.

I'm a Hunter at my core, even when there's a tube coming out of my stomach. Once you take up the cause, the work never ends. I listened to the sickly sounds of the hospital and it was as if there was a hidden curse slowly making everyone sicker and sicker. The place was already underfunded and overcrowded, and now it was being pushed to the brink.

It was an oncologist who first started to talk about radiation sickness. His experience with chemotherapy led him to make the connection. Soon afterwards, his health started to deteriorate rapidly.

I first saw her in passing, seemingly just another nurse. A young woman checking in on the patients. She thinks I've passed out again so she leans over me and for a moment the pain goes away and it feels so... It's embarrassing to talk about it. We're supposed to destroy them, and here I am, talking like this.

How do you think this story is going to end? I get up, beat the cancer suddenly growing inside me, and return to the fight?

No.

I'm dying. It's on you to finish this.

radioactive particles, drive them mad with hunger, and drop them onto the territory of an enemy nation like a supernatural biological weapon. There's no evidence of widespread adoption of this tactic in the Information Awareness Office, so it's possible it's a case of individual agents going beyond their mandate. After all, adopting the undead as weapons of war has been extremely rare so far due to the dangers they pose.

Others who've made use of the Radiant Dead include strange vampiric cults addicted to the taste of decaying blood, and orgs who've attempted to use the radioactive signature of the undead creature to track them as they move through their own society. Vampires tend to be smart enough to find any trackers attached to their person, but it's harder when the signal is coming from their very bones.

Disturbingly, it appears that there are vampires who treat irradiated blood as a delicacy, seeking to purposefully subject humans to radiation sickness by exposing them to radioactive particles. Exposure to radiation is one thing, but such vampires may also force their victims to ingest radioactive substances, meaning that the radiation source is now inside the body. With humans, this leads to sickness and death. Sometimes such human victims have been made into vampires, becoming Radiant Dead.

Still, no matter how they've been created, the trouble with the Radiant Dead is that as vampires, they're unpredictable and have a mind of their own. Even the ones who are nothing but raging hungry beasts display a cunning that often makes them act at cross-purposes to whoever is trying to use them for their own benefit. Because of the very nature of radiation, they spread sickness wherever they go as immune systems weaken and cancer manifests in previously healthy bodies.

Often it seems that the radioactive particles inside the Radiant Dead have somehow intermingled with the blood that animates them, causing heretofore unseen powers, abilities, and mutations.

Radiant Dead (Feral)

General Difficulty: 4/2

Standard Dice Pool: Physical 7, Social 3, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 3

Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl 8, Streetwise 6

Radiant Dead (Intelligent)

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pool: Physical 6, Social 6, Mental 7

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Medicine 6, Streetwise 7, Survival 7

Notes/Other Traits:

For more detail on Resilience and Vulnerability see *Hunter*, p.167–168

Radioactive: The defining quality of the Radiant Dead is that they're highly radioactive. Spending more than ten minutes in their immediate presence causes acute radiation sickness, with symptoms such as nausea and vomiting. This increases the Difficulty of all tests by 1 and lasts for the remainder of the scene. Prolonged exposure to the Radiant Dead can cause cancer and even death, but the warning signs are obvious. There is a simple way to avoid this effect altogether: Distance. Shooting at the Radiant Dead from afar means that the Hunter is safe from the radiation. Being five meters away is enough. You should note that this danger persists even after the destruction of the vampire, as its remains are also radioactive.

Contaminate: The claws of the Radiant Dead leave behind fragments of radioactive particles in the wounds. The claws cause +1 Aggravated damage. Wounds inflicted cause radiation sickness as per the trait Radioactive above until they're thoroughly cleansed. Wounds cannot be cleaned while in combat.

Quick: Whether quickened by radiation or their vampiric blood, Radiant Dead can attack twice on their turn.

Resilience: The Radiant Dead take Superficial damage from all sources unless it is one of their Vulnerabilities.

Vulnerabilities: The Radiant Dead are weak to water, boron, graphite, lead and concrete. Attacks dealt using any of these components count as Aggravated damage. Boron can be found in common foods such as milk products, coffee, and an assortment of dried beans and fruits. Boric acid can be purchased over the counter.

To Dust: When a Radiant Dead is successfully destroyed, like the undead creatures they are, they turn to dust and ash. However their remains are still highly contaminated. A Wits + Science test at a Difficulty of 3 is required to properly contain the body before the particles spread, throwing dangerous radiation into the four winds. This can be done by dousing the corpse in water, dampening the remains to prevent scattering. If they're prepared, the cell should also have acquired a concrete or lead box and sweep the ashes inside, burying the body several feet deep in a forgotten location.

VARIATION: THE PLUTONIUM SURGEON

Everyone wants to use the Radiant Dead for their own purposes, but there are vampires out there who stand out for their devotion to radiation as a goal in itself. The Plutonium Surgeons are depraved vampires who experiment with the combination of blood and radiation for both occult and culinary purposes. Known for their extreme cruelty, they display a flair for artistry in that their creations often go beyond the practical and into the realm of pure aesthetics.

Plutonium Surgeons tend to operate in small groups of three to five vampires, attended by their creations, living and undead. The signature ability of these vampires is to mold flesh and bone into whatever configurations they find most pleasing. Even their human servants have often been transformed into monstrous forms barely within the realm of biological feasibility. They use these same abilities to infuse the bodies of their subjects with radioactive matter, testing what kind of potential effects the combination of radiation and vampiric blood might have.

Any Plutonium Surgeon may replace the bones of a human subject with strontium, but it takes true talent to guide a victim through the whole process from being a custom-molded human being turned into one of the Radiant Dead. There's often competition between different Plutonium Surgeons to see who comes up with the most creative and cruel new creatures.

VARIATION ABILITIES

Vampire: The standard traits of vampire found in *Hunter*, p. 169 apply.

Fleshcrafting: If the Plutonium Surgeon has access to a restrained or unconscious body for three hours, they can change it in fantastical ways. They can give the body an inhuman appearance, turn its fingers into claws, or perform their signature technique—incorporating radioactive matter in the body. For a living human, this causes permanent radiation sickness. The results of this ability can only be reversed by another Plutonium Surgeon or a vampire with similar abilities. If a Touchstone or a similar important figure is changed in this manner, the players' cell may wish to seek out such a vampire and attempt to force them to help.

Minions: A Plutonium Surgeon is attended by an equal number of Radiant Dead to the players' characters. They arrive in two rounds if the Surgeon is attacked.

Goals and Objectives:

The goals of the Radiant Dead depend on both the individual vampire and whoever is trying to use them for their own purposes.

- One of the Radiant Dead has escaped its handlers, seeking to find a way to survive as a vampire in a foreign city. Unfortunately, they haven't really grasped just how deadly their radiation is to the humans around them. They're trying to follow the usual vampire playbook of hiding among humanity and hunting for blood but people keep dying, random clubgoers vomiting blood on the sidewalk every time the vampire spends too much time on the dance floor.
- There's an internal purge at the IAO and the agents responsible for creating Radiant Dead came under suspicion of overreach. Panicking, they dump their creations on the streets, hoping that they'll be a distraction that gives them enough time to cover their asses. Unfortunately, they misjudge how inhuman the vampires have become. Once satiated, they regain their senses and realize what's been done to them, seeking unlikely allies for their revenge against the IAO.
- A supernatural gang war erupts in the city, with secretive and mysterious factions trying to take each other out, causing significant collateral damage visible to the Hunters. One of the factions has contracted Plutonium Surgeons to create Radiant Dead that can be used as shock troops to cause major disturbances in the domains of their enemies. Human officials react with confusion and fear, believing that some sort of an extremist terrorist attack is underway. The situation becomes even messier when multiple orgs decide to step in as well with their own conflicting goals. In the midst of this all, the newly created Radiant Dead rampage seeking to drink the blood of the living.

Appearance: The trouble with the Radiant Dead is that they look like anybody. As with most other types of vampire, they don't stick out from the general throng of humanity. They might be somewhat emaciated and pale but so are workaholics, addicts, and hospital patients. It's difficult for the Radiant Dead to maintain

a role in human society so it's unlikely that they're the CEO, the journalist, or the rock star. It's far more likely that they're the type of vampire you find prowling the gutters, hiding in abandoned buildings and sewers during the day. Because of this, their clothes may look unwashed and dirty.

The easiest way to detect one of the Radiant Dead is with a dosimeter. It reacts to them the same as to any other source of radiation.

Radiant Dead created by a Plutonium Surgeon may look monstrous in appearance, with the bones of their face twisted into a malignant grimace or bones protruding through their skin. Each Surgeon has their own muse, so the specific appearance of these creations varies a great deal, but they're still broadly human-sized and usually bipedal, following the basic logic of how a human body functions.

The Remains of the Dead

It all went well until the corpse dropped and turned into dust. Sure, there were a few quirks when compared to the usual vampire hunt. We'd seen some of the victims and knew to be careful with the radiation. That's why we used incendiaries, and fire's a classic when it comes to vampires anyway.

So far so good.

Only now, we have a blazing apartment, neighbors running to the street in their pajamas, the fire brigade barreling down the street. If they run into that apartment, it's not just the fire and the smoke they'll be risking. It's also the radioactive dust swirling in the air. They get some of that in their lungs, and it's a trip to the oncology ward for sure.

You get so focused on destroying the monster, you forget what's going to happen once you succeed.

In Stories

The contrast in using the Radiant Dead in stories comes from the fact that at least the intelligent ones among them are capable of understanding their own situation. Powerful forces are using them as pawns, but they also have their own goals and plans. These can be used to bring complexity to the story and make it more emotionally compelling.

As a natural force, radiation resembles fire or gravity in that it can't be negotiated with. If a players' character is exposed for too long, they're effectively dead. This is



why the Radiant Dead work best if the characters first encounter their victims and are able to analyze them so that they have a real understanding of what they're up against. This way, they can take precautions against the radiation and make sure they're safe.

Radioactivity has a few basic qualities when it comes to horror stories. It's invisible, and it makes living bodies sicken and die. It's also connected to nuclear weapons, nuclear power plants, accidents and explosions and even intelligence agency operations. Radioactive matter can be used to poison someone, causing them to die of radiation sickness. The source of the radioactive materials used to create the Radiant Dead is always an interesting question and may lead the characters to better understand the big picture.

The Radiant Dead are characterized by the fact that while radiation kills humans, vampires are just fine. This means that the individual Radiant Dead becomes an exaggerated version of what vampires already are, monsters existing among the living and causing death and sickness wherever they go.

A vampire who understands that they're immune to radiation may employ it even if they're not one of the

Radiant Dead. The Plutonium Surgeons certainly have radioactive materials on hand and may use them to hurt their enemies, sometimes simply by stabbing a Hunter with a radioactive piece of metal.

Encountering the Radiant Dead

- The players' characters destroy a vampire. They keep its ashes in a box, hoping to use them to gain insight into the vampiric condition. The following week, all characters who've been close to the box start to develop symptoms of mild radiation poisoning. If they seek out a medical opinion, they learn that as unlikely as it feels, they've been exposed. Once they put some distance between themselves and the box, they get better, but the question remains: radioactive vampires? What the fuck?
- A vampire the cell has been hunting finally surrenders, pleading that it's happy to be a prisoner

of the cell because it wants to come clean and tell them everything about local vampires. This is a trap, where the idea is to let the radiation slowly kill the characters while the vampire plays for time.

- The trail of a vampire leads the players' cell to a CIA black site in Romania. It appears that in addition to all the usual torture and kidnapping, the site also plays host to a small IAO operation involving special reinforced and light-shielded prison cells and a storage unit housing plutonium.

Additional Dangers and Victims

- Poor **Tanya**, a lowlife and a petty criminal who's stumbled upon a gig as a courier for the Plutonium Surgeons. She has no idea what she's dealing with, but the cases she's asked to transport look fancy and valuable. There's a strong temptation to open one of them and see if she could sell the contents and disappear. The trouble is, what she's transporting is plutonium, and exposure may lead to death in a matter of days. Scary stuff to release into the local street trade.
- Because of an encounter with one of the Radiant Dead, a **Touchstone** is suffering from acute radiation sickness and is likely to die. Modern medicine can't save them from a grotesque death. But then, one of the Plutonium Surgeons sends a message saying that if the characters agree to a truce, they'll turn the Touchstone into a vampire. Better than death, right? No strings attached.
- The **IAO** is not using Radiant Dead somewhere out there far away... They're doing it right here, in the players' characters' city. Their goal is to irradiate local vampires and then release them so that they'll inadvertently destroy their own criminal networks as all their associates sicken and die. It's an inhuman plan, but the IAO agents argue that it's all for the greater good. Surely their superiors can't have sanctioned such things?

Breadcrumbs

Because the Radiant Dead are principally encountered as tools and minions, it's natural to follow their tracks to the next Quarry.

- You can't buy radioactive materials from the corner store. They came from somewhere, and the players' cell can track their movements to figure out who created the local Radiant Death.
- Governments tend to be careful with the spread of radioactive materials. With the right contacts, governmental resources can be used to track them down. They just have to make sure the matter doesn't escalate too much. Otherwise, there's going to be a panic about a suspected terrorist attack using a dirty bomb.
- Radiation affects many things: things like biology, electronics, and film. By following these side effects the characters may be able to perform data analysis that points them in the right direction.
- The tables are turned as a major Quarry loses control of their Radiant Dead. Instead of the cell trying to follow the breadcrumbs to the Quarry, the opposite happens and they discover that a Quarry is seeking to figure out what happened to their radioactive bloodsuckers.

Rewards

Temporary Contact (Occult Practitioner, •):

Radioactive vampire dust is a rare substance. It may be difficult for the characters to find an interested buyer, but perhaps instead the buyer finds them and offers a deal in exchange for the dangerous substance.

Temporary Contact (Powerplant Engineers, •):

The characters return radioactive waste material to the power plant it was stolen from. The engineers don't want to report it because they wish to avoid career repercussions, so they'll be glad to cover the matter up and do a favor for the characters later.

Artifact Ingredients: If harvested carefully, the remains of a radioactive vampire might prove useful for its supernatural properties in sorceries related to transformation, poisoning and death. ■

SULLIVAN & PINE LAW FIRM
324 El Cajon Boulevard, San Diego California

SAMUEL BEDE

Effective Date: July 30, 2018

Dear Johnathan Morris,

This letter of intent to sue shall serve as a formal notice that Meagan Callagher, member of the Sage Ranch Victims Group, intends to commence a lawsuit against you due to the following: For the Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress. The disposal of her son, Erick Callagher's, remains after their recovery in Sage Ranch Park, at 1 Black Canyon Road, Simi Valley California. Failure to allow Ms. Callagher to identify her son's remains before cremating him without her consent. The delivery of his ashes in an unopenable concrete box, along with the withholding of his personal items which included identification, electronic devices, and camping equipment. As well as for your decision to discontinue formal search attempts to recover any of the party's other missing members.

Plaintiff: Sage Ranch Victims Group & Meagan Callagher

Defendant: Johnathan Morris, head of Sage Ranch Park

Settlement: As a result of your actions, the Plaintiffs seek a relief in the form of a payment of the amount of \$900,000 dollars, including the return of Erick Callagher's withheld possessions, any other evidence of the missing party, and resources for a search party to be organized and continued.

Sincerely,
Samuel Bede



MK
2024

Chapter Three: **THE CURSED**

The most varied of the Quarries the Hunters will meet are those with their own unique background story. These Quarries are the singular result of tragedy or corruption, an experience so profound it has imbued them with supernatural power as a curse, an ability, or both. These Quarries more closely resemble those found in **Hunter: The Reckoning**, and those Quarries could slot into a conspiracy in the same way as the Cursed presented here.

If they are part of a conspiracy, they are usually the agents and lieutenants of its leader. Their unique abilities leave them well-placed for a specific agenda. Unlike the Thousand Shadows, they are usually clever and motivated. They will believe they are advancing some larger agenda or that they're working for those that are building toward some master plan. Cursed can be mercenaries, true believers, or even monsters that have been coerced into aiding the conspiracy through threats or the withholding of something vital they need for survival. Cursed do not necessarily know the details of the conspiracy, but they knowingly do the dirty work for those they believe are in charge.

Sometime just after 3:00 a.m., a light came on in the warehouse. Sally was beginning to doze off until Jed nudged her in the ribs. The rain had stopped and been replaced with an icy chill, leaving a light layer of frost on the empty streets.

Sally looked at Jed, who was already loading bullets into the large revolver he always carried.

Get your shotgun, we're going in.

But what about research, waiting for backup, all that?

I saw a kid in the window, just for a moment. I think they were the one that turned on the light. I don't plan on reading the news tomorrow morning and seeing that another kid hasn't come home.

I get it. There ain't no one here but us. I got your back.

Sally reached behind her to pick up her shotgun, checked the ammo and gave Jed a nod. Together they made their way carefully toward the old steel warehouse.

In and out, said Jed. We find the kid and we leave. Anything else we find, we run from.

Getting in was easy. No one had locked the gates in years and the layers of graffiti inside the first floor testified to a lack of locked doors. But the place was empty, the only light bleeding in from streetlamps and the stairs to the upper floor.

Creeping up the stairs, Sally felt her heart beat harder with every step. Every shadow seemed like a threat. As she and Jed came to the top of the stairs they stopped to take in the room. The whole floor was open, and well-lit from the bare bulbs and large windows to the poorly maintained street lighting. Across the room from the stairs, a little girl of about eight or so was curled up against the wall. She was wearing a party dress, with a few rips and tears but at least no blood. She was probably the Jameson girl who'd gone missing after a local birthday party.

Sally tried to call out to her quietly, beckoning at her as Jed moved up the steps into the room. The girl didn't move, but something in the shadows did. Something dark and fat with long hands oozed along the floor toward them.

Hunterssss, it rasped. You alwaysssss come for the children. Sssso eassssy. Now you are mine.

Unlike some Shadows, these monsters are never completely unaware of the crimes they are committing, or any greater purpose they serve. Their level of complicity may vary, but it is much more difficult to portray a Cursed as both a victim and a perpetrator. Unlike Puppeteers, these monsters are rarely involved in other organized schemes beyond one conspiracy. While they certainly have their own grifts and machinations, their masters in a conspiracy do not give them enough of a leash to pursue grander projects or establish their power bases. Any Cursed given too much freedom might get ideas about moving up the ladder. In fact, these Quarries can potentially graduate into becoming Puppeteers by supplanting the monster pulling their strings or by coercing a group of weaker pawns under their thumb.

Rewards

Cursed are a great source for unique magical artifacts or temporary boosts to a Hunter's innate supernatural abilities. They are usually one of a kind, and so are any rewards that might come from defeating them. When it comes to revealing the mysteries behind the conspiracy or unmasking Cog's identity, Cursed should be of limited utility. While they certainly should have a greater awareness of these things than a Shadow, these monsters are not privy to the bigger truths of the scheme. These Quarries might be a great source for information on how the conspiracy is organized or maintained within a region, but they might not even know the nature of the Puppeteers that give them their marching orders. Though it might not help a Hunter cell disable the higher echelons of the conspiracy, the most common reward available from a Cursed is the whereabouts and capabilities of nearby Shadows.

The Betrayed

Ghost



u/Anonymous

...

Someone I know, a good friend of mine who knows about the work but isn't in the work if you catch my meaning, once asked if I ever show mercy. I told them that I do consider it, but I also think that even monsters formed from victims of circumstance had to make a choice. They didn't like the answer, but I stand by it. Undead abominations like this are exactly what I mean. If it is out for revenge, that window closed a long time ago. Killing anyone it gets its hands on is all it has left. Putting it down is the greatest mercy I can think of.

138

2.8K

47K



Elements: Corpses, Ghosts, Murder, Revenge, Pharmaceuticals

Two years ago, **Scott Cai** left home early for his job at **Telset Pharmaceutical**, worked a long shift with overtime, then never came home. The last people to see him alive were work colleagues. Their testimonies provided little insight: Scott clocked out and left the building. After a month of searching, neither he nor his car was found. The case went cold and remains so to this day. He left a wife, **Tanya**, and two children, **Eric** and **Dana**, behind.

None of the witnesses saw two men in plainclothes grab Scott as he opened his car. They didn't see a third man take his keys and drive his car away. When an unmarked van left the parking lot with him restrained inside, everyone else was at their posts.

Friends, family, and colleagues knew Scott as one of the company's prized members of their research and development team. That was true, most of the time. He also had another, unlabeled position in the company: the



head of a special internal laboratory division referred to in hidden corporate documents as **The Leary Room**.

In the Leary Room, Scott ran a series of highly illegal Phase I treatment trials for Telset. These trials were for drugs and treatments developed off-the-record in an undisclosed location, all commissioned through a series of contracts drafted by rich clients. The subjects were anyone the company could get their hands on, consisting of prisoners expunged from the rosters of private prisons, human trafficking victims, and individuals brought in through corporate connections.

He was brought into the Leary Room on the promise that these trials were for world-changing applications the public just wasn't ready for, least of all any regulatory body. When the work turned from exhilarating to nightmarish, he stayed because the money could pay for his children's college tuition. When fatalities went from random tragedies to yet another shorthand scribble on the day's logs, he remained because he was certain he was the only voice of conscience left on the team.

One day, he had enough. Fearing that any local newspapers were or could be brought under Telset's influence, he went straight to **Rebecca Davenport**, a reporter for a national newspaper famous for her exposés on corporate abuses and corruption. After a round of emails and a few leaked documents, she promised him his story would be told.

That never happened. Scott confessed his intention to whistleblower to another member of the Leary Room in hopes that he'd join his cause. Instead, he was betrayed. The company hired thugs to kidnap him from Telset's headquarters, bring his car to a chop shop, and beat him to death somewhere outside town. They buried him in a shallow grave by the side of a lonely private road on company-owned property. Not long after, Rebecca died. The official cause of death was cardiac arrest. The laptop containing her early notes on Telset was never found, one of many items stolen in an apparently ordinary apartment break-in not long after her death.

Telset assumed that was the end of the affair, and the Leary Room continued its operations at a new location not long after. It currently operates under a new name: **Special Site A**.

A year ago, on the side of a private road few drive upon, a body emerged from the earth. Since then, the local area has become host to a series of bizarre, cannibalistic murders. The locations are random, but the *modus operandi* is eerily similar. Someone, described by eyewitnesses as a "gaunt masculine figure," breaks into a house with little regard for his own bodily safety. All residents inside are overpowered, murdered, and consumed.

The local media calls him The Suburban Ripper, and speculate that he's a young hooligan killing for thrills. They couldn't be further from the truth. Scott's

furious ghost clawed his way back from wherever it is the dead go, assumed control of his own corpse, and discovered that eating people kept it whole. Armed with a weapon of his own flesh, the ghost will go to any lengths to make Telset pay. If it means feasting upon this entire town to achieve that, so be it.

THE LONELY GHOST

While the Betrayed has a unique background, they are not the only angry ghost out there. The same powers and abilities with a different background can be used to create many more Quarries of this type. Each will need a powerful reason to return as such a revenant, usually one that left them dead before they could claim justice. Some possible examples are:

- Someone killed when a long-time abuser lost control but played the victim and escaped jail.
- A person murdered for no better reason than the bigotry of their killer.
- An innocent bystander who saw something they shouldn't by accident and was murdered. They might not even know exactly what they saw.
- A person who was always ignored or forgotten, and in death their silent rage drives them to inflict that hurt on others just to be remembered.
- A victim who lost a good and worthwhile life to a killer (or just random chance) who murdered them for no better reason than they were in the right place at the wrong time.

General Difficulty: 3 / 2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 2, Mental 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 4, Willpower 4

Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl 7, Firearms 6, Melee 5

Notes/Other Traits:

For more detail on Invisibility, Onslaught, Resilience, Terrify, Bound, and Vulnerability see **Hunter**, p.167–168.

Dual Form: Scott exists as both a ghost and an animated corpse, although the corpse can only animate when the ghost possesses it. Otherwise it is no different than any other dead body. Scott can only perceive what his ghostly form can see, but is always aware if his body is moved or harmed.

Bound (Scott's corpse): Scott's ghost is unable to travel farther than thirty feet from his corpse.

Healing Feast (Corpse): Scott can heal his corpse by

eating human flesh, living or dead. For each turn the corpse consumes human flesh directly from a body, it regains 2 Health. The ghost does not need to spend Willpower to use this ability. The corpse may not move from its spot nor use any of its other abilities (i.e., those tagged with *Corpse*) while eating, but the ghost is free to use any of its own.

Incorporeal (Ghost): Scott's ghost is incorporeal, and cannot be harmed with physical objects, even when manifested.

Invisibility (Ghost): Scott's ghost is invisible, and only becomes visible when it manifests, usually to frighten interlopers or to manipulate the physical world. Only those with the ability to sense the supernatural (such as the Perk Horrid Detail, see p. 142) can see Scott's ghost form when it is not manifested.

Onslaught (Corpse): Scott's ghost can pilot his corpse with near perfect precision, allowing him to physically attack multiple targets at once.

Resilience (Corpse): The otherworldly energies and substances flowing through Scott's corpse cause all sources of physical harm save for fire and supernatural abilities (such as Endowments) to inflict Superficial damage.

Telekinesis (Ghost): As an action, Scott may launch a heavy object at a single target, or several lighter objects at up to three targets. The ghost uses its Firearms pool, and all targets may contest it as if they were contesting a regular Firearms attack. A successful attack inflicts margin + 1 Superficial Health damage on each hit target.

Terrify (6, Ghost): When Scott's ghost manifests, it may attempt to Terrify anyone within eye contact. This also affects anyone watching the event over a live feed (such as observing the scene from a drone), but not anyone watching a recording of the event after it has happened.

Vulnerability (Fire, Corpse): Fire from any source always inflicts +1 Aggravated Health damage on Scott's corpse. If Incapacitated, Scott's ghost is banished.

Vulnerability (Memorabilia, Ghost): Heirlooms from Scott's living life, such as a prized possession, an everyday object he heavily used, or even the presence of living relatives like his wife and children, may be used as a +1 Aggravated Willpower damage weapon that can affect Scott's ghostly form. If Incapacitated by willpower damage, Scott's ghost is banished, and his corpse becomes inert and rapidly decays.



Goals and Objectives:

- Scott wants revenge on Telset Pharmaceutical. His targets are the thugs who killed him, current and former members of Special Site A, and the general employees of Telset. He isn't picky about targets, although he comes for those who are directly involved with Telset, not their friends and families. Unfortunately, he can make mistakes. Some of his victims worked at the company thanks to a temp program. A very unlucky few lived in houses that some of his former colleagues resided in. When he remembers to ask his victims questions, it's whether they can take him back to the Leary Room. If he learns that it's become Special Site A, he'll want to learn its location. If possible, he'll make his way there and wreak bloody vengeance. If he can't do that, finding his way to Telset headquarters works just as well.
- Scott wants his story told, and Telset's crimes exposed to the world. In between the killings, when the memory rises like a rock in a murky pond, he attempts to seek out Rebecca so she can shed light on Telset's wrongdoings. He never gets far, and before he can learn she's dead, the hatred in his heart rushes back in and he seeks out new victims. This cycle is only getting shorter, and soon enough he'll forget that she existed at all.
- Scott wants to see his family one more time. Though much of his memory, personality, and identity is lost in a wash of despair and fury, his family was on his mind while he was beaten to death. The hope for a true family reunion is one of the few non-violent impulses he holds on to. This

may not last long. His obsession with revenge is starting to mingle with his love for his family, and it's creating strange (even contradictory) impulses. Sometimes he just wants to return to a quiet life with them, and sometimes he wants to punish them



for not seeking him out in the first place. More frequently, he starts thinking about the taste of their flesh, and wonders if releasing them from their bodies might be the best path to reconciliation.

Appearance: Scott has a corporeal and ethereal appearance. In the material world, he's a young man of Chinese descent of average height. His build is frail and sickly, and his skin is jaundiced. Lacerations form a lattice on his face, and the right side of his head is caved in. Depending on how long he's been standing, the bottom of his extremities takes on a deep, purple tinge, the result of the corpse's blood pooling where gravity takes it. Patches of his hair still cling to his head. He hides his obviously dead looks with multiple layers of baggy clothing, all stolen from his victims. He often forgets about covering up his eyes, long grayed over with several layers of film, but when he does remember he uses a cheap pair of sunglasses.

Hunters who see Scott in his ghostly form see Scott as he was when he died; all his injuries look fresh.

His hair is in a crew cut and his expression is that of pure rage. A gray, mucus-like substance flows from his mouth, eyes, and the fresh laceration and battery wounds on his head. These ethereal liquid strands dig into the corpse nearby. The ghost manipulates these strands to move the corpse as if he were performing a hideous puppet show upon himself.

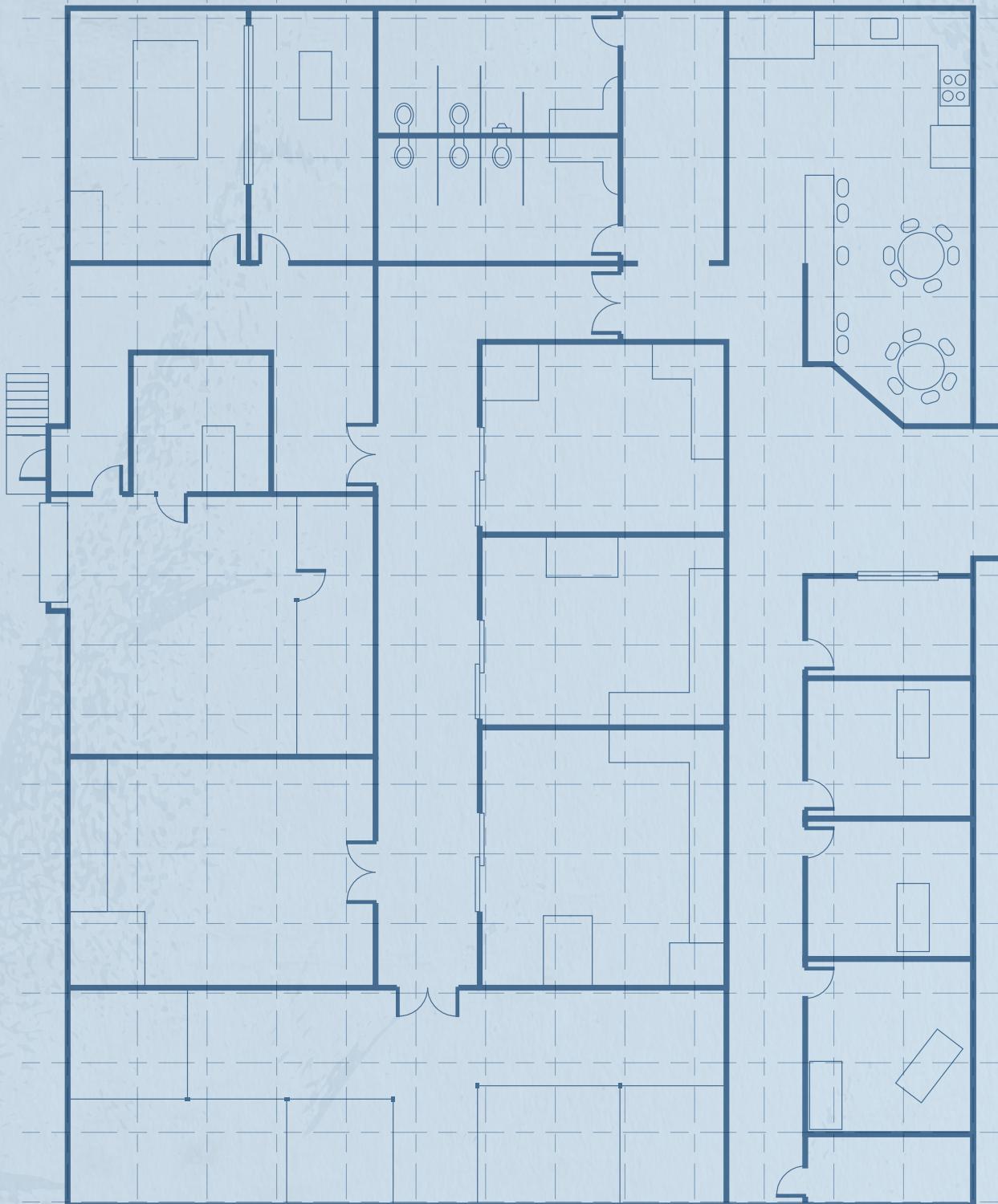
In Stories

The Betrayed is a simple tale of the unquiet dead that could expand into something much more complicated. He could fit into a chronicle as one of the first Quarries a cell ever faces or be an omen signifying the direction of a new story.

Though Scott is obsessively, violently focused on his purpose, he is capable of rational thought. He was known in life for being personable, and some aspect of this remains. If a person isn't actively in his way and he doesn't know or suspect that they're connected to Telset, he might communicate with them if there's no other choice. It's difficult to get the corpse to speak, especially if it hasn't eaten enough flesh to keep the lungs and voice box from rotting, so he prefers to communicate with grunts or short, aggressive sentences. Attempts at more complicated dialogue annoys him, but a sympathetic ear or any new information about Telset or his murderers could turn things around.

Unfortunately, he knows very little about his situation beyond who he and his family are, the very basics of Telset and the Leary Room, how he was supposed to help Rebecca break the story, and vivid memories of his death. Whatever caused him to exist beyond death severely addled his memory. It'll only get worse as the Hunt progresses.

As a ghost, Scott is highly emotional and prone to severe mood swings. He has little time for introspection about his undead nature, but curious Hunters willing to take the risk might pick up that his need for murderous revenge goes beyond any cliché a ghost story tells. There's an inhuman darkness within him, a craving to bring as much suffering and harm on the living as he experienced in life. If he isn't destroyed or made to pass on, this craving overtakes even his love for family and desire for revenge. There'll be nothing left of him but a mindless flesh-eater.

TELSET PHARMACEUTICALS FLOOR PLAN

His family has no idea what happened to him, nor do any of his former coworkers inside or outside Special Site A. Two years of corporate turnover and near-discoveries of company's illegal operations made it so while most of Scott's coworkers outside of the laboratory still work there, most of his coworkers inside the laboratory do not. Those who remain might believe that Scott was killed by the company, but they have no actual proof, nor would they be prepared should they end up one of his targets. Higher-ups in Telset's research and development division, the direction behind Special Site A, could suspect that someone is killing people related to their work, but they're too busy operating the division to act beyond anything more than hiring a private investigator.

Encountering the Betrayed

- Someone close to the cell, such as a Relationship Map Connection, starts a new job at Telset Pharmaceutical. They excel at their work, but over the past few days, they've noticed a sickly-looking man in a hoodie tailing them when they get home. It's the Betrayed, who's trying to set aside his murderous impulses to determine how close this person is to the company. It won't be long before those impulses win, especially after the person gets offered an under-the-table promotion to work at Special Site A. The cell must keep them out of both the Betrayed's and Telset's clutches.
- A rival of the cell is hired by a Telset executive to investigate the connection between a recent killing spree attributed to the Suburban Ripper and current employees of the company. Before they can put the pieces together, they come across the Betrayed. Barely escaping with their life, the rival turns to the only people they think can handle the undead creature: the cell. They must form an uneasy alliance with their rival to take the Quarry down. They'll also need to avoid the machinations of the Telset executive. If the company learns of the

Betrayed's true nature, they'll have no qualms with eliminating the rival to tie up every loose end...and the cell along with them.

- The landlord of the apartment building Rebecca Davenport once lived in reaches out to a contact of the cell. Strange activity is occurring near the Pulitzer-nominated journalist's former home, and the landlord has turned to their absolute last resort. The cell finds her ghost, but it gets worse. The Betrayed has finally found the ex-journalist's former home, and, under the belief she's still alive, won't hesitate to slaughter his way up to her apartment. Can the cell exorcize two ghosts at once?

Additional Dangers and Victims

- The Suburban Ripper is a sensational figure in local news media. The cell could find news articles about the killer, or clips from television news. These articles and clips contain direct eyewitness accounts of the events, as well as the theories of local law enforcement. The cell can obtain these through combing through internet archives using Academics or Investigation. This is a great way to introduce the Quarry into the chronicle, as well as an in-character method of describing his appearance.
- There's never been an atrocity that social media hasn't obsessed about. The gruesome and seemingly random nature of the crimes has attracted amateur sleuths from all over the internet. The cell could find online communities speculating about the murders, as well as groups dedicated to solving the mystery. These posts can introduce new angles to the Hunt or a chance to create a Contact out of a knowledgeable poster.
- The Betrayed doesn't care about being filmed. If a victim's home has cameras, they're going to be on it. Some of these video clips could show up in news media, but the cell could gain access to

longer, uncensored clips through leaked videos on the internet, Contacts or Allies connected to law enforcement, or the use of the Global Access Edge. These videos provide even greater detail of the Quarry's appearance, as well as an opportunity to examine how it attacks its victims and how to best counter its assaults.

- Though the Leary Room/Special Site A is top secret, the cell can find evidence of its existence. The facility is on Telset property and needed to pass construction codes to avoid suspicion. While the building's purpose is obscured, officially, Special Site A is a distribution center for the company's products, the last stop before a local pharmacy. Its address, capacity, and floor plans aren't secret. Hunters can find these papers through bribing public officials with Resources, finding the documents with Academics, or using Global Access. This could be useful information for helping the Betrayed pass on by revealing the program to the public, or if the cell decides that raiding the laboratory is the best course of action.
- Not all victims of the Betrayed are dead. Sometimes a person can play dead long enough for the Betrayed to pass them by, or they're one of the ones lucky enough to not be consumed by the abomination. In either case, their statements to the police could be more evidence for its existence. These statements could be obtained through Contacts or even Relationship Map Connections with ties to law enforcement. They could exist as written transcripts or recorded audio.

Breadcrumbs

- Scott is intelligent and has a clear motive in wanting to damage Telset Pharmaceutical. His desires mean he may be allied to more powerful forces. It's possible they're out to cheat him, or it also may be that they're honest in their dealings with him. Whatever the case, Scott's focus is something that the Hunters may also be able to exploit in using him for information.

- What kind of things is Telset connected to? Perhaps it's not Scott but the company which provides the essential clues for the players' characters to proceed. After all, there are any number of powerful Quarries and even orgs who might have their own goals to attain by making use of the company.
- It's a long shot but clever Hunters might even be able to redirect Scott to a different target by playing on the feeling of being betrayed. It's dangerous to lie to the ghost, however. After all, such mendacity may come to be seen as betrayal in itself.

Rewards

Temporary Resources (• to •): Depending on how the Betrayed was neutralized and who, if any, knows the truth behind its existence, this reward can take many forms. If the cell uses the body to prove that Scott is dead, his family pays them the listed reward for his whereabouts. If the cell struck a deal with Telset and destroyed the Betrayed without revealing the existence of Special Site A, the payment is a lump sum in cash placed in escrow. If Telset's rewarding them, heavy strings are attached. They'll try to bind the cell in an indefinite NDA about the events, enforced with armed security if necessary.

Temporary Contacts (• to •): While investigating the Quarry, the cell should have the chance to meet many kinds of people along the way, each capable of bringing them closer to the Betrayed. With the right impressions and actions, they might work for them long-term. Some potential Contacts are:

- Sarah Grazia, a renegade employee at Telset and one of the Betrayed's next targets. If the cell saves her from his wrath, she's happy to be alive. If the cell exposes the company's wrongdoing, she's grateful that they were able to do what she and some other employees could not. If Telset continues to function at the end of the hunt, she'll keep the cell up-to-date on its next moves, especially if the company plans to retaliate against the cell.
- Max Beckett, a former colleague of Rebecca Davenport. If the cell exposed Telset, the truth

behind Rebecca's death is exposed as well. It's been years since Max has worked in journalism, but he still knows enough people to keep the cell in the loop for anything strange or unusual. He's a great way to get the cell involved with other Quarries, especially if they're indeed involved in a greater conspiracy.

- Tanya Cai, Scott's wife. She works as a lead technician for a security company and could give advice on unlocking electronic systems or share master codes for her employer's products.

New Library Perk (Where They Go): The Betrayed has very specific targeting patterns. If the cell can successfully analyze those patterns and use them to neutralize the Quarry, they may have access to this new Perk. Like other Perks, Where They Go must be purchased with Experience. But it may be granted as a temporary asset for the next hunt. See p. 26 for further details.

New Global Access Perk (Intranet Insertion): Most of Telset's crimes are hidden on internal servers. While they're not normally accessible to anyone on the public internet, Hunters could cajole an employee to give them access, sneak into its headquarters to retrieve it from the servers, or use a compromised remote work computer to enter their intranet. If the cell successfully uses these tactics to discover the Betrayed's true nature, they could perfect their tactics for future hunts with this new Perk. Like other Perks, Intranet Insertion must be purchased with Experience. But like a temporary asset the Storyteller might grant this bonus for the next hunt. See p. 26 for further details.

New Beast Whisperer Perk (Supernatural Scent): While dressed in his hoodie and from a distance, the Betrayed has the appearance of an ordinary—if sickly—human being. Those close enough to land in his clutches pick up an unforgettable scent, a mixture of fresh blood, rot, and ammonia. It's strong and unique enough for animals to pick up on. If a Hunter learns to train their animals on the scent, they could use that ability for future hunts with this new Perk. The Hunter could even learn to use this training for other senses as well. Like other Perks, Supernatural Scent must be purchased with Experience. But like a temporary asset the Storyteller might grant this bonus for the next hunt. See p. 26 for further details.

New Sense the Unnatural Perk (Horrific Detail):

Encountering a real ghost might awaken a Hunter's dormant ability to see supernatural essences that are normally hidden. Such an ability might awaken first in flashes and moments where they see more than their companions. But with time and training, they can hone the power and perceive what is usually hidden, in all its horrific detail.

Telset Experimental Drugs: While hunting down the Betrayed, the cell could encounter several opportunities to acquire some of the drugs and treatments from Special Site A. These could be used as evidence for what the company has done, which could be one of the ways Scott could pass on if he hasn't been defeated by another means. If the cell wants to keep them, they can analyze their effects with access to a laboratory and an Intelligence + Medicine or Intelligence + Science (Pharmacology) test at Difficulty 3. However, this only allows the players' characters to understand what it does, not duplicate it. If sold on the black market or used to blackmail Telset, the cell receives at least 3 temporary Resource dots for the entire batch, no matter how many they have.

If the cell is brave or foolish enough to try to use any of these chemicals on themselves, they could gain the Unnatural Changes Edge (see p. 143) in whatever way the Storyteller thinks is reasonable. Thankfully such effects are usually temporary and last for the duration of the next hunt or a single scene at the Storyteller's whim.

MISSING

SCOTT CAI
April 19th, 2021
Crestford, North Carolina
DESCRIPTION
Date of Birth Used: January 23rd, 1976
Place of Birth: Raleigh, North Carolina
Hair: Black
Eyes: Brown
Height: 5'9"
Weight: 148 lbs.
Build: Light
Complexion: Medium
Sex: Male
Race: Chinese
Nationality: American
Occupation: Laboratory Head



DETAILS

Scott Cai was last seen leaving the headquarters of Telset Pharmaceutical at 1:45 AM on April 15th, 2021. Neither he nor his vehicle, a blue sedan, have been seen since.

REWARD

Scott Cai's family is offering a reward of up to \$10,000 for any information leading to either his location or his recovery, alive or deceased.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING SCOTT CAI,
CONTACT THE CRESTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT.**

The Turncoat

Corrupted Hunter

Some of my fellow travelers talk about the Reckoning like it's a universal goal, some uniting factor between all of us. It's not out of naivete; anyone who stays alive in our job isn't naive. It's hope. I can understand that, I can respect it. But that's what makes it more important that they know about her. She's brought about her own personal Reckoning, and it made her into a monster.

Elements: Transformation, Body horror, Science without ethics, Betrayal, Obsession, Rogue hunter

The former members of the Back Alley Bowling League, a large cell that was once active in the Des Moines metropolitan area, don't like to talk about what happened in their last days. At one time, it was the largest organized cell in the Midwestern United States (or elsewhere, near your chronicle location) and its dissolution was messy, violent, and the stuff of speculation and legends across the monster hunting community. Its rise and fall serves as a cautionary tale to those wishing for greater organization outside of the Jobber-led monster hunting groups.

Enough Leaguers survived the collapse and formed or joined new cells worldwide. Inevitably, one of their team always asks what happened. Some shrug off the question, others speak in trivialities about how the bigger an organization gets, the harder it is to trust the motives of all its members. A few, especially those who're convinced to talk after one beer too many, place the blame on one person: Renee Gibbs.

Renee's first encounter with the supernatural came as a teenager. While on a youth group camping trip, the campsite was attacked by a group of disheveled, seemingly rotting wolves. The pack laid waste to the site, tearing apart tents and mauling campers with a shocking amount of coordination. Renee struck one of

them with a rock. She watched its wound heal instantly. Just as she grabbed another stone, the wolf changed into a hideous amalgamation of human and wolf, three times her size. Everything in her body screamed at her to run, but before she did, she attempted to bash the rock into the creature's belly. It grabbed hold of the rock, and her hands, and crushed them both.

Her friends rationalized the terror they faced that night as a pack of fleeing wolves, terrified by the start of a forest fire the club managed to escape. Somehow, Renee kept crystal clear memories of that night. She looked back while running away, and saw the wolves assume human shapes. They spread gasoline around the site and set it ablaze.

Renee's hands recovered over a long, arduous time. Despite the harm done to her, she became obsessed with the pins and wires that held her bones in shape. She was almost sad to see them go. She came away from the event not with a desire for revenge against the creature that harmed her, but deep envy. It was strong, could transform into all kinds of shapes, and could heal itself in seconds. The event changed her life in two ways. She shifted her career goals into biological science, and she found her way into the monster hunting community.

She fell in with the Back Alley Bowling League Hunter team in its early days and became an integral member. She was the one the cell relied upon when researching new means of taking down monsters. She also made sure to take samples for her own personal research, which proved invaluable in taking down many Quarries. After some training with ex-military members of the cell, she became a boon in the field. Soon, she met and then exceeded the combat prowess of her tutors.

And yet, all of that wasn't enough. Some teammates demanded she destroy her samples once she was done researching them, out of fear of contamination. Others wanted to destroy their Quarries as fast as possible, preventing her from getting all the information she wanted. Most of all, the cell's resources were spread thin. Its growing size combined with its need to stay underground ensured a tight budget that severely hindered her ambitions.

When Monster-X (see **Hunter**, p. 250) expanded into the United States, one of their first moves was market exploration. Agents were placed in major cities around the country. They were searching not only

for a place to put the U.S. branch headquarters, but also monster hunters willing to jump on board for a steady paycheck. Des Moines was one of their potential location choices. They didn't get the headquarters, but they did get Renee.

When Renee joined Monster-X, she took all her research with her. She also convinced a few key members of the cell to join her, creating a snowball of hurt and mistrust that concluded in a disastrous hunt that tore the Back Alley Bowling League apart. After the fall of her original team, she worked her way up the company through one of its first franchises, landing an important role in the company's laboratory in Togo. Now, she had the time, budget, and personnel to pursue the research she wanted.

Even this wasn't enough. She clashed with the company's Chief Technology Officer over what was possible and what was profitable. The people she brought to the company either perished on obviously dangerous missions or were forced out, both of which she took personally. She also missed the thrill of being out in the field, something she couldn't get at a desk job. The final straw was when the CTO rejected Renee's magnum opus: a biological enhancement system powered by the bodily fluids and organs of monsters.

She decided if she could burn her bridges once, she could do it again. She stole an exorbitant amount of proprietary hardware, internal secrets, and embezzled several million dollars from the company. She returned to the United States and established a new company, Framework Security. As a combination of a bleeding edge biotech development firm and private military company, Renee has the perfect playground to pursue her dreams. She's even completed phase one of her enhancement system. She's testing it with the only subject worthy of using it: herself.

General Difficulty: 4/3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 5, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6

Exceptional Dice Pools: Firearms 7, Melee 4, Stealth 6

Notes/Other Traits:

For more detail on Shapeshift and Vulnerability see

Hunter, p.167–168



Fighting Form (Combat Mode): A special switch on Renee's control mechanism pumps cortisol into her natural endocrine system and a series of internal organs harvested from the corpses of shapeshifters. Once per scene, she may take a turn to press the switch. She grows more muscular and an extra foot or so taller. Her teeth become fangs and her hands become deadly claws. For an amount of turns equal to her current Willpower, she gains the monster abilities Onslaught (**Hunter**, p. 167) and Rush (**Hunter**, p. 168), and receives a +4 bonus to her Health and all melee combat tests. When Combat Mode ends, all damage held in her bonus Health boxes carry over to her regular Health, which may Incapacitate her at the Storyteller's discretion. This mode cannot be combined with other modes.

Shapeshift (Stealth Mode): A switch on Renee's control mechanism pumps a special reserve of blood

extracted from a vampire stolen from a Monster-X black site. When Renee wants to take on a specific form, she adds blood, bile, or other means of genetic material from her target into the reserve. Once per scene, she may take a turn to press the switch. She takes on either a generic human form of indiscriminate gender identity, or the near-exact visage of the person she's imitating as long as they are roughly the same height, gender, and weight. She may keep this form for as long as three hours. Those close to or very familiar with a person she's imitating may make an Intelligence + Investigation or Insight check to detect flaws in her visage or demeanor. Anyone who has witnessed her activate this mode receives a two-dice bonus to any test dedicated to finding her. This mode cannot be combined with other modes.

Armored Form (Hazard Mode): A switch on Renee's control mechanism pumps in electrically-charged blood taken from "naturally hardy people," and filtered through her surgically inserted special organs. Once per scene, she may take a turn to press the switch. For several turns equal to her current Willpower, her skin grows a layer of hard scales, which grants her the monster ability Resilience (*Hunter*, p. 168). This mode cannot be combined with other modes.

Vulnerability (Control Mechanism): A successful Called Shot (see Sidebar) to the control mechanism on the back of Renee's neck damages the device, forcing her to return to her original form. In addition, its direct connection to her endocrine, circulatory, and nervous system ensures that Called Shots with four or more Successes after the -2 Success penalty always inflicts Aggravated Health damage.

Edges: Arsenal (Exotics), Ordinance (Exotics)

Goals and Objectives:

- Renee sells her company's services to anyone and anything willing to pay. No warzone is too small for the private military company, and they have no qualms serving public or private police forces of any kind if the check clears. Framework's unique relationship with the supernatural could even open themselves to having monster clients, though they might not be aware of it until well into the job.

CALLED SHOTS

For more information, see the *Storyteller's Toolkit* p.18

A combatant may seek to direct their attacks at a specific part of their target in order to produce a result other than maximal physical trauma: shooting out the tires of a car, disarming an opponent, or putting a bullet in the leg of a fleeing informant.

To do so, the attacker declares their action and target before rolling the dice for their attack. After the attacker tests, they subtract successes as hitting a specific location is much harder. Usually, the modifier is -2 successes, though the Storyteller can modify this number up or down depending on the nature of the target. Hitting the tires of a car might incur a -1 penalty, while piercing the fuel line of a plane taking off is done at -4. If the test is still a success the attacker does damage as normal and specifically hits the area they specified. This may have additional effects at the Storyteller's discretion.

- Renee is a poacher, both of Quarries and of Hunters. When she decides to get into the field, her years of experience working in an organized cell make it reasonably simple to find a Quarry. When she suspects that a monster has something (or is made from something) that's a boon to the company's projects, their research methodology, or her own personal project, she organizes a team and dives in. If there's already a cell on its trail, that's even better. She won't pass up free labor. If the cell manages to take down the Quarry before her team does, they're now potential recruits. As far as she's concerned, she wins either way.
- Above all else, Renee wants to perfect her biological enhancement system. When she sought funding from very rich private investors, the system was one of the highlights of her presentation, and it won them over. They want to see results, and while she's made fantastic progress, it isn't yet ready for public demonstration. Even after countless invasive surgeries and harvesting many monsters, it only works for a few minutes at a time and takes a massive toll on her body. She has a solution. She believes that she's exhausted all she can from monsters, and that the blood and organs of veteran monster hunters might be able to counteract the system's side effects. She's yet to act on her theory, but it's only a matter of time.

Appearance: Renee is a tall Black woman with short gray hair and a powerful build. But experimentation and surgery has made her physique somewhat lopsided. How this lopsidedness occurs changes after each shapeshift. Sometimes, one arm is more sculpted than the other. Other times, her legs are noticeably longer than the rest of her body. In the boardroom and on remote calls, her brown eyes are bright, and her expressions are boisterous. In the field, her gaze is steely.

Her clothing style favors jeans and long-sleeved, high-collared tops or turtleneck sweaters. She essentially dresses to hide the control mechanism for her shapeshifting system, which is otherwise visible on the back of her neck. A network of tubes and pumps connected to the control mechanism snake through her limbs and torso. The largest of these tubes are outside of her body, held to her flesh through a proprietary bioplastic. Scars and stretch marks from the alterations line her skin.

In Stories

When Hunters fear losing it all, they tend to imagine their personal lives falling apart, or the severe toll their mental stability takes as one of the few humans aware of the greater supernatural world.

The Turncoat adds a new, exciting way to lose it all. She is selfish, greedy, and ambitious in addition to having the worst impulses of a Hunter. She's such a sellout that she sold out the organization she sold out to. Her zeal for the hunt is real and unrelenting, but she sees no need to pay lip service to the lofty ideals Hunters claim to have. She's here to make money and pursue a more powerful form, end of story.

The Turncoat could serve as a confounding element to an otherwise simple hunt. The cell might see hunting down the Quarry as a matter of life and death, but she sees it as yet another competition to win. Even if they find a way to work with her, her team's hunting style

is unsubtle and prone to collateral damage. If Danger increases during a hunt, she's a great in-narrative option for how that happened.

Direct conflict with her is also possible. As a mercenary, she might unknowingly end up on a Quarry's payroll. Even if the cell breaks the truth to her, it's likely she might stay in its employ, even if it's only to lull them into a false sense of security so she can harvest them later. If she decides to follow through on hunting Hunters, she could be an outright Quarry.

Renee carries herself with incredible confidence. She wants to be thought of the smartest person in the room, and she often is. She considers the thoughts and opinions of her employees and squad mates just long enough to make it seem like her dismissals of them are carefully thought out. When someone suggests a good idea to her, she always finds a way to make it seem like she's the reason they came up with it.

She rarely enters the field alone. On the hunt, she's backed up by three or four squad mates, each with a general difficulty of 3 / 2. If The Turncoat gets another chance to face off with the cell, these squad mates are rarely the same people. Renee isn't interested in getting attached to people she sees as potential cannon fodder.



Encountering the Turncoat

- As the cell arrives at a Quarry's lair, they discover something that their preparation didn't cover. Renee and her squadron serve as an extra layer of security between them and the monster, and Renee is not going to let them get to the target without a fight. If the cell tries to hint at their client's monstrous nature to get them to give up, they learn that she knows very well that she's working for a monster. She says she wants the Quarry for herself, and she isn't going to let the cell have her prize. Is she telling the truth, or does the Quarry have a sinister hold over her?
- No one expected Monster-X's glorified pizza delivery drivers to get involved in a gang war, but that was before Framework Security set its roots in the city. The former's corporate heads see a chance to get back at their past employee and Renee sees it as an opportunity to eliminate or assimilate competition. They're both claiming potential monster activity sites as theirs, and the fighting's only getting worse. The cell must find a way to either end their rivalry or exploit it to get both organizations out of their city.
- One of the cell's comrades, a former member of the Back Alley Bowling League, is the latest to go missing in a series of disappearances. Investigating their whereabouts reveals their past, and a trail leading toward a factory outside of town currently owned by Framework Security. Renee is ready to test her theory and believes that there's no better source for the flesh and blood of experienced monster hunters than her old cell. Unless the Hunters do something, their comrade is about to take part in a ghoulish reunion.

Additional Dangers and Victims

- Framework Security openly does business as a biotech firm and a military contractor.

They're incorporated in Fresno, Texas and their headquarters are in McLean, Virginia. If the cell catches a glimpse of a soldier's ID badge or the faint traces of the company logo on a van, getting basic information is a search engine away.

- Since Framework uses some of Monster-X's proprietary technology, Monster-X turned to its greatest weapon: litigation. The two companies are currently in a lawsuit. Court records are available to Hunters who work as lawyers, have a lawyer Contact, or who are willing to pay database fees for the files (i.e., anyone at Resources 2 or above) or with Global Access. These legal files contain accurate information about Framework, such as the location of outposts, the identities of some of its operators, and the capabilities of some of its technology. The lawsuit is currently in the discovery phase, when both parties exchange the evidence they'll present at trial. Both companies have secrets they'd rather keep out of public record, so this phase could take months, if not years.
- Renee spends much of her time working with the biotech side of her company, both on her personal project and on the company's other projects. She and her research team have written a few papers regarding their findings, none of which have been peer-reviewed, and all of which can be found on open-access scientific paper repositories. These papers are examinations of healing physical trauma, proposals for neural interfaces, and examinations of extraordinary biology that border on speculative fiction. At the Storyteller's discretion, discussing these papers with her could be used for a two-dice bonus to any tests to sway or distract her in a non-combat situation.
- Video evidence of Renee's biological enhancement system exists. This video, labeled "42104a31f.mov," "Balkan Brutality," and "REAL Monster caught on camera!!" exists on underground video streaming services and shock sites. The footage takes place during a drug raid outside a Croatian city. From the perspective of a body cam, Framework soldiers enter a gunfight in a warehouse. The cameraman is shot and falls to the ground, giving him a clear view of one of their fellow soldiers reaching for the back of their neck. The soldier, Renee, shapeshifts into

The screenshot shows a web browser window with two tabs: 'JobHunter' and 'After The Tour'. The 'After The Tour' tab is active, displaying a forum post titled 'Framework Security y/n?'. The post has four replies:

- Pats1989** (with a gorilla icon): Been looking around the job boards and I came across these guys. Pay, benefits look good. Anyone have experience with them?
- ProudPA** (with a green helmet icon): how much do u like freaky shit
- Pats1989** (with a gorilla icon): Like "bad night in Amsterdam" freaky shit, or "oh fuck, I joined a cult" freaky shit?
- ProudPA** (with a green helmet icon): i dont even know what to tell u. signed on for a bit. best equipment ive had, better than anyone else.
but.
they tell u ur escorting doctors and setting up hospitals but thats not what i did. its a lot more shooting and blowing shit up.
last job was me and this lady she said we were all we needed. we take a plane to london. were at this fancy hotel and she asks me to keep watch and then shes not her anymore
shes changed from a black lady to a white guy i swear to god. she knocks on a door. another lady that looks kind of like the guy she turned into calls her by a guys name. she fucking shoots her!
then she turns back to herself somehow and we clean it up.
all real i swear. thats what ur in for.

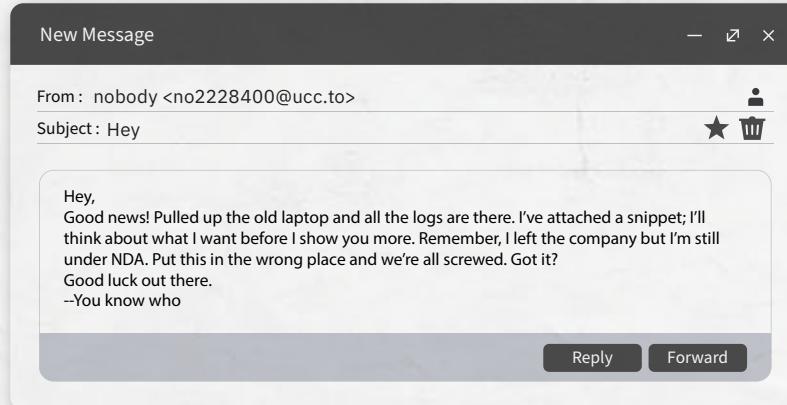
combat mode and goes on a killing spree in graphic detail. The video ends as the creature begins to shift back into a person.

- The Back Alley Bowling League's last hunt was a newsworthy event. They attempted to strike a vampire's lair, but without Renee's knowledge and with the cell's morale in disarray, the vampire not only survived the attack, but retaliated the next night. Local media reported on the explosion at a mansion in the suburbs and the subsequent bombing of a Des Moines bowling alley as the work of a serial bomber. One member of the cell, George Kessel, was arrested for the crime

and is still serving his sentence at Iowa State Penitentiary. Articles about the events are in online and physical archives.

Breadcrumbs

- Renee has left a lot of former allies behind her, and many of them are good sources of information on her and her connections to other potential Quarries. Monster-X and her old Hunter friends may all have complicated feelings about her, but it's not always so difficult to convince a monster hunter to give up information that helps you hunt monsters.



- The technology Renee works with opens a lot of doors for her. Some of these are in the form of business dealings, meaning that players' characters with the Finance Skill may be well poisoned to find clues among the public details of business transactions.
- A puppetmaster may overplay their hand and accidentally reveal themselves to the Hunters because they want Renee's technology so much. The characters think they're hunting Renee, but suddenly it turns out there's something much more dangerous hunting her.

Rewards

Temporary Assets (Retainer ••) or (Contacts ••):

Neutralizing Renee ends Framework Security. While it could reincorporate without her under a different name, many of its employees are left out in the cold. If a Hunter rescued an employee, assisted them in a time of need, blackmailed them, or simply had the Resources to hire them, one of these ex-employees could aid the cell. Some examples of these Retainers or Contacts are:

- Carl "Wallslammer" Zellig: This wasn't Carl's first mercenary gig, but it was by far the weirdest. He's sure that he's seen everything the supernatural has to offer if he ends up in the Hunters' employ. He'll soon learn he hasn't.
- Sally Beck: The former bursar and purchasing manager for Framework Security. Her superb accounting skills and vast connections with gray

and black markets could provide the cell with weapons or information. She could also serve as a source for the Arsenal, Fleet, or Ordinance Edges.

- Dr. Mira Bashar: Hired almost immediately after receiving her doctorate, Dr. Bashar was one of the few researchers Renee trusted with her project. She can use her newfound knowledge of unnatural biology to examine samples the cell sends to her.

Temporary Assets (Safe House ••••): Framework Security owned several buildings around the world. Some were research facilities, while others were small barracks or armories. If the company is shut down, or if the cell can claim one of these buildings by some other means, they could come away with a new base of operations. The safehouse has a base rating of two dots. The cell may select two of the following for the last two dots: Hidden Armory, Laboratory, Postern, Security System, or Surgery. Their choices are subject to the Storyteller's final approval. Depending on how they took the building, the Safe House may come with the Compromised Flaw at the Storyteller's discretion.

New Arsenal Perk (Backup Piece): When Renee's company falls apart, its weapons, both ordinary and extraordinary, vanish into the ether. A crafty Hunter can take advantage of the situation with this new Perk. Like other Perks, Backup Pieces must be purchased with Experience unless awarded as a temporary bonus. See p. 26 for further details.

New Fleet Perk (Hidden Cache): Among Framework's lost assets are military vehicles, as well as customized civilian weapons designed to hide assets in hostile territory. While the former is lost to the black market, the cell could get their hands on the latter.

Like other Perks, Hidden Cache must be purchased with Experience. See p. 26 for further details.

New Improvised Gear Perk (Made to Last):

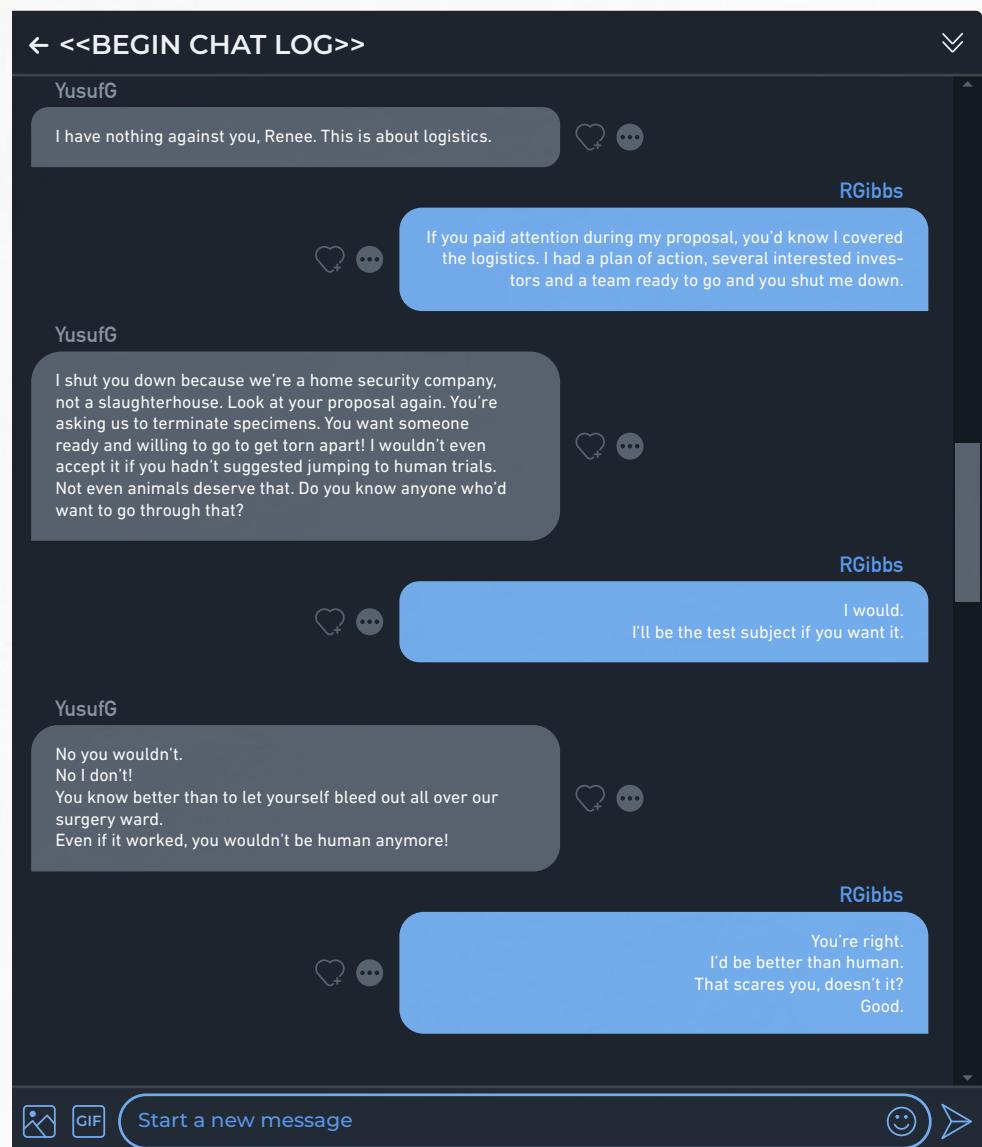
Working on the bleeding edge of biotechnology meant that much of Framework's products and prototypes were held together with clever thinking and a bit of prayer. They kept copious records of their techniques, which could teach a Hunter some new ways to jury-rig. See p. 26 for further details.

Somatic Enhancement Gear: The cell could get access to Renee's customized biogear in a few ways. They could steal her designs from her, either by hacking into Framework's corporate networks or physically stealing a copy of her plans from the company headquarters. If they kill or capture Renee, they have direct access to it. She might outright tell them the details if the cell gains her trust. Extracting it from her body requires difficult and intensive surgery; any attempt is a Composure + Medicine test with a Difficulty of 5. Failure kills her. It's impossible to assemble it (or reassemble it if it was extracted) and insert it into a Hunter's body. She spent so much time perfecting it for herself that she never thought about a version designed for any biological makeup besides hers. It also requires the use of body parts from monsters, which could drive a Hunter into Despair or worse. However, examining the plans or how the system works in her body could grant Hunters an important benefit of the Storyteller's creation, or one of these options:

- The interactions between monster and human anatomy gives the Hunter insights on the biological nature of supernatural creatures. The Hunter has a narrative opportunity to gain one or more dots of Occult or Medicine. If they have the

Library Edge, this is also a narrative opportunity to learn the How to Harm Them Perk.

- Renee's control mechanism can detect the differences between the blood of supernatural creatures and ordinary people. If a Hunter uses a technological focus for Sense the Unnatural, they could use the mechanism's principles as a narrative opportunity to learn one or more Creature Specialization Perks.
- The system's construction uses techniques the Hunters can learn for themselves. They have the narrative opportunity to learn the Improvised Gear Edge.



LilMissMurder

Ghost

She's just so, you know. She's just got it all together like I never could have. God, I just wish I could be like her. LilMiss is so sweet, no cap I think I'd actually kill for her.



Elements: Social media, Spirits, Ghost in the machine, chibi style, Toxic influencer, Suicide

LilMissMurder is an influencer, a VTuber avatar and a ghost. She came online a few years ago with the death of videomaker apps like Vine, rising from the ashes of TikTok like a pixelated phoenix. Her favorite thing is to participate in online challenges, her chibi eyes widening with delight, awe, and giggling in disgust at what her fans send in. That is almost all of her content, watching what her fans tag her in. On the surface it seems innocent enough; a little blonde virtual avatar making faces over amateurs attempting to recreate masterful pastries, street art being sprayed on top of hate signage. All of her videos end with her catch phrase, 'I double dare you'.

When LilMissMurder first began to cultivate a fanbase, she wowed the internet with her ability to turn things she touched into gold. She was talented in many ways, from singing and dancing, to videos on how to change brake pads or make a filling meal on a budget. Exhibiting all of her skills meant that LilMiss was able to cast a wide net of viewers, double daring them to perform the tasks that she had given instructions on, appearing to arm and educate her followers on how to survive day-to-day life and successfully be an adult. Those surprised by her swift rise to fame wrote it off as "not getting what young people are into today".

Once LilMissMurder had harvested a group of devoted followers, looking to her for answers on how to do this or that, the meme warfare started. LilMissMurder's format of educating and daring people to try new things and experiment with their lives meant

that political parties were eager to sponsor her. Some she accepted graciously, teaching her viewers the importance of activism, understanding their rights as citizens, and how to use loopholes. Others she rejected viciously, and the challenges she dared her viewers to take took dangerous turns. One sequence of videos taken from LilMiss' archives show some of her followers, masked and armed to the teeth with weapons and tape, breaking into the home of one of the political officers who attempted to bribe LilMiss to endorse him. The footage wasn't used in a criminal case, because the politician never pressed charges against the scare tactics. But they worked, and the public figure stepped out of the spotlight.

This incident was the first time Cognistas took notice of LilMiss, as her supporters began to show up at rallies, armed with the ins and outs taught to them by their leader. Some caused unrest, others attempted to uphold order, all of it ended in bloodshed. LilMissMurder's motives at the end of the day, when all of the observing police escorts and organizers go home, is that someone leaves the venue in an ambulance. The violence her followers create gets press, garners attention (sometimes unwanted) to whatever politician or activist is targeted. She loves to repost shaky videos zooming in on shocked reactions as chaos unravels before the authority figure as they scramble and try to save face, contain the situation, or urge the troublemakers on. The fear and uncertainty in their eyes as they figure out how to deal with the curveball her followers throw — that's the money shot right there.

All while on a split screen or green-screened into the corner the virtual avatar of LilMissMurder is perched, watching gleefully. She takes a perverse joy in witnessing the crimes and harm that her followers commit. It inspires her, keeps her grounded to this plane. LilMissMurder is not just any influencer, looking to immortalize herself in the depths of the web, she can't be. Before there was LilMissMurder, there was a young woman called Delilah Kimmel, who led an ordinary life with her ordinary wife and their ordinary cats. She was as talented then as she is now, but instead ended up trapped in a dead-end admin job. A fatal car accident sealed her fate in carnage. While she begged for help from onlookers, they chose to take pictures instead, with filters of cat ears and whiskers placed over her mottled face. Instead of life-saving procedures,

she received thoughts and prayers. Instead of helping her, spectators helped themselves to the free content that would expand their viewerbase. As Delilah died, she refused to move on, consumed by the hunger to revenge herself for the vitriol that was spewed on her dying corpse and those who attempted to increase their fame while she slowly lost her life.

Sightings of LilMiss??

Uploaded: 8:14pm November 2, 2021

*Homies are all here! Protecting people and their rights to vote today, making LilMiss proud! #Doubledare
#Electionday #Daretobe #DareAccepted
#LilCollective*

General Difficulty: 4 / 3

Standard Dice Pools:

Physical 3, Social 5, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes:

Health 5, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools:

Performance 6, Technology 8, Persuasion 8

Notes/Other Traits:

For more detail on Resilience and Vulnerability see **Hunter**, p.167–168

Ghost of the Web: LilMissMurder is a ghost who has taken residency in the World Wide Web, able to exist and manipulate technology. Attempts to track down LilMissMurder, or uncover her true background using the internet, increase the Difficulty of the test by two.

Raid: Her fanbase will not let her be alone and suffer in silence again. Once per session LilMissMurder may blast her current location and a crowd of crazed fans arrive on location to confront and fight to save their Queen. The number of crazed fans that show up is up to the Storyteller given the remoteness or population of the area.

Resilience: As an incorporeal spirit LilMissMurder is immune to physical damage, and can possess technology at will. But if a system she inhabits is harmed, she suffers damage as if she was the machine. However, if she is destroyed in this way she heals quickly from backups across the web and re-forms in a day.

Vulnerability (Exorcism): LilMissMurder can be summoned and held to one location. The tools required to undertake this include her full name, indicators of who she was in life, and other generic items used in an exorcism or summoning ritual. These can be



trinkets that were directly connected to her in life (her wife's wedding band or pictures of her cats). Once LilMissMurder has been summoned and pinned, all damage she takes is treated as normal, and her true self is revealed in physical form.

Vulnerability (Cats): No matter what she does, LilMissMurder cannot intentionally cause harm to a cat. This weird quirk may be due to her background in life as a cat lover, or the internet's obsession with cats. Either way, being near a cat has often saved the life of a Hunter chasing her as a Quarry.

Information Awareness: The internet has infinite uses and is an endless library of information, and not just Hunters are using it. When LilMissMurder died and became the monster she is, she chose a unique means of haunting the world around her and resides in servers and networks. As a result, she is getting a constant stream of knowledge and information as messages, spreadsheets, and datafiles are fired past her. This makes using online services like search engines, forum posts, and group chats difficult to track her, as there is a good chance that she is spying the whole time (certainly at Danger 2).

At Danger 3 or higher, whenever the Hunters use smartphones, computers, or other similar devices the Storyteller may insist (at their discretion) they must make a Wits + Technology test. If the Hunter fails, they take normal damage as their devices are short-circuited and they receive an electrical shock, they lose access to their phones or smart devices for the rest of the session, and the Danger is increased by 1.

At Danger 4, if they have smart home devices those begin to go haywire, causing mischief like turning the lights on and off, playing music in the night, ordering random things, or even tripping home alarms. Phone wallpaper may be changed, and Hunters could find themselves locked out of their devices.

When Danger reaches 5, LilMissMurder may break into the Hunter's personal records and attain things such as their private addresses, credit card information, even their present location. What she does with this information is at the Storyteller's discretion, but it may include: sending this information to her followers, buying and sending boxes of explosive glitter (she is a prankster content creator, after all), or even hijacking their accounts to post blackmail or other incriminating things.

Cornering *LilMissMurder*

*"We found one of the Quarry's first bases, a townhouse in a newly built neighborhood; you can still see the cement drying on the pavement. Cooper thinks that she must have tampered with the leasing office's records, because the manager doesn't remember ever meeting the tenant, and only knows that they keep to themselves and are quiet. When we breached the area it was like walking into a server room. Cords everywhere, perfectly maintained, plugged into servers, hardware, monitors, the whole shebang. How we caught her by surprise I'll never know, but we were able to perform the ritual to bring her up, and tie her down. She looks just like the autopsy photographs. Half her face is missing, split open by a piece of shrapnel, cartilage from all over her face. Her body looks like it was handled by an amateur butcher, body parts broken and torn away. But there she was, Delilah Kimmel, the thing the world knows as *LilMissMurder*. We almost had her, when the door opened and a swarm of cops took us down. They ruined the ritual and she got away. After we got our bail posted we found out they knew about Jamie's parole, no doubt the work of her nosing through our personal stuff. Jamie may be going away for a while because of this, but he may be safer in there, things being as dangerous they are with the Quarry."*

Goals and Objectives:

- In the beginning, LilMissMurder's intentions were to punish everyone who had failed her. The photographers and onlookers, the Medical Examiner's office and first responders all had to pay. To achieve this, she became the very thing she wanted to destroy, an incorporeal entity moving through the code and formatting to dazzle and wow fans across the globe. It didn't take her long to garner the audience she was looking for, a horde of attention-seekers who would do anything for her acknowledgement or be the next hot viral video she would promote.
- Once LilMissMurder had what she needed, the crimes started. Within a year every video of the crash that took her life, every photograph of her open face, and the people who uploaded them vanished from the face of the internet. Her followers defaced, stalked, and threatened those has-beens out of the spotlight and taking it for herself. That hasn't been enough for

LilMissMurder though—the videos are still rolling out, and her followers are still taking up her dares, breaking into buildings and causing upset. Whether it's because her own anger hasn't been sated, or something keeps her trapped in front of the camera, LilMissMurder has no intention of stopping.

- Now the Quarry is a chaotic agent that uses clout, charm, and the promise of more clout to get people to jump when she says jump. Even if that request to jump also happens to be to jump into oncoming traffic while declaring your love. People have done it. Most importantly though, she wants to see it, and she wants other people to see her seeing it. A silent gesture to show that she condones the behavior she rallies her subjects to carry out. Her sponsorships come from politicians, attorney offices, and corporate boardrooms, all people that want her to propagate and advertise to her followers, turning them into avid followers of flashy brands, or a militia to appear at a political rival's rally.
- LilMissMurder is a Cursed with plenty of avenues for being manipulated if that is what the story calls for. She has a lot of pent-up anger and resentment over the circumstances of her own death. Her intent is to make people, the ones who adore her, hurt like she did, die the way she died. She was denied the dignity of a quality death, so why should others deserve one? Her blind rage can be channeled by the proper guiding hand, under the guise of sponsorships and collaborators.
- Once upon a time LilMissMurder's spirit may have had good intentions, trying to hold up the mirror to society, revealing what monsters they've allowed themselves to become. Entrenching oneself into the internet and becoming part of it in a way like LilMissMurder has a unique way of corrupting someone. In her journey to be great she has forgotten to do some good. What is left now is an incorporeal entity masquerading as a cat-girl and reveling in the agony her followers inflict in her name.

Appearance: LilMissMurder keeps a low profile, a truly anonymous entity, an impressive feat in an age of facial recognition and obsession with selfie trends. She is usually pictured as a cartoonish blonde-haired woman with dark green eyes that twist and emote along with her

facial expressions. She teases and hints at her true self to her followers, engaging them in ARGs, alternate reality games, to keep people interested. She is a wraith, a spirit capable of possessing the living, but instead chooses to ride hard drives and internet routers. This is how she was able to create the VTuber avatar most know her as.

When the content creator uploads pictures or videos featuring herself, it's always the virtual avatar. At rallies and events that her followers attend, there have been sightings of a woman moving through the crowd matching the avatar. Her face is always distorted, hidden behind a face mask with a printed cat nose and whiskers. This is her physical manifestation; one she can only maintain for short periods of time, and even then, she still phases in and out of crowds and focus. It keeps her fans interested, showing up places where she might be hoping for a brush with the artist they adore.

In Stories

The modern world is full of modern traps, ones that LilMissMurder and her followers know how to spring. LilMissMurder is an active, though indirect, weapon used by the conspiracy, furthering agendas of those who she is connected to and has a vested interest in assisting. She lets her followers do the work, feeding them instructions and places on where to be, then letting their imaginations run wild. Her fans love to capitalize on cameras and reporters already present to bear witness to whatever threatening antics they've been instructed to do by their leader. Her follower's bravado to act dangerously in LilMiss' name comes from her knowledge on how to protect them. She can scramble GPS trackers, interfere with scanners, silence alarm systems, and on one occasion hijacked a smart car to drive it into a police barricade. With no fingerprints (physical or digital), it is nearly impossible to track wrongdoings back to the influencer or her accomplices.

Her followers know that if they practice the precautions she preaches, and do exactly as she says, that they will be safe from legal repercussions. Should her followers fail their goals set out for them by LilMiss, the consequences leave loose ends that must be tied up, often by the Cursed herself. People have mysteriously lost their lives in holding cells, suffered

cardiac arrest in the middle of interrogations, or pled insanity as their defense as they see LilMiss herself coming to clean up their mess for them. With that feeling of security her followers have done everything from vandalizing hostile architecture, toilet papering politicians' homes (with the toilet paper they found inside), and acting as amateur bodyguard services. Braver and more reckless followers have committed suicide in the name of martyrdom for causes that the Quarry holds dear, usually fed to her by the sponsors. They have disrupted public demonstrations that go against the interest of LilMiss and her collaborators, and attempted assassinations.

Encountering LilMissMurder

- While investigating the rumblings of another supernatural creature in the area, a cell stumbles upon a crime in progress. It is an armed robbery, the victim clutching at a stab wound, the kitchen knife still in their gut, while the robber loots through a bag. Some distance away sits a tripod, a smartphone recording the act. Interrupting the assault scares the attacker away, ending the recording in the process. Apprehending the culprit and interrogating him before authorities arrive yields few results. The person will refuse to speak, only asking for a lawyer when the authorities arrive. Looking through their phone shows that the video was being streamed to a chatroom server, where people were watching and recording the video themselves. When attempting to access the phone later, the SIM card in the phone has been fried, and the phone locked out of the server.
- The Hunters are investigating the death of a cell of Hunters, looking into their past records. They were collaborating with a specialist who helped them with their Hunts. The specialist's moniker is "LilMiss", and with an internet search can lead the Hunters to the Quarry's social media sites.

- The cell stumbles across a crime scene, where several people are injured and at least one person dead, a suspected assailant among them. Investigating the scene themselves (during or after the police have cleaned up) reveals a QR code tattooed onto the corpse of the assailant. The QR code leads to a popular meme, addressing the weaponization of sheer numbers and force against the elite few. The meme says: "They can't kill us all." The creator of the meme is LilMissMurder.

Additional Dangers and Victims

- The Hunters find an obituary for Delilah Kimmel, who died a few years prior in a freak accident where a car caught fire and the gasoline tank broke. She was survived by her two cats, Dixie and Missy, and her widowed wife, Emilia Rosenbaugh. Meeting with Emilia Rosenbaugh at her apartment she once shared with Delilah, the Hunters may notice that the place is well-stocked with supplies for her cats, and a pile of envelopes. Emilia believes that a guardian angel or an anonymous benefactor sends her these things, gift cards to pet supplies and grocery stores, prepaid debit cards, and other liquidated money that Ms. Rosenbaugh may use. These are all solemn signs that Delilah is still looking out for her beloved.
- The Hunters notice news articles about suicides related to cyberbullying. These articles may reference the mysterious challenges that LilMiss' followers attempt in the name of a viral status. The last post the victim made before taking his life mentioned his favorite influencer and he would hurt himself in solidarity for whatever pain she was experiencing.

CONSPIRACY QUARRIES

Part of LilMissMurder's orders from her sponsors is to protect the conspiracy and those who work within it, other Quarry included. If the Storyteller wishes to include a Quarry of their own creation into the Conspiracy, LilMissMurder may act as a guardian and tie in for that monster.

Breadcrumbs

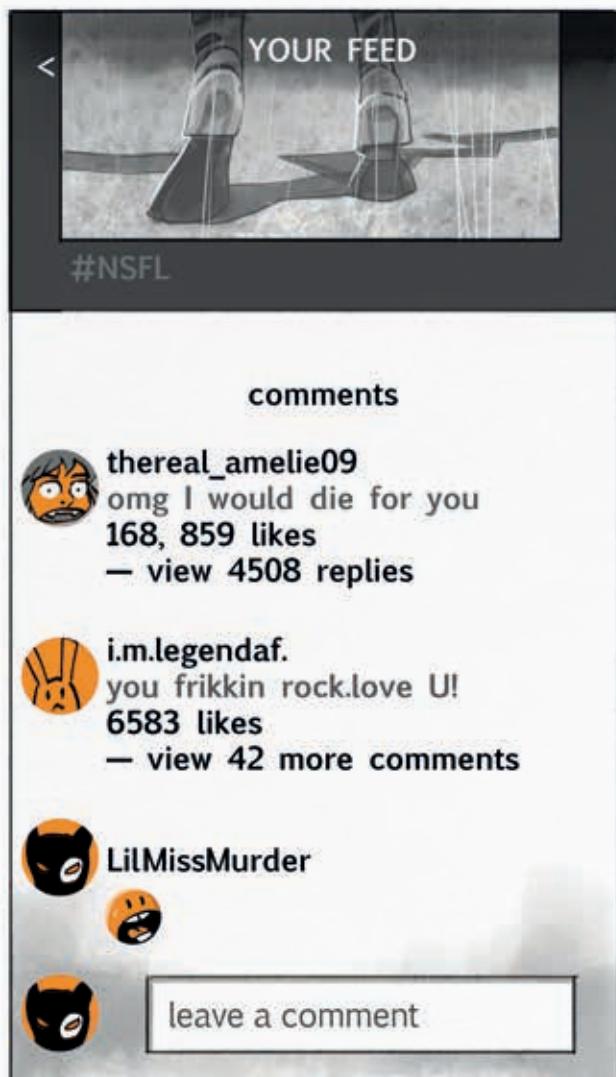
- There's an element of chaos in the way LilMissMurder interacts with her fanbase. Fan dynamics are inherently volatile, something that the ghost exploits to the hilt. However, it also means that she may leave behind former fans who have become disgruntled as they start to understand her a little too well. Such individuals can be a rich source of information about what other connections the ghost might have.
- LilMissMurder is not just a ghost, but because of her fanbase, in a sense she's also the focal point of a unique type of culture. There may be hints towards other Quarries in the social media posts, songs, fan art and other expressions created by her followers.
- LilMissMurder is able to influence online information sources to make it harder to track her. She may also consciously choose to point the characters into a new direction, perhaps towards an enemy or even a supposed ally of her's, by planting clues. The way she does this is rarely discreet and a Hunter may recognize her unique touch.

Rewards

Temporary Fame (• to ••): It's not unheard of for celebrities to disappear and step out of the spotlight of fame overnight. You've gained access to LilMissMurder's social media accounts and her virtual avatar. Her anonymous nature meant that she could have looked like or been anyone. So why can't it be you now?

Temporary Allies (••): LilMissMurder's fans were resilient and always determined for a chance to meet their glitzy matron. With a push of an upload button you could deploy them to a new challenge where they show up to support you.

Temporary Resources (••): What use did a ghost have of sponsorships and donations aside from paying rent for her recording studio? LilMissMurder built up a nice little nest egg of cash, and without someone to keep up, all of that money is going to gather dust as the sponsorships peter out.



The following voice recording was taken from an evidence locker after the investigation it was involved in abruptly ended. The main suspect was found dead in his holding cell, an apparent suicide. 34-year-old Edward Waylon was arrested and would have been charged with manslaughter if not for his untimely demise. Edward killed 5 and injured 1. There is heavy speculation about the nature of his death. The cause of death was labeled as suicide by asphyxiation, but there are plenty of holes to be poked into it as well. This audio recording was from earlier that day, where Edward confessed and offered some insight into his motives. The interviewing officer is Jack Peyton, who resigned shortly after Edward's suicide. In his exit interview Officer Peyton referenced Edward's insistence that an online personality influenced his decision to act, an influencer his own children adamantly follow.

[Audio begins seemingly in the middle of the recording, like someone was recording the recording as it played. In the distance sirens can be heard, and the person holding the recorder to the tape cassette can be heard taking slow, shuddering breaths.]

Officer P.: So to reiterate what you've said so far. You received a uh, Snapchat message from a woman after subscribing to this website. *[The ruffling of papers as Officer P. Checks his notes]* "ALittleIntent.com". She told you to head down the intersection of Sunset and Jefferson, where the art walk festival was happening. And you were instructed to kill a set number of people, specifically men.

Edward W.: That's right.

Officer P.: What were you going to get in return for doing this?

Edward W.: That depends—*[The creaking sound of Edward leaning forward in his chair. He nervously lowers his voice]*... were there survivors?

[Shuffling of more paper before Officer P. responds.]

Officer P.: One.

Edward W.: ... one?

Officer P.: One.

[Eerie silence plays for 5 minutes. It is unclear if the recordings cut out, or if they just sat there like that.]

Edward W.: I failed her, she won't like that.

Officer P.: Are you talking about the woman who provided you with the weapon and ammunition?

Edward W.: Yeah. She's everywhere, probably here right now.

[There is a brief pause as one of the two men can be heard moving in their seat, possibly checking the room.]

Edward W.: *[cont.]*: She said that if I did this, recorded it and sent it to the website, that I would be protected, that I wouldn't have anything to worry about. That I could live- I. I think I'd like to talk to my lawyer now.

Officer P.: We're a little past that point now, don't you think Edward?

Edward W.: I want to talk to my lawyer now, I have to settle my affairs.

Officer P.: Your what?

[The recording is interrupted by someone pounding on a door, and the person recording the interview curses under their breath, and the recording ends before Edward can elaborate.]



Emilia Rosenbau

December 15, 2024 • 17:02



I did what you guys suggested and tried talking to the police, even just to get a file on report that I've been having issues with this stalker. I talked to the officer working the front desk armed with the printed pictures of what I've been able to get from my own detective work. I told him about when the stuff first started coming in—about a month ago now. I showed him my pictures unlabeled boxes filled pre-paid debit cards, cat supplies, and so on. Yeah none of it is dangerous or harmful, but its unsettling. Someone is watching me, knows what I need for me and the cats, and its creepy. He didn't take me seriously, he had the balls to ask me if I've used any of the stuff I've been getting, and then followed that up with if he could have them. I didn't waste my time with him after that, I have a lot of things I wish I could have told him. If I turn up dead or hurt in my house because some asshole cop didn't think this was going to escalate, its on his hands.

I tried another station after that, had to drive across town, and this time I got a lady cop. She was much more sympathetic; she took all of the photos that I have of the stuff at least. I mentioned the people following me, I had to correct her when she thought I meant only one person. It's definitely multiple people, and they are definitely tailing me. They aren't confrontational or aggressive towards me, just watchful. Part of me wishes they would try something just so I could stop living in suspense. She said that she'll try and get a squad car to do a patrol by me in the next couple of days to get a look at it for themselves, see if they can see what I see. I don't feel any safer, but I don't really expect anyone to understand what I'm going through right now. Will keep you guys updated, thank you for your kind words and the money donated to help me with Delilah's medical bills. I'm not out of the woods, but every little bit helps. <3 <3



27

Like

Share

Comment



[A scratchy audio recording]

Dispatch: 9-1-1 what is your emergency?

E. Rosenbaugh: There's someone in my house. [Address censored for privacy]. Please come, they've finally doing it.

Dispatch: Where are you in your house ma'am? Are the intruders someone you may know?

E. Rosenbaugh: I'm in my bedroom with the cats, I moved my dresser in front of the door, and I have a live fire arm. Oh Dixie, no! Don't go over there sweetie, Dixie come back.

[A distinct cat mewling can be heard over the line. Rosenbaugh can also be heard desperately calling out.]

Dispatch: We're on our way ma'am. Do you know these people?

E. Rosenbaugh: No! They've been following me for a month now. They just walked in the front door like they knew how to get in. I can hear them walking around outside. *[There is a rattling as the sound of the dresser against the door is shifted.]* Stay away! I'm armed and will shoot!

E. Rosenbaugh: *[cont.]* They just tried to open the door. Oh, crap, Missy! Missy get back here, what is going on with you two?

Dispatch: Stay calm ma'am, are Dixie and Missy your cats?

E. Rosenbaugh: They're about to be past tense, they are just sitting at the door now. No, you can't go out there right now. Gods, what is going on?

[The sound of the cats scratching and mewling at the door. Very faintly on the other side, a voice is talking to the cats, presumably through the barricaded door.]

E. Rosenbaugh: They're talking to my cats; they're talking to my damn babies. The police are on their way! Get out of my house!

[The sound of police sirens in the distance is picked up through E. Rosenbaugh's phone. Just before the call ends, another voice is still talking through the door, this time possibly directed at Mr. Rosenbaugh.]

Dispatch: ... ma'am? Ma'am are you still there? The police are coming up the stair way now.

[The dispatcher is only met by shaky breathing as the voice continues to speak, though unintelligible.]

E. Rosenbaugh: ... Del?

[The phone call ends abruptly.]

Notes on Response to call at Firelight street, Aspen Apartments:

Forces on scene performed a sweep of the unit and property looking for signs of the intruders. None were found, and no forced entry was made to the unit. The apartment's security system was deactivated, though the homeowner claimed she had set it before going to bed that night. The homeowner's front door Ring camera also detected no movement or sign of entry. Upon speaking further with the caller Emilia Rosenbaugh, reporting Officer Solace observed that she was much less distressed than when she had been on the phone with Dispatch. Without being advised, Ms. Rosenbaugh signed a statement saying that police had swept her house, found nothing, and she was okay with that. We haven't heard any further complaints or reports about harassment or the mysterious packages being delivered to her place of residence.

The Harbinger

Werewolf

"She stood up on that stage and she spoke for hours, but I barely remember a word she said. It must have moved me because I was hoarse from cheering for days after. All I remember is this: If you're not angry, you're not paying attention."

Elements: Witchcraft, Activism, Gathering storm, False flag, Violent protest, Manipulation

Some people are troublemakers. It's as simple as that. Most people are capable of keeping a low profile, picking their battles, and getting through life making a minimum of waves. That's not the Harbinger. That's not Rhea.

Rhea attracts trouble or is a generator of it, depending on which accounts you believe. There are law enforcement officers up and down the east coast of the U.S. who say whenever Rhea O'Connor shows up on their radar, the Doomsday Clock moves another second or two closer to midnight. Because wherever Rhea shows up, things get worse. To all appearances, she's one more committed activist pursuing environmental and social justice causes, not unusual for a werewolf like her. But her presence rarely contributes to their success. A movement that, when she arrives, is perfectly healthy and full of enthusiasm, becomes bitter and violent (as well as schismatic and self-destructive) by the time she leaves. Wherever Rhea goes, the apocalypse feels a little bit closer.

Rhea shows up at protests and marches. Her range is gradually increasing. In the past year or so she's been seen as far afield as Brazil and central Europe. Rhea has a nose for action, showing up in nascent movements that go on to be big problems. Her primary focus is on movements to address climate change and specific

contributors to it like air travel, oil extraction, and pollution. She makes time for fights for human rights, too, especially the ones with the potential to turn into a riot.

That's because Rhea believes with her whole heart that the end of the world is coming, and soon. Her motives beyond that are muddy, even to herself. Consciously, she believes she needs to raise awareness, make people appropriately scared of and angry about the world they live in. But there's a part of her that wants to prove herself right, and as a shaman, she's plenty capable of making reality reflect her beliefs. She



trails discord in her wake, destroys good causes, and makes the world immeasurably worse.

For example, when Rhea joined an anti-oil protest in Newfoundland, she got the leaders and members fired up and built substantial support among local people and media. She was there for two months. Just before she left, the group decided it was time to get tough. They invaded and sabotaged a drilling platform. While the operation itself was successful to some degree, the violence involved was quickly spun into a deeply damaging narrative in the media.

Rhea's got a knack for finding trouble spots and causes in their early days. Maybe it's magic, maybe it's just a set of connections built up over thirty-plus years of life. Probably it's both those things operating with a touch of synchronicity. Magic helps those who help themselves, as Rhea's fond of saying. Or, as proponents of Cog's conspiracy theory would say, maybe she's got a contact or a handler higher up in the conspiracy making sure she gets where she needs to be. She joins movements when they're young—when locals first start organizing to resist a proposed nuclear plant or when the first public outcry draws attention to official corruption. She provides invaluable help with everything from how to make their voices heard in different channels, how to build up support, and how to hit their opponents where it hurts. Rhea's a professional activist and she's very good at it. Every move she advises or makes conveys the subconscious message that if her allies don't take conclusive action now they'll fail... and if they fail, the world is a step closer to doom. It subtly inspires people to take dangerous action, like the group in Newfoundland who sabotaged an oil rig and polluted miles of open sea.

Rhea stays in the background where she can. She never tries to be the face of a movement. Once she's done working with it, she'll depart, as she wants the organizers on the ground to be the ones people recognize. She is also hoping to avoid would-be witch hunters having too easy a time finding her.

The latest weapon in Rhea's arsenal is Consuming Panics (see p. 37). She's always had a knack for dragging ephemeral beings into her orbit. Her usual entourage is made up of bound spirits of the urban wasteland. She stumbled across her first

Consuming Panic in Wyoming, where it fanned the flames of apocalyptic terror about the Yellowstone supervolcano erupting. She was immediately smitten. She couldn't have come across a more perfect servant if she'd created it herself. The Consuming Panics work willingly with Rhea, trailing her around like stray dogs looking for a warm home. She, in turn, is immune to their effects since they're not telling her anything she doesn't know. She unleashes appropriate Consuming Panics among the supporters of her current cause. They're extremely good at getting people to see things Rhea's way.

It's just unfortunate that Rhea's vision of the world is one on the brink of collapse. She thinks of herself as a prophet of coming doom, and maybe someone who could avert it. She doesn't fully believe the last part. In fact, she believes the end of humanity, if not the world, is inevitable.

General Difficulty: 4/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Social 6, Mental 6

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 8

Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl 8, Leadership 7, Streetwise 8,

Notes/Other Traits:

For more detail on Charm and Shapeshift see *Hunter*, p. 167–168

Charm (7): Rhea uses her charm to convince her supporters to take risky, self-destructive actions in the name of their chosen cause.

Doomsayer: Rhea's aura of discord and entropy makes it extremely difficult to act rationally and maintain self-control around her. Composure and Resolve tests are made with 2 fewer dice in her presence.

Spirit Caller: Rhea can call and control powerful spirits to support her. Doing so takes several minutes of uninterrupted activity. The Storyteller should use the profiles for Urban Spirit (see opposite).

Spirit Controller: Rhea is always accompanied by a few urban spirits (see Variations, p. 107), which she can command. They act separately from Rhea. She doesn't need to make a test or use her action to control them as they follow her verbal commands to the best of their understanding and ability.

Shapeshift (Wolf): In wolf form, Rhea's Physical dice pools are all 8 and her attacks inflict Aggravated damage.

VARIATION: URBAN SPIRIT

Rhea's never alone. Aside from the Consuming Panics she's learned to control (or at least ally with), Rhea keeps a small army of bound spirits close by for protection. They're unwilling servants kept in line by fear and threats, and they're by no means loyal to Rhea. But if they run she traps more to replace them and sends the new additions to her army to hunt down escapees. Hunters who can see spirits perceive them as greasy vermin, oversized insects, or limping, sick-looking pigeons; all the familiar sights of the urban environment. Those who can't see spirits see takeout boxes, junk mail, and plastic waste skittering in a nonexistent breeze.

The spirits aren't especially smart, but they're discreet and observant. Individually, Rhea uses them to spy on people she suspects mean her harm. In group settings, she uses them as a barrier between her and danger. She calls the spirits to interpose themselves between her and attackers, tying them up so she can leave the scene. It's a mercy: if she were to shift into one of her more dangerous forms, she'd tear most foes limb from limb.

Rhea's spirits aren't fully manifested in the physical world, but they're solid enough to inflict and receive damage as normal.

INDIVIDUAL SPIRIT

General Difficulty: 2/1

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 2, Mental 3

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Athletics 6, Brawl 6, Stealth 7

Notes/Other Traits:

Damage: The spirit usually inflicts Superficial damage but can sacrifice 1 Health to inflict Aggravated damage with its next attack.

SPIRIT PACK

General Difficulty: 3/2

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 7, Social 2, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Athletics 6, Brawl 8, Stealth 6

Notes/Other Traits:

Damage: The spirit usually inflicts Superficial damage but can sacrifice 1 Health to inflict Aggravated damage with its next attack.

Other Abilities: Onslaught (see Hunter, p. 167).

Goals and Objectives:

- Rhea's complicated and messy, and what she thinks she wants is not the same as what she *actually* wants. As a witch, what she actually wants is what she gets.
- Rhea needs to show the world how much danger it's in; how close to the end of the Anthropocene age they really are. That's what drives her decision-making, and the framework the Storyteller should use to decide on her next move. She attaches herself to causes she truly believes in and genuinely works hard to support them. She speaks passionately to people who aren't involved, organizes actions from protest, to disruption, to sabotage. She's not concerned about staying on the right side of the law.
- Being a strong personality with a short temper, Rhea makes enemies easily. People who disagree with her and don't fall in line get bullied, intimidated, and occasionally injured. Violence is a convenient tool and she's not afraid to use it. She finds she needs to resort to violence less often, since she has Consuming Panics at her disposal. All she has to do is wait.
- The other thing that really matters to Rhea is discretion. It's not that she's afraid of the spotlight; quite the opposite, she's never happier than when she has a crowd of people hanging on her every word. But she knows there are people in the world who hunt witches and she doesn't want to catch their eye. She prefers to operate behind the scenes, motivating other people to do the things she considers needful and using captive spirits as her first line of defense. That can lead Hunters to underestimate her and assume that if they can pin her down to a physical fight they'll have an advantage. That would be a mistake. She's extremely dangerous in human or wolf form. Breadcrumb how dangerous she is with a couple of reports of violence or hold back the information to surprise your players and upset their plans.
- Rhea is obsessed with proving she's right the world is ending around her. The Storyteller should decide on the actual consequences of her presence because inevitably it does. The force of discord and entropy that rolls off her like radiation takes its toll on the people around her. The activist groups she joins fall

victim to infighting or they adopt such destructive tactics they bring about multiple small apocalypses with every action.

- Because Rhea knows all things fall apart she tends not to stick around long. She picks a cause, supports it until it begins to turn sour, and then moves on. She tries not to make too many connections but she's only human, and there are always people she gets close to; usually people as jagged and cynical as she is, who don't want too much emotional intimacy from her.

Appearance: Rhea is a big, intimidating, white woman in ripped denim and leather. She's well over six feet tall, broad-shouldered, with the kind of direct stare that cuts straight through most people's shell and addresses the feral, frightened animal inside them. That stare can be a challenge or a threat, but it's always uncomfortable. Rhea never tries to fade into the background but her scars would make it impossible anyway. The most obvious are claw marks from another werewolf who thought they could best her in a fight, a scrape down her head and over her right temple and cheek, narrowly missing her right eye.

There's always movement around Rhea. Captive spirits flutter around her, taking the forms of swirling trash or wisps of smoke that smell like exhaust fumes. They evoke a sense of an audience, and Rhea definitely talks and moves like she's performing to one: big, dramatic gestures and a voice that could fill a theater or call across a battlefield.

Rhea's a shapeshifter, and her preferred secondary form is large timber wolf with a salt-and-pepper coat. The wolf is just as big, proportionally speaking, as Rhea's human form. It's got her stare, and her retinue of restless spirit creatures. Rhea's capable of partially transforming, lengthening her teeth or extending her fingers into claws as long and sharp as hunting knives. She can never make the scars go away, whatever form she takes.

In Stories

The tension between what Rhea thinks she wants (the world to sit up and realize how close it is to doomsday) and what she subconsciously desires and calls into being (strife, chaos, little nudges toward apocalypse) make her a tricky antagonist for Hunters to get their heads around

because she's not entirely wrong. The world is very close to becoming unable to support human life as the twenty-first century knows it. It's also very hard to prove Rhea's doing anything to turn the people around her into agents of the end. She shows up, earnestly proclaims the same messages as countless other activists, and while she's more aggressive and violent than many of her peers, it's mostly a difference of degree.

That puts the Hunters in the awkward position of deciding if someone's a monster based on a feeling of nonspecific badness. Some cells might be happy to put a Quarry in the ground as a preventative measure but others are more concerned with evidence. Unfortunately, gathering evidence on what Rhea's actually doing is tricky, because she doesn't fully know herself. She consciously uses her magic to control and bind spirits, including Consuming Panics, and she turns them loose on people who oppose her. While that's not behavior to be celebrated, for many Hunters, and players, the morality of her actions may depend on who Rhea's enemies are. She can also turn into a wolf, but that's just weird, not necessarily morally bad—as long as she's not killing anyone. Rhea might easily become an ally of the players' characters until they find out more about her.

But for all her gray areas, Rhea is dragging people's lives out of shape. The aura of apocalypse she trails around with her makes people violent and destructive. Her presence leads to arson, assault, and worse. People under her influence have strung up at least one corporate executive. They've blown up and burned down buildings, dams, pipelines, and construction projects, with a high cost in environmental damage as well as ruined and lost lives. People turn on each other and give in to their most destructive and self-destructive impulses. While Rhea doesn't know she's doing this, as far as she's concerned, it's human nature, she wouldn't care if she did. She knows, with unshakeable conviction, this is how the world is and must be.

All of this means that Hunts involving Rhea involves a large component of evidence gathering, getting from getting bad vibes to an actual understanding of what she's doing. One way to help the Hunters through this process is to show them the fallout from one of her previous appearances like a character who follows her to the Hunters' location,

blaming her for the way their protest group turned on each other, ending up dead or in jail. A citizen journalist who's already halfway to putting the pieces together approaches the cell with what they have. There may even be other werewolves who want to rein Rhea in and tip off the Hunters so they can help.

Remember that hunting sorcerers, especially sorcerers known to law enforcement in multiple locations, isn't the same as hunting a vampire or a ghost. It leaves a human corpse and attracts people whose job it is to find someone to blame for that corpse's presence. Cops may not like Rhea, but they know her. She's familiar. If she dies or disappears, they'll want to know exactly what happened.

Encountering Rhea

- The cell receives a zip file or old-fashioned document folder of information on Rhea O'Connor. It includes reports from people who've worked with her or for her, news coverage of movements she's been involved in. There is heavy emphasis on how much they damaged the communities they arose from and swept along. There are also reports from less credible sources of hauntings and animal attacks at the same time, in the same places, as Rhea's presence. One of the documents is an extremely lengthy blog essay from someone who used to know her as part of an activist group. It details all the ways in which Rhea is problematic, although this is mostly blamed on her autocratic personality and tendency to dominate people she's working with, rather than anything specifically or objectively malicious. Nothing happens for six months, and then Rhea shows up. This should leave the cell with two questions: how did someone know to warn them so far in advance, and why should they care? The answer to the first question is that another sorcerer tipped them off, and plenty of sorcerers are prescient. They regard Rhea as a problem and want the Hunters to deal with it for them. This could lead the cell to another Quarry such as Gunshop (see Hunter, p. 185–188), who knows Rhea's scared of him and can't get close enough to blow her to pieces. If the Hunters don't make a move toward Rhea, the other sorcerer will, and that could get messy.

- After the cell meets Rhea once, perhaps in the background of a Hunt involving Consuming Panics (see p. 37), her name pings on their radar again. Another Hunter gets in touch to ask whether the cell suspects she's a potential Quarry or just a normal human who happens to be a trouble magnet. The cell doesn't need to get involved, but Rhea's name (or her face) keeps coming up. A few Hunts later she's back in their turf, stirring up trouble again. This time, having heard so much about her, the cell has much more reason to scrutinize her.
- This story works particularly well for Hunters with close ties to their local community. Objections to some new local policy spring up, such as plans to gentrify a neighborhood, replace a school or community hub with luxury apartments, build on a nature reserve, or any other decision that pretty much everyone can unite to oppose. The Storyteller should run it as a background element: the humans around the Hunters doing their best to clean up their area, as a parallel to the cell's work keeping them all safe from monsters. Relationship Map connections get involved, and then slowly get in over their heads, becoming so committed to the cause they put their lives on hold or take risks likely to harm their careers, families, or themselves. Then Rhea calls a spirit nobody can ignore. She puts a storm under her command and wrecks a building, creates a servant out of construction materials, or other obvious act of witchcraft and wreaks havoc with it. Suddenly that cause the players have been low-key rooting for looks a lot more like a problem.
- Deliberately or not, the Hunters have allied themselves with a person or group Rhea considers a target. It could be a local business that's been plagued by ghosts (possibly the ghosts of workers who died in preventable industrial accidents), a politician they helped break free of a vampire's thrall, or a useful but unpleasant contact who's done terrible things for money. That puts the Hunters on Rhea's radar, and she decides to take them out before they become a problem.
- Protest movements aren't Hunters' problem, no matter how much they might sympathize with them. Rumors about animated, self-aware trash storms, and sightings of huge, unnaturally

smart wolves prowling inside city limits are. The spirits crop up wherever Rhea happens to be, in either of her forms. As a wolf, she's doing some reconnaissance on a corrupt local politician taking corporate money to overlook environmental protection breaches. The politician's a vile person with a range of character flaws and skeletons in the closet but they are a human being and the Hunters get to decide whether there's a minimum standard for whose life is worth saving from a monster. It's easy for the Hunters to connect Rhea's actions to a popular local movement accusing the politician, perhaps among several others, of corruption. It'll take more work to untangle whether the whole movement's a front for some supernatural creature or whether they're in thrall to one. By the time the Hunters figure it out there's a good chance one of the members, afflicted by Rhea's apocalyptic aura, may have tried to threaten or hurt that politician on their own. If the Hunters play it smart they might even be able to force the politician to clean up their act or do the cell a couple of favors in return for saving them from a giant, intelligent wolf.

Additional Dangers and Victims

Rhea has appeared all over the world, but she's most active in the eastern parts of the United States and Western Europe. She's rarely the most prominent feature in a piece of media, but once someone knows what they're looking for, she crops up a lot, especially in media captured at protests, riots, and acts of civil disobedience.

- A video covering a protest in front of a major city landmark shows Rhea standing behind the speaker, half hidden by a stack of amps. She's frowning at the speaker with fierce attention, like she's willing them on. A set of photos from a pipeline protest, or against the backdrop of a burning city, show her among the crowd.

- Very occasionally, Rhea O'Connor's listed as the speaker at some grassroots event, the kind of rally that springs up in public spaces, not affiliated with any formal organization. Hours after her presence is announced, the organizers delete the messages or graphics and replace them, Rhea's name no longer listed. She still attends the events, she just doesn't like her presence advertised. Hunters need to be very quick and well-connected or very good at digging up deleted media to get access to these early warnings.
- There's a black hole where Rhea's criminal record should be. It's wildly implausible she's never been arrested for public order offences, even if she was never charged, and there's no trace of so much as a parking ticket. More strikingly, arrest records from events where Rhea's seen tend to get corrupted, go missing, and generally fade out of existence. Decades into the information age, a gap in records can be as much of a red flag as records themselves.
- Rhea has a social media presence, though it's strictly set to "friends only" on all platforms. She rarely posts any original content but she's among the first to share material that goes on to be important, at least in the frenetic, fireworks display of the online interest cycle. Breaking news stories, whistleblowing reports, and really good science communication that lays bare catastrophic problems in compelling layperson-friendly language, make up the bulk of her content. She's also got a penchant for dinosaur cartoons. All work and no play, as they say.

Breadcrumbs

- The human activists Rhea interacts with are not stupid. Many figure out that Rhea is dangerous and detrimental to their goals. Some of them are good at figuring out how power works and how different organizations and individuals are connected. They might not even know that the connections they've noticed are, to a Hunter, clues to Rhea's connections in the conspiracy.

If you're getting involved with any local issues please stay alert for people like Rhea O'Connor. Rhea is an experienced activist who shows up, offers her expertise, and makes herself the lynchpin of organizing efforts. She then talks over people who actually understand the situation. She feeds off of drama and conflict and she is a bully when she thinks she can get away with it.

She's so divisive and unpleasant and when she leaves (SHE. ALWAYS. LEAVES.) she leaves behind a power vacuum or people at each other's throats so the whole movement fall apart.

I don't think she is actually an undercover cop as @end_of_daves suggested here (although some of dave's arguments are pretty convincing) but she is most definitely not on the level.

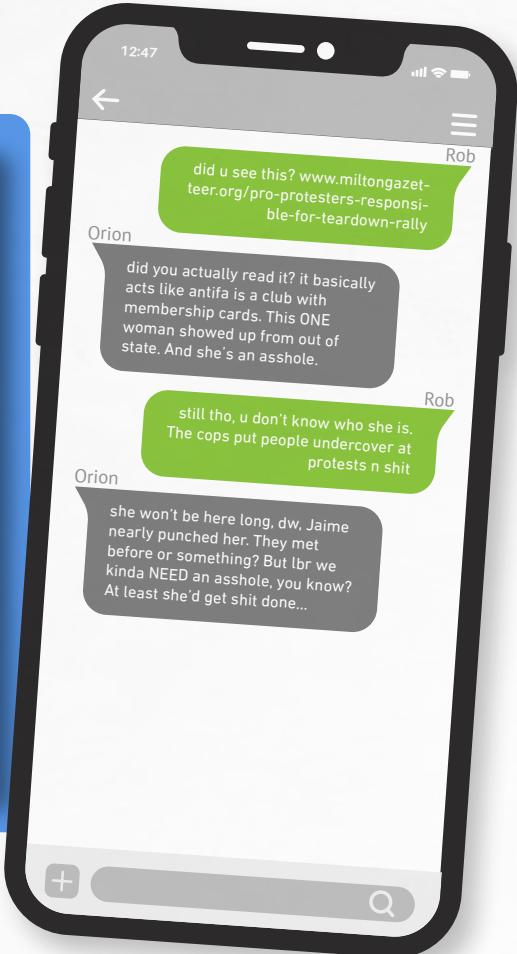
Do not welcome her.

Do not confront her.

Do not engage.

#yourfaveisproblematic #humansoverheroes #bullying #notinmyname
#seriouslythoughshesastonecoldbitch #doyouthinkshegotthescarsfrombeingtoonicetopeople
#alsoshesdirty #trashattractor

[Share](#) [Comment](#)



- Rhea has a lot of enemies. There are people tasked with compiling dossiers on her, and sometimes those dossiers leak or are purposefully leaked. They might even reach the Hunters, who may find out that Rhea has connections she herself may not be entirely aware of.
- A volatile individual, Rhea may turn on her allies in the conspiracy if she feels they've acted against her interests. Because of this, she herself may be the best source on her connections to other potential Quarries.

gain the Creature Specialization Perk under the Sense the Unnatural Endowment, or the Sense the Unnatural Edge itself.

Temporary Assets (Arsenal or Ordnance):

Rhea's own contacts and allies end up with a variety of weapons and ordnances, an increasing amount the longer Rhea's around, as they get closer to doing something extremely dangerous. Hunters that take down an activist group she's been involved with might discover a large cache of weapons and explosives. Players who confiscate those toys get the benefit of the Arsenal or Ordnance Edge, with the Team Requisition or Multiple Payload Perk respectively, as a Temporary Asset. However, this isn't access to someone who can procure the goods or a facility where the Hunter can make them: it's a truckload or storage unit of weapons or explosives. If the Hunter has to dump them or loses access to the location, they're gone forever. And if the authorities find them, the Hunter has a huge problem on their hands. ■

Rewards

Spiritual Awakening: Dealing with Rhea makes a Hunter much more familiar with identifying and interacting with a supernatural creature's influence, not just addressing its presence. Players might be allowed to



MK
2024

Chapter Four: **PUPPETEERS**

Every conspiracy has an echelon of masterminds and manipulators. They may not be the ultimate overlords of the grand design, but their leadership is necessary for its success. These are the monsters that marshal resources, direct underlings, and have a view of the larger goal that their conspiracy is working toward. These Puppeteers are often highly intelligent and usually have a great deal of indirect influence in the mortal world, but most importantly, they have a plan. These are the monsters who either believe in a particular conspiracy's goals or think they can subvert some or all of its adherents to their agenda. Vampires, sorcerers, and powerful fae creatures fit particularly well in this role. Usually, to find their way to a Puppeteer the Hunters will have had to face several of its minions. By the time they know what is behind the conspiracy, the Puppeteer knows they are coming.

Outside of a conspiracy-focused chronicle, a Puppeteer may simply be a much more powerful Quarry than the cell has encountered previously. This may be reflected in play by the time it takes to hunt them. An investigation may be more involved, or the Puppeteer might only have a couple of lackeys or servitors in a small conspiracy.

Sally remembered hearing Jed start firing, over and over again as the thing reached out to them. She's blasted her shotgun in the same direction, carving chunks out of the grotesque shape of flesh and spiderlike limbs she could only half see in the shadows. But then one of those limbs snatched the shotgun out of her hands with a strength that shouldn't have been possible.

The girl! Jed had shouted, as one of the creature's arms skewered him in the side. Sally had run toward the child, still curled up from trauma, and picked her up. Without looking back she ran for the stairs, stumbling as a spindly arm snatched at her legs. All she could hope is that Jed kept firing. She wanted to think it was because that meant he was still alive. But a voice in the back of her mind told her it was because it meant the creature was fighting Jed and not coming for her.

The cold air outside woke Sally up a little and she bundled the little girl into the back seat of the car. She hadn't said anything yet, but Sally was pretty sure she was still breathing. Fumbling the keys into the ignition all she could think about was getting away. But then she remembered and stopped, her hands frozen on the wheel. Jed was still in there.

Stay here, she said to the girl, although she got no response. Grabbing the backup gun from the glove compartment she walked back toward the warehouse, her heart in her mouth with every step. No one was firing anymore.

Just as she reached the side door it swung open with a crash. She nearly opened fire but it was Jed. He was covered in blood and limping badly, his gun in his hand only because he couldn't open his fingers anymore.

Is it dead? asked Sally.

Run, said Jed.

Shaking with fear and adrenaline Sally put an arm around his waist and they hobbled as fast as they could back to the car. Sally got the car moving, glancing at Jed who was only just conscious in the passenger seat.

She glanced at the girl in the rearview mirror and saw she was uncurling and starting to sit up. Maybe she would be okay after all.

We have a place, Fulham Street on the east side, next to the deli, Sally told her. We have plenty of people there, you're going to be safe. They'll help find your parents and get you home.

Ah, Fulham Street, replied the girl. Near the deli. Of course. I don't need my parents, but I am hungry.

Slightly confused, Sally stole another look at the child in the mirror. The girl was sitting up and staring straight back at her. Behind her rows of sharp teeth, a smile was forming.

Rewards

A Puppeteer may be the culmination of several Hunts, or a chronicle that has spanned for months or years. If this is the case, the rewards are likely to be largely narrative if it represents the end of a chronicle. Some members of the cell may die, but their touchstones remain safe and, at least for now, the unnatural threat to the area has been averted.

If the conspiracy is not the end of the chronicle, defeating a Puppeteer often rewards a Hunter cell with sensitive information that cannot be obtained through any other means. In addition to the rewards given by the individual Quarries, these monsters are a great way to reward players' characters with key clues

that can expose mysteries that are essential to a story's resolution. This can include information capable of crippling the conspiracy, exposing Cog's true identity, or revealing who is pulling the strings behind the entire shadowy operation. Neutralizing a Puppeteer takes a great deal of effort from even a veteran Hunter cell and the rewards for doing so should be equally impressive. If the focus of a Storyteller's chronicle is a large conspiracy, then these are the monsters the players' characters must confront to have any hope of putting a stop to the conspiracy's master plans.

If the Hunters successfully and definitively destroy a Puppeteer, the Storyteller should give them all a point of Status. Taking out one of the kingpins of any conspiracy makes people notice and grants a lot of reputation.

Eugenia

Fae Spirit

"Dearest Constance,
 I hope this letter finds you in
 good fortune. I have secured funds
 for a house suitable to become
 a marital home for a woman
 such as yourself. I now have the
 final piece in place so that I
 might ask your father for your
 hand in marriage. I have one
 task to do before I leave Boston
 to join you in New York. This
 simple act of benevolence for
 my generous patron will allow us
 to spend a lifetime celebrating
 the joining of our two fated souls."

Your Loving Fiancée,
 John

Last letter of John Patrick Allen,
 missing February 16, 1923

Elements: Fae, Nice old lady, Housing,
 Homelessness, Preying on the needy,
 Consequences, Contacts

Safe housing is an almost insurmountable crisis in the heart of many urban centers. From the condominium communities to the dilapidated low-rise apartments to the overcrowded shelters and the contentious tent cities, humans are always desperate for a place to call home. There are many creatures that prey on the desperate, but few as vicious or dangerous as **Mrs. Eugenia Belford**.

Eugenia appeared in the city when the first person needed a home and could not find one. As ancient as human need and desire, she set up shop in the most at-risk communities, waiting for the first

poor soul to wander into her office. She has remained more constant than any city skyline, appearing when someone needs her most as a quaint elderly woman in a helpful housing office. These victims are down on their luck, with nowhere to go, and not enough money to dig them out of the hole they're in. So Eugenia offers them hope.

Her office is dated and smells of an almost offensive mixture of peonies and mothballs. It feels as old as she is. The waiting room has a dated style, but one hard to pin down to an era. Parenting magazines, many no longer in publication, sit in a neat pile on wooden end tables. Dark wooden chairs sit comfortably apart with cushions made of green leather, with colorful crochet throws sitting on the back to protect them from sun damage. An unused ashtray sits on the coffee table beside a well-used copy of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Victims sit in the waiting room,



watching the time tick by on the cuckoo clock, eyeing the plain thrift shop art, while a coffee pot brews a fresh pot on a small table with Styrofoam cups and creamers that have been sitting out too long.

The door to Eugenia's private office has her name on the misty glass. She opens the door, a grandmotherly visage and warm smile on her face as she greets her victim and offers them cookies. They come inside and sit down on the plush chairs across from her librarian's desk. An old filing cabinet sits beside her desk and holds an ancient dot-matrix printer. An old computer, looking more like a prop from an '80s hacker movie than a functioning piece of technology, hums on the desk, painfully loud by today's standards. A crystal dish of scotch mints waits on the desk for anyone who needs one, alongside a box of tissues, as though people are prone to tears. A faint smell of baking cookies lingers in the air.

Eugenia fixes her square glasses and asks her victim what they desperately need in a home. Her grandmotherly warmth radiates to the renter, inviting them to talk at length about their painful situation. They walk out of the office an hour later, belly filled with sweets and a newly printed contract signed on Eugenia's desk.

The contract states that the renter agrees to the rate and for one hour of volunteer work with Mrs. Belford. The rate is always reasonable. So reasonable, the renter would be a fool to refuse it. Hidden among the paperwork is a multilayered due date based upon an arcane chronological measurement from Eugenia's home dimension. This date is beyond what a traditional clock and calendar are capable of measuring. The renter, with their painfully human eyes, cannot perceive the true date beyond their own basic temporal understanding. Sadly, Eugenia always abides by the strictest letter of her contracts and takes no responsibility for a client's lack of understanding the scope of those terms.

Once the renter misses their payment, the volunteering time is upped to twenty-four hours. Grateful that Mrs. Belford has given them a second chance, the renter usually agrees to the new term. They show up for their shift and are never heard from again.

Eugenia's appearance changes every thirty years or so as she updates her visage (and her office's interior) to be congruent with humanity's perception of old and dated. Whatever her appearance, she is always an elderly woman with spectacles and a cardigan draped on her shoulders. Around her neck is a beautiful gold chain that holds a small, lady's pocket watch. Anyone standing near her can hear it ticking away and anyone who pays attention can notice the chaotic beat the clock makes, like no clock they've ever heard before.

This beautiful pocket watch is how Eugenia keeps time. It is also how she keeps ahead of her renters, ensuring they never make all their payments punctually and eventually succumb to servitude. Eugenia's sweet, kind, and caring demeanor nearly never falters. When someone begins to suspect her dark inclinations, she plays the dull and dimwitted elderly woman, unable to really understand what the suspicious party is implying. She is, above all things, helpful and very calculating.

It is unclear what Eugenia does with the renters who disappear, although few people believe Eugenia has anything to do with the disappearance. That is, if anyone notices anyway; she chooses her victims with care. But everyone makes the odd mistake and a few people have come to suspect her monstrous nature. Most of those rare few believe she consumes them in some way. Others speculate that she keeps them, selling them to other nobles or supernatural entities that require a human as a pet or servant. She has no morals or concerns about the well-being of her renters. Whatever she does with them, they are never seen or heard from again. Their bones are never recovered, their belongings are never found, and their previous apartment is now up for rent.

Eugenia never preys on those who can pay their rent. She specifically hunts those who make promises they are not able to keep. This dangerous and cruel being has no interest in risk. She has spent hundreds of years perfecting her web in which to catch unsuspecting victims. The web, now so finely woven that even Eugenia forgets it's there, expands across cities, countries, and continents. Desperation knows no borders, so why should Eugenia?

NICE LITTLE OLD LADY

There are a lot of supernatural threats that like to take on the form of a frail and unassuming elderly person. They might appear to be a kindly grandfather, the elderly aunt who always wants to spoil you, or a wise old grandmother whose baked goods are always irresistible. The reason for this is simple; appearing weak and kind is very disarming and makes you appear unthreatening. It may also make people trust you just that little bit more, or underestimate you. This is especially true if you remind them of what is usually an archetype of kindness and warmth. While such forms may appear frail, the monsters who steal them never are. They can usually shed this guise in moments and show their true colors to those they have already lured a target too far into their web to escape.

General Difficulty: 4 / 3

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 7, Mental 7

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl 6, Finance 8, Occult 8, Stealth 8

Notes/Other Traits:

Transitory: Eugenia's office wanders from place to place, even within the city that she lives in. After every signed contract, the office moves to another location to attract a new victim. It is nearly impossible to find unless someone is seeking help that Eugenia can offer. Any magic done to track down the transitory office must be powerful and hidden, otherwise the aged being knows she is being followed. Most mundane means of discovering Eugenia's lair always fail. Supernatural or possibly highly advanced technological methods to track Eugenia have their Difficulty increased by the current Danger. A failed test alerts Eugenia to the attempt.

Aged Face: While Eugenia appears old, she is a supernatural entity, and doesn't age. No one has ever seen her true form and lived to tell the tale. To avoid suspicions, as renters can and do tell their friends about their landlady, Eugenia's appearance changes between each contract. Her features broaden or narrow, her eyes change color, her hair or skin color gets lighter or darker, and her clothes change style or design. Her perfume and necklace never change, though, and are a sure tell for anyone who is seeking her.

Chronon Watch: The delicate gold pocket watch that Mrs. Belford keeps on her necklace is not just any

ordinary watch. It is an old and fragile magical quantum device that tracks time in an entirely alien way. It is shows how time moves in Eugenia's homeland, and for that reason alone it is highly valuable. The time device gives Eugenia the ability to comprehend time at its most basic non-linear building blocks. She sets her victims up for failure by obfuscating their ability to comprehend the true nature of the deadlines. Any test the Hunters make against Eugenia involving precise timing have their Difficulties increased by the current Danger. This can include tests needed to plan an ambush, pursue a Project, tap a phone call or shadow a suspect.

True Name: Like all of the folk of her homeland, Eugenia Belford has a true name, and is unable to be controlled or killed unless someone finds her true name and uses it against her. It has been so long since Eugenia has heard her true name she no longer remembers it, but it is inscribed on the inside of her pocket watch. If Eugenia is killed without her true name being invoked, she simply manifests in her office in another part of the city or world.

The Web: Like a clever spider, Eugenia weaves a dangerous web to ensnare her victims. As soon as they enter her office, they are stuck, desperate to escape but unable to see the spider waiting for them. The web consists of Eugenia's office and her contracts. Her magic is intricately tied to the office that travels from place to place with her, and without her magic, the office would crumble apart and reveal that it was a glamour all along. The web only appears in areas of poor housing conditions where people seeking help are likely to be. Every time it appears, it has the same interior and title above the door. "Mrs. Belford's Housing Aid." Anyone who enters immediately feels at home and tells Eugenia the truth whenever she asks a question. Using this information, Eugenia creates the perfect contract for an amount that seems reasonable for the victim's situation while also impossible to maintain on the mystical time schedule that Eugenia keeps. It is impossible to leave the web without signing a contract or making an agreement with Eugenia without supernatural intervention. However, particularly strong-willed mortals can take 1 Aggravated Willpower damage to flee Eugenia's lair. Those who escape the web in this way wander away with only a hazy recollection of location and are unable to find their way back until they heal all of their current Willpower damage.

VARIATION: THE REAL ESTATE AGENT

Ms. Geni Belford is a forty-something previous homemaker who now works as a real estate agent and drives a Subaru. She always has an iced latte in hand, a beautiful handmade leather briefcase, a power suit, short blonde hair, beautiful white teeth, perfect but slightly dated makeup, and the scent of Gucci perfume. Geni is lively, friendly, and coming into her own powerful vision of herself as a woman who can have it all. She's vivacious and helps clients feel alive as they sell, refinance, mortgage, and buy homes. Geni specializes in finding the *perfect* home for her clients, with special financing options that she helps support... in exchange for client referrals and other sundry tasks her clients do.

Unlike Eugenia, Geni doesn't have an office. She works on the road. Her briefcase carries everything she needs to trap her victims in large, endless contracts they cannot fully understand or read, lawyers can see nothing at fault with, and she can manipulate with a turn of her pocket watch. Geni's clients don't disappear; instead they become indentured servants of Geni, working for her and her court until she releases them.

Goals and Objectives:

- Eugenia wants to strengthen the web she has spent generations perfecting. All of the trials and testing were in the name of creating a trap to provide her with wealth and sustenance. Every deal she makes ensures she has a new bargaining chip, a new person to bargain with, or a new body to consume. These renters owe her a favor when they miss the first payment, by way of community service. But as they miss more and more, they eventually succumb and pay the ultimate favor: their lives. These escalating favors is how Eugenia slowly boils the proverbial frog, pulling people deeper into her web until they cannot escape. She will never be satisfied and always continues her schemes and the hunt.
- In recent years, Eugenia has turned her sights on ensnaring as many people as she can in one area, slowly beginning an occupation of renters in specific parts of the city she hunts. This new taste for controlling an entire area of a city allows

her greater power when it comes to dealing with Hunters and other supernatural beings. The renters in these experimental areas maintain a longer contract with Eugenia so that she can hold sway over the neighborhood or community for a prolonged period of time, slowly ousting other powerful factions that live within these areas. With luck and skill, Eugenia learns how to trap an entire city, turning one place into her permanent court and home.

- Only one person has ever escaped the dangerous office of Eugenia Belford: **Celeste Nguyễn**. Celeste works as the Director of Housing Assistance at the charity **New Day Housing and Resource Assistance (NDHRA)**. Early in Celeste's life, their mom ended up in Eugenia's office. Their mother ended up lost forever to the entity's grasp, but in a final deal, Celeste was spared. They grew up, forever seeking to find their mother, or the woman who last saw her, Mrs. Belford. Eugenia is aware that Celeste is hunting her with their own obsession and is ready to go on the offensive. Now Eugenia is seeking to ensnare someone who works in the NDHRA office or is a current NDHRA client to trap them into a deal she can leverage against Celeste.

Appearance: Eugenia is an elderly woman with a kind, caring smile and the faint scent of lily of the valley on her skin. She keeps her salt-and-pepper hair up in a conservative bun with the odd loose strand framing her face. Eugenia always dresses conservatively, with a modest dress and cardigan or knit shawl that drapes loosely on her thin shoulders. A lovely gold necklace ends in a beautiful, intricately made lady's pocket watch about the size of a quarter. It ticks away, counting arcane time. Eugenia references the pocket watch whenever she forges a new contract, a time that no mortal could hope to understand or be held to. Her nails are painted, though a chip or two is obvious if one looks closely. The entity wears just a touch of peach lipstick and despite looking nothing like her victims, always reminds them of family in the best of ways. If her web is destroyed, Eugenia flees to rebuild her magic away from those who hunt her.

In Stories

An old nursery rhyme warns children of running away from home and being all alone on the city streets. The rhyme dates back from the Industrial Revolution, supposedly inspired by children who went missing when they were homeless. The rhyme ends with a warning that when the child is lost and all hope is gone, they'll see "her" smile before they're done.

In the city ghost tours, the guide speaks of an old neighborhood that used to be the poorest in the city. They take people through the new streets, artisan coffee shops, and fancy gardens to talk about the witch of St. Phillips. It's said she cursed the area with hunger, and that certain buildings consume people, digesting them in their basement bellies.

An old book about hauntings in the city details how an aged woman appears to those who call out her name in their greatest hour of need. Her name is Eugenia, and the destitute used to cry her name at night on a full moon. She would appear as a ghost to them and for the small price of their soul, she'll change their fortunes from unfortunate to good.

In a popular urban legend that's told during visits to City Hall, political campaigns, and origin stories about the city, there was once a time when the residents of the city believed that the city had a soul. This soul, or spirit of the city, was of Lady luck, who would manifest to save her most beloved citizens. In exchange for her kindness, they could never leave her borders.

A local halfway house and housing advocacy group are called Aunt Eugenia's and named after a charitable philanthropist from the 1800s. The picture on their wall is of Eugenia Belford and names her the city's aunt. The charity prides themselves on following in her example by taking in the neediest and finding them homes.

Rumors and old newspaper clippings show that one of the old houses on the river was believed to have been owned by a cult. Residents say the building was owned by an elderly woman and renters were constantly moving in, but no one was ever moving out. Strange sigils were seen on windowsills, over doors, and on the mailboxes of the renters' homes. The building burned down suddenly and the owner was presumed dead.

Encountering Eugenia

- A missing woman, Li Meilin, was last seen downtown rushing out of the subway, phone in hand, tears streaming down her face. Footage of the woman from various sources, including people who recorded her at the time, shows her running from person to person asking what time it is. Her voice gets more and more frantic as people give her the answer: 4:18 p.m. In reply to these answers, she screams, "No! The real time! Her time! HER TIME!" The woman gets more and more agitated before starting to sob. Another woman approaches to comfort her, but the woman runs away from her, heading down the street. This is the last time she is seen. Li's sister, Hao, reported her missing the next day. Hao insists that Li wouldn't just run away. Police have found no evidence of foul play and consider the case open, but suspect that Li left town after struggling to make rent.



- In a housing crisis, a new and unheard of business is reported opening in the heart of the most at risk community. The office, either somehow unnoticed before or opened overnight, sits on a deserted street. Neighbors say they noticed it one night all of a sudden as they came home from a night shift. The office sign reads Mrs. Belford's Home Advocacy. In the middle of the night, the light of the office turned out, brightly lit from the inside, with a beautifully hand-printed sign hung in the window: "We can help you get home."
- On the evening news, the anchor reports on a new housing scam that is impacting homeowners. Reportedly, apartments and homes that are being used for Airbnb are being rented long-term and being rented out by the renter. The owners report that they haven't found a way to contact the renter, and people are leaving their stuff in their homes. The belongings disappear overnight right before another tenant the owners didn't rent to appears with keys to the unit. Owners are assuming the mystery tenant is making a lot of money on their rented properties and demand that the police do something about this scam.

Additional Dangers and Victims

- The transient population in the city have been making wild accusations against one of the elders in the local community. Near the water, the unhoused population has set up a tent city. Residents are demanding the city do something about it, but officials claim the situation is too delicate. Rumors are spreading that several people have disappeared from their tent city to go to a boarding house run by a local woman. Members of the tent city say that the old woman is luring people away from the tent city with the promise of shelter and a meal. They claim that she's murdering them and burying them in the flower bed behind the house her office is in.
- Taaliah Semaan, the main bartender at the Anchor Lounge, has been telling patrons about an amazing

community project and the woman that runs it. The project provided outreach and kindness when Taaliah needed it most, offering her aid when her husband left her and her two kids without enough money to pay for her house. She enrolled in a housing and mortgage aid program after hearing about it from a friend. The program offered to decrease her payments for a time in exchange for some community service.

- A blurry video is released online of an elderly woman whose eyes are reflective when she looks at the doorbell camera. The woman doesn't knock or ring the doorbell, but instead walks into the apartment without a key, stays inside for several minutes, and then walks out and locks the door behind her with an old-looking key she didn't have before. The voice on the video talks about how this woman just walked into her neighbor's house. Cassidy Bradshaw, the neighbor, claims that she's been watching the house for her neighbor as a favor, but hasn't seen her for several months. The doorbell footage was sent to the police, who assured Ms. Bradshaw that the woman who entered had a legal right to do so based on a contract with the owner. Cassidy is worried that her neighbor's cat whom she's been caring for won't be cared for by this mysterious new woman.
- Rosemary "Rosie" Santos is an internet celebrity who makes videos about using her money to help those who need it. Every Wednesday, she asks random people what they would buy if they had \$1000 and then buys it for them, recording it all on her phone. A video surfaced of her keeping donations instead of spending them as she promised to do and now, she has been canceled and accused of exploitation of the poor. Three months ago, she posted a tearful video apologizing and saying she was using the money to pay for her rent and that she had learned her lesson. The comments were brutal, and Rosie went radio silent until yesterday. In her most recent video, she talks about her growth and healing through a program that has provided her with a new apartment. An elderly woman is seen in the background, gently coaching her through the video.

- After a new housing project is launched in an at-risk neighborhood, a Housing Support Office is opened. Flyers have appeared in mailboxes, on car windows, via email newsletters, and in spontaneous text messages. The message is simple: "I know you need help." It also lists a number to call or an address to go to. The messages and flyers are easily thrown out or deleted, but they appear a day or two later, tucked in a pile of mail or a book or in someone's inbox or as a comment on a social media post they've made. Several people have responded that they can't get it out of their head.

Breadcrumbs

- Populations are messy and full of life and complication. When a person vanishes, they may leave behind others who wonder what happened. Such people can be a rich source of information, if the Hunters can just find the right ones to talk to.
- Eugenia exists in a system, that of housing. Such systems include bureaucracy, permits, contracts and other documents, many of which are filed away and stored. When the players' characters do research on the nature of the conspiracy opposing them, the humble municipal archives may prove to be surprisingly useful.

- Everybody needs a place to live, even Quarries. Or at least many Quarries. The Hunters may find conflicting, confusing clues which stem from the fact that Eugenie's latest tenant is supernatural in nature, and isn't going to go down easily.

Rewards

Eugenia's Timepiece: A pocket watch that can reset time in a localized area (10 square meters) to 3 seconds in the past. The timepiece holds one charge maximum and requires the willing sacrifice of a life to recharge. Users must be able to translate the arcane symbols inscribed inside the device to understand the device's functionality. Alternately, this may simply function as the focus object for an Artifact Edge.

Eugenia's Web: A physical office space that shifts locations randomly throughout the city. If Hunters are able to defeat Mrs. Belford and overcome the wards and enchantments she has put in place, they can take ownership of the building. The Web's owner can call the front door to appear at their location using a simple ritual. Finding the right ritual may prove difficult though, as Eugenia isn't going to just tell anyone.

Temporary Ally (Celeste Nguyễn): As a city official, Celeste might become a useful ally to the Hunters. She has access to files and city hall in general, which might be useful for other missing persons. She will certainly feel she is in their debt if they dispatch Eugenia.



MRS. EUGENIA BELFORD

**MORTGAGE AND
LANDLORD ADVOCACY**

555-084-4663

YOURHOME@EBELFORD.MLA

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

RESIDENTIAL LEASE AGREEMENT

The following contract is between Tyrone Ryan (the "tenant") and the Belford Housing Project (the "landlord") executed on July 30 2021. All parts of the agreement shall be carried out by either the tenant or the landlord by the agreed upon timeline. The agreement can be exited by the landlord at any time, without notice. The tenant may not exit the agreement without the consent of the landlord.

The tenant agrees to pay \$ 450.00 to the landlord once a month on the 33 of each month, beginning in July. The tenant agrees that the full amount shall be paid, not in parts or segments, to the landlord on the agreed day or sooner. Payments shall be made in person by cheque or cash at the office of the landlord.

The tenant agrees to participate in 1 hour(s) of community service upon signing of the contract. Community service shall be served to the landlord in an activity of the landlord's choosing. The tenant may not avoid, ignore, dismiss, alter, or complain about their community service. The community service must be completed within epoch months of signing. Community service may include manual labor, services to other community members, donations, or any other action deemed necessary by the landlord.

The landlord agrees to provide shelter to the tenant while the contract is in effect. Shelter may include a house, apartment, shanty, lean-to, mansion, or other human-based hovel. It must include safety from the elements and a place for the tenant to call home. The landlord agrees to maintain the home. The landlord agrees to offer assistance with mortgages or financial stress on the tenant in exchange for favors or promises. The tenant agrees to always pay any favors or promises in full and without hesitation.

The tenant agrees to not miss a payment or community service requirement. Should the tenant miss a payment, the landlord may institute punitive options based upon the contract, including more community service, upping the agreed rental, terminating the agreed rental, selling in whole or part the tenant's belongings, endangering the tenant's life through tasks or conditions, selling in whole or part the body, soul, mind, or memories of the tenant, releasing the tenant into dangerous or unpredictable situations, testing the tenant with quests, or taking the tenant's dearest treasures, up to and including life savings, family heirlooms, children, and pets. The tenant agrees not to fight or stop these proceedings from happening or forfeits their right to safety and happiness.

The tenant acknowledges the contract may be altered to reflect new negotiated terms agreed upon by the tenant and landlord. The tenant acknowledges they will not need to sign a new contract upon these alterations. The tenant acknowledges they are bound to any and all new agreements added or addendum and the timelines stipulated therein.

The tenant acknowledges the landlord will not be held responsible for damaged or lost property that is at the fault of the tenant, the tenant's burdens, or the tenant's social connections. The tenant acknowledges that the landlord may take steps to limit these factors should damage or harm occur to the property.

Tyrone Ryan
Tenant signature

Joshua Belford
Landlord Signature

6/30/2021
Date of Contract

The Prophet

Sorcerer

File 242196 Caseworker's Notes:

He'll tell you that everything he does is for the greater good. He'll say that humanity has a destiny, that he's going to help us all seek it. Don't you believe it. If he has any hopes for us, it's that we'll be his willing guinea pigs.

Elements: Scientist, Precognition, Doomsday clock, Immortal, Behind the curtain, Technomancer, Eugenics

In 1973, a consultant for the **Audio-Digital Company (ADC)** pushed for the creation of a new line of radios with a revolutionary audio system designed to not only enhance the sound of the audio, but to also enhance the listener's hearing. Everyone knows about the lawsuits that emerged from its failures after its debut in several test markets; its instability, its tendency to damage a listener's hearing, its tendency to catch fire... Few know about its successes, those driven into a mental breakdown or worse after permanently tuning into the sounds of realms beyond ours.

In 1987, an unnamed company representative convinced a North Dakotan local council to approve the conversion of a field near a water reservoir into a "safe and secure" storage facility for medical waste in the area. Until the facility was destroyed in a freak accident six years later, locals reported seeing shadowy figures holding ceremonies in the facility. The news reported its constant leakage into a nearby reservoir, believed to be responsible for waves of bizarre illnesses in the small North Dakota town.

In 1998, a programmer inserted several lines of code into the retail build of **The Celestial Depths**, a long-forgotten early MMORPG. These codes were the bedrock of the game's artificial intelligence, which far outpaced other games over the era. While mainstream publications reviewed the game as "visually and technologically impressive, but a bit boring," a few players became so immersed in the game and its oddly lifelike characters that they couldn't stop playing. These players are all in comas now, their medical bills paid for by an anonymous figure. Each is a medical curiosity; their brain waves behave as if they're still participating in waking life.

The consultant, the company rep, and the programmer were never found. That's because they didn't exist; each was an alias of **Raymond Siddall**,



a powerful sorcerer with terrible ambitions. Each incident was a failed step in his master plan. But he keeps trying, because he believes the fate of the world is at stake if he can't succeed.

Raymond was born in the early 20th century. When he came of age, he became fascinated with the rapidly developing technology of the post-World War II era. He studied electrical engineering and became an early adopter of cybernetics and computer science. His passion for these subjects verged on the mystical. Cybernetic patterns and the development of machinery, he felt, were reflections of the systems that powered life itself. Perhaps it was this sort of thinking that led to his discovery of sorcery.

As a sorcerer, Raymond blended the occult arts with his understanding of technology. He joined a coven of technomancers just like him. From them, he learned the benefits of both hard and soft social power. With their aid, he graduated at the top of his class and received lucrative employment offers from the most prestigious electronic companies in the United States.

Sometime in the 1960s, Raymond had a falling-out with his coven. While performing magic using closed-circuit television as his medium, he received a vision of a nightmarish future. He came away convinced that humankind was destined to die a slow, miserable death as the planet itself withered away. Three sleepless days later, he presented his plans to the coven. He felt that humanity must undergo a rapid biological and technological evolution to weather the coming storm. This plan clashed with the coven's own vision of the future, and he soon left in disgust.

In the years since, he's used his powers to place himself in positions capable of advancing his newfound purpose. He's kept up with the times, allowing him to command all kinds of technology. He's personally responsible for several atrocities across the world, each one an attempt to bring about another step of his plan. Misery and death are his only harvest, but he'll continue to farm it. In his eyes, the alternative is so much worse, and there is no limit to who or what he will sacrifice when the survival of the human species is at stake.

General Difficulty: 5 / 4

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Mental 7, Social 8

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 8

Exceptional Dice Pools: Persuasion 6, Subterfuge 8, Technology 9

Notes/Other Traits:

For more detail on Prescience and Vulnerability see *Hunter*, p.167–168

Bilocation: Raymond is capable of physically being in two locations at once. Each version of him acts independently with the other and each is aware of what the other is doing at that moment. Each has their own individual Health and Willpower trackers, each holding the same levels of damage he may have sustained before using the ability. Incapacitating Raymond in one location does not Incapacitate the other, but does inflict 1 Aggravated Willpower damage upon him. Both are effectively different timelines of his, which are functionally infinite. So as long as one survives he is fine.

Technological Control: Raymond can assume direct control of any piece of technology with a circuit board, processor, or memory bank within the space of an enclosed room indoors, and a number of meters equal to 10 times the current Danger outdoors. He has access to every capability it possesses and every piece of data it holds. He can even force otherwise separated networked devices to act as one. This includes any electronic devices attached to a Hunter's Edges. The Hunter may make a Resolve + Technology test with a Difficulty equivalent to the story's current Danger to maintain control of their electronics for a number of turns equal to the margin, minimum 1.

Power Focus (Spectacles): Raymond's glasses channel his mystic abilities, enhancing his already formidable capabilities. Once per scene, when he visibly wears his spectacles to perform sorcery, the Storyteller may choose one of the following modifications to his uses of sorcery during the scene: his sorcery is temporarily immune from his Weakness, he does not need to spend Willpower to activate his abilities, or he receives a two-dice bonus to any pool used in a contested test caused by sorcery.

Prescience (7): Raymond uses a special function on his glasses to read the unprotected minds of anyone looking directly at him while he is wearing them. In addition to

Prescience's regular function, if he wins any test with a margin of four or more and it's a Critical success, he can read a number of hidden or deeply planted thoughts equivalent to the story's current Danger.

Vulnerability (Mass Human Observation):

Raymond's sorcery is difficult or sometimes impossible to perform in the presence of crowds of ordinary human beings. When he is forced to cast a spell in a crowd of people of at least 10 people, the majority of which are human, or while being recorded on a live feed, he must spend 2 Willpower points to use an Ability, and may not use his Power Focus' capability to negate this. If this Incapacitates him, he cannot use his abilities until the next day.

Goals and Objectives

- Raymond believes that humanity cannot exist as it is now. He's not picky as to what he wants it to become. Sometimes it's a perfect fusion of humans and machinery, sometimes it's forcing the body to evolve into a being capable of surviving the harshest environments, sometimes it's using human brains as the building blocks of a "guardian artificial consciousness." The specifics of his agenda change as he learns about more advanced technology or concludes something new about the upcoming apocalypse. Whatever the current plan is, it's bound to kill, maim, or break anyone unfortunate to get caught up in it.
- The sorcerer knows that he'll only see progress if he puts his ideas to the test. He sets up elaborate experiments based on his ideas for a better humanity. He prefers to inflict them on small, isolated communities, but won't pass up an opportunity if all he has is a few vulnerable individuals. He has copious notes on all his past failures, kept in his sanctum. If nothing else, he always learns from his failures.
- To ensure his experiments function away from prying eyes, he infiltrates government, corporate, and charity structures to maintain a position of great influence. This doesn't necessarily mean placing himself at the top of an organization. He's learned that sometimes, the best

places to wield the most power are in unorthodox places. He's not the CEO of a company; he's the CEO's personal assistant. He's not the treasurer of a charity; he's the helpful man in the mail room who always has the right advice. One of his current guises is a policy writer and lobbyist working for the New Millennium Initiative, an up-and-coming American think tank. He hopes his position can help him achieve his greatest plan yet.

Appearance: Raymond is a shorter-than-average white man. His blond hair is in a perfect taper cut and his eyes are green. His abilities keep him looking in his mid-20s, when in fact he's at least three decades older. He dresses differently to other men of his apparent age, choosing outfits harkening back to American men's fashions of the mid-20th century. He keeps a pair of old spectacles in his vest pocket, which appears to be antique on the outside, but on the inside, they are crafted with bleeding-edge technology and high-powered magic. They serve as advanced smartglasses and can be used as a focus for several spells.

While there is nothing outwardly supernatural about him, Hunters attuned to the supernatural might pick on a few details with successful uses of Edges like



Sense the Unnatural. Technical readouts could detect odd electromagnetic signatures around Raymond or when he casts his spells. Mystically enhanced vision or even abilities like his own could witness how reality seems to shift and warp when he works his will.

In Stories

The Prophet is a Quarry with cosmic aims, but all his schemes and machinations are firmly rooted in the material world. No matter how mystical or arcane the actual process may be, its blowback always falls on ordinary people, and the damage is visible and visceral. He fits into a chronicle as a “man behind the curtain” when the cell looks deeper into another Quarry, or as a long-term antagonist whose discovery and confrontation occurs over multiple stories.

No matter what plan Raymond has, it usually has three pillars. The first is that it involves a dramatic and sometimes permanent physical or mental alteration of its victims. The second is that the mechanism for the alteration is hidden behind a mundane product, event,

or location. The third is that the attempted alteration is intended to create a new form of humanity capable of surviving a nebulous world-spanning disaster occurring sometime soon. These plans are just as likely to follow “nightmare logic” as they are actual logic. It is important to note that he is not intending to create this new breed of human in one go. Many of his experiments are designed to create a single adaption he will add to the collection he feels humanity will need, rather than his final creation.

He presents himself to others as a kind, affable man, and it's almost the truth. His ability to read minds gives the illusion of deep empathy, and years of infiltration perfected his social manipulation skills to near perfection. When he's undercover, he's the friendly janitor with helpful advice, the hapless doorman that remembers everyone's name, or the politician's aide that seems to be the voice of reason. As he thinks he is saving humanity, he is always caring and dedicated in that sense.

Beneath his warm façade lies an arrogant, condescending man. He rarely talks about the intentions behind his experiments, but when he does, he claims that it's to help humanity survive an

“THEY CANNOT STOP SCREAMING:” PALLUS’ UNTOLD NIGHTMARE

Earl Nelson
Unknown World Reporter

It was supposed to be a regular Sunday afternoon for Patricia Langenburg and her husband Jeff. While she hung her laundry out to dry, Jeff took a break from repairing the kitchen table to listen to the game on his new radio, the Pallus PLL-89. When Patricia returned to the house, she wasn't prepared for what she heard...and saw.

“It sounded like Hell on Earth,” she said to Unknown World in an exclusive statement, “Hundreds of voices shrieking at once, screaming curses. I saw Jeff before I could ask him what was going on.”

She found her husband convulsing on the floor, clawing his ears. “He'd bitten deep into his tongue,” she added.

Mrs. Langenburg rushed to aid her husband, but soon realized her mistake.

“I tried to calm him down, to get him to stop, but I got too close to the radio. I felt this awful shiver down my spine. Then my nose started bleeding and

unjust fate. If that was ever true, it's not so much the reality now. He approaches "improving" humanity in the same way that someone changes the tires on their car or tosses out a full garbage bag. It's a necessary chore, but a chore nonetheless. When a plan inevitably fails, he doesn't blame himself or his sorcery but his victims. They couldn't embrace the changes he blessed them with, or perhaps they lacked the proper mental or spiritual fortitude. Maybe he needs to make further adjustments to make his subjects worthy before trying again...

He also has a well-hidden paranoia. His sorcery is weakened in the mass presence of others, and he fears that his old coven is watching his every move, waiting to strike him down. Because of these things, he prefers to act remotely when possible. He won't wave his hands and cast a spell; he'll give a suspected enemy what he'll call a lucky charm. He'll then use its magical resonance to access the enemy's phone once it's nearby. When it comes to his experiments, his pride overcomes his suspicions. While he knows he could, and perhaps should, arrange his experiments to occur miles away, he wants to be present and see the effects for himself. Whatever minions he might use, he trusts no one else to properly manage the experiment without him or accurately interpret the results.

While he prefers to hide in plain sight, he's not afraid to make himself known if necessary. If he feels that someone's too close to the truth, such as the cell, he seeks them out and uses his positive demeanor to either pull them off his trail or convince them to reveal what they know. If he discovers the cell is on his tail, he won't act right away. His hubris has him believe that people like the Hunters are minor considerations at best. As the cell gets closer to confronting him, and as the Danger increases, this changes quickly. At lower levels of Danger, he depends on his cover's position and its soft power to make the cell's lives harder. At higher levels, he'll use his sorcery to remotely impede their efforts. At Danger 5, he'll directly intervene and has no issue with displaying the full capabilities of his magic.

It is not impossible that since the Hunters are physically fit, clever and dedicated, he may decide that they would make excellent subjects...

Encountering the Prophet

- Several years ago, the Prophet set up an experiment during the construction of a new portion of a city district. Its municipal wiring was laid out in such a way that when enough energy flowed through the wires, a gate between our world and the spirit realm would tear open. Now, the experiment has begun. The cell must investigate the mass hysteria occurring in the district, exorcise the spirits, and find a way to close the gate. Raymond, in the guise of a beat cop, won't make it easy.
- An ally of the cell seeks their help. Last night, they overheard their teenager speaking to their cell phone as if it were an actual person. They assumed it was a fancy new search assistant until they heard it talk back to them with intimate details about their school life. An investigation reveals a secret at the local high school, mysterious USB charging ports that make smartphones even smarter. The phones claim that it knows the students better than themselves, and that it can change their fates. All it needs is for them to place strange QR codes all over their homes. The cell must destroy the charging ports and take down the QR codes before the Prophet, who works at the school as an IT assistant, uses the codes to transform the students into a hive mind.
- After eliminating a Quarry, the cell experiences several misfortunes. Computer hardware fails, traffic lights change in ways that almost gets a player character killed in an accident, and threatening phone calls from unknown numbers become a daily occurrence. Their last Quarry, whether it knew it or not, was a pawn in the Prophet's latest scheme, and now Raymond wants revenge. He's slid into their lives briefly, perhaps as a repairman or a "new neighbor," to plant a cursed talisman such as a blank USB drive onto their persons or homes. The cell must discover the nature of their curse and track him down. He won't be far; his arrogance demands that he witness their downfall personally.

Additional Dangers and Victims

- An award-winning podcast, Deadly Reservoir, tells the story of the North Dakota disaster from a human perspective. While it pins the tragedy as the result of small-town corruption, listeners could pick up that one of the city's commissioners mentions the company representative who vanishes from the narrative. The Storyteller could record an excerpt from the podcast and present it to the players at the table.
- Raymond assumes many identities, but he rarely changes his visage. He depends on his sorcery and his natural charm to smooth over any misunderstandings, and by the time his experiments take a turn for the worse, he's gone. He has little problem with others taking his pictures; he believes his looks are plain and ordinary enough to go unnoticed — although he has forgotten that fashion has moved on with the years, and his vintage sense of style stands out more with the passing of time. There are plenty of pictures he's in over the past fifty years. If the Hunters gather some and put them in a collage, it's clear that the Prophet, always so youthful, is in all of them.



- When Raymond abandons his experiments, someone's left holding the bag. It's not personal; it's just the most effective method of getting away clean. These are people who believed in him enough to follow through with his plans but weren't useful enough to bring into the conspiracy. Some were even close enough to suspect he was a sorcerer, and a few might have even become Hunters once he left them with broken lives. If the cell never has a chance to meet these people, they can find their diaries or journals of the experiment they took part in. If they faced criminal charges, they might even be on court record trying to convince the jury that this was all the fault of a man who no longer exists.
- Sorcery and technology are not the cleanest mix. The Prophet is a powerful sorcerer, but his limits and vulnerabilities could leave strange aftereffects in the technology he controls, especially if he controls the same device over a long period of time. An ordinary video camera sees events both in the moment and a week from now. Software code suddenly pivots into full passages in Enochian. A smartphone's service reaches far beyond any known realm. Dig deep enough on tech advice forums, and you'll find the results of his handiwork, all of which are dismissed as bad pranks or attempts at writing creepypasta web stories. If the cell encounters Raymond, they could experience this for themselves. It might even be to their benefit; analyzing any equipment altered by his sorcery could provide insights into how it works, and how to stop it from happening again.
- As a think tank employee named Bob Fisher, Raymond is an author on several policy papers from the New Millennium Initiative. Papers he's written propose moves toward a rigid surveillance state, a loosening of bioethics laws, and investment in interstellar travel. He's popular with his bosses, but not his fellow coworkers; complaints about Bob are found on tight-knit lobbyist cliques on social media. They claim he hosts basement parties with his bosses and some obscure but surprisingly powerful figures in Washington, D.C. A few weeks ago, a member of a rival lobbyist group posted that

Subject : 08/17/99 "Distress Segment"
Transcript (Version 2.0-FINAL)
Newsgroups: alt.fan.outthereradio
Date: Tuesday, August 24th, 1999

I'll start off by saying I'm sure this is fake. Every show like this gets the "Area 51" call, this is theirs. I know they haven't been back since but that's part of the ruse. But it's still creepy and sad, and I've already the tape space. Enjoy!

RICK: Out There Radio With Rick Stahl, last call!

CALLER: He showed it to me.

RICK: I think you can press charges for that.

CALLER: I didn't believe him. He wanted me to put in his lines and it put those kids in a coma. But he showed me.

RICK: It'll be all right. Can I get your name? Take it from the top. *[off mic]* What's that noise?

CALLER: He beamed it into my head and it's too much but you gotta know. One day, very soon, the sun rises wrong. The trees start to bleed. The ground feasts on us.

RICK: *[off mic]* What do you mean you've lost control of the console? Get it back!

CALLER: He has to do it. For us. We won't survive it unless we change. He showed it to me and he's right. *[gurgling noise]*

RICK: *[off mic]* Are we even on the air right now? Who is that? Hey! Show yourself now!

CALLER: I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna change. Then they'll forgive me. Then they'll---

[Crash To Static]

he was going to crash one of “Bob’s” parties and post about it. That man has not posted since. He was declared missing last week.

Breadcrumbs

- The thing about Raymond is that he's so thoroughly embedded in the systems of society that he leaves a lot of traces for those with the eyes to see. The trick to this Quarry and its contacts with others is that its telltale signs don't necessarily look like the marks of the supernatural at all. Compared to a rampaging werewolf, a memo from a think tank appears mundane. Once the Hunters realize what to look for, clues abound.
- Raymond operates on a very high level and sometimes that means ignoring the people who do the dirty work. Disgruntled associates and employees are always a good source of information, particularly if the Prophet abandoned them.
- One of Raymond's recognizable qualities is the nature of his rhetoric. A more modest Quarry who's been influenced by him may mention some of the ideas and concepts Raymond likes to talk about, even if they don't know who their patron really is.

Rewards

Temporary Assets (Mask ••): Raymond's years of practice perfected his ability to craft false identities that work almost anywhere. In his lair, he keeps a few spare identification cards and papers in a safe, ready to go at a moment's notice. If the cell gets in, they could find these full identities. Each identity appears designed to insert the Prophet into a scene, an institution, or organizations with access to power and room to grow. These Masks are masculine, and all have his face, but a Hunter with the Cobbler addition to the Mask background or an Ally with the same ability can easily edit them. Some examples are:

- Palmer Dyer, a freelance music producer and occasional wedding DJ. This Mask has a video channel and streaming music page with several thousand followers. The page is blank, and the

followers are obviously bots, so it cannot provide Fame, but it's a clear launching point into the entertainment industry.

- Alexi Welch, a paralegal at a prestigious local law firm. This Mask comes with an acceptance letter to an Ivy League college's law program that can be edited to any academic year, and an offer for a full scholarship.
- Dwayne LeBlanc, a firearms instructor at a local gun range. This Mask comes with a filled-out and notarized application to run for a regional political position and a list of “interested supporters.”

Temporary Assets (Resources (• to ••):

Raymond's experiments might all be failures, but that doesn't mean he comes away with nothing. Over half a century of careful investments, insider trading, using sorcery to create “accidental bank transfers,” and even royalties have given him quite the nest egg. The Money Tap Perk could give him a taste of his own medicine, or the cell could get their hands on his riches in his lair. However, while his assets are staggering, finding them all might be a chronicle in its own right.

New Drone Jockey Perk (Electronic Shield):

Anyone who Hunts the Prophet risks losing access to their electronics, but it could be a learning experience. Repairing a drone after encountering him could show the exact effects he had on the machine. Neutralizing him might grant a Hunter access to his notes on technological sorcery. While they probably can't master the occult complexities in his writings, they might be able to pick up on how to harden their electronic defenses.

New Global Access Perk (Spoof): Raymond's notes also have much to say about hacking. It's a topic he's followed for decades, and he clearly incorporates it into his sorcery. A Hunter could use pieces of his thoughts on hacking to better hide their tracks when digging through databases.

New Thwart the Unnatural Perk (Redirection): The Prophet's sorcery could be thwarted by a strong enough mind or the presence of a mass gathering of people. An observant Hunter could use this revelation to hone their mind, spirit, or their technological prowess and develop a way to turn a monster's powers against it.

Timor, The End of Hope

Sorcerous Creation

File 78296823 Caseworker's Notes:

There's always something worse.
If you can convince people of
that, you can make them do
anything.

Elements: Sorcery, Manifestation, End of everything. Beyond our dimension. Emptiness

There's a government research facility in a snowbound, isolated stretch of Alaska. At the peak of its activity it was known to fewer than a dozen people and appeared in the highly classified records of precisely one government department. It didn't have a name, and the research conducted there was known by the code name PROJECT TIMOR. The whole facility is empty now, but the buildings are still there. Anyone could stumble across it and wander around inside. If they did, they might find a few unredacted documents scattered around detailing one of the weirdest things the U.S. government has ever done.

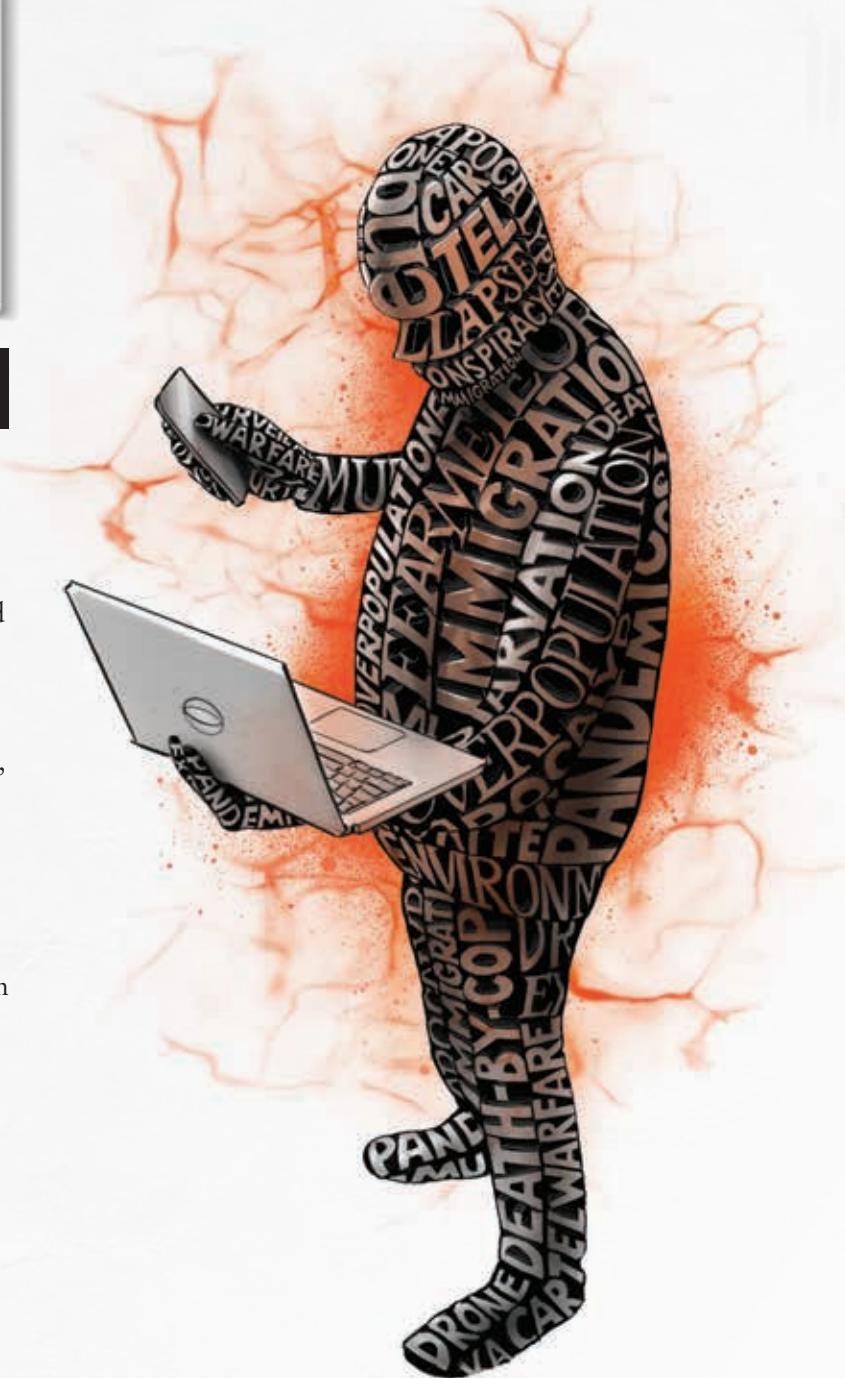
For seven years, a group of occult specialists in the employ of the government worked on a project to condense the fears of the general population into a form they could command and control. Guiding the project was a theory that every abstract concept exists in some level of reality ordinary humans can't perceive. If these manifestations could be brought into physical reality and then controlled, they could become a powerful weapon or a tool.

As part of the project, the idea was to ramp up the fears of the general population, whipping them into a state of hysteria about perceived threats. Enemies

internal and external were lurking everywhere. Could you really trust even those closest to you?

Using fear for political gain has a long history across the world but PROJECT TIMOR went beyond the usual goals and methods of propaganda by attempting to realize a sorcerous, occult goal. In their hands, fear was meant to become brute force.

It's all there to be discovered in the abandoned research facility, along with administrative documents and budgets that indicate just how cheap the program





PUPPETEERS

was and which government department commissioned it. It had next to no chance of working, but compared to the sums spent on individual defense, infrastructure, or public health projects it cost pennies. None of this information has come to light yet, and if it did very few people would believe it.

The reason the facility was abandoned but never properly torn down is simple: the government sorcerers succeeded. They drew down, or created, or imagined (this is entirely unclear from the documentation available) an entity that represented all the fear and angst of a population writhing in terror and anxiety.

Unfortunately for its creators, they were the first to be affected by their own creation. Some fled, others chose death. A few might still be out there, having discreetly transferred to another government project.

The name assigned to the entity by its creators is Timor. Whether Timor is newly created or something ancient and powerful summoned down from elsewhere and poured into a humanoid form is unclear. Its intelligence and desires are fully alien. It's made of fear. It feeds on fear. It seeks to spread fear. But not fear for its own sake, in the way lesser creatures like Consuming Panics might. Timor wants a world *based* on fear, because a world devoid of hope and happiness and fully given over to misery can feed it for eternity.

Timor has numerous ways of shaping the world to its will. It frequently works through agents like **Rhea O'Connor** and other individuals motivated by fear, especially the fear of apocalypse (and as the twenty-first century progresses, there's an ever-increasing number of people who fit this bill). These agents usually have supernatural powers of their own. These allies rarely know the extent of Timor's power, but some have suspicions. Rhea O'Connor at least knows that records of her mistakes and brushes with law enforcement go missing from databases, and she's not doing that herself, so Timor must have some influence in those arenas.

Timor has the ability to affect people working in mass media subliminally, without their knowledge or understanding. It sucks in information, but also communicates subtly through television, radio, and the internet. Timor mostly influences the world through proxies and servants. Its own body is still there in that abandoned facility where it was created, often its lone occupant.

As abstract and long-term as its goals are, in practice Timor's strategy is simple. Whatever causes the most fear is what it does. It has a knack for utilizing existing sources of fear and ramping them up. Thus, a politician trafficking in terror may be more successful than they hoped, or even wanted as panic takes over and people descend into chaos.

General Difficulty: 6 / 4

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Social 5, Mental 8

Secondary Attributes: Health 10, Willpower 10

Exceptional Dice Pools: Insight 10, Intimidation 10, Persuasion 12

Notes/Other Traits:

For more detail on Resilience, Rush, Terrify, and Vulnerability see **Hunter**, p.167–168.

Network Knowledge: Timor is aware of all information that has been reported through news media. Although it might also be aware of everything on the internet, in practice the mass of online data is too enormous for even an entity of its power to process. It is able to make inferences so even a minor and oblique news item related to the activities of the Hunters may tip it off.

Possession (8): Timor can reach through any form of broadcast media, including streaming, and take possession of a viewer or listener's body. The victim makes a Resolve + Composure test at a Difficulty of 3 to resist, and if they fail their body belongs to Timor until it chooses to leave if they're an ordinary human or until the following dawn if they're a Hunter. Over the course of the possession Timor's words appear on the victim's body in block letters in the victim's native language. They remain even after Timor leaves although they fade after a week.

Timor can possess a number of victims equal to Danger. Reduce Timor's dice pools for actions taken in its own form by 1 die for each victim currently possessed. Its General Difficulties go down by 1 for every two victims possessed. In general, Timor will try a different host if the first attempt fails. There is no shortage of people connected to media, so fighting a strong-willed victim isn't necessary. A Hunter may avoid being possessed by not looking at any networked media source such as their own cellphone, a television or a computer.

Poison Mind (8): Timor can speak one of its words aloud and flood the mind of anyone who hears with dread. This attack inflicts 1+Danger Aggravated Willpower damage. The volume at which Timor chooses to speak defines how many targets are affected. If transmitted through speakers it affects anyone who hears. The effect is limited to an area the size of a square mile and can cause mass casualties. Timor can use the attack once per scene. It's possible to protect against the attack by using ear protection. This will reduce the damage to Superficial. Deaf people are immune to the attack altogether.

Resilience: As a creature of spirit, Timor is very hard to hurt.

Rush: Timor moves almost at the speed of an idea.

Terrify (8): Timor is a door into the darkest heart of humanity.

Vulnerability (Sound 2): Timor is a creature from another level of reality, and strong sound waves disrupt its form (whether manifested or possessed). LRADs, sonic cannons, or noises above 150dB (e.g., most gunshots) cause it physical pain. Submitting Timor's manifested true form to a focused sound wave of this magnitude does 1 Aggravated Health damage each round. If attacked in this manner, Timor will do all it can to escape.

Goals and Objectives:

- Timor wants all the words that it contains to come to pass. It wants every possible apocalypse to come true. Fear must rule the world and it's all the better if that fear is justified. Timor wants things in the same way other forces of cosmic horror want them: single-mindedly and with an alien implacability.
- Even though the world in its current form is a temporary home, Timor enjoys learning about it. It consumes information like plants take in sunlight; it draws strength from it. Timor sees its plans gradually come to fruition in news coverage and online outcries. It has a weakness for false news because its thoughts exist in the media sphere to such a degree. Because of this, it's possible to mislead and confuse it by planting false stories in the media. It's also bad at keeping abreast of events that occur outside the knowledge of the media, which is ironic considering that its own existence and creation is just such an event.
- Although Timor wants the world to be a fearful place, it wants the change to occur slowly so it can savor the emotions. A rapid collapse doesn't suit its nature—the fear and suffering are the point and there won't be any if everyone is dead. That means

VARIATION: APOCALYPT

Apocalypts are human bodies Timor temporarily possesses. Over time, Timor's words appear on the victims' skin, but they have none of Timor's other abilities. They're disposable assets: Timor uses them until they complete their objective or the body's come to too much harm to be of any further use.

General Difficulty: 3/1

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 5, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 10

Notes/Other Traits:

Deathless: Killing an Apocalyptic doesn't harm Timor. It departs from the body, but will be back.

Sonic Control: In the same way as sonic weapons can harm Timor's true form, they can drive it out of a possessed victim. Doing so requires noise at above 150dB, and whoever controls the sound should make an Intelligence + Technology test at a Difficulty of 4. If they succeed, the possession ends. For obvious reasons, the Apocalyptic does everything in their power to flee from the noise while they're still possessed. Note that exposure to such high volumes of sound causes permanent hearing damage to the Apocalyptic and anyone present without hearing protection.

if any other group is too successful at ripping the world apart at its seams, Timor might act to slow them down.

- Timor doesn't know its own true nature. Did Timor exist before a group of sorcerers called it into being in a lab in some remote wilderness? It wants to understand its essential nature. If it existed before, it must have had another form, maybe even another purpose. If it is part of a collective, a species, a culture, then perhaps Timor has allies out there somewhere. Sometimes this yearning is communicated through humans possessed by Timor whose bodies may suddenly sport words of loneliness and confusion of identity.

Appearance: If you see Timor bathed in the light of a dozen different screens, it looks almost human. The words all over its skin could just be projections from the content it is consuming on every LCD panel. But look closer, and the illusion falls apart. There is no skin, just words in countless different typefaces that bring to mind news headlines, print journalism, even bad news shared over messaging apps. Timor is a concept shoved into a roughly human form. The words reveal Timor's nature: "apocalypse", "collapse", "conspiracy", and "extinction." Timor doesn't have features and it speaks directly into their audience's mind, in a seductive, velvety, genderless voice.

When Timor borrows a body, creating an Apocalyp, there's very little sign of the possession at first. The only giveaway is a crust of blood around their vessel's ears where they listened to those entrancing stories of end and loss. Timor could simply clean up their host, but it tends not to notice trivial physical details. It doesn't even know where blood is supposed to be. The longer Timor's in possession of the body, the more it changes. Timor's words write themselves over the skin, looking like smudged newsprint. By the time Timor's used up the body there's barely an inch of skin visible under the warnings of doom.

In Stories

When used indirectly in a story, Timor is a shadow. Hunters work their way slowly up to Timor through layers of agents. Consuming Panics and Rhea

O'Connor are perfect examples, but other entities do Timor's bidding too; anything that leaves physical or cultural scars on a community or is sufficiently destructive could be receiving support. For example, a werewolf pack making sure humans never set foot on a swathe of moorland again, thanks to a surge of brutal murders, suits Timor perfectly. The pack are making humans' worlds smaller and more constrained.

In cases like this, the Storyteller can lay a breadcrumb trail that leads Hunters gradually to Timor. They can namedrop Project Timor, even format it TIMOR so that it looks like an acronym. Have Timor's apocalyptic dictionary of words appear on willing and unwilling agents (who don't know where the marks came from, and are probably disturbed by the discovery). If it's time to blow the mystery wide open, the Storyteller can get the players' characters to the abandoned lab and let them look through the archives.

Using Timor directly can mean having the entity operate through an Apocalyp, or Hunters facing it down in person in its physical form.

When Timor acts through an Apocalyp, it does so in order to enact a specific plan. Timor is here to crash an oil tanker, commit a string of murders, poison the water supply, or otherwise commit some horrific crime that makes it feel like the world's a step closer to ending. It's important to angle these so Hunters see them as supernatural events. The bodies Timor possesses are the way in. They're normal people who abandon their lives and start acting weirdly. Their families begin to notice. Timor's direct actions look like hauntings and possessions, getting more complicated when the Hunters find the entity in question is body-swapping as it wears out hosts.

Encountering Timor in its own form, in its own den, is a chronicle finale. The entity is extremely deadly. Destroying it is much easier if the cell has had a chance to understand its vulnerabilities and find information about it in advance. Running into Timor unprepared is a recipe for disaster.

Of course, direct and indirect encounters aren't exclusive. The Storyteller can have communities afflicted by Consuming Panics with a controlled Apocalyp planning to unleash an experimental virus from a top-secret lab. Players' characters should see

the repeating themes and motifs and guess there's a connection between the Quarries, but they won't know how close they came to a brush with something supremely powerful until later in the chronicle.

Encountering Timor

- **Cold Open:** The cell travels to Alaska tracking down another Quarry, one they've tangled with before. The Quarry's current lair is in the abandoned research facility where Timor came to be. Once the cell finishes dealing with the Quarry they followed here, they have time to look around. What they find reveals Timor's existence, agenda, and what its creators understood of its nature. They might even catch a glimpse of Timor itself, or find power cables leading to a room full of screens that still work.
- **Husk:** The Hunters learn of an Apocalyp, or rather a person who used to be one when Timor possessed them. They're now permanently disabled and in a nursing home, but there's definitely something unnatural about someone losing their mind over the course of a few days at the same time as words appear all over their body. Having found one ex-Apocalyp, the cell searches for others. The victims don't have many traits in common, but with enough digging the Hunters find out they're all associated with recent violent crimes, though they were never caught or charged, or they wouldn't be in nursing homes. The more the Danger increases as the Hunters investigate, the more attention they attract.
- **Not Letting Go:** Timor's usually good at letting a plan fall apart. It can't win 'em all. Even a failed plan might bring some fear and misery, so it's rarely a waste. But if Timor is particularly fond of an idea or it has invested a lot of effort in pursuing a scheme, it might not let go. If a favored agent like Rhea O'Connor comes to harm or loses their life, Timor might seek revenge. In other words, a successful Hunt could be quickly followed by Timor showing up via

an Apocalyp, unless the Hunters have proven themselves especially fearsome, for a second try at the same objective.

- **Patient Zero:** Timor possesses a body, creating an Apocalyp. As with any possession story, it hits extra hard if the body is one of the cell's friends or loved ones. Timor's plans for this body revolve around a viral research lab. It's not lucky enough to possess someone who works there, so it loiters around the facility, looking for ways in. The Hunters either get involved because their friend's acting strangely, or because one of the lab employees is concerned about the increasingly weird, and increasingly injured, loner watching their place of work. Every night Timor tries to break in, harming the body a little more in the process. Eventually the Apocalyp (or a subsequent one, if the first one becomes too much of a liability) gets inside. The Apocalyp spies on employees, gathering useful information such as codes to sample storage. Timor's ultimate goal is to infect the Apocalyp with a virulent disease that can rip through the region and maybe even get further afield. But that's a worse-case scenario; the Hunters have numerous chances to stop the Apocalyp before things progress that far.
- **The Signal:** Timor learns a new way to touch minds, inspired by the stories it reads about itself in online troves of horror stories. Instead of moving in until the host body breaks, it touches minds briefly, just long enough to leave an impression, but it does so repeatedly. It isn't easy to do, and it requires content that's a natural home for Timor; a steady stream of misery and doom. Timor forms a little cult from the dozens of people who catch its transmissions as they doomscroll. One of them pulls a gun at a shopping mall; another drives their car onto train tracks, derailing a train full of toxic chemicals. The key to stopping Timor this time is shutting down the signal. This might be stopping the streamer broadcasting, shutting down the TV station, or otherwise taking the content off air.

Additional Dangers and Victims

- It seems plain to most Cognistas who are aware of Timor's existence that it's not only affiliated with but central to the conspiracy. They view it as a tool of population control through media messaging, maybe even a direct tool for mind control. A way to keep sheeple in their place. Its full destructive agenda is not on anyone's radar. Yet.
- A minority among the Cognistas believe Timor's a product of the conspiracy but are no longer a part of it. They believe Timor has broken free of whatever power the conspiracy had over them and now operates as a free agent. They base their arguments on the comparatively rare interactions between Timor and its agents and other tentacles of the conspiracy. They posit that, if Timor is an escaped asset, Hunters might be able to use Timor or intel on Timor to get other branches of the conspiracy off their backs—in other words, getting multiple heads of the monster to fight one another and leave them alone.
- A significant faction of the Cognistas doesn't recognize Timor as an entity in its own right. They assume "Timor" is a codename or a project. They suspect a coven of sorcerers at work somewhere in the heart of government, though they can't agree on how powerful those hypothetical sorcerers might be. Is the country secretly run by a coven of witches, or are Timor's creators overworked public servants in it for the pension? Status aside, they're partially correct, just a few years out of date.
- There's no reason the Timor project couldn't have been replicated in a different country. Espionage is a thing even among sorcerers. Fearmongers, whether supernatural or merely human, excel in feeding off each other. Each can hype their communities into a frenzy of terror against outsiders or those living in another country. In this way, two separate entities of this type are both allies and enemies at the same time. They work against each other and feed off each other.

- Theorists who've encountered **Consuming Panics** (see p. 37) draw a connection between them and Timor. They suggest Panics might be prototypes or failed versions of an entity like Timor, or they might be its offspring. Which means they might grow to a similar scale as their parent if left unchecked. Those who've encountered Rhea O'Connor see connections there too. Most assume Rhea takes her orders from Timor and strikes where it tells her to. A few even hypothesize that she's Timor's creator.

Breadcrumbs

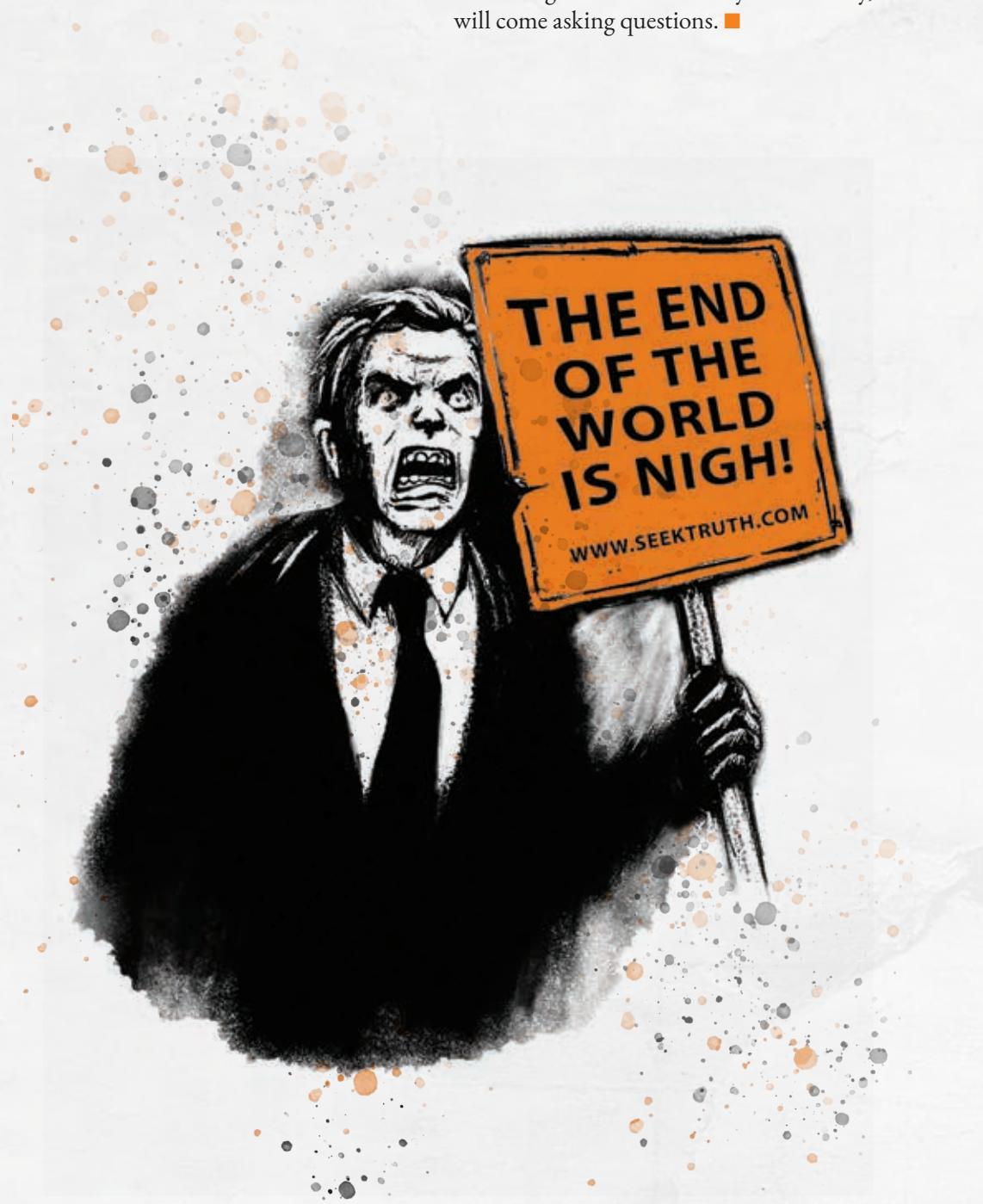
- Timor exists mostly in the paper trails of obscure government agencies. Its name appears alongside "CLASSIFIED," "TOP SECRET," and other intimidating stamps.
- The most natural way to tip a cell off to Timor's existence is to have it tangle with an opposing government organization. The organization's agents won't have documents specifically about Timor, but its name might appear in a context like "discretion advised: multiple models predict TIMOR-adjacent operations." The more highly classified the document, the more useful and less cryptic the information within.
- At the other end of the scale, Timor crops up in urban legends, usually cheesy ones about monsters that possess you through the TV screen. It doesn't appear by name here, though a couple of stories refer to a "Mr. Fear" or other self-consciously kitschy equivalent. They're the kind of lowest common denominator nonsense Hunters dismiss every day, but if they've already dealt with a creature who possesses victims through mass media they should find the odd detail that resonates with their experience, such as words gradually appearing on victims' skin. Creepypasta, indie horror video games, and short-form video are all likely sources of tips.

Rewards

Temporary Asset (Safe House): Defeating Timor might grant the Hunters the option to use the abandoned secret research facility as a base. After all, no one else knows about it. It counts as a large two-dot Safe House and the Storyteller should pick five merits for this safe house, but it has the flaw of being

very remote, many miles from any other habitation. This can be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on the Hunters' needs.

If anyone is still alive in the rest of the building, none of them has clearance to question who comes and goes from it, and no government department has clear jurisdiction over it. However, this state of affairs won't last forever, so unless the players' characters do something to claim it officially in some way, authorities will come asking questions. ■



Independent Psychiatric Report on Mackenzie Needham

Author: [REDACTED]

Hospital Unit [REDACTED]

Consultant Psychiatrist

Date 4.6.2022

2.01 CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

1.01 ADMISSION

Patient was admitted to [REDACTED] at 0230 hours on April 3rd for assessment by medical and mental health professionals. Patient was brought in by police officers following her arrest at [REDACTED] subway station, where she was prevented from boarding a train after station staff reported a passenger behaving suspiciously.

*Suspicious? She had improvised explosives in her backpack.
Suspicious that a pastry chef even knew how to make them -M.*

1.02 INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Medical assessment noted dehydration and mild self-neglect. Writing covering much of the patient's skin was initially assumed to be handwritten, but attempts to clean the skin indicated these were permanent alterations.

Note the doc doesn't say tattoos. You have to get good at reading these! what they don't say's as important as what they do -M.

The patient was unresponsive to questioning and indeed to stimuli. She showed no recognition or understanding of speech directed at her, including her own name. Despite officer Joseph Brady's insistence that the patient was "putting it on" the considered opinion of both medics who examined the patient was that she was experiencing an acute mental health crisis.

Patient exhibited stupor, mutism, stereotypies, and infrequent echolalia. Patient therefore met criteria for a diagnosis of catatonia. Patient was placed in a private room under observation. Due to the circumstances of her admission, a police officer remained stationed in the room.

Compare to the footage from the station cameras. She fights like a hellcat at first, but as they're dragging her out of the station she goes limp, like a rag doll. Seems like that never changed. From functioning human being to... this... in a split second. And it looks like it's forever.

Appendix: CHARACTER MECHANICS

This appendix contains new Perks for existing Edges to add variety to your **Hunter** chronicles, and the new Edge: Unnatural Changes. This isn't an armory for the players to raid unless the Storyteller allows it. Edges like Unnatural Changes might not fit the themes of every chronicle. Instead, Storytellers should consider if including any of these options might upset their plans, and work with players who may wish for new options. In an Incognito chronicle, each of the Quarries suggests when Hunters might acquire these Perks or Unnatural Changes over the course of play.

Some of the fun of new options comes as they emerging naturally during play. Previously unknown Perks may be “unlocked” or revealed during a Hunt, such as discovering an Endowment Perk a character didn’t realize they possessed. Beyond the suggestions for rewards in each of the Quarries presented in this book, Storytellers may wish to keep track of the Edges selected by each player and offer these or other Perks as rewards for any given Hunt. Troupes with a more collaborative style might take input from players on which Perks and Edges they are interested in so that the Storyteller might consciously work them into a Hunt as rewards.

New Perks

Assets

Arsenal

- **Backup Piece:** If the Hunter has a place to hide the weapon on their person (e.g., an undershirt holster, a pants pocket, etc.) once per scene they may declare they have a Light Gunshot weapon such as a pistol or revolver. This occurs even if the Hunter fails the test to activate the Arsenal Edge. The weapon has no access to Perks and can be stolen or detected by ordinary means without proper precautions. If lost a new backup cannot be acquired until the next scene.

Fleet

- **Hidden Cache:** The vehicle comes with a hidden compartment that hides the cell's weapons and equipment from prying eyes. The Difficulty to find the hidden compartment is 2 more than the Difficulty of any search made in the area itself. If the cache remains undiscovered, the character can still use their Arsenal and Ordnance Edges even if all the rest of their gear is stolen. The limit of items hidden in the compartment is at the Storyteller's discretion.
- **Wagon Train:** The Hunter has access to a lot of vehicles, although it is very much quantity over quality. But they all have a decent set of wheels and a mostly reliable engine. If a Hunter loses a vehicle after already having used the Fleet Perk to gain a new one, they can make a second test of their Fleet Edge during the scene to gain a new one. But the new vehicle received will either be lacking one other Perk, or increase the Difficulty of all tests using it by 1.

Library

- **Where they Go:** In addition to the clue gained, the information yields a bonus equal to the margin on the win to any attempt to identify the prey's preferred targets, its favored hunting grounds, or determine who the prey might attack next. This bonus expires after use and cannot exceed three dice.

Aptitudes

Improvised Gear

- **Made to Last:** Normally, improvised items last for a single scene. With this Perk, the item lasts for additional scenes equal to the margin of success, minimum 1. This may continue into the next session. These items are no sturdier than other items made with this Edge, and any damage could break or cease their function well before this Perk's additional scenes run out at the Storyteller's discretion.

Global Access

- **Intranet Insertion:** Through personal contacts, the exploitation of removable media such as USBs, or the use of advanced acoustic communications or radio frequencies, the Hunter gains access to non-networked or air gapped systems without needing to be physically present. They may use the Edge and any associated Perks as normal. Unless the Hunter covers their tracks well, the remote intrusion of a network that otherwise cannot be remotely intruded upon is easily noticed. At the Storyteller's discretion, using this Perk may risk an automatic increase in Danger.
- **Spoof:** The Hunter can manipulate server data logs and entry records, allowing them to pin their intrusion on a nonexistent person or on another real person. This extra layer of security might not fool everyone, but it gives the Hunter some breathing room when accessing extremely sensitive data. Difficulty is determined by the Storyteller and ranges 3–5 depending on how untraceable the Hunter wants the spoof to be.

Drone Jockey

- **Electronic Shield:** The drone has some kind of protection against signal interference or hacking. Simpler drones might have a shield around its antenna, while technologically complex drones could have a small module built into its chip set loaded with a customized firewall and antivirus software. Unless a skill or ability says otherwise, the drone cannot be hacked or remotely tampered with. If a skill or ability gives another character a chance to break these defenses, the Difficulty is 2 plus the margin of the drone operator's Intelligence + Technology test at Difficulty 2.

Beast Whisperer

- **Supernatural Scent:** Through its physical senses, the animal can detect the presence of a specific type of supernatural creature within close vicinity, such as the same room. If trained over the course of a story, the animal can track that specific supernatural type by its senses in future stories by command. The supernatural creature must have a distinct associated stimulus, either as part of its body or part of its actions. If the animal tracks by scent, the scent can be no older than 12 hours. This Perk can be learned multiple times, but only once for each creature type.

Endowments

Sense the Unnatural

- **Horrid Detail:** The Hunter is able to cut through any supernatural disguise to sense the Quarry's true or non-physical form. Mundane disguises are noticed as such, but any true form of the Quarry is not automatically seen if they are disguised. Non-physical forms do not always make sense to the human mind, but might test the sanity of those who see them in their true form.



- **Network:** The Hunter can tell whether anyone in their immediate vicinity is currently under the influence of a supernatural creature. With a successful Wits + Insight test they can determine if anyone is under such influence or had recent, sustained contact with the supernatural. If the influencer is actually present when the target is observed (both influencer and target can both be seen by the character) the character can also see a connection between them. This therefore also reveals who the influencer actually is. However, this Perk doesn't tell the Hunter anything about the nature of the influence or contact: the people they sense could be unwilling victims or loyal allies. It also doesn't tell them what kind of influence has been exerted: it could be a charm, a lingering presence, or a sip of vampiric blood that turns a human into a killing machine.

Thwart the Unnatural

- **Redirection:** On successfully resisting an ability, the Hunter may take a point of Superficial Willpower damage and declare that the ability takes effect on its own user. Unless the Hunter also has the Recognition Perk, the Storyteller isn't obligated to reveal what the ability is and may inflict a lesser version of the ability on the Quarry. For example, a Hunter without Recognition can only redirect Vampiric mind control to command it to flee or stand down, whereas one with Recognition could learn how to redirect it to their full advantage.

New Endowment: Unnatural Changes

Some Hunters become more than human at a physiological or spiritual level, having undergone some terrible ordeal that leaves them simply different. Strange chemicals, radiation, alchemical reagents, or consuming the hearts or blood of a Quarry could all trigger unexpected bodily changes. By holding or using an object of focus, the Hunter can use their warped bodies in ways no ordinary human could. Typical objects of focus might be a stash of injectable drugs, a radioactive object, a piece of a Quarry's body to be consumed, or a crystal that opens them to the supernatural energies flowing through the Earth.

Edge Pool: Stamina, Composure, or Resolve + Insight

System: With a bit of concentration, the Hunter calls on their enhanced neuropathways or the mystical properties lodged in their physical bodies to perform unnatural feats. Upon selecting this Edge, the character must choose one attribute that it will apply to. They may pick this Edge multiple times, using the Breadth Perk, to select different attributes, but can only enhance one at a time (doubling up on the same attribute does not stack).

To activate this Edge the character must test Stamina, Composure, or Resolve + Insight vs. a difficulty of 4. On a success, for the rest of the scene, they may add two dice to all rolls using the selected attribute. If the test fails, the Hunter suffers Aggravated damage to their choice of Health or Willpower (or a mix) equal to the margin of failure. If the Hunter enters Despair while this Edge is active, the effect ends prematurely.

Unnatural Changes Perks

- **Breadth:** The Hunter can select a secondary attribute to enhance. When activating their Unnatural Changes, they gain the 1 bonus die to all dice pools using secondary attributes selected for this Edge. This Perk can be selected no more than 2 times.
- **Neuropathway Practice:** The Edge's Difficulty is reduced from 4 to 3.
- **Maximized Neuropathways:** Activating the Edge takes no time at all and so does not use an action.
- **Handsfree:** The Hunter no longer needs to rely on an object of focus to use this Edge. They've either learned to channel their supernatural potential without the need for aid, or they've managed to miniaturize the technology to the size of an earbud. ■

