

Exit 23



An adventure for use with **GURPS Horror**

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Adventure Background

Don't read this to the players! This is a brief background of what's happening in this adventure. We'll let you know how to start the game for the players on the next page.

The Hoffmann Institute is an organization devoted to investigating and understanding all kinds of paranormal phenomena. The Institute operates from more than a dozen major offices around the world, dispatching professional investigators to check out reports of ghosts, hauntings, UFOs, mysterious creatures, real magic, and the activities of secret organizations and conspiracies.

Several days ago, agents working for the Institute investigated an old estate formerly owned by a reputed cult leader and diabolist named Michel Galvin. Galvin disappeared about ten years ago, and distant relatives finally sold his manor in order to wash their hands of the whole business. Hoffmann agent Jonas Riley, who'd been keeping tabs on the old Galvin place, heard of the upcoming estate sale and visited the site to make sure that it was free of Michel Galvin's sinister influence before it was sold to some unsuspecting person.

Riley and his team examined the place in detail, discovering a secret laboratory or conjuration room hidden in the manor's attic. The room was mostly empty, but concealed in a secret drawer Riley found an evil artifact—a snow globe with magical powers. Neither Riley nor anyone else on his team knew what to make of Galvin's globe, so Riley took it to an Institute expert in Portland, Oregon, for a thorough examination and safekeeping.

Unknown to Riley, other people besides the Hoffmann Institute have been keeping an eye on Galvin's mansion. Galvin's circle of acolytes, Les Trieze Corbins (The Thirteen Crows) still exists, and they still watch Galvin's place. They'd searched the grounds several times for the globe but never found the secret drawer. When Riley discovered the globe and removed it from the mansion, Les Trieze Corbins wanted it back. They sent Jacob Dumont, one of their number, after Riley to retrieve the globe.

White River Rest Stop

While truckers and locals know it better as the Exit 23 rest stop, the name on the lobby identifies the place as the White River Station. It's located between the eastbound and westbound lanes, and there is a turnoff here for a lonely mountain road that runs about ten miles to the closest town, White River. At the moment, none of the roads is even close to passable due to the accumulation of snow and the lack of visibility.

The heroes may explore the rest stop anytime they like. In fact, since the adventure assumes that they've been here for a couple of hours before the action starts, you can pretty much tell the players anything they want to know about what's where—their heroes have seen the whole place by now.

Vestibule and Phones: The main entrance. There are two phones here, neither of which is working.

Lobby: A large, open room featuring an information counter (never staffed), two wall displays with flyers for local tourist attractions, and a big wall map of Idaho.

Women's Room: A typical rest room.

Men's Room: A typical rest room.

Arcade: This alcove contains six coin-operated video games.

Dumont trailed Riley from Galvin's estate in Montana into the rugged mountain country of the Idaho panhandle. But Dumont isn't alone.

With spells learned from Galvin years ago, the cultists conjured a winter-demon and created a vicious blizzard to close the highway and trap Riley at a lonely rest stop in the middle of the night. This allowed Dumont to catch up with Riley.

Overview

What does all of this have to do with the players? The answer is simple: Their heroes are caught at the rest stop along with Riley and Dumont, and it's up to them to stop the sadistic cultist from killing everyone and escaping with Galvin's sinister artifact.

The beginning of the adventure finds the heroes stranded in a rest stop on I-90, near Exit 23 in Idaho. They're on the road for various reasons of their own; for example, Officer McDermott is patrolling this stretch of highway, while Donna Truitt is just driving back to her home in Seattle from whatever business she was engaged in before the start of the adventure. Most of the heroes don't know each other; they're just travelers stranded by a sudden snowstorm.

The adventure opens when the heroes discover that someone or something has attacked several other travelers in another part of the building, killing one person and seriously injuring another (Jonas Riley, although the players don't know who he is or what he's doing there when their heroes find him). The adventure should proceed through seven distinct scenes, as shown below:

Scene 1: A Grisly Discovery. The heroes learn that they're not alone in the rest stop and that something waits in the storm.

Scene 2: Danny Wood. The heroes interview the only witness to the winter-demon's attack and learn something about what they're up against.

Scene 3: Who Goes There? The winter-demon lashes out at anyone who tries to track it into the storm and drives the heroes back inside.

Convenience Store: A small, cluttered shop loaded with knick-knacks, caffeine pills, road maps, and souvenirs. The store is closed and the lobby entrance is blocked by a roll-down grate. Anne Banks, the cashier, is waiting out the storm in the donut shop. She'll open the store if anyone wants to buy something.

Storerooms: These are typical stockrooms filled with the supplies needed by the rest stop businesses. All feature large sheet-metal doors leading outside that are currently locked.

The Donut Shop: A small shop with a counter, stools by the counter, and a couple of small booths. The shop serves coffee, donuts, breakfast sandwiches, and other light fare. Most of the people in the rest stop have gathered here.

Restaurant: A McDonald's that is closed for the night. A pull-down grate covers the counter window, but the seating area is open.

Kitchen: The kitchen for the McDonald's. It's crowded with stoves, fryers, and several large refrigerators.

Fuel Office: The cashier's stand for the gas station. Ahmed Singh, the cashier, has shut down the pumps and the office in order to join everyone else in the donut shop.

Scene 4: Smoke ‘em Out: The cultist, Dumont, drives everyone in the rest stop outside so that the demon can make short work of them. He starts a fire that the heroes must extinguish, or they’ll have to abandon the tenuous safety of the rest stop.

Scene 5: Firebug. The heroes discover that Dumont lit the fire, and they capture him.

Scene 6: Les Trieze Corbins. The heroes question Dumont to learn more about what they’re up against and why he’s after Riley.

Scene 7: Fire and Ice. The heroes determine that the only way to survive the storm is to destroy the demon. Arming themselves with improvised weapons, they lure the demon into a final confrontation.

Of course, the adventure may not follow this exact path. Your players will think of dozens of things to try that don’t have anything to do with the script. Your job as Gamemaster is to treat each of these improvisations fairly and sensibly, using what you know about the plot as a guideline for whether or not the player’s idea will work.

Now you know how the story should go; you’re ready to play!

Players’ Introduction

When you’re ready to start playing, read or paraphrase the text in the box below to the players. This lets them know where their heroes are and what they’re doing when the adventure begins.

You’ve never seen a snowstorm like this. October in the Idaho mountains can be bad, but for hours now it’s been a virtual white-out.

The snow must be at least fifteen inches deep on the highway, and the weather’s showing no signs of breaking.

It’s close to midnight now, but you’ve been stranded since sundown in a small interstate rest stop, waiting for the plows to come through so that you can get back on the road. A half-dozen motorists share your predicament, plus four or five rest stop employees who have stayed on to serve coffee and food for the duration of the storm.

Each of you has places to go and things to do, but for now you’re all stuck here. No one’s driving anywhere tonight, and no one’s coming to get you out. Some of you have passed the time with a paperback novel or a magazine, while others have been chatting with the other motorists.

Ask the players to introduce their heroes for the game. Have the players state their heroes’ names, describe their general appearance, and maybe even say something about where their heroes were going when the snowstorm set in.

Answer any questions the players have about the situation or the people around them. Here are a couple of the most likely questions you’ll get:

What does this place look like? It’s an interstate rest stop. You can use the map to explain the general layout of the place. The heroes have been stuck here long enough to look around a little.

Who else is here? In addition to the heroes, a number of supporting characters are at the Exit 23 rest stop. You’ll play these characters as the Gamemaster.



- A balding business executive of about 50, wearing a good suit and a conservative overcoat (Jonas Riley).
- A short, stocky lady truck driver wearing a flannel shirt and a sheepskin vest (Norma Thomson).
- A long-haired college student with John Lennon glasses, an Army jacket, and a sketchbook filled with Gigeresque drawings (John Black).
- A matronly waitress of about sixty years who runs the donut shop (Mabel Adams).
- A big, beefy truck driver in a cheap parka and a black ball cap (Jacob Dumont).
- A teenage kid with long hair and an apron who does the shortorder cooking in the restaurant (Danny Wood, the witness in Scene 1).
- A pretty teenage girl who runs the register in the convenience store (Anne Banks).
- A young man with South Asian or Indian features who runs the gas station (Ahmed Singh).

Why can't I just keep driving? Your players may hail from someplace like Georgia or Florida, and they might find it hard to believe that a snowstorm could close a major highway. If any hero tries it, he or she gets about a mile so down the highway and drives into a ditch. It takes a long, cold walk to get back to the rest stop, and then you can continue with the adventure.

Okay, so what do we do now? Tell your players to wait a minute while you finish the introduction, and then they can tell you what their heroes are doing.

You're sitting in the donut shop, nursing a cup of coffee, when the lights flicker. "Oh, great," mutters Mabel, the counter waitress—and then the lights go out altogether. Somewhere on the other side of the rest stop you hear a door slam open, followed by a vicious blast of freezing cold air that somehow finds its way over to where you sit. The wind howls like something alive, scratching and clawing at you with an icy grasp.

Without even thinking about it, you abruptly realize that something is horribly, terribly wrong. Then you hear an awful racket from the direction of the rest rooms—violent blows, choking cries, breaking glass, and finally one more highpitched scream that makes your blood run cold.

The wind howls again, more doors slam . . . and then the room becomes still again, except for the distant whistling of the storm outside.

"What in heaven was that?" Mabel says in the darkness.

What do you do?

If any player thinks to ask, tell him or her that the following characters are not in the donut shop at the moment: the executive, the cook, and the guy in the Army jacket. (The gas station and convenience store cashiers shut down their stations and joined everyone in the donut shop.) People have been coming and going all night, so it's not unusual that several aren't here right now.

If your players don't know what else to do, encourage them to investigate the screams from the rest rooms. Proceed to Scene 1.

Scene 1: A Grisly Discovery

When the heroes investigate the screams and sounds of struggle they heard earlier, read or paraphrase the text below:

The last gust of wind seems to have knocked out power to the rest stop. There's just enough illumination from various emergency lights to carefully move through the darkened building. Wind screams outside, howling past an open door or broken window clattering shrilly somewhere out of sight.

At the rest room, a body is sprawled in the doorway. It's the young man in the Army jacket, and he's quite dead. Several needle-sharp icicles as long as swords impale the corpse, now surrounded by a puddle of slick scarlet ice. He seems to have been stabbed through the back as he left the rest room.

Inside the men's room, you find another body—the executive. Like the guy at the door, he's transfixed by several icicles, but while you watch, he groans and stirs. "Help me," he gasps. "So . . . cold . . ."

The dead man is John Black. He's beyond any help the heroes can give. The executive is Jonas Riley. He's been badly injured, impaled through the thigh, upper arm, and side, but by pure chance the icicles missed killing him.

This is a challenge scene, with the following challenges for the heroes to resolve: help Riley; make some deductions about what happened from the first look at the scene; search the scene for hidden clues; and search the surrounding areas. Ask the players what their heroes do, but suggest some of these options if necessary.

Helping Riley

Riley's game statistics don't really matter in this adventure. He's sustained several points of mortal damage in the attack, which means that he'll be unconscious and helpless for the balance of the adventure. It also means that he dies if he doesn't get help. To stabilize Riley and keep him from dying, a hero must succeed in a skill check using either *First Aid* or *Physician*.

Ask the players which of their heroes tries to help Riley. Add a -1 penalty to reflect the difficulty of working on Riley's injuries in the dark, but ignore the penalty if the heroes provide some light for the doctor to work with.

If the skill check succeeds, she succeeds in stabilizing Riley and preventing his death for now. If the skill check fails, Riley's condition worsens. The hero may make one more skill check at a -2 penalty to stabilize the agent, and if this fails, Riley dies. (It's not critical to the adventure for Riley to survive.)

Depending on which heroes the players chose to play, there may not be any heroes present who know first aid or medicine. Remember, you can allow a hero to make an untrained skill check to help Riley (IQ-4 for *First Aid*, IQ-7 for *Physician*). The hero will probably fail, since this is a very difficult roll, but at least he can try.

Checking Out the Scene

If any player tells you that her hero is just looking around or trying to figure out what happened here, ask for a *Perception* check or a *Search* skill check for the hero. The result of this skill check indicates which of the clues noted below the hero notices. Any hero who looks around the scene sees that the stalls are empty, a trash can stands against one wall, and a condom dispenser hangs on the other wall. The mirror behind the sink has been holed and broken, and ice standing in the sink seems to have frozen right out of the faucet.

With a successful skill check, the hero notices that a fine layer of frost covers the entire room. This was not present the last time one of the heroes visited the facility; the rest room is much, much colder than it should be. (Most heroes notice this.) The hero may also note that no icicles large enough to kill someone have formed anywhere on the building, and certainly not in the rest room.

With a critical success, she realizes that Riley's attacker most likely hit him from the front, probably as he stood near the sink, judging by the blood splatters on the wall. The hero also notices that Riley's coat hangs on a hook on the wall, but no other personal belongings from either victim are in sight.

Hidden Clues

Heroes who search the scene in detail for anything of interest may attempt a *Search* skill check.

A success allows a hero to find Riley's valise stashed in the trash can underneath a layer of paper debris. It contains some papers (summed up in the sidebar below) and the snow globe. If the player indicates that his hero is specifically checking the trash can, he automatically finds this. (Riley stashed it here when the demon burst in, suspecting that he—or, more specifically, the globe—was the target.)

A critical success allows the hero to find a footprint in the puddle of blood surrounding John Black's body. It seems to be the print of a large wolf or maybe a small bear.

Searching the Area

When the winter-demon attacked Riley and Black, Danny Wood was playing video games in the arcade next door. He got a good look at the creature, which scared him out of his wits. He's currently hiding behind an Asteroids game at the back of the arcade.

To find Danny, the heroes need to look around the corridor, lobby, and arcade—in other words, they need to look around outside the rest room as well as inside it. If a player tells you that his hero is examining the hallway, skip ahead to Scene 2.

If the players don't think to look around the area, you can cheat a little bit by telling the players that the heroes hear a clunk or scraping sound in the arcade.

The Snow Globe and Riley's Notes

Jonas Riley's briefcase is stashed in the trash can in the men's room. If the heroes find the briefcase and examine its contents, they'll find the snow globe and Riley's notes about the device and how he found it.

The snow globe is a simple glass sphere about 10 centimeters (4 inches) in diameter. At the moment, it contains a small representation of the rest stop where the heroes are sheltering against the storm, and the tiny flakes flurry downward without ever settling—you don't have to shake the globe to make the snow fall.

The globe is remarkably resistant to breakage and won't crack if dropped, thrown against a wall, or struck a good hard blow. (There is a way to destroy the globe, though the heroes shouldn't discover it at this point. See Scene 7.)

Riley's notes about the snow globe take about half an hour to read. If any hero takes the time to study them, take that player aside and sum up the information that appears in the "Adventure Background" heading. Omit any mention of Jacob Dumont, since Riley doesn't know that Dumont followed him.

Scene 2: Danny Wood

Danny Wood was playing games in the arcade when the winterdemon attacked John Black and Jonas Riley in the room right next door. When the heroes check out the hallway outside the rest room, read the text below to the players:

The corridor just outside the rest room is dark and cold. At the end of the hallway, a door leading outside swings in the vicious, gusting wind, banging loudly against the wall. Fingers of swirling snow already dust the floor near the open door.

To your right, the building's arcade is a dark cavern, with the normal chatter of video action silenced by the loss of power. Suddenly, there's a small rustling from somewhere inside, like something moving around in there.

What do you do?

Play this up as a situation that may be dangerous—as far as the heroes know, the murderer could be hiding in here. Of course, it's only Danny Wood, hiding in the back of the room. But the heroes must go into the dark arcade (or at least call out) without knowing exactly what's in here. A good horror game involves an occasional tension-building scene that doesn't actually endanger anybody.

When the heroes identify themselves, challenge the occupant of the room, or just go in and look around, continue with the text below:

Slowly and carefully, someone dressed in a fast-food uniform and apron stands up from behind a video game. It's the kid from the McDonald's, and he's obviously scared out of his wits. "Please tell me it's gone," he says in a weak voice. "I don't know what it was, but I was sure it was gonna kill me."

He looks around, panic growing in his eyes, and then starts for the door. "Man, I gotta get out of here!"

This is an encounter scene. Danny Wood is the only conscious witness to the killing, but he flees outside to his car and tries to drive away if the heroes don't calm him down and find out what happened.

Keeping Him Here

The first step is to prevent Danny from running off. Ask the players if the heroes let him leave. The heroes can restrain him physically (a hand on the shoulder is enough to stop him), or they can try to calm him down.

Calm Him Down: A successful *Influence* roll or *Fast-Talk* skill check calms Danny.

Threaten Him: A successful *Influence* roll or *Intimidation* skill check scares Danny enough to keep him here. Add a +2 bonus if an obvious authority figure (Officer McDermott or anybody flashing a gun) makes the attempt.

Get Him Talking: A successful *Influence* roll or *Public Speaking* skill check gets Danny talking about what he saw and distracts him.

"It's Out There": If any hero points out that the killer is outside now, Danny abandons the notion of going for his car. No skill check is necessary.

Finding Out What He Saw

Even if the heroes keep Danny on the scene, the cook is very shaken up right now. The sight of Black's body by the entrance to the men's room panics him even more. With the first few questions the heroes ask, Danny just mumbles things like "I dunno" and "Oh, man, it just killed that guy!"

To get some better information from their witness, the heroes need to ask the right questions. Have the hero speaking to Danny make a successful *Public Speaking* skill check (Dr. Akens is good at it) to dig out the following facts. Make one check per question, but you can apply a +2 bonus if the heroes calmed him down or got him talking first.

What happened? "I was over here playing Asteroids when the lights went out. I started to walk out of the arcade, and suddenly the door flew open in the hallway. A big blast of snow and ice came in, and there was something in the middle of the snow—a big white wolf or animal or something."

What did it do? "It went right past me and into the men's room. I looked around the corner, and I saw the dead guy come staggering out, with those icicles sticking in him. I heard someone else yell, and then it came back out again. It looked at the dead guy, and then it left."

Where did it go? "The wolf-thing stopped right there, there where you're standing, and looked right at me. I think it was telling me it coulda killed me if it wanted to. Then it blew apart into snow and ice, and it flew back out the door again. It's outside somewhere."

What did it look like, exactly? "I don't know, mister. It wasn't like anything I've ever seen before. It was part ice, part wind, part animal. It had claws of ice, and eyes that glowed red. It howled, too, just like the wind, but there were a thousand voices in it, saying stuff in some language I don't know. I hope to God I never see it again."

You can allow the players to grill Danny for as long as they like, but the cook doesn't know anything more.

Do I Know Anything About This?

After looking over the murder scene and talking to Danny, your players may ask if their heroes have any knowledge of supernatural entities or murders with this kind of MO (modus operandi). Most of the heroes described in the templates simply have had no exposure to this kind of happening before. There are two exceptions, though: Officer McDermott and Dr. Akens.

Officer McDermott: If the player running McDermott asks if she's heard of any similar killings lately, ask the player to make an *Area Knowledge (Beat)* skill check. If the check succeeds, McDermott realizes that there have been no other killings like this in the area.

Dr. Akens: The player running Dr. Akens may ask if he knows anything about this. Ask him to make an *Occultism* skill check (add a +2 bonus if Dr. Akens has read through Riley's notes on Galvin's snow globe). If successful, Akens can draw the following conclusions from the evidence at hand:

- If Galvin was a diabolist (an evil sorcerer), the creature that attacked Riley and Black may have been some kind of demon. Such things come in many varieties, and ice-demons or winterdemons have been described in some obscure occult texts.
- Demons or spirits are often bound to specific missions or tasks, such as the destruction of a particular person or the recovery of a specific object.

- Demons may be invulnerable to normal weapons, but sometimes possess other weaknesses—a susceptibility to silver weapons, fear of bright light, and so on.

Scene 3: Who Goes There?

At this point, the heroes are probably studying the murder scene, examining Riley's briefcase, talking to Danny Wood, and working to make Riley comfortable. The winter-demon realizes that it still hasn't accomplished its mission, and it lures people outside.

Begin this scene when Scene 2 is starting to finish up. You could also start this scene anytime a hero ventures outside into the storm.

The wind howls outside, and the snow continues to fall. The building is dark and cold, with icy gusts reaching into every corner of the structure. Mabel, the lady running the donut shop, has lit a couple of gas lanterns in that corner of the rest stop, but it's still dim and shadowy in here.

Abruptly, bright light fills the lobby. One by one, the headlights of the cars outside are coming on. Over the moaning of the storm, you can hear a cacophony of horns and car alarms going off all at once. You can also hear glass breaking outside.

What do you do?

The heroes don't have to do anything, of course. They can let the demon outside trash their cars, and no one will get hurt. But several heroes have weapons or special equipment sitting out in their cars, and they may want to retrieve this gear at some point. If the heroes choose to stay inside and do nothing, go on to Scene 4 after the winter-demon commits a few acts of miscellaneous vandalism to the heroes' cars.

Anyone who goes outside to confront the creature or to get some gear is in for a combat scene. The demon does its best to injure or kill someone. It attacks lone heroes who are far away from their companions before it goes after a group of heroes.

The wind screams and rages all around you as you stumble out into the snow. It's surprisingly deep, almost to your knees, and you can't see anything with the snow whipping past your eyes. Suddenly, the car horns and alarms fall silent.

Randomly select one of the heroes who is outside for the winter-demon to attack and have that hero's player roll a *Perception* check (characters with the *Combat Reflexes* advantage may forego this). If the check fails, the winter-demon gets a free attack on the hero. Read the following text:

From out of the storm's fury, something slams into you like a locomotive, slashing and gouging you with icy claws.

Roll the winter-demon's attack and damage (if it hits) normally.

If the skill check succeeds, the hero senses the winter-demon's presence just before it attacks. Read the following text:

Despite the poor visibility and biting cold, you sense an even greater cold approaching you. And then you see two points of fiery red, like sinister eyes burning into your soul. . . .

After the winter-demon gets its free attack, or after the hero spots the demon just before it attacks, all other players will get their actions. All characters receive a -2 penalty to all attack rolls while they're outside, since driving snow limits visibility. The demon attacks a different hero each round.

The Winter-Demon

ST: 16 **HP:** 16 **Speed:** 6.75
DX: 13 **Will:** 14 **Move:** 6
IQ: 10 **Per:** 12
HT: 14 **FP:** 14 **SM:** +1
Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 9 **DR:** 6

Claws (16): 2d+1 sw cut (imp)/1d+1 thr cut (imp)

Fangs (16): 1d imp

Icicle Breath (12): 4d imp

Traits: Claws (Talons); Cloud-form (Alternate Form, Enhanced Move 1 (Air Speed 24), Flight (Air Move 12), Injury Tolerance (Immune to non-heat attacks), Insubstantiality); Combat Reflexes (When in a cold environment only); DR 6; Immune to Metabolic Hazards; Immunity to Mind-Affecting Magic; Injury Tolerance (Half damage from non-heat, magic or silver attacks); Innate Impaling Attack (4d damage, 2 yard cone, Dissipation, Reduced Range, xl/5); Night Vision 5; Teeth (Fangs).

Features: May create minor supernatural effects (See below; requires a Will check).

Skills: Brawling -16; Innate Attack -12; Stealth -13.

Special

The winter-demon can use its action to dissolve into a cloud of ice and snow that can't be affected by any damage except fire, although this prevents the creature from attacking. It can resume its physical form by spending another action to do so.

The demon gains the benefit of the Combat Reflexes advantage when outside in the snowstorm.

The demon can use an action to create a minor supernatural effect (flickering lights, frightening sounds, gusts of wind) within 10 meters. This requires a successful Will check.

Background/Personality

The winter-demon is a powerful, malevolent entity from another dimension. Jacob Dumont's fellow cultists conjured it to kill Jonas Riley and retrieve the snow globe, and it obeys Dumont's commands. The creature can shift between two body forms at will. The first is a large, wolflike biped with claws of ice and a gaping jaw filled with needle-sharp fangs; the demon can make physical attacks in this form.

The second form is a cloud of snow, ice, and wind. In cloud-form, the demon can't attack, but it can't be harmed by any force except fire. In cloud-form, the demon can fly at a rate of about 100 kilometers per hour (or 400 meters per minute).

The winter-demon is very resistant to normal physical attacks, but magical attacks, fire, and silver weapons can harm it.

Ending the Fight

The fight ends when all heroes retreat back into the building, after the demon injures three heroes, when the demon suffers more than six points of wound damage, or after five melee rounds. Read the text below when the fight ends:

Suddenly, the white wolf-thing seems to fly apart in a spray of icy shards. A whirlwind of snow and howling wind dances and spins where the creature was standing. Dozens of shrieking voices seem to gibber and moan in the wind, and the creature laughs maniacally. Then it's gone, flying off into the blizzard. But you can still feel it out there, watching you.

It's very likely that several heroes may be wounded without hurting the demon at all. That's okay—this is a horror game, and you want the players to be scared for their heroes.

Assuming that the heroes retreat or drive off the demon and then go back inside, give the players a few minutes to talk things over, and then go on to Scene 4.

Scene 4: Smoke 'em Out

While the heroes are occupied with the demon outside, Jacob Dumont decides to drive everyone out of the building and into the storm. He figures that the best way to do this is to start a fire. The demon can pick off individuals one at a time under the cover of darkness, and Dumont can search the rest stop for Riley's valise without interference, at least until he's forced to leave, too. (Dumont is more about action than good plans.)

During the heroes' investigation of the murder scene and fight with the demon, Dumont douses the newspaper stand in the store with gas from the gas pump and lights it. When the heroes are recovering from their encounter with the winter-demon, read or paraphrase the following text:

You're keeping an eye open for more strange happenings when you become aware of a strange orange glow illuminating the dark lobby. At the same time, you smell smoke! Behind you, the magazine stand in one corner of the convenience store is blazing away, and the flames are spreading fast!

What do you do?

This is a challenge scene—the heroes must extinguish the flames within five minutes or the store becomes a blazing inferno that simply can't be extinguished with the materials at hand. Five minutes after the store goes up, heat and smoke make the lobby and the donut shop untenable. Five minutes after that, the entire building must be abandoned.

Each hero can act once per minute. Keep track of how many times each hero has acted.

To extinguish the flames before they spread, the heroes must amass 10 successes with various firefighting techniques, some of which are listed below:

Beat Out the Flames: Heroes can use coats, blankets, or stomping to fight the flames. Each time a hero tries to beat out the flames, have the player make an *ST* check for his hero. An Ordinary success counts as 1 success toward putting out the fire, a Critical success counts as 2 successes. If the hero critically fails the check, he catches fire and sustains 2d points of wound damage! He needs to spend his next minute's action rolling on the ground to put out the flames.

Each minute that a hero stays up close to the flames, he suffers 2d points of fatigue damage (no armor prevents this). If a hero passes out in here, someone else must use an action to pull him out, or the fire kills him.

Get a Fire Extinguisher: It takes one action to locate a fire extinguisher, and another action to get the extinguisher back to the scene of the fire and get it ready for use. As a third action, the hero may start fighting the fire (so this action takes three minutes total). Each action with a fire extinguisher requires a *DX* check with a +3 bonus. On a Failure, the hero scores 1 success toward extinguishing the fire; on an Ordinary or Critical success result, she scores 2 or 3 successes.

Fire extinguishers are located in the restaurant kitchen, the storeroom of the donut shop, the convenience store (inaccessible due to the fire), and the hallway outside the rest rooms.

Use Water or Snow: To use water or snow effectively, the hero must spend one action to locate a bucket or container. A second action fills the bucket and another action gets him to the scene. After that, it takes one action to load up and one action to get the water or snow on the fire. Have the hero make a *ST* check with a +1 bonus. He scores 1 or 2 successes toward extinguishing the fire with an Ordinary or Critical success result.

Move Flammables Away: Each time a hero spends an action to clear possible fuel for the fire away from the area, she buys one more minute before the flames spread. For example, if a hero spends two actions moving flammable objects away from the magazine stand, the fire won't spread until seven minutes have passed instead of five. No skill check is necessary. At best, this tactic can buy six additional minutes before the fire spreads.

Scene 5: Firebug

The heroes should be able to put out the fire. If you have only one or two players in your game, you can make it easier by ruling that it takes 5 successes to put out the fire. Wait until the heroes have finished putting out the fire, then read the text:

Well, you're not cold any longer. Sweat runs down your face and stings your eyes, and you're pretty sure you've got some minor burns on your hands and face. But it looks like you've got the fire under control. It's already dying out. Over the smell of smoke, you can make out a different odor—the sharp tang of gasoline in the air. That fire wasn't an accident.

Suddenly, you hear a couple of loud bangs from the other room. A woman screams: "Look out! He's got a gun!"

What do you do?

Since the heroes extinguished his fire, Dumont is trying something more direct. Any hero in the donut shop sees Dumont draw a gun and move out toward the lobby, firing a couple of shots in the air to drive everybody else to the ground. If Officer McDermott is in the donut shop at the start of the scene, the fight begins right away as Dumont yanks out a gun and starts shooting at her. (Ignore the boxed text below if this is the case.) Otherwise, he steps into the lobby to confront the heroes.

You can hear people screaming and diving for cover in the other room. Suddenly, the big trucker in the black baseball cap appears in the doorway of the donut shop, pointing a pistol in your direction. "I won't let you meddle with my plans any longer," he hisses. He raises the pistol. "Time to die!"

What do you do?

Have the players make action checks for their heroes—this is definitely a combat scene. Make an action check for Dumont, too. When his turn comes up, the cultist shoots at any armed character he can see. If no one is carrying weapons, he shoots at Officer McDermott. If Dumont doesn't see any armed characters out here, he shoots at whichever character is standing nearby.

Dumont doesn't expect anyone behind him to do anything, so if a hero is in the donut shop, he can attack Dumont from behind with a +2 bonus to his attack roll.

Most of the heroes are probably armed by this point, so they should kill or incapacitate Dumont quickly. If the fight goes poorly for Dumont (if less than half his hit points are left), he surrenders; go to Scene 6.

Taking Down Dumont

Your players might have their heroes tackle or grab Dumont to wrestle him to the ground and get the gun away from him.

Dumont can continue to shoot or act while held, but he suffers a -4 penalty while being grappled. He can't do anything while pinned, as long as the heroes keep him under control.

Dumont may use an action to try to break out of a hold, but not a pin. To break out, he must win a regular *Contest of ST* vs. the grappling hero. Of course, even if he does, he can be tackled again.

If the heroes defeat Dumont without killing him, go to Scene 6. If he gets away or the heroes kill him, go to Scene 7.

Jacob Dumont, Cult Member

ST: 14	HP: 14	Speed: 5.75
DX: 12	Will: 13	Move: 5
IQ: 10	Per: 10	
HT: 11	FP: 11	SM: 0
Dodge: 8	Parry: 9	DR: 8/2* (Kevlar vest)

Colt M-1911 (13): 2d pi+
Unarmed (14): 2d sw cr/1d thr cr

Traits: Combat Reflexes; Fanaticism (Les Trieze Corbins), Language (French; Native/Literate) and (English; Accented/ Literate); Patron and Duty (Les Trieze Corbins).

Skills: Brawling -14; Driving (Automobile) -11; Guns (Pistol) -13; Occultism -13.

Equipment: Colt M-1911, Kevlar Vest.

* Use the first, higher DR against piercing and cutting attacks; use the second, lower DR against all other damage types.

Background/Personality

Dumont is a member of Les Trieze Corbins, the acolytes of the modern-day sorcerer Michel Galvin. He and his companions have waited for years since Galvin's disappearance to get their hands on his arcane lore. In the current situation, Dumont thinks nothing of killing everyone in the rest stop to accomplish his goals and glorify the dark powers he worships.

Dumont is a large, powerfully built man who dresses like a trucker or longshoreman. He speaks with a guttural French-Canadian accent, when he speaks at all—he's normally surly and unresponsive to any kind of attempts at conversation.

Scene 6: Les Trieze Corbins

You need to run this scene only if the heroes capture Dumont without incapacitating him. They can't talk to him if he runs off, is dead, or is unconscious. If the cultist can't be questioned, skip ahead to Scene 7.

The trucker is a big man, with a thin beard and a feverish intensity in his eyes. He's dressed in a weathered old parka and wears a black ball cap on his head. Strands of unkempt hair cover his shoulders. He looks up at you with contempt. "You think I am beaten so easily, eh?" he snarls. He's got a strange accent, maybe French-Canadian, in his voice. "I think no. My friend out in the storm will dispose of you one by one. When morning comes, I'll be here, and you'll all be frozen corpses!"

This is an encounter scene. The heroes have a chance to interrogate Dumont and find out what he's up to, what's waiting outside, and how they can defeat it. It's also another way for you to let the players in on the story's background so that they'll understand why their heroes became involved.

Questions and Answers

Ask the players if their heroes are replying to Dumont's threat or asking him questions. Determine what topic they're asking about and use the guidelines to determine what they can get out of the cultist. Remember, Dumont is contemptuous and angry. He'll spit out anything he says, adding various insults as you see fit.

Who Are You? "I am Jacob Dumont."

If the players ask what he does or where he comes from, Dumont tells them that he is a powerful sorcerer. He threatens them with horrible dooms. "You have meddled with Les Trieze Corbins. We shall remember that—always."

What's Going on Here? "Nothing that you should have interfered with, fool."

If the players press harder, call for a *Public Speaking*, *Intimidation*, or *Fast-Talk* skill check. Each successful skill check reveals one piece of information:

- Dumont's here to retrieve some artifact.
- The artifact was in the possession of a man named Jonas Riley—the fellow who was injured in the demon's attack.
- The demon is helping Dumont.

What Are You Looking For? "If I tell you, you will keep it from me. I am not stupid."

If the players press, he adds, "It is something sacred—a work of my master's hand. I will not have you defile it with your touch."

What Is the Thing Outside? "A demon of winter—a great and terrible demon. I command it. Soon it will destroy all of you!"

How Do We Beat the Demon? "Hah! Your weapons are almost useless. Better to consider how you want to meet your end."

If the players continue, have them make skill checks as described above. Each successful skill check reveals a piece of the following information:

- The demon won't give up until it accomplishes its mission.
- Magical spells may dismiss the creature. (Unfortunately, neither Dumont nor the heroes know any magical spells.)
- Mundane weapons won't hurt it much, but fire or silver might harm it.

What If We Just Kill (or Hurt) You Now? "I have no fear of death or torture. There are more of us. One sacrifice for the cause is nothing."

Getting Ready?

While the heroes were interrogating or holding Dumont, they may have had some time to make some preparations for another confrontation with the demon. Ask the players if they want their heroes to do anything while they're questioning Dumont.

Get Weapons: McDermott and Wheeler have some heavy weapons in their cars. Retrieving them takes the heroes only a minute, but make sure you scare the players by allowing them to think the demon may attack at any moment!

Get Fire: Preparing torches or Molotov cocktails (gasoline-filled bottles with rags stuffed into the neck for easy lighting and throwing) is a good idea. It takes only a few minutes for a hero to pump gas from the filling station, but he or she has to go outside first. Again, scare the players to build suspense.

Get Silver: Several characters may have silver jewelry, and the convenience store includes a few pieces of locally made sterling silver earrings. It takes only a few minutes to empty the buckshot from a shotgun shell and stuff it full of silver. Assume that the heroes can put together six shots' worth of silver.

Interviews Over

Allow the players to question Dumont until they've followed up two or three lines of inquiry. Then read the text below and go to Scene 7.

Scene 7: Fire and Ice

If the heroes kill or incapacitate Dumont, or when Dumont decides the interrogation is over, the ice-demon breaks into the building to finish off the surviving heroes. This time the demon tries to kill everyone it can catch.

Outside, the wind howls. You hear glass breaking and the sound of a door flying open. A gust of icy wind sweeps through the building, as the storm suddenly reaches out for you!

Screaming in panic, the other people in the rest stop—the employees and your fellow travelers—scatter and run, seeking shelter. In the confusion, a sharp blast of wind knocks over the gas lanterns, which gutter out, leaving you in darkness!

The demon attacks any hero it can catch. Remember that the creature is indoors now, so it loses its Combat Reflexes advantage.

If you want to make this fight more dramatic, the demon slashes once at a hero and then chases one of the supporting cast members. Mabel runs into the storeroom; Anne and Danny flee into the restaurant; Ahmed runs for the nearest door; and Norma just goes to ground under a table in the donut shop.

Fight Ice with Fire . . .

The players may realize by now that guns don't work extremely well against the ice-demon. There are several ways to attack the demon with fire, though. Dr. Neary has several road flares in her car, and the gas station is nearby. There are three ways to use these weapons against the creature.

Warding: Any open flame or a burning flare deters the demon from attacking a hero who specifically tries to keep the flame between the creature and herself. The demon must make a successful *Will* check at a -2 penalty to ignore a flare or torch and attack the hero carrying the flame.

Douse and Light: There's plenty of gasoline around. A hero could fill a bucket with gasoline and carry a lighter, torch, or flare to light the gasoline fast. Dousing the demon requires the hero to get close to the demon (3 meters or less) and make a successful *Throwing* skill check with a +1 bonus. Lighting the gasoline takes another action. If the demon is set aflame, it suffers 6d damage, plus 1d damage per second for 10d seconds. The demon has no DR vs. this sort of attack.

Molotov Cocktail: Attacking with a Molotov cocktail requires a *Throwing* skill check (or DX-3, if the hero has no *Throwing* skill). The cocktail ignites immediately, without needing an action to torch it off. It inflicts 3d damage, plus 1d damage per second for 10d seconds. The demon has no DR vs. this sort of attack.

Aerosol Sprays: Using fire to light the liquid from a can of hair spray, for example, can inflict 1d damage. The demon has no DR vs. this sort of attack.

. . . or Gunfire

Wheeler's assault rifle and Officer McDermott's shotgun aren't much more effective than pistols, since the damage still downgrades before it affects the demon.

Silver Bullets: If the heroes loaded any shotgun shells with silver, they'll do much better. The demon is affected normally by silver weapons (no downgrading effect to damage). One or two hits from a shotgun loaded with silver-filled shells should take care of the demon.

Occult Knowledge

Dr. Akens knows enough about the occult to suspect that Dumont doesn't have the skill to control the winter-demon without help. During the battle, have the player running Dr. Akens roll an *Occultism* skill check. If successful, he realizes that the snow globe may be some sort of talisman that keeps the demon in check. (If Dr. Akens has read through Riley's notes, give the player a +2 bonus to the skill check.) This successful skill check also allows Akens to theorize that the snow globe may have the same vulnerability that the demon does—fire.

Destroying the snow globe requires that it be engulfed in fire or great heat for 1 minute, then struck with a hard object. During the time the globe is heated, the winter-demon is completely vulnerable to any attack. If the globe is struck after the minute of heat, it instantly shatters, at which point the demon is no longer tied to this dimension (since it can no longer achieve its designated goal). Should this occur, the demon must make a *Will* check at the beginning of each round. If it succeeds, it remains in the fight. If it fails, go to "Victory?" below.

Victory?

If the heroes defeat the demon or destroy the snow globe, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The howling of the wind and the screaming of the winter-demon rise to an intolerable pitch. Stinging ice scours your flesh, and waves of bitter cold rake your body. Then the creature seems to explode into a spray of ice, dissipating in the wind. Its chattering howls die with it, slowly fading away. The wind relents, and the malign sentience of the storm outside seems to vanish as well.

It's done.

Or Defeat?

If the demon is simply too much for the heroes, you can spare their lives—just make sure that the demon can reach the snow globe. If a hero is carrying the artifact, the demon batters that hero into unconsciousness and then steals the globe; if the globe is simply lying about somewhere, the demon ignores the heroes, seizes the globe, and leaves. If he can, Dumont makes his escape.

If some of the heroes are in bad shape, the supporting characters who work in the rest stop can attempt to save their lives with some quick first aid. Use your discretion, but don't be too harsh.

Conclusion

If Jonas Riley survives, he comes to sometime around sunrise. Although he's weak and exhausted, he carefully questions the heroes about the events of the preceding night. Then he offers the heroes his business card, marked with the Hoffmann Institute logo. "You handled yourselves pretty well," Riley tells them. "We're looking for people like you."

If Riley didn't survive, another Hoffmann Institute agent named Mary Carter shows up at the rest stop at daybreak, following the snowplows. She pieces together the heroes' story and offers the same deal.

If Dumont made his escape, don't worry. The bad guys might have won the day, but some or all of the heroes probably survived. They know the story of *Les Trieze Corbins* now, and they've got a reason to go after Dumont. You can use this as a springboard for another adventure—perhaps one of your own creation.

Appendix 1: Pre-Generated Characters

Jane McDermott

Attributes [75]

ST: 11 [10] HP: 11 **Basic Speed:** 5.75
 DX: 12 [40] Will: 12 [10] **Basic Move:** 5
 IQ: 10 Per: 11 [5] **Ground Move:** 5
 HT: 11 [10] FP: 11 **Water Move:** 1

Basic Lift: 24 **Damage:** 1d-1/1d+1

Social Background

TL: 8 [0]

Cultural Familiarities: Western (Native) [0].

Languages: English (Native/Literate) [0].

Advantages [20]

Administrative Rank 1 (Idaho State Police) [5]

Fit [5]

Patron (Idaho State Police; 9 or less) [10]

Perks [1]

Style Familiarity (Tae Kwon Do) [1]

Disadvantages [-47]

Code of Honor (Police) [-5]

Duty (Idaho State Police; 12 or less) [-10]

Light Sleeper [-5]

Overconfidence (9 or less) [-7]

Stubbornness [-5]

Wealth (Struggling) [-10]

Workaholic [-5]

Quirks [-3]

Eager to Prove Herself [-1]

Proud [-1]

Self-Reliant [-1]

Skills [54]

Administration IQ/A - IQ+0 10 [2]

Area Knowledge (Beat) IQ/E - IQ+0 10 [1]

Brawling DX/E - DX+0 12 [1]

Computer Operation/TL8 IQ/E - IQ+0 10 [1]

Criminology/TL8 IQ/A - IQ-1 9 [1]

Detect Lies Per/H - Per+0 11 [4]

Driving/TL8 (Automobile) DX/A - DX+0 12 [2]

Electronics Operation/TL8 (Communications) IQ/A - IQ-1 9 [1]

First Aid/TL8 (Human) IQ/E - IQ+0 10 [1]

Guns/TL8 (Pistol) DX/E - DX+2 14 [4]

Guns/TL8 (Shotgun) DX/E - DX+1 13 [1]

Interrogation IQ/A - IQ+0 10 [2]

Jumping DX/E - DX+1 13 [2]

Karate DX/H - DX+1 13 [8]

Karate Sport DX/H - DX-1 11 [1]

Law (Idaho State Law) IQ/H - IQ+0 10 [4]

Observation Per/A - Per+0 11 [2]

Running HT/A - HT-1 10 [1]

Savoir-Faire (Dojo) IQ/E - IQ+0 10 [1]

Search Per/A - Per+0 11 [2]

Shadowing IQ/A - IQ+0 10 [2]

Stealth DX/A - DX-1 11 [1]

Streetwise IQ/A - IQ+0 10 [2]

Tonfa DX/A - DX-1 9 [1]

Manuevers (Tae Kwon Do)

Axe Kick (Karate) Tech/H - def+1 10 [2]

Back Kick (Karate) Tech/H - def+1 10 [2]

Elbow Strike (Karate) Tech/A - def+0 11 [0]

Exotic Hand Strike (Karate) Tech/A - def+0 12 [0]

Jump Kick (Karate) Tech/H - def+1 10 [2]

Kicking (Karate) Tech/H - def+0 11 [0]

Spinning Kick (Karate) Tech/H - def+0 10 [0]

Spinning Punch (Karate) Tech/H - def+0 11 [0]

Sweep (Karate) Tech/H - def+0 10 [0]

Stats [75] Ads [20] Disads [-47] Quirks [-3] Skills [54] = Total [100]

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Reach	Parry	Wgt	ST
Tonfa	1d+2 sw cr / 1d thr cr	1	0U	2	8
Unarmed (Punch)	1d+1 sw cr / 1d-1 thr cr	C	0	---	---

Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Acc	Range	Wgt	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl
Glock Model 22	2d+2 pi+	2	160/ 1,800	2.1/ 0.7	3	15+1	9	-3	4
Remington Model 870, 12G Shotgun	1d+1 pi	3	40/800	7.6/ 0.6	2x9	5+1 (2i)	10 †	-6	1/5

Equipment

Kevlar vest*, Glock Model 22 pistol with 15 rounds, flashlight, handcuffs (two sets), personal radio, police cruiser with Remington shotgun* and 20 shells*, police radio, toolkit.

*The vest is stored in the trunk of her car and can be worn under her uniform. The shotgun and ammunition are also in the trunk.

Background and Personality

Jane McDermott grew up in Boise, Idaho. After attending a local community college for two years, she took the Idaho State Trooper exam and passed with flying colors. She's been out of the academy for about a year and a half now, which is long enough that her peers don't call her "rookie" anymore unless they're trying to get under her skin. In fact, her fellow officers made a point of giving her a necklace with a silver bullet on it to commemorate the time she saved a man from a rabid coyote that attacked him while he was changing his tire on the roadside.

Officer McDermott is tall and athletic. She has always enjoyed physical challenges, and she spends a lot of her off-duty time rock climbing and working on her tae kwon do. She's very stubborn and self-reliant, and strongly inclined to handle situations by herself instead of calling in help if it's at all possible. That might get her into trouble someday. . . .

Will Wheeler

Attributes [110]

ST: 14 [40] HP: 14 **Basic Speed:** 6.50
 DX: 12 [40] Will: 8 [-10] **Basic Move:** 6
 IQ: 10 Per: 10 **Ground Move:** 6
 HT: 14 [40] FP: 14 **Water Move:** 1

Basic Lift: 39 **Damage:** 1d/2d

Social Background

TL: 8 [0]

Cultural Familiarities: Western (Native) [0].

Languages: English (Native/Literate) [0].

Advantages [15]

Fit [5]

Patrons (Liberty Church; 9 or less) [10]

Disadvantages [-42]

Enemy (ATF) (A large group (21-1,000 people; 9 or less; Hunter) [-30]

Loner (9 or less) [-7]

Social Stigma (Criminal Record) [-5]

Quirks [-3]

Code of Honor [-1]

Dislikes The US Government [-1]

Uncongenial [-1]

Skills [20]

Climbing DX/A - DX-1 11 [1]

Driving/TL8 (Automobile) DX/A - DX+0 12 [2]

First Aid/TL8 (Human) IQ/E - IQ+1 11 [2]

Guns/TL8 (Pistol) DX/E - DX+1 13 [2]

Guns/TL8 (Rifle) DX/E - DX+2 14 [4]

Jumping DX/E - DX+0 12 [1]

Riding (Horse) DX/A - DX-1 11 [1]

Soldier/TL8 IQ/A - IQ+0 10 [2]

Stealth DX/A - DX+0 12 [2]

Survival (Arctic) Per/A - Per-1 9 [1]

Survival (Mountain) Per/A - Per-1 9 [1]

Throwing DX/A - DX-1 11 [1]

Stats [110] Ads [15] Disads [-42] Quirks [-3] Skills [20] = Total [100]

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Reach	Parry	Wgt	ST
Unarmed (Punch)	2d sw cr / 1d thr cr	C	0	---	---

Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Acc	Range	Wgt	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl
S&W .38 Special	2d pi	2	110/ 1,200	2/0.2	3	3 (3i)	9	-2	2
M16A1	5d pi	5	500/ 3,200	7.2/ 0.7	13	20+1 (3)	8†	-5	2

Equipment

Lighter and pack of cigarettes; .38 caliber pistol with 6 rounds, carried in an ankle holster; assault rifle with 30 rounds, in lockbox in the truck; beat-up 4WD Suburban with police band radio and CB radio; 500 antigovernment pamphlets, in truck.

Background and Personality

Will Wheeler is a native of Moscow, Idaho. He joined the Army right out of high school and served for a four-year enlistment before coming back home to work on his father's ranch. When the ranch failed and tax collectors confiscated his family's land, Will decided that he didn't need to support the government with his tax dollars anymore. He's drifted through a couple of militia groups and is currently living in an isolated "free haven" run by a group calling itself the Liberty Church. Will's also a little bit wanted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, but they haven't posted an APB on him yet.

Will is a short, broad-shouldered man built like a baby bull. He dresses in camo pants, Army boots, and T-shirts, and he wears his hair shoulder-length. He's paranoid and angry, and he's got a lot of guns. But he honestly believes that America could be a better place, and he's willing to do anything to make it all happen.



Dr. Nadine Neary

Attributes [55]

ST: 9 [-10] **HP:** 9 **Basic Speed:** 5.25 [-5]
DX: 12 [40] **Will:** 10 [-15] **Basic Move:** 5
IQ: 13 [60] **Per:** 10 [-15] **Ground Move:** 5
HT: 10 **FP:** 10 **Water Move:** 1

Basic Lift: 16 **Damage:** 1d-2/1d-1

Social Background

TL: 8 [0]

Cultural Familiarities: Western (Native) [0].

Languages: English (Native/Literate) [0].

Advantages [20]

Charisma (2) [10]

Wealth (Comfortable) [10]

Disadvantages [-35]

Bad Sight (Nearsighted) (Contacts) [-10]

Insomniac (Mild) [-10]

Odious Personal Habit-1 (Talks Endlessly About Her Work) [-5]

Truthfulness (12 or less) [-5]

Workaholic [-5]

Quirks [-3]

Alcohol Intolerance [-1]

Careful [-1]

Proud [-1]

Skills [63]

Acrobatics DX/H - DX-1 11 [2]

Biology/TL8 (Earthlike) IQ/VH - IQ+0 13 [8]

Chemistry/TL8 IQ/H - IQ-1 12 [2]

Computer Operation/TL8 IQ/E - IQ+0 13 [1]

Current Affairs/TL8 (Science & Technology) IQ/E - IQ+0 13 [1]

Diagnosis/TL8 (Human) IQ/H - IQ+1 14 [8]

Driving/TL8 (Automobile) DX/A - DX-1 11 [1]

Electronics Operation/TL8 (Scientific) IQ/A - IQ+0 13 [2]

Expert Skill (Epidemiology) IQ/H - IQ+1 14 [8]

Forensics/TL8 IQ/H - IQ+0 13 [4]

Mathematics/TL8 (Statistics) IQ/H - IQ+0 13 [4]

NBC Suit/TL8 DX/A - DX+0 12 [2]

Physician/TL8 (Human) IQ/H - IQ+1 14 [8]

Physiology/TL8 (Human) IQ/H - IQ-2 11 [1]

Public Speaking IQ/A - IQ+1 14 [1] (includes: +2 from 'Charisma')

Research/TL8 IQ/A - IQ+1 14 [4]

Surgery/TL8 (Human) IQ/VH - IQ-1 12 [4]

Teaching IQ/A - IQ-1 12 [1]

Writing IQ/A - IQ-1 12 [1]

Stats [55] Ads [20] Disads [-35] Quirks [-3] Skills [63] = Total [100]

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Reach	Parry	Wgt	ST
Unarmed (Punch)	1d-1 sw cr / 1d-2 thr cr	C	0	---	---

Equipment

Doctor's bag, personal alarm in purse, beeper, late-model Volvo with cell phone, luggage, road survival kit including 6 road flares, 4 hazard markers, a space blanket, and a gallon of antifreeze.

Doctor's Bag

Dr. Neary can use her training and the supplies in her doctor's bag to help injured characters. She can make *Physician* skill check to do the following:

- Revive a knocked-out character.
- Heal 1d damage with a successful skill check.
- Stabilize a character with mortal damage.

Background and Personality

Dr. Neary lives in Rochester, Minnesota, where she works at the Mayo Clinic. Her specialty is infectious diseases, and she often consults with the CDC—the Centers for Disease Control. She grew up in Iowa and attended Iowa State on a gymnastics scholarship before she went to medical school; she's still in good shape, and she likes to exercise to get her mind off her work. Dr. Neary is currently headed for Seattle, where she is scheduled to speak at a microbiology conference.

Nadine Neary is a small, slender woman with short-cropped hair and a friendly, open manner. She has a knack for putting people at ease.



Donna Truitt

Attributes [70]

ST: 10 **HP:** 10 **Basic Speed:** 5.50
DX: 12 [40] **Will:** 10 [-10] **Basic Move:** 5
IQ: 12 [40] **Per:** 12 **Ground Move:** 5
HT: 10 **FP:** 10 **Water Move:** 1

Basic Lift: 20 **Damage:** 1d-2/1d

Social Background

TL: 8 [0]

Cultural Familiarities: Western (Native) [0].

Languages: English (Native/Literate) [0].

Advantages [26]

Alternate Identity (Illegal) [15]

Contact (CIA Operative) (Effective Skill 12; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [1]

Fit [5]

High Manual Dexterity (1) [5]

Perks [2]

Style Familiarity (Judo) [1]

Technique Mastery (Judo Throw) [1]

Disadvantages [-32]

Overconfidence (12 or less) [-5]

Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents) [-10]

Paranoia [-10]

Reputation (Crook) -1 (10 or less; Large class) [-2]

Social Stigma (Criminal Record) [-5]

Quirks [-3]

Allergy (Hay Fever) [-1]

Code of Honor [-1]

Trademark [-1]

Skills [37]

Climbing DX/A - DX+0 12 [2]

Computer Operation/TL8 IQ/E - IQ+0 12 [1]

Driving/TL8 (Automobile) DX/A - DX+0 12 [2]

Electronics Operation/TL8 (Security) IQ/A - IQ+0 12 [2]

Fast-Talk IQ/A - IQ+0 12 [2]

Forced Entry DX/E - DX+2 14 [4]

Games (Judo) IQ/E - IQ+0 12 [1]

Guns/TL8 (Pistol) DX/E - DX+1 13 [2]

Judo Sport DX/H - DX+0 12 [4]

Jumping DX/E - DX+0 12 [1]

Lockpicking/TL8 IQ/A - IQ+2 14 [8]

Stealth DX/A - DX+0 12 [2]

Streetwise IQ/A - IQ+0 12 [2]

Manuevers (Judo)

Arm Lock (Judo Sport) Tech/A - def+0 12 [0]

Breakfall (Judo Sport) Tech/A - def+0 12 [0]

Ground Fighting (Judo Sport) Tech/H - def+3 11 [4]

Stats [70] Ads [26] Disads [-32] Quirks [-3] Skills [37] = Total [100]

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Reach	Parry	Wgt	ST
Unarmed (Punch)	1d sw cr / 1d-2 thr cr	C	0	---	---

Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Acc	Range	Wgt	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rel
Walther P38	2d+2 pi	2	160/ 1,800	2.4/ 0.4	3	8+1 (3)	9	-2	2

Equipment

Break-in bag with lockpicks, grapnel pistol (30 meters of nylon rope), night-vision goggles, magnetic card for door locks, black jumpsuit, Walther P38 with 9 rounds in purse, cell phone, 2001 Chevrolet Corvette (fire engine red).

Background and Personality

Donna Truitt is a professional burglar. She specializes in corporate espionage and similar high-security break-ins, stealing research data, account information, and similar materials on a contract basis. She was recruited and trained by the CIA out of college, but she left the Agency several years ago to pursue a freelance career. While she's capable of defending herself if discovered, Donna is very careful to avoid hurting people; she even refuses to work for people who might use the material she recovers to harm innocent people. Donna currently resides in Seattle, since many of her jobs take her to various high-tech corridors around the Pacific Rim.

Donna is a physically fit woman with long, dark hair and a disarming smile. She's very cynical and suspicious of people representing business or government interests. She usually tells people that she works as a security consultant.



Dr. Phillip Akens

Attributes [70]

ST: 11 [10] **HP:** 11 **Basic Speed:** 4.50
DX: 8 [-40] **Will:** 13 [-10] **Basic Move:** 4
IQ: 15 [100] **Per:** 17 **Ground Move:** 4
HT: 10 **FP:** 10 **Water Move:** 1

Basic Lift: 24 **Damage:** 1d-1/1d+1

Social Background

TL: 8 [0]

Cultural Familiarities: Western (Native) [0].

Languages: English (Native) [0]; Hellenic Greek (Native/Literate) [3]; Latin (Native/Literate) [3].

Advantages [21]

Language Talent [10]

Tenure (Marquette University) [5]

Disadvantages [-29]

Duty (Teaching) (9 or less (fairly often)) [-5]

Obsession (Prove that the paranormal is real; Long-Term Goal; 9 or less) [-15]

Post-Combat Shakes (9 or less) [-7]

Reputation (As a crackpot) (-2) (10 or less; Small class) [-2]

Quirks [-3]

Congenial [-1]

Horrible Hangovers [-1]

Takes everyone at their word [-1]

Skills [41]

Anthropology (Human) IQ/H - IQ+0 15 [4]

Computer Operation/TL8 IQ/E - IQ+1 16 [2]

Driving/TL8 (Automobile) DX/A - DX+2 10 [1]

Electronics Operation/TL8 (Sensors) IQ/A - IQ+0 15 [2]

First Aid/TL8 (Human) IQ/E - IQ+0 15 [1]

Hidden Lore (Psychic Phenomena) IQ/A - IQ-1 14 [1]

History (Midwest America) IQ/H - IQ+0 15 [4]

Linguistics (Human) IQ/H - IQ+0 15 [4]

Occultism IQ/A - IQ-1 14 [1]

Professional Skill (Parapsychology) IQ/A - IQ+2 17 [8]

Public Speaking IQ/A - IQ+0 15 [2]

Research/TL8 IQ/A - IQ+0 15 [2]

Savoir-Faire (High Society) IQ/E - IQ+0 15 [1]

Search Per/A - Per-1 16 [1]

Speed-Reading IQ/A - IQ-1 14 [1]

Teaching IQ/A - IQ+1 16 [4]

Writing IQ/A - IQ+0 15 [2]

Stats [70] Ads [21] Disads [-29] Quirks [-3] Skills [41] = Total [100]

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Reach	Parry	Wgt	ST
Unarmed (Punch)	1d+1 sw cr / 1d-1 thr cr	C	0	---	---

Equipment

Tape recorder; camera; specimen collection kit; laptop computer with cellular modem, database of paranormal activity patterns; blessed silver crucifix; luggage; VW Microbus with 150,000 miles on it.

Background and Personality

Dr. Akens has been studying paranormal activity for more than twenty years. He started out by investigating alleged haunted houses and psychic phenomena as a graduate student, and he's become one of the foremost experts on ghosts, hauntings, and occult traditions in the Midwest. Most academics don't take him seriously, of course, but Dr. Akens is one of the more reputable specialists in his field. He teaches anthropology and linguistics at Marquette University in Milwaukee in order to maintain some credibility with the college administration and to fund his occult investigations.

Dr. Akens is a tall, dignified man forty years of age, with a thoughtful manner and a deep, pleasant voice. He always takes people at their word and assumes that they're telling the truth about their experiences until hard evidence proves otherwise.

Dr. Akens is currently traveling to Portland to look into a reported haunting. He's accompanied by Doug Nichols, a photojournalist.



Doug Nichols

Attributes [72]

ST: 11 [10] **HP:** 12 [2] **Basic Speed:** 5.75
DX: 12 [40] **Will:** 12 [10] **Basic Move:** 5
IQ: 10 **Per:** 10 **Ground Move:** 5
HT: 11 [10] **FP:** 11 **Water Move:** 1

Basic Lift: 24 **Damage:** 1d-1/1d+1

Social Background

TL: 8 [0]

Cultural Familiarities: Western (Native) [0].

Languages: English (Native/Literate) [0].

Advantages [24]

Acute Vision (2) [4]

Fit [5]

Intuition [15]

Disadvantages [-30]

Code of Honor (Professional) [-5]

Impulsiveness (12 or less) [-10]

Obsession (Capture a spirit on film; Long-Term Goal; 9 or less) [-15]

Quirks [-3]

Congenial [-1]

Imaginative [-1]

Nosy [-1]

Skills [37]

Brawling DX/E - DX+0 12 [1]

Climbing DX/A - DX+0 12 [2]

Driving/TL8 (Automobile) DX/A - DX+0 12 [2]

Hiking HT/A - HT+0 11 [2]

Photography/TL8 IQ/A - IQ+3 13 [12]

Professional Skill (Journalism) IQ/A - IQ+3 13 [12]

Search Per/A - Per+0 10 [2]

Shadowing IQ/A - IQ+0 10 [2]

Sports (Skiing) DX/A - DX+0 12 [2]

Stats [72] Ads [24] Disads [-30] Quirks [-3] Skills [37] = Total [100]

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Dmg	Reach	Parry	Wgt	ST
Unarmed (Punch)	1d+1 sw cr / 1d-1 thr cr	C	0	---	---

Equipment

Professional-grade camcorder; tripod; still camera; tape recorder; laptop computer with video editing software; cellular phone; luggage.

Background and Personality

Ever since he was a kid, Doug Nichols has loved cameras and journalism. He worked on his school paper, served a tour in the Navy as a journalism specialist, and started freelancing as a photographer as soon as he got out of the service. He's been all over the world,

specializing in archaeology shoots and nature documentaries. Documentary work pays the bills, but Nichols has another hobby—ghost-hunting. When he can find the time, he tries his hand at paranormal investigation, hoping to catch an image of something that's never been photographed before.

Nichols is a rangy, big-boned man in his late twenties. He has a laid-back manner, and he enjoys outdoor sports of all kinds. He's currently traveling with Dr. Phillip Akens, a paranormal investigator who intends to check out a reported haunting in Portland. But after that, Nichols hopes to get in some mountaineering, extreme skiing, and hiking around the southern Cascades before heading home.

