

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

HORROR

Beyond the Pale™



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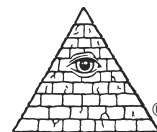
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INTRODUCTION

They say white is pure – but sometimes it's pure *evil*. A disturbed mind has reached from our world into a pale realm of pain and horror, and brought something back with it. Now two households are dead, and the Things that did it remain, resting before going out to slaughter again.

The authorities claim to have the killer. They are wrong. A sympathetic detective contacts the PCs for help, for he knows – or at least *hopes* – the suspect couldn't have done it. As the investigators sift through clues and dig deeper, they may come to wish things were that simple.

A **GURPS Horror** investigation for four to six seasoned 150- to 200-point characters, *Beyond the Pale* brings the heroes into contact with dangerous extradimensional beings capable of warping flesh and bone with a mere touch, and of taking the distorted shape of those loved and lost. With

foresight, preparation, and luck, the investigators might just banish these foes . . . and save the accused.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Christopher R. Rice has been published in *Pyramid* many times. He co-authored **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 19: Incantation Magic**, with Antoni Ten Monrós, and **Dungeon Fantasy Traps**, with Jason "PK" Levine, and wrote additional material for **GURPS Monster Hunters 6: Holy Hunters** and **GURPS Thaumatology: Ritual Path Magic**. His first solo work was **GURPS Monster Hunters Power-Ups 1**. Of course, if he's not writing about **GURPS**, he's blogging about it; visit his site, "Ravens N' Pennies" (www.ravenspennies.com), for more **GURPS** goodies. From Portsmouth, Virginia, he's spinning words of whimsy into gold. He wishes to thank L.A., for being the wonderful, amazing, inspiring woman that she is – not every man gets his muse personified in the flesh! He also wishes to thank his gaming group, the Headhunters, for alpha testing; his family (especially his mother); and Elizabeth "Archangel Beth" McCoy, his Sith Editrix mentor.

J. Edward Tremlett, a.k.a. "the Lurker in Lansing," takes his ancient keyboard from its hiding place and unleashes his words upon the world. His bizarre lifestyle has taken him to such exotic locales as South Korea and Dubai. He was a frequent contributor to *Pyramid* in its last two incarnations, was the editor of *The Wraith Project*, and has seen print in *The End Is Nigh*, *Worlds of Cthulhu*, and the anthology *Ride the Star Wind*. He's also partially responsible for *The Crown of Eternity* and *Curse of the Pirate King*, but he's not taking all the blame. He's the author of the fiction blog *SPYCOD's Tales* (spygod-tales.blogspot.com), and lives in Lansing with two cats and enough Lego bricks to make a Great Old One. Maybe he already has.

GETTING THE PCs INVOLVED

The group's reputation for solving strange and unusual cases attracts the attention of Detective Fred Smit, who contacts one of them via email, asking if they've heard of the "Sutcliffe Street murders." An Internet search turns up a half-dozen articles from major Massachusetts newspapers: Three days ago, two near-simultaneous mass slayings took place on the same block in the well-to-do community of Evensong. Later articles say the police have a suspect in custody, but give no name.

Smit asks to meet with the PCs in an unofficial capacity. He admits to having a professional dilemma, and needs outside help. He can't offer money, but hopes seeing the right thing done will be enough. He'd like to get together as soon as possible, and asks the group to keep a low profile, offering to meet them at an unremarkable watering hole just outside of Evensong.

THE EVENSONG MURDERS

A sympathetic detective contacts the PCs for help, because he believes in the innocence of the suspect in a multiple murder. He would like to save the accused from the state police,

who think they can just beat a confession out of the young man. As the investigators sift through clues and dig deeper, they may come to wish things could be that simple.

BACKDROP

Evensong is a small “enclave” community of 2,000 souls, three miles north of Saugus on Route 1. The meet-up location, Stoebers, is just off the highway, halfway between the two towns. Smit waits in the back room: a balding, fat-faced man in his mid-40’s, with a droopy brown mustache. Looking like he hasn’t slept in a week, he gives the basic facts from memory.

At 10:30 p.m., a 911 call was made from the home of Beau Bledney, local celebrity artist. The call reported an abduction scenario in play, with the caller possibly taken as well. An Evensong police car was responding when, at or around 11 p.m., they came across Sam Crane, 25, employed as a gardener and handyman by the Davidsons – Bledney’s

right-side neighbors. He was wandering their street, covered in blood and looking extremely confused, repeating, “They made me watch.”

The trail of blood led to Bledney’s left-side neighbors, the Claxtons. The officers at the scene called for backup to respond to the earlier call, and then went inside. They found the front door open – and bodies in the foyer. At that point, they arrested Crane on suspicion and followed the trail to the front door of the Davidsons. What they found there was enough to dissuade them from searching further. Backup arrived at 11:30 p.m. and entered Bledney’s home, only to discover that he and his manservant, Bradley Lagueux, were missing.

ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. We can be reached by email: info@sjgames.com. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

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

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Pyramid (pyramid.sjgames.com). For 10 years, our PDF magazine *Pyramid* included new rules and articles for **GURPS**, plus systemless locations, adventures, and more. The entire 122-issue library is available at Warehouse 23!

Internet. To discuss **GURPS** with our staff and your fellow gamers, visit our forums at forums.sjgames.com. You can also join us at facebook.com/sjgames or twitter.com/sjgames. Share your brief campaign teasers

with #GURPSHook on Twitter. Or explore that hashtag for ideas to add to your own game! The **GURPS Horror: Beyond the Pale** web page is at gurps.sjgames.com/beyondthepale.

Store Finder (storefinder.sjgames.com): Discover nearby places to buy **GURPS** items and other Steve Jackson Games products. Local shops are great places to play our games and meet fellow gamers!

Bibliographies. Bibliographies are a great resource for finding more of what you love! We’ve added them to many **GURPS** book web pages with links to help you find the next perfect element for your game.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for **GURPS** releases are available at sjgames.com/errata/gurps.

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

Read the following text aloud to the players:

*"We found six dead bodies," Smit explains. "The Davidsons' daughter, dog, and butler are still missing, along with Bledney and his help. But the search dogs won't even step on the grass. Something about those three houses just feels **bad**."*

The Evensong police chief invited the State Police to take jurisdiction, owing to their superior resources and the murders' severity. Sam Crane is their prime suspect, due to his condition when found, not to mention his juvenile record. Although that record is sealed, "everybody" knows about the three murders he participated in 10 years ago. The Stateys also want to reopen the case on the death of Nathaniel Claxton's first wife and that of the Davidsons' eldest son – both killed in accidents last year, just six months apart.

Smit doesn't believe Crane did this. True, he has a mental condition that makes him highly susceptible to suggestion – hence his record – but he's harmless as long as he takes his meds. Mrs. Davidson said he'd been a good worker all these years, just a little odd. Plus, there's a lot that's simply *wrong* about this case, which Smit doesn't want to talk about here.

Smit nervously plays a recording from Bledney's manservant for the PCs:

"911. What's your emergency?"

"Oh my God. The painting. It took him."

"Sir? I'm sorry, can you repeat that?"

"The painting took him. The white . . . it came for him. It went on forever."

"Sir, is someone hurt? Are you okay?"

"Oh my God, they're . . . it's . . . oh God help!"

(CLICK)

The detective can get the PCs certain degrees of access: They can see the case files, visit the crime scenes under his escort, and interview Crane. They mustn't let the State Police see them, but Smit can get *some* locals to help cover. Not all of them, sadly – some of them think Crane's as guilty as sin.

Read the following to the players:

"Don't let that poor kid suffer all over again," he practically begs. "I don't care if we never find out who really did this. Just as long as we can prove he didn't do it, I'll call it a win."

Did you ever notice how in the Bible, whenever God needed to punish someone . . . he sent an angel? Did you ever wonder what a creature like that must be like?

*– Thomas Daggett, in **The Prophecy** (1995)*

THE TRUTH

Detective Smit really *doesn't* want to find the dangerous, otherworldly beings who actually committed the Evensong murders . . . but failing to do so leads to even more deaths.

Creatures of pure thought, with little regard for human life – other than their amusement at ending it in painful and creative ways – the Drawn live in the White Beyond. In that pale and endless expanse, they coningle in a tiresome, eternal loop, covetous of both our discrete, individual forms and physical sensations. Over the eons, they've made a careful study of both, to the extent that they're masters of flesh and

pain, and able to read our minds and appear as figures from our memory.

Now and again, a suitable mind stares deeply into a pure-white surface, only to find the Drawn looking back. They pull the observer into their realm – most likely to enjoy their victim's suffering. But every so often, the mind is strong enough to make a pact with its captors, allowing them to enjoy our world for a time.

That's what happened in the sleepy community of Evensong: Bledney's attempt at pure white brought the Drawn here, and a chance meeting with Crane as they set out to play led to his unfortunate situation. His mental issues made him unsuitable for their desires, but they cajoled him into watching in the hopes he'd show *something*. When he didn't, even after watching two households die – seemingly at the hands of their lost loved ones – and being doused by their blood, the creatures abandoned him in disgust.

Then they went to the artist's hidden studio to "digest." Over the last few days, they've alternated between watching Bledney paint with the blood they collected for him, and reliving their victims' horror and pain. When that ceases to satisfy, they intend to have more fun with the police, and maybe the neighbors across the street, until their time expires.

The Strangeness Inside

The GM should check the investigators' character sheets for disadvantages or quirks that reflect a notable neurological or psychological deficiency (Killjoy, Low Empathy, etc.). The Drawn cannot process the pain from such people, and tend to leave them alone unless provoked. This information becomes important when the heroes encounter the creatures.

INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS

If the investigators agree, Smit suggests they check into Tooney's Motor Lodge, a few doors down from Stoebers; it's cheap and no one asks questions. Meanwhile, he returns to the station to sneak out the copy he made of the case file, and to arrange for the PCs to clandestinely interview the chief suspect.

CRIME SCENE NOTES

The disposition of the bodies fills a major part of the case file. There are diagrams and photographs of the crime scenes, along with the medical examiner's initial findings. Given the state of the bodies (see *Bodies*, below), this makes for unsettling reading.

In both houses, all bodies were found in the foyer, meaning Crane had to either lure them down there, threaten them into converging, or overpower them. The victims' precise disassembly indicates high degrees of strength, skill, and medical knowledge on the killer's part – qualities the young man isn't known to possess. The killings would have required a great deal of speed as well; the medical examiner estimates all times of death to be between 10:30 and 11:00 p.m.

In both houses, the only blood was in irregular pools just inside the front door. The bodies were remarkably bloodless. The pools weren't nearly large enough to account for all the blood that would have been spilled in each set of murders. Crane's footprints came from the Davidsons', led to the Claxtons', and then went out into the road where he was found.

Crane had a key to the Davidsons', and the front door was unlocked. However, the Claxtons' alarm wasn't triggered, which meant someone let him in – despite him being soaked in enough blood to leave a trail from his employers' home. Unfortunately, as the Claxtons' security cameras are fakes, there's no visual record.

Having help makes Crane's participation in the murders more likely, but forensic analysis revealed no outsiders in either house; Crane's were the only bloody tracks. Nothing was taken or greatly disturbed, both houses' safes were still locked, and exposed valuables were left alone.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THOSE INVOLVED

Beau Bledney (male, age 45) is wealthy and eccentric, and a divisive figure in the art world due to his recent forays into "monochromatism": paintings of one solid field of color. He has worked his way through the color wheel (except red), and has moved on to combinations. He likes to paint blindfolded, claiming he can "feel the colors" better that way. Smit adds that he's a rude fellow, quite hostile toward his neighbors – bringing unsuccessful lawsuits over noise (Claxtons') and zoning violations (Davidsons' and the house across the street). He lives with his manservant, **Bradley Lagueux** (male, age 54).

The Davidsons, who employed Crane as their gardener for the last five years, were a wealthy software engineer (**Janet Kelner-Davidson**, female, age 39), her would-be novelist

husband (**Victor Davidson**, male, age 40), and their two children (**Jerry Davidson**, male, age 11, and **Kelsey Davidson**, female, age 14). They lost their oldest son, **Victor Jr.** (male, age 17), three months ago; he was killed while playing with illegally bought lawn darts. They were undergoing family counseling, and making excellent progress.

Crane lives in a small guesthouse in the back yard – the prime source of Bledney's zoning lawsuits. The Davidsons also had a butler, **Thomas Murphy** (male, age 43), who'd been with them for 10 years. Smit confides that Crane told him Murphy was trying to get him fired, but Mrs. Davidson wasn't interested.

Nathaniel Claxton (male, age 30) was a trust-fund kid who made good on timely investments. His first wife, **Clara** (female, age 27), died in a horrible defenestration accident nine months ago. His new wife, **Sevanne Sharnette-Claxton** (female, age 35), moved in three months later with her son (**Jules**, male, age 15) and his prize-winning parakeet, **Napoleon**. Smit admits the police didn't believe Clara's death was an accident, but had no proof.

*She had opened a door . . . and
now she was walking with demons.*

– Clive Barker,
The Hellbound Heart

BODIES

The bodies are being kept at Evensong's police station, in the basement morgue; they haven't been moved to State facilities yet. The medical examiner literally fled her post mid-autopsy, and won't return phone calls. She left some notes, but the work is incomplete. In all cases, the estimated time of death is between 10:30 p.m., when the 911 call came in, and around 11:00 p.m., when the police found the first bodies.

If any of the PCs is qualified to perform autopsies, Smit can get them clearance within a day. Each body takes around three hours to autopsy. A successful Diagnosis roll uncovers the things noted in parentheses. Full chemical analyses take a week, but reveal nothing relevant.

Janet Kelner-Davidson: Health difficult to determine (lab results eventually indicate generally good health). Cause of death unknown. Body was neatly disassembled postmortem, with 100 discrete pieces laid to rest, one in the center of each tile in the house's foyer. (Other pieces, mostly bones, are missing.)

Victor Davidson: Acceptable health. (Signs of early liver damage, most likely from alcohol.) Cause of death was a combination of shock and blood loss from having his left side flayed down to the muscles. He was pinioned to the wall by his wrists and shoulders with broken, sharpened human bones. (Two radius-ulna pairs, the size of which indicates they were taken from an adult male not found at scene. Bones were not sharpened with metal tools, but somehow *distorted*.)

Jerry Davidson: Decent health. Cause of death was a combination of shock and blood loss from having his left side flayed down to the muscles. He was pinioned to the wall by his wrists and shoulders with broken, sharpened human bones. (Two fibula-tibia pairs, also taken from an adult male not found at scene, also seemingly distorted into points.)

Nathaniel Claxton: Health difficult to determine (lab results eventually indicate pre-diabetic, overweight). Cause of death was extreme falling damage, as if he'd hit terminal velocity. (Not possible inside the building.) Lack of blood around corpse should be impossible.

Sevanne Sharnette-Claxton: Decent health. Cause of death was shock and blood loss due to extraction of all major abdominal organs via 35 three-inch holes in the abdomen. (Punctures came from *inside*, rather than outside.) Organs completely missing. Only thing in abdominal cavity is a chewed-up, barely digested bird (**Napoleon**).

Jules Sharnette: Decent health. Cause of death was internal puncturing of all major organs, including brain. (Punctures caused by irregularly sized spikes of bone, grown in from his own skeleton. There are medical conditions where this could happen, but not this quickly. While Jules broke his left humerus four months ago, X-rays show no sign of this.)

CRANE'S STORY

Talking to Crane means sneaking into the Evensong police station. Smit can have a local distract the State Police, but that only buys the PCs an hour or two.

The blank-faced young man shackled to a desk in the interrogation room has clearly been subjected to numerous third-degrees. A 2005 Boston telephone book sits in the corner; an IQ or Streetwise+4 roll indicates that such things are used to beat suspects without bruising. If the PCs treat Crane poorly or talk down to him (using Interrogation counts!), he tells the bare minimum. If they treat him with respect and/or sympathy, he opens up; such additional information is in parentheses.

Crane says he was out looking at the moon when the "light-bulb people" came from Bledney's house. They were two white wisps of light, slowly becoming Victor Davidson and Clara Claxton, only something was wrong. "Their faces were skin over a basketball. (I think they knew I thought they were ghosts, so they became the ghosts I thought they were.)"

The strange beings approached quickly – "like I was prey" – but then stopped short, clearly puzzled. "It was like people are when they know who I am. They smelled it on me, like a dog. They walked around me, looking up and down. I couldn't move."

"Eventually, they spoke. Their voices were bad. Listening to them made my heart hurt." They ordered him to take them to his home. Once inside the Davidsons', they both changed to look like Victor – one rounding up and killing the father and son, the other going upstairs to look for the wife and daughter. The one who went upstairs came down to deposit Janet's parts on the floor.

Asking Crane about specific missing persons has disturbing results:

Thomas Murphy, the butler: "He begged for his life. (That wasn't smart.)"

Kelsey Davidson, the daughter: "I heard her scream, upstairs. The scream stopped."

The dog: "It ran away. (One followed it. I heard it bark, once. Then it whined.)"

Why didn't he do anything? "It's like a train wreck, you know. You just watch. They made all the blood go away. Then they showered me with it and stared some more. (Like they wanted me to feel something, then got mad when I didn't.)"

Then the bizarre pair turned in eerie unison to look at the Claxtons', and told Crane to follow. There, they pretended to be Clara Claxton to get in. Crane doesn't want to say what happened. ("While they were killing them, one of them told me 'Those were for science. These are for fun. Do you understand?'" Asked if he does, he says nothing.)

The murders done, the creatures soaked him in blood once more (and became angry), and then walked away. Crane eventually wandered onto the road, which was when the police arrived. They didn't believe his story, and when they saw the bodies, they blamed him. "Same thing always happens," he says, shrugging.

(At the end, before the PCs leave: "I asked who they were to wear those faces. They said they were Drawn. And I said yes, you are, aren't you?" He half-smiles, then stops.)

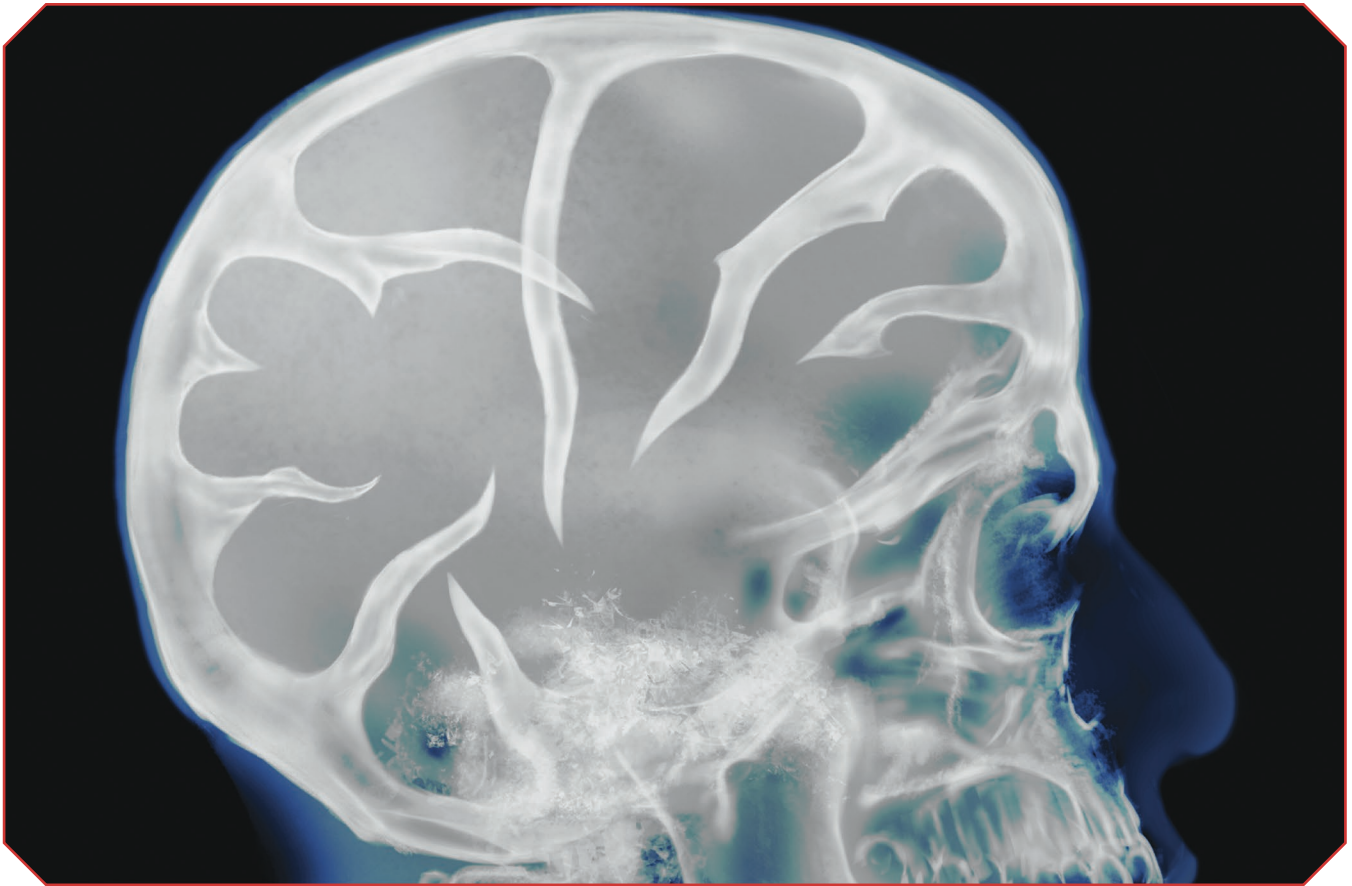
THE CRIME SCENES

To keep away the curious, a police car with two officers is parked in the Claxtons' driveway, and another in the Davidsons', day and night. During the day, crime-scene techs and/or State Police are also poking around, looking for clues (or at least the Davidsons' dog). At night, it's just the two cars – and Smit has fixed things so it's *local* police, minimizing the chance of the PCs being hassled.

The three houses were designed by the same architect, who operated under the principle of "reflected residences": Barring a few additions, the Davidson and Claxton houses are mirror images, with Bledney's a centerpiece between them.

And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.

– Revelation 6:8



The Claxtons' House

The decor seems at war with itself: Half consists of tasteful, well-considered purchases born from tempered wealth; the other is grotesquely focused on parrots, the late Napoleon in particular. There's an off, rotten smell. Searching for the source uncovers a total of 35 flesh parrots, liquefying in the dark corners of the house. The Drawn killed Sevanne by transforming her organs into these grotesque, flightless things, which then chewed their way out of her.

The riot of evidence tags all over the foyer marks it as the place where the Claxtons' bodies were found. Crane's footprints are clearly visible in the dried blood, matching up with his story.

The rest of the house is in order, each room remaining as its inhabitants left it. There's a pair of matching Lamborghinis in the garage, along with a literal ton of unused garden and lawn tools. The only "unusual" room is the bedroom devoted entirely to the Claxtons' parrot, Napoleon, which is filled with numerous shiny toys and gewgaws.

The Davidsons' House

The house is a testament to one life of high technical achievement, another of seemingly wasted potential, and a terrible loss. Numerous awards – and framed photos of Mrs. Davidson receiving them – are balanced against shelves full of books on how to write books and boxes of unsold, self-published novels about a two-gunned vampire time-traveler with a talking dog. Photos of the Davidsons' lost, oldest child outnumber those of their two living ones.

As at the Claxtons', there's an off, rotten smell, strongest in the foyer and TV room. Evidence tags sit on each floor tile in the foyer, and up against both sides of the entrance to the dining room. Two huge, pearl-blue vases frame the doorway. Thomas Murphy, the missing butler – boneless and staring – is stuffed into the left-hand one. Between the vases is the dried pool of blood, with Crane's footprints entering and leaving.

In the TV room, a large, cushion-looking lump is what remains of the family's dog. It was rearranged into a headless, legless mass and left to suffocate (a Perception or Search roll will notice that it's odd right away).

In Kelsey's upstairs bedroom, the air seems thick and moist. Staying there too long leaves an odd coppery taste in the mouth. Crime-scene investigators have complained that they're getting blood readings everywhere, but not really *seeing* any blood outside luminol sprays. (Roll against Occultism at -2 to determine what happened: The girl's body wasn't found because the Drawn killed her by aerosolizing her and leaving her to float.)

The Bledney House

A shrine to its occupant's genius, the entire house is filled with unsold originals and reproductions of his placed works, displayed in large, garish frames that deliberately clash with their contents. The other two houses "felt" bad, but this one feels worse – as if something cosmically horrible had taken place within its walls.

Looking at the massive red painting that goes from the floor to the stairway landing reveals nothing unusual until the investigators get closer and realize that it isn't paint, but *blood* that somehow hasn't coagulated. (This is what remains of Bledney's manservant, Bradley Lagueux. The Drawn spread him across another painting, somehow keeping him alive and in agony. A Smell roll notices something is up, while any successful medical skill roll reveals that it's a *lot* of blood – a human's worth.) The painting is on a track, and slides open to reveal a concealed room.

Inside is the hidden studio where Bledney does his important work. It holds all the paintings he couldn't get right, as well as a few that went too far; the white painting is up on the wall. Bledney is here, too – blindfolded, painting using blood that won't congeal. He clearly doesn't care about the dead people who supplied the blood; his response to any questions is, "My new friends have shown me so much." Behind the blindfold, his eyes are gone, sockets covered with flesh. He may or may not be alone; see *Confrontation* (pp. 9-10).

THE DRAWN

Based on Crane's description – or given the name – the PCs can make an Occultism roll to research these thankfully

obscure, malevolent creatures of pure thought. Doing so reveals their place of origin, as well as their mastery over flesh, pain, and memory. Most important, the researchers learn the Drawn can be here only by linking with exceptional human minds – visionaries and madmen, willing to prolong their own agony to allow their captors free rein in our world, for a time.

The Drawn are parasites from a dimension made of pure, blindingly white thought, with no form or sensation. They visit our world to enjoy our discrete, individual forms, and to taste our extreme sensations – primarily pain.

In their native form – at least as humans perceive them – the Drawn appear as wispy, thin humanoids formed of white light, with hideously swollen hands and heads. When hunting, however, they assume the guise of their intended prey's lost loved ones. Their stolen identities are grotesquely imperfect, with light-bulb heads and distorted voices, but usually close enough to fool their targets. Their connection to a human host allows them total mastery over our form. By touching a victim, they can rearrange flesh and bone into whatever their fevered imaginations can devise . . . keeping their subject *alive* through the experience.

While bonded to a human host, the Drawn are somewhat bound by our dimension's laws: They must walk at a reasonable human speed, not float about. However, only magical damage affects them fully, and is rightly feared; they've been known to quit our dimension altogether when attacked by a magician.



The Drawn have one other curious eccentricity: Their desire to experience the full cornucopia of human emotions means they're much less interested in the neurologically and psychologically divergent. They don't harm such people unprovoked, as they find no reward in it. This shortsightedness on their part can be an exploitable weakness.

Use these statistics, inspired by the Arendians (*GURPS Horror*, p. 85).

The Drawn

460 points

The Etruscans knew the Drawn as demons of Usil, god of the Sun; the Aztecs, as the nameless servitors of Tzontemoc, one of the many gods of the Underworld. Franz Bardon warned of them in his fragmentary *The Golden Book of Wisdom*, describing them as "The Eyes in the Light" and exhorting to avoid things of pure, unadulterated white. In *On the Mysteries*, Iamblichus spoke of the "Skull Monks of the lost Isle of Tarn," who stared at pillars of skulls for days on end in the hopes of bringing forth "the pale eternal." Some occult researchers wonder if Claude Roule's infamous *Flesh Beggars* alluded to these creatures, but the author denied all knowledge, right up to his mysterious disappearance in 2003.

Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: Will+4 [20]; Basic Speed-2.00 [-40].

Advantages: 360° Vision [25]; Affliction (Advantage, Morph (Improvised Forms, +100%; Mass Conservation, -20%), +1,800%; Based on HT or Will, +40%; Extended Duration, Permanent, +300%; Malediction 1, +100%; Melee Attack, Reach C, Cannot Parry, -35%)* [231]; Body of Air [36]; Leech 4 (Accessibility, Not certain types of minds, -20%; Doleovore†, +20%; Malediction 1, +100%; Ranged, +40%; Symptoms, Agony, 1/3 HP, +300%) [200]; Mind Probe [20]; Mind Reading [30]; No Vulnerability to Vacuum and Wind-Based Attacks [20]; Unaging [15].

Disadvantages: Callous [-5]; Disturbing Voice [-10]; Mute (Accessibility, Only in cloud form, -10%) [-22]; Unhealing (Partial) [-20]; Vulnerability (Magic‡ x2) [-40].

* Lets them rearrange the target's corporeal body as desired with a touch by winning a Quick Contest of Will against the *lower* of the victim's HT or Will. They *can* use this on themselves, allowing them to look like the loved ones of those they torment!

† *GURPS Horror*, p. 21.

‡ For games that lack magic but have psi, change Magic to Psionics.

Outrageous behavior, also known as the lunatic fringe, is the seed bed of innovation and creativity.

– Joel Salatin

CONFRONTATION

At some point, the heroes *will* encounter the real murderers. When that happens – and what happens next – depends on how soon they get to the murder scenes.

If the investigators arrive no more than two days after Smit recruited them, the pair of Drawn are in Bledney's hidden studio. Seeing the creatures in their resting state should negate their masquerade attempts, but they'll attempt to capitalize on the group's shock at their appearance. If the PCs try to talk to them or the artist, rather than attack, the beings play along, hoping to get close enough to touch someone. The Drawn won't leave the neighborhood or their anchor, but if they can get Bledney to depart, they can go as well. Of course, they don't know how to drive and Bledney has no eyes (and is quite insane at this point) . . .

After two days, the Drawn are out hunting the police – in the houses by day, outside by night. Victims are typically confused or gladdened by a lost loved one's appearance, only to be cruelly rewarded. A neighbor (probably in the middle of

packing to leave their home!) may admit to having witnessed an officer react with confusion or joy at someone's approach, only to die horribly once that person reached them. If the witness was nearby, they might have heard a mostly one-sided dialogue, followed by a scream. The victims' deconstructed bodies are later discovered at suitably horrific junctures.

The Drawn know their limits. They withdraw from a fight at the first sign they might be harmed, hoping to attack their foes from a novel angle. If one is seriously wounded, both flee back to the white painting, taking Bledney if they can. If one is *killed*, the other runs pell-mell for the stark door to its incorporeal home, leaving the artist behind.

The creatures have a pair of Achilles heels: Bledney and the painting. Investigators who figure this out might not need magic – threatening to kill their anchor and/or destroy the painting may get the Drawn to leave (use Intimidation for this). Destroying both Bledney *and* the painting *forces* the monsters to leave, but requires the heroes to sacrifice a life.

Fighting the Drawn *supernaturally* is the best tactic, assuming they don't quickly kill or incapacitate the group's mages (psis). The first hint of magic (psi) use will have the creatures fleeing, since they take double injury from it.

Fighting the Drawn *physically* is a losing proposition – they take at most 2 points of injury from any attack, thanks to Injury Tolerance (Diffuse). Add this to the fact that they can manipulate flesh with a thought *and* cause targets to experience

immense pain, and most altercations will end with dead PCs. Still, clever heroes could try using area attacks, which pummel the creatures' entire form and injure them normally (p. B380). Even an extradimensional sadist can balk at passing through a fire or be shaken by grenade explosions!

When a Drawn dies, it explodes into a shower of sparks, leaving nothing behind.



THE END

Dispatching or chasing off the Drawn, and halting their return, are the primary victories. Other, more humane considerations may have to take a distant back seat.

If the Drawn are destroyed, or leave without him, Bledney lapses into catatonia. Medical scans reveal that his eye sockets are *gone*, as if they'd never existed. He never awakens and eventually dies – yet another medical mystery.

Utterly destroying the white painting keeps Drawn from returning by that route. If it's even *partially* intact, another suitable mind could make contact. The PCs might feel honor-bound to deal with the resulting mayhem.

Unless they see the Drawn, the State Police are *not* going to accept stories of murderous, otherworldly beings. Even if they do, they *still* need a scapegoat, and – absent a good

lawyer – they beat a confession out of Sam Crane. Institutionalized, he one day vanishes from a pale-white room, but (thankfully) does *not* return.

The PCs could manufacture a good explanation – perhaps with Smit's help – or at least get the kid a good lawyer. With a little evidence doctoring, there's no reason this hideous escapade couldn't be blamed on mysteriously absent actors. What happens to Crane next may be out of the heroes' hands, but at least they'll have saved a life.

That one little victory may be worth everything: The investigators will never again be able to pass a stark, white surface without knowing what lurks beyond, waiting for the right kind of broken mind to look too deeply, for too long.

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