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MONSTER HUNTERS III

TACTICAL SHOOTING: MONSTER HUNTERS

by Hans-Christian Vortisch

THE DEPARTMENT OF OCCULT DEFENSE by Christopher R. Rice

THE FLOCK OF THE ABOVE by J. Edward Tremlett

VENATIOby David L. Pulver

MONSTER HUNTERS 2043:
AGENTS OF ORCID
by W.A. Frick

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ARTICLE COLORS

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

Pale Blue: In This Issue

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

Green: Columnist

Dark Blue: **GURPS** Features Purple: Systemless Features

COVER ART *Christopher Shy*

In This Issue

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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FROM THE EDITOR

THE GOOD FIGHT

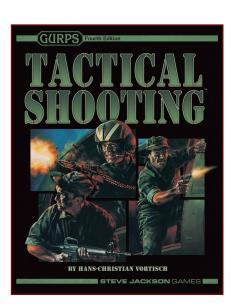
Pyramid has been around in various forms for over 20 years – your Humble Editor has been at the helm for almost 15 years now – so it's seen a lot of trends in the world of tabletop gaming . . . not even counting the four (or five?) editions of (Advanced) Dungeons & Dragons in the intervening eras. One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

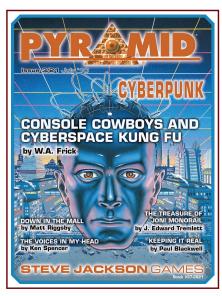
In contrast, recent years have seen an upswing of more pure, optimistic fare. (I'll leave it to the history/sociology majors to chart these trends against the relatively calm-and-prosperous '90s with modern developments.) I include the *GURPS Monster Hunters* line in that category; even though it has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

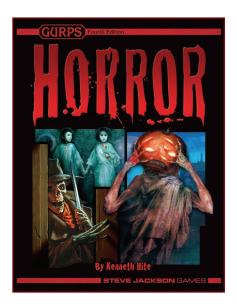
the wherewithal to fight against the darkness and – more often than not – *win*. This core positivity about the future – even in the face of significant problems – is what sets a horror-hunting game apart from a stock *Horror* investigation campaign. Sure, there's plenty of room for terrifying developments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

Write Here, Write Now

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







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Disadvantages: Hard of Hearing; Nightmares; Overconfidence.

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

Techniques: Close-Hip Shooting (any); Double-Loading. *Perks*: Armorer's Gift (any); Battle Drills; Cross-Trained (any); Early Adopter (any); Tracer Eyes.

OTHER HUNTERS

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

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

ZOMBIE EXTERMINATOR

7 points

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Optional Traits

Secondary Characteristics: Improved Basic Speed and Per. Advantages: Acute Vision; Ambidexterity; Combat Reflexes; Danger Sense; Fearlessness; Fit; Night Vision; Signature Gear; Very Fit.

Disadvantages: Careful; Hard of Hearing; Nightmares.

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

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

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

* From GURPS Zombies.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

Special thanks to the Hellions.

Location

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

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

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

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

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

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

Agents

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

THE HPLD AND THE JUDAS INITIATIVE

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

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

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

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

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

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

DESTINY, LUCK, AND THE DARK FUTURE

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

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

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

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

New Motivational Lens: ORCID Agent

15 points

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

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

Perks: Bomb Implant*‡. [1]

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

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

- * Cybernetics; see *Ultra-Tech*, p. 207.
- † See Black Budget (p. 30).
- ‡ The bomb is implanted in the skull, and is under the agent's conscious control a final measure against capture, assimilation, or worse; it qualifies as a Dramatic Death perk. Rumors persist that it can also be triggered remotely, in the event that an agent's will is subverted by the Enemy, or he otherwise acts against the interests of the division. Management categorically denies any such thing.

ORCID Basic Training

All ORCID agents go through a rugged training program to prepare them for the rigors of monster hunting. If any skill listed below *isn't* included in a PC's selected template, *or* covered by one of his wildcard skills, it should be chosen where available from skill options, taken as a background skill, or bought

with discretionary points (from quirks, leftover advantage points, etc.). One way or another, all ORCID agents should have at least 1-2 points in each of the following:

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

Know Thy Enemy: 2043 Edition

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

- *The Cabal:* Hidden Lore (The Cabal) (A) IQ [2]; History (Esoteric) (H) IQ-1 [2]; Thaumatology (VH) IQ-2 [2]; and any skills relevant to the particular Cabalist(s) in question who could be faeries, "rogue" witches, vampires, etc.
- Things Man Was Not Meant To Know: Hidden Lore (Things) (A) IQ [2]; History (Things), Literature (Things), and Physics (Paraphysics), all (H) IQ-1 [2].
- *Cults*: Psychology and/or Theology (Cult beliefs), both (H) IQ-1 [2].

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

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