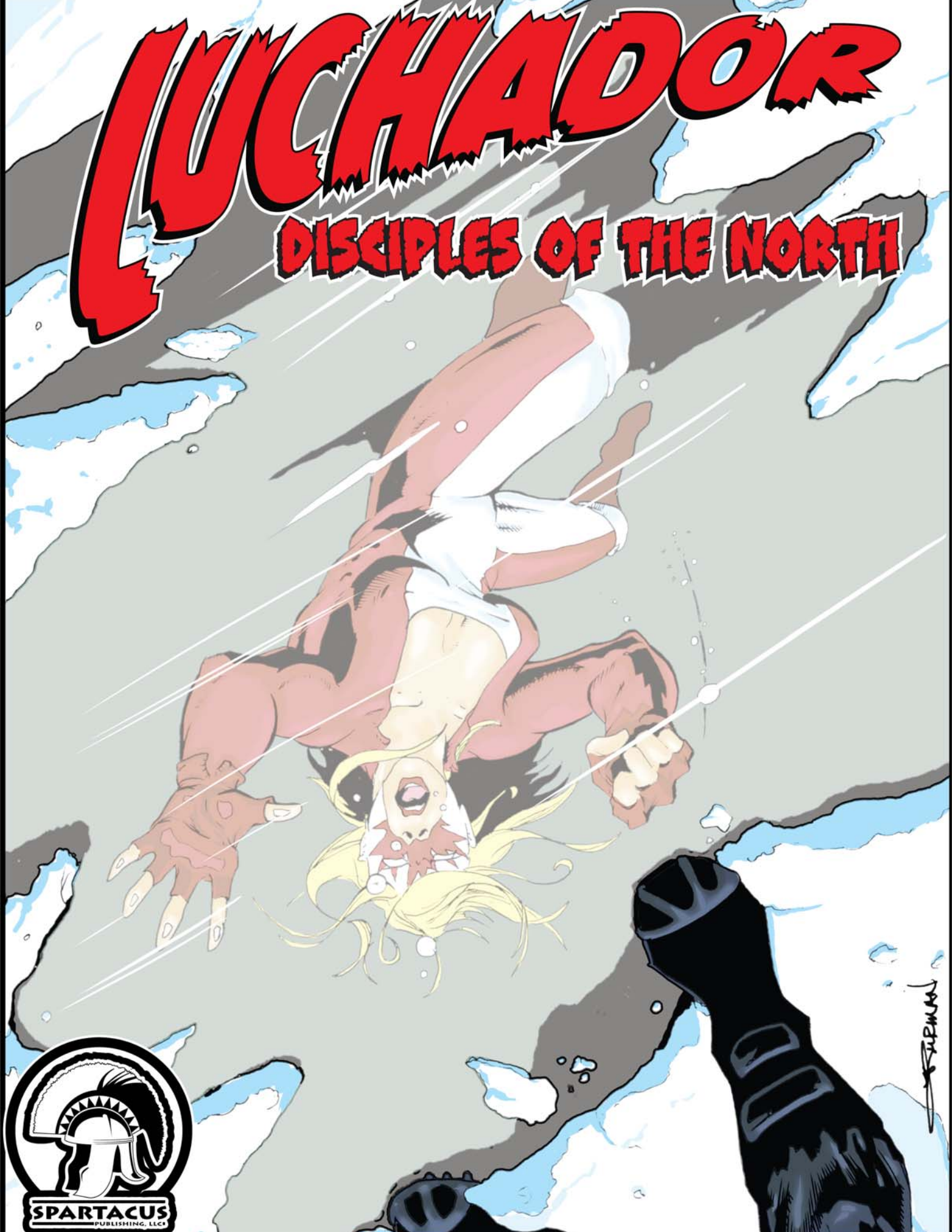


LUCHADOR

DISCIPLES OF THE NORTH



Signature

BUCHADOR

DISCIPLES OF THE NORTH

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*Ô Canada!
Terre de nos aïeux,
Ton front est ceint de fleurons glorieux!
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,
Il sait porter la croix!
Ton histoire est une épopée
Des plus brillants exploits.
Et ta valeur, de foi trempée,
Protégera nos foyers et nos droits.
Protégera nos foyers et nos droits.*

*We would like to thank all of our
playtesters over the years and a special
thanks to our homeguard:
Alex, Brian, James and Jason*

PEPITO AND PALS FOREVER!!



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Hold on to your masks, because it is time for the fourth installment (that's right, FOURTH) of Luchador: Way of the Mask! Let's review for those among you who have not been keeping score at home. We opened with Luchador: Way of the Mask which provided the core rules and premise for the game. Then we went to Japan with Luchador: Painted Honor where we took the action back into the ring and introduced specialties to the game. Next we went to the USA with Luchador: Bright Lights and Barbed Wire with rules for valets, titles, plunder, and new character classes. Keep reading to find out what new excitement we have prepared for you this time, and make sure your collection is complete. You gotta pin them all!

In case the cover wasn't a giveaway, this time the Luchaverse is expanding into the great white north. As always, we are creating a game setting where masked wrestlers confront supernatural danger and bizarre machinations, not a travel guide to Canada. Everything that follows is distorted through the lens of an action film or the panels of a horror comic. This is not intended as a slight against Canada so please take no umbrage from our offering.

LANGUAGE BARRIER

Travel always brings up the difficulty of speaking the local language. In Canada French and English claim most conversations leaving Spanish out in the cold. With an entire country of militant English speakers between them and Mexico, there are a low percentage of Spanish speakers available for convenient translation of masked adventurers. Obviously that percentage increases at centers of professional wrestling activity where the love of lucha libre leads devout fans to pick up the language. The GM may wish to provide a bi-lingual NPC to help out in case none of the player characters picked up any English while in the States.

WRESTLING IN CANADA

As always, the Luchaverse expands around major bastions of professional wrestling tradition, and Canada does not disappoint in this field. While the rest of North America is fascinated with power moves and pyrotechnics, Canada retains a commitment to excellence in all fields. This well-rounded approach produces a steady stream of exceptional talent who can hold their own in any

aspect of professional wrestling. Wrestlers from Canada have a strong sense of discipline about their craft. They rarely neglect any of the major skills of combat or wrestling, and even mike skills are recognized for their importance.

While all areas may be important, one remains above the others: wrestling. Canada is home to some of the most technically gifted wrestlers ever to enter the squared circle. The reputation of these individuals has led countless hopefuls to make pilgrimages to the great white north to study under the masters. The schools of Canada are almost mythical in status, and wrestlers who train there gain unparalleled insight into the grappling arts. Those who wish to call themselves masters must travel to Canada to train and test their talents.

GMs should treat the Canadian schools akin to the monasteries in kung fu films. Worthy heroes venture there to study at the feet of wizened masters of the art. The schools can make excellent background for stories, establishing connections to other wrestlers and introducing plot points. The GM can also use the schools to introduce new specialties and wrestling rules presented in this book.

ADVENTURING IN CANADA

Canada boasts vast expanses of pristine wilderness which makes it a great place to visit in real life, and an even better one to get lost in during a game. Mountain ranges and climate create a winter wonderland for any sort of snow sport imaginable, providing additional activities and exciting chase sequences for your masked heroes. The many resorts provide settings for unmasked snow enthusiasts from around the world to come together for plot introductions. Seriously, how many classic spy films and thrillers have you seen that don't include a ski lodge scene?

Looking for an isolated wilderness setting for your next adventure? Miles and miles of woodlands stretch across Canada just waiting to conceal exciting new dangers. Everything from secret strongholds to magical groves could be lurking out there with a pleasant sprinkling of quiet little towns or safe-looking cities as near or far as your story demands. A GM would have a hard time finding a better mix of civilization and natural settings.

THE LA CROIX FAMILY

Perhaps the most famous of the Canadian schools belongs to the legendary La Croix family. Known as The Crucible to graduates and hopefuls alike, the La Croix school sets the standard for strict discipline and trial by fire attitude. Graduates claim that The Crucible will teach you to breathe fire or burn you to ash and anyone who expects less need not apply. Founded by the undefeated La Croix brothers (Liam and Lincoln), the school emphasizes tag team tactics and technical wrestling skills above all others. Disciples of The Crucible have dominated tag team competition across Canada and the United States for the last three decades.

The school's contributions to technical wrestling manifest first and foremost in the form of Liam's grandson Lamont La Croix who claimed championship gold for the family at Rising Sun Wrestling in Japan and the Global Wrestling Alliance out of the USA. Lamont's time in the high profile GWA elevated him to celebrity status with a series of championships culminating in a 16 month reign as the GWA heavyweight champion. The attention he received renewed interest in the La Croix dynasty and created a new influx of sacrifices for The Crucible.



While the high flyers and showmen tend to get most of the attention, the heart of lucha libre is wrestling. Canadian wrestling has a particularly strong tradition of technical proficiency on the mat. Wrestlers flock from all over North America to hone their craft under the unforgiving glare of the Canadian masters in their academies. These legendary schools are famous or infamous for their strict discipline and grueling regimen. The harsh conditions may dissuade the unworthy, but for true students of the game such punishment is a price eagerly paid in the pursuit of greatness. You can now learn some of the advanced grappling techniques of the masters, at least in RPG form, without enduring the harsh road that others must travel.

RECAPPING

We're about to cover some old ground as a primer for the new rules that lie ahead. There are a few new wrinkles sprinkled in along the way, but we give bullet points in bold for those of you who are just skimming this section.

GRABS

The basis of all wrestling skill moves is the grab. Without the grab, none of the pain that follows is possible. The grab is not just a gateway to other moves however. Sometimes the grab alone is enough to achieve your goal. A grabbed character cannot move away from the grabber and can only move by dragging the grabber through a very difficult strength check as described in section 3.2.1 of *Luchador: Painted Honor*. Even if the trapped character succeeds, the amount of movement attained is fairly trivial. The simple control of positioning offered by the grab is often overlooked and has surprising usefulness in out-of-ring action.

The grabber can exert a great deal of control on the grabbed character. The grabber can execute a takedown to force the enemy to a prone position by making a strength check with the opponent's strength level as difficulty. Once prone, the grabbed character cannot stand until the grab is broken without making a strength check using the strength level and grab expertise of the attacker as difficulty. Even if successful, the check does not free the character it only allows him to get to his feet. Regaining footing is important as the grabbed character face +2 difficulty for any checks against the grabber while prone (see section 6.2.3 of *Luchador: Way of the Mask*) in addition to the normal penalty for the grab. The combined modifier can make fighting your way out nearly impossible.

- **A takedown can hold the target down.**
- **The prone character needs a strength check to stand while grabbed.**

Instead of putting an opponent down on the mat, the grabber can make a strength check to lift him up. As usual, the difficulty for the check is the strength level of the opponent. The most common reason for the lift is to set up some form of slam. See the slam section that follows for more information. The lifter can move while grabbing the target on an exceptional success on the strength check. The character can move with the lifted

opponent a number of feet equal to the margin of success, as long as the success was exceptional. This rule expands upon the entry in section 3.2.1 of *Luchador: Painted Honor*, allowing more movement than previously stated.

These rules assume a struggling opponent. A luchador can lift and carry an unconscious or otherwise disabled character with a simple (difficulty 0) strength check. Carrying (as opposed to lifting) is less strenuous but offers less control. The carrier cannot do anything other than carry and move. Characters are free to react to incoming attacks while carrying someone, but face an additional +2 to the difficulty for any checks. Particularly powerful characters can avoid these penalties. If the carrying character made an exceptional check, or has a strength level 2 higher than that of the carried character (plus any heavy modifiers), then the carrier is free to act while carrying and does not face the +2 difficulty. Carrying someone around is not easy and can tire you out. The character must make another strength check and pays a point of fatigue at intervals equal to the carrier's conditioning level in turns.

The grabbed character's greatest disadvantage is the difficulty applied to all checks, other than escape. Half of the current margin of success applies to the difficulty of all checks, rendering the character's efforts futile if the attacker has a good grab locked in. To make matters worse, the grabbed character cannot apply his agility level against incoming attacks.

A grabber can employ the rules in section 3.2.2 of *Luchador: Painted Honor* to immobilize a specific limb of an opponent, but reduces the amount of control by doing so.

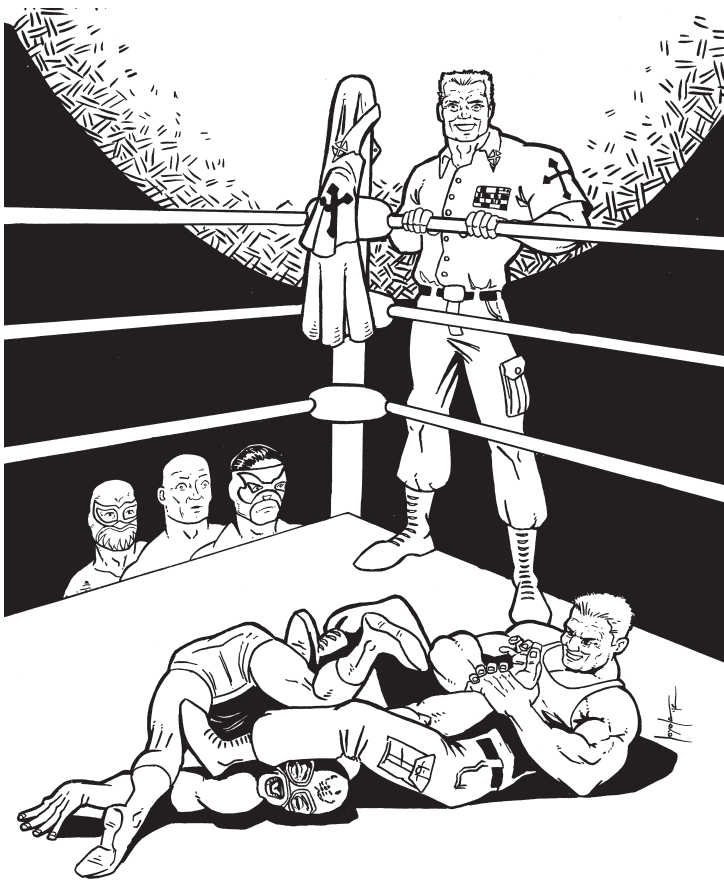
REACTING TO A GRAB

The target of a grab can react to it like any other attack. By the nature of the grab, the counterattack option is not particularly effective unless the grabber misses. A successful grab completely prevents any combat action other than a strike, so counterattacking with a throw, tackle, or armed attack automatically fails if the grab is successful. The GM may rule that armed attacks are possible while in a grab for small and easily used (difficulty 0) weapons, but does so on a case by case manner. Counterattacking with a strike against a successful grab faces the additional difficulty for the grab as covered above, but can still be effective particularly if you can stun the grabber.

Defensive reactions to a grab are more common and more effective. Dodging allows the character to sidestep, or at least prevent a solid grab. Evading serves a similar purpose particularly if trying to avoid multiple opponents, but usually doesn't stop a skilled grappler. Escaping is the one of the best reactions to a grab attempt. The target struggles to get free of the grab before the attacker can finish locking the move in place. The technical escape involving a grab check or the bruiser escape (section 6.3.3 of *Luchador: Way of the Mask*) using strength are both options for a reaction.

Once the grab is in place, the grabbed character cannot take any reaction except strikes, escape, and the resist defensive action described in section 3.3 of *Luchador: Painted Honor*. The grabbed character cannot react to simply being in the grab, but can react if another check is made against him. Thus, he could react





to a strength check to lift him or an attempt to lock a submission hold into place. He also gets to react to strikes made against him by the grabber or opportunistic allies. Yes, that means he gets extra attempts to slip free because your buddy is pummeling him. Of course all of these reactions are burning up fatigue and helping wear the target down. Just keeping out of a skilled grappler's clutches can quickly exhaust a guy.

PINNING

A successful grab opens up the opportunity for many options, but what if you just want to hold somebody still? Players can employ the grab skill to pin an opponent down. In the ring, pinning can win a match. Outside of a match, pinning can hold someone still long enough to try and talk sense into them. To execute a pin, the target must be prone but need not be on his back. The pinning character then twists the target into a knot to control all of the target's limbs. The pinning character rolls a grab check attempting to score a margin of success that equals or exceeds the target's strength rating! If successful, the pinned character can take no action other than attempts to escape (either through grab or strength checks as normal). There is no chance of trying to fight out of a pin with strikes. If the pinned character reduces the margin of success to less than his strength rating, then the pin becomes a normal grab. Likewise, if the attacker fails to equal the strength rating, then the attack is normal grab, but the attacker cannot advance to another wrestling move on the same turn as a pin attempt.

The pinning rule is essentially an extension of the rules from section 3.2.2 of *Luchador: Painted Honor* for controlling a

single limb of an opponent. It is much harder to hold the entire body helpless. The pinning character can take no other actions while maintaining the pin and cannot use the pin to progress into other wrestling moves. Any attempt to do so ends the pinning effect, but the high margin of success remains.

HOLDS

Submission holds are dreaded by most luchadors who have been forced to face them. Sure, you have to make yourself a target to employ one, and it takes time to get the opponent to tap out, but the effect is worth it. Once you lock in a hold it is usually just a matter of time before the enemy inevitably submits.

The attacker must make a hold check every turn to maintain and increase the punishment from the hold. A success adds half the margin of success to the current base damage, and the base damage increases by 1 for every turn of the hold up to double the character's strength level. An exceptional success on a hold prevents the target from reacting, limiting attempts to escape to his actions. If the target declares a reaction to a hold, then the escape or counterattack does not occur until after the hold check! A failed hold check means that the character has slipped and the increasing damage stops. A new hold must be attempted and the base damage starts back at the character's strength level. The grab remains at its current margin of success even if the hold check fails. Only a disastrous failure on the hold check ends the grab.

- **An exceptional success on a hold prevents a reaction.**
- **Reactions to a hold take place after the hold.**
- **A disastrous hold check breaks the grab.**

What truly makes the hold feared is its high likelihood of inflicting injury. All submission holds take some body part and twist it in a way it was not meant to go. Essentially, the attacker is trying to inflict injury on the opponent in a manner so painful that they have no choice but to give up. Consequently, holds in the game inflict injury points when they exceed half of the target's resilience (always round down). Most opponents will pass out or tap before they take too much lasting punishment, but a grappler is perfectly capable of hospitalizing enemies who don't know when to quit. The high injury level of holds also make them very effective for dealing with unliving opposition where injury points are the only thing that matters.

SIGNATURE HOLDS

If a character takes a signature hold, the base damage increases by 1 for the first turn of the hold, and the maximum base damage is double that total. Thus, a character with a strength level 4 and a signature hold has a 5 base damage on the first turn and can get to a 10 base damage if the hold lasts 5 more turns!

A signature hold makes it harder to resist tapping out, as it applies the extra +2 points of difficulty to the opponent's determination check. Add that to the expertise level of a character who took the time to develop a signature hold and the chance of success becomes very grim.

When purchasing a signature hold, the player must describe the move to the GM's satisfaction as with any other signature. It starts as a two step move (grab and hold), but other steps can be added. If the luchador pauses to showboat between

the grab and the hold, the player can add flourish steps. Holds that requires a prone opponent, like the figure four, can take advantage of the prone modifier. Even a feat of strength can be incorporated, as in the case of a chicken wing lift.

A signature hold only generates Heat when it is first locked into place, not every turn that the victim is held. Once again the technico gets the short end of the glory.

SLEEPER HOLDS

The sleeper hold is a specific type of hold that differs from the submission holds discussed so far. Sleeper holds attempt to render an opponent unconscious without causing serious injury. Knocking an opponent out can get you a win in the ring, and has even more applications outside it.

This move works differently than most attacks. A sleeper hold does not inflict any damage. I'll repeat that. A sleeper hold does not inflict any damage. The attacker makes a hold check against a grabbed target with an additional difficulty of +2 for applying a sleeper. If the attack is successful, the target is instantly fatigued. Instead of inflicting damage in the form of vitality loss, the attack generates 'sleeper points' in the exact same manner that a submission hold generates damage. The target gets to subtract his conditioning level from this total, and makes a free determination check every turn to reduce the total further. The difficulty for the determination check is the attacker's level of expertise in hold. Once all of the dice have rolled, compare the current total of sleeper points to the target's resilience. As soon as the sleeper points equal resilience, the character passes out! If the total is not enough, the tally continues until next turn or until the hold is broken. A character in a sleeper hold can choose to make an action to actively fight off the sleeper points with a determination check at the same difficulty as the free one. This check further reduces the current total, but costs 1 fatigue (which you don't have) to attempt. The sleeper does not work on undead or unliving characters, or anyone else the GM deigns immune.

A character rendered unconscious by a sleeper wakes up with a simple (difficulty 0) conditioning check made at a time of the GM's choosing. Important characters should get a check after a minute or two, and continue to check every minute thereafter. Henchmen and minions could be out for longer, but rarely more than half an hour. The victim gets to make a check immediately if anyone attempts to wake them.

The sleeper is a staple of professional wrestling, and one of the most requested moves in demos of Luchador: Way of the Mask. It is also a handy way to subdue a character without causing serious harm, which makes it a helpful tool for adventuring masked men with a conscience. We have designed the attack to work best on a foe who is already at a disadvantage, which keeps with the in-ring tradition, and reduces the impact of the sleeper so it won't dominate the game.

SLAMS

Although lacking much of the technical expertise and finesse of submission holds, the myriad array of moves we categorize as slams brings a high impact option to a wrestler's repertoire. A slam requires three steps: the grab, the lift, and the slam itself. Don't worry, we aren't going to go over grabs and lifts again. The required lift makes the slam a favorite of more powerfully built grapplers.

The character can add additional steps between the lift and the slam if desired. As previously discussed, an exceptional strength check can open up the opportunity to move with the lifted opponent. This allows the lifter to move to a more advantageous location for the slam, or to add risk in the form of momentum for a running slam. The character must pass an agility check to apply the risk as usual. On an aside, the damage from a running slam is truly appalling. If the grabbed character can successfully escape before the slam, he may be able to use that momentum against his attacker.

The slammer can also gain risk by falling with the slam, as in the case of all suplexes and a number of sit-down-power bombs. The agility check is required as usual, but this manner of adding risk does not require the exceptional strength check. The attacker does end up prone with the target.

A slam has a base damage of 4 plus the strength level of the slammer. It adds the full margin of success to the damage (up to double the base), and threatens to stun the target on an exceptional success. A character can substitute his level of expertise for his strength level as the difficulty for resisting the stunning effect of a slam. The target of a slam automatically ends up prone.

- **Expertise in slam may replace strength level for stunning.**

RELEASE SLAM

For power wrestlers who want to add even more impact (you sick little monkeys) but dread facing an agility check of a running slam, there remains the release slam. A release slam generally refers to a slam where the attacker lets go and does not follow the target down. For our purposes, the important distinction from a regular slam is that the release slam can be used to throw a target off of an elevated point to the ground far below.

The first step to this move is getting into the right situation. While the adventure settings should usually include lots of diverse elevation to accommodate lucha action, getting an obliging opponent to join you at a convenient height can be more difficult than just leaping off of one at targets below. Once you get your opponent into position, the character goes through the normal steps to set up for a slam. Things change when the target is elevated, but before the slam check. The slammer now must make an additional strength check with the level of risk that the slammees is about to face as difficulty. In short, the difficulty is 1 for every 5 feet (as the GM decides to measure it) that the attacker is hurling the victim down. The slammer must pass this strength check to add force to the normal falling; otherwise he just tosses the victim and lets gravity take its course. A failed check ends the set up for a slam, and the target simply falls facing normal damage for falling. A successful check adds risk to the slam, however the slammer faces no danger of having the risk used against him. Consequently, he gains no Heat from the risk, but his opponent does. That's right, the move gives your opponent Heat! Now, he's going to need the Heat because this is going to hurt.

DROPS

While power slams are major crowd pleasers, many mat technicians prefer drops for their grappling offense. To a skilled grappler the drop is a much quicker move than the slam and packs almost as much punch. It also foregoes the strength check which



can be a stumbling block, particularly if facing off against a larger opponent.

The drop requires only two steps: the grab, and the drop itself. A drop has a base damage of 3 plus the strength level of the attacker. It adds the full margin of success to the damage (up to double the base), and threatens to stun the target on an exceptional success. A character can substitute his level of expertise for his strength level as the difficulty for resisting stunning.

The target of a drop ends up prone if the damage of the attack (before reducing by C-level) equals or exceeds half his strength. A drop that fails to knock the target prone still leaves the attacker prone. In these cases, the target fell with the attacker, but was able to keep or immediately regain his footing.

- **Expertise in drop may replace strength level for stunning.**

FALLING

Once more I am guilty of sin by omission. Nowhere in the core rulebook do we specifically detail falling damage. The implication and intent was to have characters face 3 damage per 5 feet fallen as an extension of levels of risk. However, this rule was never stated before, and I find it somewhat appropriate to bury it here in a sidebar in the wrestling moves section of the fourth book as a little Easter egg for old school rule lawyers.

GMs wishing to up the severity of falls can include extra damage for the surface landed upon by employing the rules from section 3.2.5 of *Luchador: Painted Honor*. Doing so generally adds 3 to falls onto the concrete floors which comprise most wrestling arenas.

RISK AND DROPS

In addition to its speed, many wrestlers like the drop because it has more opportunity to add momentum for even more devastating impact. The tornado DDT and flying bulldog are just a few of the classic high risk drops from the wrestling world.

A character can add risk to a drop before reaching the grab step. This is generally not the case with a slam, as the act of lifting requires the character to be stationary. The luchador executing any form of high risk grab builds up momentum, and risk, then executes the flying grab as the next step. As long as nothing interrupts the sequence, the character then adds the risk to the drop as the third step. Both the grab and the drop check face the extra difficulty for any risk involved. If the target escapes from the grab, or the attacking luchador is stunned or knocked down by any action before the drop can be completed, then the risk is lost. Naturally, all of this can be compressed with the complex action rules.

Example

Red Scorpion leaps off a balcony to take down a vampire woman before she can feed upon a mesmerized King Phoenix. The technico feels a need to show off a little since the King is too spellbound to engage in any high flying, so he opts for a flying tornado DDT.

The GM rules that the balcony dive constitutes a 2 risk leap, so the first step is a difficulty 2 check against the Scorpion's agility of 14. He rolls a 10 which succeeds, and spends one precious Heat to make it an exceptional success so he can press on to the next step. He must spend 1 fatigue to advance to the next move in the same turn.

Actually grabbing the head and neck of the breathtaking bloodsucker requires a grab check with a difficulty of 4 for her agility level and 2 for the levels of risk. Red Scorpion has a grab rating of 20 so he needs a 14. On his second check (technicos can re-roll wrestling skills) he gets the exceptional success he's looking for with a roll of 8. The vampiress should get a reaction, but must first pass a wits check to react to a high risk move. She faces a difficulty of 2 for the risk and an additional penalty of 1 as the GM decides she was fixated on feeding on her handsome victim (and he likes the direction that the action is taking). She needs a 9 to react, but rolls a 13.

The Red Scorpion dodges another potential bullet to his big play, and keeps advancing into the drop itself. The difficulty for the drop is 5 for her undead strength level, and 2 more for the high risk. He now remembers why he doesn't like to fly. His rating at drop is 19 so he needs a 12 to pull this off. His first roll is a 14, but the re-roll gets him a 10. This time the vampires passes her wits check and reacts with an attempt to shove the scarlet pest away as he whips around her head. She makes a strength check with a difficulty of 4 for his strength level, 3 for half the margin of success for his grab, and 1 for the hasty check of a reaction. Her strength of 15 means she needs a 7 to cast him aside and bring all of his momentum to an end. The GM explains the situation to the players and allows a moment for suspense to build before rolling a 9!

Red Scorpion's player breathes a sigh of relief, and finishes the math on his DDT. He has a margin of success of 2. The base damage for a drop is 3, plus 4 for his strength level, plus 6 for the 2 levels of risk, for a total damage of 15! The undead don't suffer vitality loss, but she does take three injury points as her head hits the ground. The damage is also enough to drag her to the ground leaving her prone for future attacks.

RUNNING DROP

A character can add risk to a drop after executing a grab at the GM's discretion. To do so, the character must allow more leeway to the grabbed target which reduces the grab check to half its current margin of success. The grabber is basically trying to lead his victim as he builds momentum providing a better opportunity to escape. The agility check to gain risk faces a difficulty of the target's strength level and allows the target to make another reaction. If the target gets free before the move is complete, then the risk can be used against the original attacker.

Example

A rookie luchador slaps a headlock on Red Scorpion and tries to turn it into a running bulldog. The original margin of success for the grab was 4, so it drops to a 2 as the rookie tries to build up a head of steam. His agility is 13, but he faces a difficulty of 4 for the Red Scorpion's strength level and 1 for the risk he seeks. He continues to roll well scoring a margin of success of 2, but not the exceptional success he needed. The kid ends his move in mid-leap for the bulldog.

*Red Scorpion gambled on the difficulty of the agility check preventing his attacker from finishing the move in a single turn and did not waste fatigue on a reaction. The technico escapes on his turn and burns one Heat to make it an exceptional success so he can execute a reversal using the rules from section 3.2.6 of *Luchador: Painted Honor* (like all pros, he reads all of the rules). The exceptional escape allows him to spend 1 fatigue and make a hasty grab without facing the agility level of the rookie. With a grab rating of 20 and a difficulty of only 1 for the hasty check, his chance of success is 19. He rolls an 8 which is an exceptional success even after the hasty division. The Red Scorpion then executes a drop of his own using his opponent's risk against him.*



HOLDING ON

Normally, a luchador releases his grip on an opponent with the impact of a slam or drop, however that need not be the case. A character can choose to maintain the grab after either move. Doing so requires the expenditure of a point of fatigue, and reduces the grab's margin of success to half the current value. In the ring, a luchador may retain a grab to take a slam directly into a pinning predicament. Retaining a grab also allows the character to move directly into a hold, possibly taking advantage of a stunned adversary. Last, but not least, the character can move from one slam into another. The already grabbed target just needs to be lifted again to keep the carnage coming.

Example

Continuing the action from the earlier example, the Red Scorpion has the vampire woman prone after a flying tornado DDT. Mother Mercy is poised on the same balcony with wooden stake in hand. The tecnico decides to spend the 1 fatigue needed to maintain his grab. The margin of success was at 6, so the vampires must now escape from a MOS 3 grab before the flying nun can drive the stake home.

MULTIPLE MOVE SIGNATURE

If you read the last line in the previous section, then you can probably guess where we are going here. A luchador can combine multiple moves into a single signature move. This rule follows the same pattern as the tag team rules in section 4.2.1 of Luchador: Painted Honor. The player specifies the combination of moves, including the order they must be executed in, and adds the steps together to create the final multiple move signature. The character must complete the entire series to generate Heat, and only gains the additional damage and difficulty to the opponent's checks on the last offensive move in the series. As the 'bonuses' only apply to the final move, the cost of the signature drops by 1.

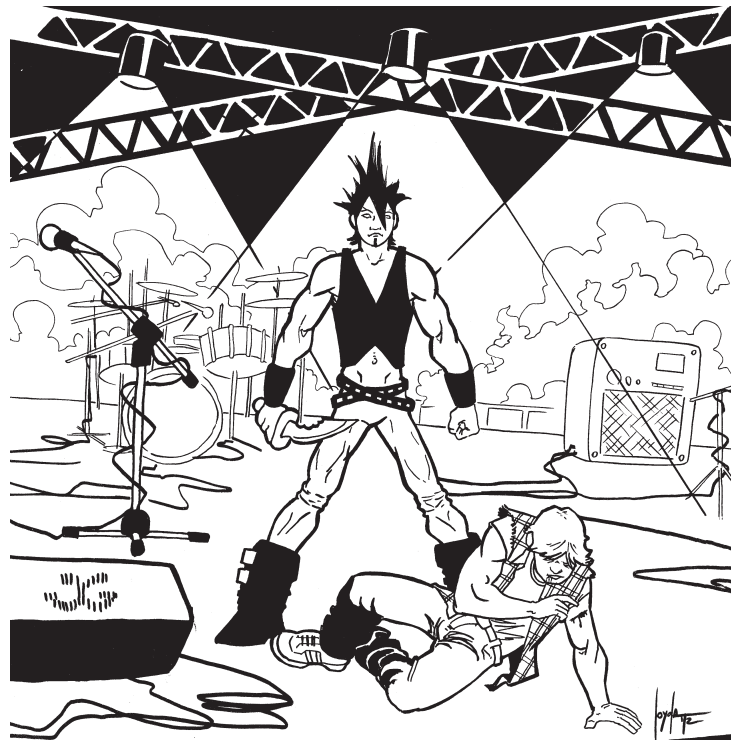
Obviously, this rule requires even more scrutiny on the part of the GM than other signature moves. The multiple move must contain at least 2 damaging checks (attacks that can cause damage) to qualify for the extra one point reduction. The most common multiple signatures are strings of a specified suplex.

NARRATIVE GRAPPLING

We have been over this before, but we're going to hit it again because it really is that important. The GM and players need to describe the action in manner that goes beyond the banal, 'I slam him.' The game becomes unbearably repetitive if the players don't act as their own color commentary. You are playing luchadors fighting against the very forces of evil. Put a little panache into your fights!

The players must describe their action to the satisfaction of the GM or he cannot set difficulty or determine the outcome. The player does not have to write a short poem for every move, but should at least name a specific type of slam. Short descriptions are actually preferable, but they should include enough detail for the GM and other players to be able to visualize what is going on. The clearer the image of the action, the easier it is for everyone to interact and build upon it.

Even if a player is not particularly versed in the world of lucha libre, he can describe what he wants to do. Action figures and players with more wrestling knowledge can make this a more



fluid process. Moves that follow classic ring style combinations should be encouraged, often with reduction to difficulty. It is the collective description of the action that keeps it exciting. If the game doesn't stay exciting then the players (and GM) will lose interest.

Example

Eviscerator I has rushed the stage at a concert for the faustian rocker Noah Veil. He opens the fight with a simple boot to the midsection, which the GM determines is a strike with the rocker's A-level of 3 as difficulty. The attack easily stuns the macabre musician.

Eviscerator I's player rationalizes that the stunning kick probably doubled his opponent over and quickly sites the 'to the midsection' as support. Swayed by the bruiser style logic, the GM agrees. EI declares a waist lock from behind in preparation for a classic powerbomb lift. However, the rocker's initiative comes up before the bruiser can execute the grab, restoring his A-level of 3 to the difficulty. The GM likes the fact that Eviscerator I is building on his moves and lowers the difficulty for the grab by one. A difficulty 2 check later and the waist lock is locked in place but not exceptional, leaving the big man prepared for the dreaded decapitator slam as the knife-wielding diabolic throng rushes the stage.



3 TAG TEAM TACTICS

The La Croix Brothers reinvented tag team wrestling in the late seventies with their combination of technical skill, well timed high risk moves, and flawless coordination. Their skills inspired generation of wrestlers, and now your characters can follow in their footsteps with this guide to tag team tactics.

THE SPIRIT OF TAG TEAMING

Teamwork is an important part of any game, however Luchador: Way of the Mask is a game that requires a different outlook than most others and that extends to its view on teamwork. In many genres, the group of heroes learns the advantages of concentrating fire into a single powerful enemy to bring it down quickly and effectively. While luchadors aren't above ganging up on an enemy, they don't care for the dogpile approach. Wrestlers who hold down an enemy while their allies stomp him into paste are heels and an affront to the competitive spirit that drive lucha libre.

First off, luchadors generally prefer one on one combat. This is the basis of wrestling and the desire to test one's self in a fair fight is what luchadors live for. If both sides are using multiple opponents, then the laws of tag team hold sway, and the side that best utilizes teamwork shall prevail.

When luchadors choose to work together against a single enemy they usually employ a succession of moves that work off of one another, and hopefully still allow them to each show off their own style. Beating the opponent is important, but if you cannot do it with flash then what's the point?

While luchadors rarely 'tag in' during fights outside the ring, they still follow the basic tenants of tag team wrestling. It is preferable not to have more than one luchador remain in contact with the same opponent for more than a three count (3 turns). The key here is the phrase 'remain in contact'. Three different luchadors can execute a series of splashes into an opponent, as long as they keep moving to make room for the next one. Player A can armdrag the enemy to the ground where player B frog splashes him, and then player C executes a baseball slide into his back as he sits up. As long as everybody keeps moving, then the match is exciting and the lucha libre sensibility is satisfied.

Actual double teaming moves like the tandem actions described in section 3.4 of Luchador: Painted Honor (you missed a lot if you didn't get that one) fall under the umbrella of the three count. The referee usually grants a three count before ejecting a member of a team from the ring after the tag. The same rule applies to active double teaming an enemy outside of the ring. A tandem lift into a slam can be executed in three steps making it fair game. Exceptional successes can speed things up, leaving room for additional rough housing. After three turns of double teaming, years of training cause the luchador to reflexively back off before a referee throws the match out.

THE TAG

Most multi-person wrestling matches only allow one participant per side to be in the ring at a time. Outside of Mexico, the rules usually require a tag to trade one member of a team for another. The active participant must reach the corner and touch an ally to grant him access to the ring. When playing out a match, the GM decides if the character is in his corner and how far from the

ropes as detailed in section 7.1 of Luchador: Painted Honor. The tag occurs on the legal character's initiative, and the new legal man enters on his own initiative roll. Delaying (see next section) can make this a near instantaneous exchange, as long as nobody gets distracted by ringside shenanigans.

In lucha libre, things work a little different. A new member of a team can usually enter the ring as soon as the current legal man is ejected from the ring. This rule is subject to a great deal of interpretation by the referee. If both legal men leave the ring to fight on the floor, then the ref can insist that both of them are still legal, and no exchange can be made. The free style of these matches can be very exciting, and can also overwhelm a referee and GM quickly. It is up to the GM to decide when tags need to be made, and when they do not. Resort to patience checks if you think things are getting out of hand.

TIMING AND DELAYING

Timing is everything in lucha libre. Success and failure are often a mere heartbeat apart, which is why we make you roll initiative every turn. Many fights are won by moving fast enough to capitalize on the situation before the other guy. When you are trying to coordinate with a partner, you often find yourself in the curious situation where you need to slow down.

Delaying initiative is a useful tool for many situations. The most obvious use is coordinating with a tag team partner. A character can opt to delay until his partner's initiative so the two of them can execute a tandem move. Characters with the tag team specialty get to average their initiative scores for this purpose, but other characters have to do things the hard way. If the slower character is prevented from acting, then the delaying character has wasted his action in vain. The faster character cannot change moves this turn.

In tag team situations, the character is waiting for a partner who wants to execute the move together and no game mechanics need be employed. The delaying character moves when his partner activates according to initiative check for the turn. When a character wants to wait for a less cooperative interaction then a few extra dice rolls are involved.

A character can delay his action until a specific event occurs. The specific event must meet the standards of the GM. Simply waiting to see how your partner does is not an acceptable descriptor. Waiting to jump into the ring as soon as the tag is made is a perfectly legitimate and common situation for delaying. Waiting for a specific opponent to get to his feet before executing your signature bulldog is also acceptable.

The requirements for a delaying situation are subjective, but have some clear guidelines. First, the trigger for the delay must be a single person or spot performing a specific action, such as the opponent getting up or anyone coming through this door. Second, the delaying character's intended response to the trigger must also be clearly stated. The delaying character can abort the action, but cannot switch to another action. The third requirement is that the GM should be able to envision the character waiting for the trigger. I know that sounds silly, but it works. If you are a fan of wrestling, then you have probably seen a wrestler poised to strike with his favorite finishing move as he waits for his unfortunate foe



to stagger to his feet. Likewise, the last girl hiding behind the door with a weapon waiting to bash in the head of the masked killer is a standard scene in horror films. You've never seen an action star wait to see if the hired heavy gets a better initiative check than the comedy sidekick.

If the GM decides that the situation is appropriate, then the character can delay. Furthermore, the character can delay into another turn if the event has not occurred yet. At the beginning of each turn, the character has the option of continuing to wait, or rolling initiative so he can choose a different action. Once other players roll the dice, it is too late to change your mind and you wait for another turn. The maximum number of turns that a character can wait is his determination level, after that he starts getting distracted and must roll initiative as normal.

Delaying characters can also get distracted through interaction of other characters. A trick check can get the character to take his eyes off the prize and miss the opportunity to strike. Likewise, a blatant attack can bring a delayed action to a halt. If the character is knocked down, stunned, or reacts to an action then his concentration shifts and the delay is lost. He rolls for initiative next turn like everybody else.

NEW THROW RULES

In tag team wrestling ring positioning is the key to victory. The team that isolates the enemy on their side of the ring has the upper hand. Guile, cunning, and brute force can accomplish this goal, but the most reliable method of moving the enemy is the throw.

Hold on to your hats, because the rules are changing for the throw. This is not an optional rule. This is an unalterable change in the game and must be observed at all times or you forfeit your game mastering privileges! We have spies in all gaming groups who will report violations to us. Don't question it!

The throw now faces difficulty from either the strength or agility level of the target, whichever is higher. Add any modifications to strength or agility level from reactions before determining which is higher. Heavy targets also add the bonus for their mass when figuring strength level.

Once the GM determines which one to apply, the throw works as before, ignoring the second paragraph from section 5.1.2 of Luchador: Way of the Mask detailing a free strength check to oppose the throw. To reiterate, there is no longer a free strength check to oppose throws. Characters can react with a resist move if they feel nostalgic for the previous rule.

The final results of the throw remain unchanged. The base damage is the strength level of the attacker. A successful check adds half the margin of success to the damage dealt, up to double the base damage. An exceptional success threatens to stun the opponent. The target of a successful throw is knocked prone and faces difficulty to initiative equal to the MOS. The target is thrown 5 feet, or up to 10 feet on an exceptional success.

Agility governs Throw.

Example

King Phoenix is involved in an adventure in Japan too complicated to sum up quickly. He is squaring off with a ninja when a werewolf pounces on him from above. A lucky wits check prevents the sneak attack, and lets the King act on a turn that begins with the werewolf in mid leap (two levels of risk, but no exceptional success).

King Phoenix is thrilled to hear he has the highest initiative score for the turn, and declares an armdrag to the airborne werewolf to toss him towards the ninja so he can keep both bad guys in front of him.

The GM decides this is a throw incorporating the risk of the werewolf. The lycanthrope's strength level is 5 and his agility level is 4, so King Phoenix faces a difficulty of 7 to his throw (5 for strength level and 2 for risk). His rating in throw is 17, so he needs a 10 to succeed. With a roll of nine he sends the werewolf tumbling and confused towards the ninja.

THE THROW AS IRISH WHIP

I know this book is set in Canada, but the move is still called the Irish whip. In section 6.1 of Luchador: Painted Honor we introduced the concept of adding risk to a second character by lifting or hurling him with a strength check. While these rules still stand, we offer a new option for the more tactical Irish whip.

Characters can use the throw skill to execute an Irish whip that sends the enemy racing forward with additional risk. The attacker executes a throw as normal, but foregoes knocking the target prone or inflicting any damage to add a level of risk to the target. The thrown character does not have to make an agility check to utilize the risk! The target still faces the modifier to initiative, meaning the attacker has a good chance of beating him to the punch on the next turn. The end result of this move is an opponent moving with velocity and no need to check for it, but facing a hard initiative check. If he goes first next turn, he gets to cream you, and you gave him the velocity to make it happen.

Crafty players are already thinking about using the Irish whip to throw their buddy (particularly their giant buddy) into enemies. They can even site wrestling matches where they have seen it done, and they are right. However, the difficulty to initiative still applies, and their giant friend might not get to move at all. This is where those strength checks to hurl people have the upper hand. Think carefully about which one you want to try.

DESIGNER'S NOTE

When putting together Luchador: Way of the Mask, I had to struggle with several decisions on how moves should work. My general design ethic included that strength should factor in on any move that knocks a character prone. Throws knock characters prone, therefore strength should figure into blocking a throw. But wait! Agility has to apply difficulty because you have to grab the target to throw him. I watched several matches looking for drop toeholds and armdrags, and eventually arrived on the free strength check to oppose the throw that appears in the original rules.

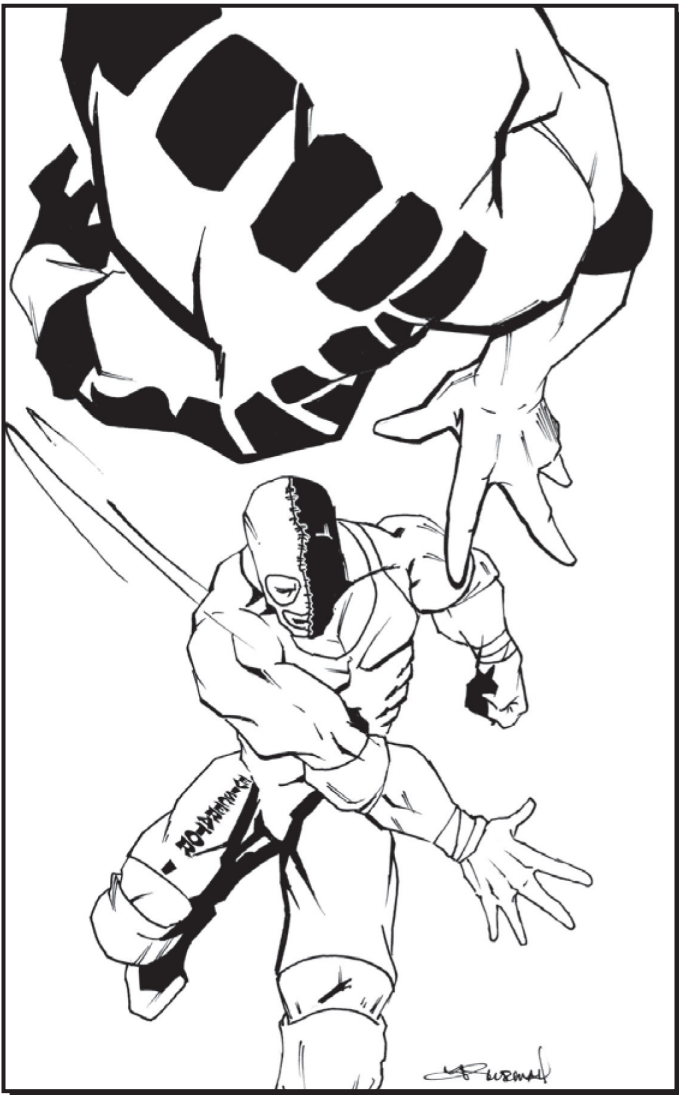
The problem was, that the throw rules were clunky and broke from the pattern of using statistic levels to apply difficulty unless the target actively resisted. During demos, I frequently skipped the free strength check for NPCs because it didn't fit neatly into my OCD for rules. The revised rules here grew out of demos and playtesting at an embarrassingly slow rate. Characters can use the Resist defensive action presented in section 3.3 of Luchador: Painted Honor to achieve the classic power stop to a throw in a manner akin to the original rules, and everything follows the same basic design which makes me happy.



4 FOR EVERY ACTION AN AWESOME REACTION!

In *Luchador: Way of the Mask* we introduces reactions as a means of responding to attacks. Even though we implied that the rules were optional, all of the following material displays the belief that reactions are an integral part of the game system. Players have shown a variety of opinions on reactions. Many feel that reactions are a waste of fatigue since the hasty check reduces the effect of these moves to pointlessness. Others find reactions frustrating as a nimble enemy eludes their blows with a lucky roll. Both camps are ultimately correct in their observations. Reactions should rarely dominate the action but can be life savers when properly employed. They create a further level of uncertainty in a game where many PCs have ratings of 20 or more in favorite attacks.

While not clearly stated, a character can react to each and every attack that targets him. Of course he must pay fatigue for every reaction, which can add up quickly. A character could react to several attacks in a single turn, but may only react once to each individual attack. The character obviously cannot react to an attack from surprise, nor can they react while stunned. Characters targeted by a high risk attack may be too surprised to react. The character must pass a wits check with either the level of risk or the attacker's presence level (whichever is higher) as difficulty. A failed check prevents the character from reacting in time.



OPPOSING ATTACK CHECKS

Some players have trouble visualizing a successful defensive action that doesn't stop the attack. They think that a successful block means they are safe. Basically the blocking character gets an arm or whatever in front of the blow, but don't catch all of it. A block can be the difference between a glancing shot to the face and a crippling hook to the temple. They both hurt, but one will leave you on your feet.

Occasionally a defender reacts to an attack only to find that the attacker missed entirely. From a narrative standpoint, your character tried to block a wild swing. You still spend fatigue and have used your reaction to that attack. No switching to a counter attack just because he missed (check out the Veteran specialty in section 8).

REVIEW OF REACTION OPTIONS

Blocks apply to all combat skill actions and reduce the margin of success of the attack check. As the attack check increases the damage of the attack, each point stopped is damage you don't have to face.

Dodging is the most versatile defensive action as it applies to combat actions, grabs, and even ranged attacks. Obviously it is a favored reaction of aerialists who can re-roll the check. As with blocks, the dodge opposes the attack check.

Escape attempts only apply against grabs, but a solid grab can be the beginning of a world of trouble for a character. An escape reaction is often vital in preventing the attacker from getting the exceptional success needed to move into a complex wrestling action on the same turn. The tecnico gets to re-roll escape reactions further ensuring that nobody outwrestles a tecnico.

Standing as a reaction allows the character to avoid the extra level of risk for being prone. As a free level of risk without agility check means even a giant can get a splash on you, it is vital that you avoid remaining prone if you can. Your current wound level dictates if a check is needed. If the character needs to make an agility check, then the check is hasty as a reaction. A failed check means the character does not get up in time to avoid the hit.

Counter attacks are among the most popular reactions, but are not without some drawbacks. The counter attack occurs after the incoming attack is completely resolved. Knockdown or stunning renders the counter attack moot as the character is no longer in position to counter. Of course, you still spend fatigue even though you get no retaliation. If all goes well, the defender throws a hasty attack back at the attacker. Even though it is hasty, the counter attack allows the defender to dish out a little damage on the opponent's initiative. Bruisers and other power wrestlers tend to be fans of the counter attack. The attack thrown in the counter has to be a one step move.

Bracing is an oft-overlooked option. The character simply absorbs the blow through raw strength! The character makes a strength check with the strength level and risk level of the incoming attack as difficulty. The margin of success adds to the character's conditioning level for reducing damage, and adds to the strength rating to determine if the character is knocked down. A character may not brace against wrestling skill moves as these attacks are either driving the character into the ground or twisting



limbs the wrong way. Obviously, a move based on strength is favored by Bruisers and Giants. Bracing costs 1 extra fatigue.

Evading is the defensive action most commonly employed as an action rather than a reaction since it applies to all incoming attacks. That doesn't mean it cannot be a reaction. The character makes an agility check and adds half the margin of success to agility level for avoiding attacks! This increase in agility level lasts until the character's next activation. Since reactions are hasty checks, the margin of success is cut in half for a hasty evasion and half of that number adds to the character's agility level. This is another reason it is more popular as an action.

The last defensive action available is the simply titled resist action. As described in *Luchador: Painted Honor*, a resist action is a strength check made to oppose the attacker's attempt to

move the character with a strength check. Normally, a wrestler's attempt to avoid being moved is represented by strength level applying difficulty to the opponent's strength check. In this case, the character spends fatigue (the normal 1 fatigue for a reaction, not an additional point) and makes a strength check of his own to oppose the attacker. This defensive action can react to any situation where an opponent makes a strength check to move the character. The defending character's strength check uses the attacker's S-level as difficulty.

FIGHTING DEFENSIVELY

Sometimes even the greatest heroes find themselves a little outmatched. Who knew that the spindly little mad scientist you cornered was going to turn into a towering bone-crusher of a monster thanks to that serum he had hidden in his lab coat?

Most game systems include some option for fighting on while concentrating on staying

alive. In *Luchador: Way of the Mask*, characters fight defensively by attacking with counterattack reactions and using their actions to defend. When the character's initiative comes around, the player opts to prepare for the defensive action that seems most useful. This allows the character to make active checks to avoid incoming attacks, resulting in very few hits to the defending character. The luchador then uses counterattack reactions to throw a few light jabs at the opponent while looking for an opening to change the momentum of the fight.

Fighting in this manner may seem a little cheesy, and it can be. Defensive fighting is best employed when your character is targeted by attacks that he cannot allow to hit at all. Samurais determined to end your life and other highly skilled attackers with overwhelming offense are good candidates for this tactic. Fighting

defensively against gangsters may keep you from getting hurt, but a luchador is usually better served taking the enemy down quickly rather than a drawn out defensive game.

When tactics and good taste don't limit defensive fighting, there are the concrete limitations of fatigue and wound level. The character can only counterattack until battered, and the extra fatigue expenditure per turn will eventually turn into vitality loss.

Reacting to Reactions

This is a short section. You cannot react to reactions. We toyed with some options, but they all ended up being more trouble than they were worth. If you as a GM find that counterattacks are overused in your campaign, amend the rules to allow a reaction to counterattacks at the normal cost of 1 fatigue.



Most fights in *Luchador: Way of the Mask* involve all parties losing vitality points until one side can endure no more. This convention allows for exciting battles with lots of damage flying around. When the smoke clears and the bad guys are thoroughly routed, the player characters can lick their wounds and press on with the adventure. A couple hours of rest or some well spent points of Heat and the characters are ready to go again. Sure, the characters might be under a time limit forcing them to enter the next scene down a few vitality points, but most of the time they are going into a fight rested and ring-ready. Being free to spend all of their vitality can get the players a little cocky. Injury points help keep the characters grounded.

Injury points represent serious damage that the characters cannot simply walk off. These are the ongoing effects of a life of action that can slow even a luchador down. Injury points are what make sharp weapons like the Aztec warrior's blades and the claws of a lurking horror fearsome. Injury points are why characters tap out to a submission hold, and why aerialists hesitate before the death defying dive.

EFFECTS OF INJURY POINTS

Even suffering a few injury points can have an impact on a luchador. Each injury point that a character takes ties up one vitality point that cannot be healed. Once the injury points heal, the corresponding vitality can be recovered as usual. If Mother Mercy is still recovering the 4 injury points from an unstoppable killer's attack, then she is dangerously close to being at the bruised wound level before the next fight even begins. The restriction on vitality as injury points build up usually convinces luchadors to ease up a bit until they can convalesce. If they don't, or the injury points just come at them too fast, then the character faces much more severe consequences.

When the number of injury points exceeds the character's conditioning rating his life is in jeopardy. It is up to the GM to decide if the character survives at this point or not. Killing a character, particularly a player character, goes a long way to setting the tone for a campaign. As *Luchador: Way of the Mask* draws heavily from horror films, some fatalities are expected. How many depends on the vibe the GM wants to maintain. NPC deaths should always serve some purpose in the storyline. Excessive casualties lose their impact and simply become gratuitous. Player character deaths are a much stickier subject. The players should generally be encouraged to take risks and fight bravely, but if those risks never have consequences then their courage is hollow.

If the GM decides that the injuries should not prove fatal, then the character is incapacitated. An incapacitated character cannot move or make any checks involving strength, agility, or conditioning including skills governed by those statistics. If the character still has vitality points then he can talk albeit slowly and with difficulty. Any checks against presence, wits, or determination are hasty and cost fatigue every turn. The GM may allow the character to crawl or take a physical action by spending 1 Heat for every turn. The character remains incapacitated until he has had time to heal his injury points down to his conditioning rating, although he probably shouldn't get too adventurous until he gets rid of a few more IP.

LONG TERM EFFECTS OF INJURY POINTS

It may come to pass that your players cease to have any concern for injury points. They may realize that you are unlikely to kill their characters when their injury points exceed their conditioning, and they accept incapacitation as nothing more than the end of their action in this adventure. To add a little more sting to incapacitation, the GM may opt to employ permanent effects to injury.

Whenever a character is incapacitated from injury points, they must make a conditioning check to see if they face long term effects. The difficulty for the check starts at 0, but includes the wound level penalty as usual. A character who has taken a sound beating before suffering incapacitation is less likely to minimize the effects of the damage. Alternatively, the GM can call for a permanent effect check if the character takes injury points exceeding his resilience in a single blow.

A successful check means that the character suffers no additional effects other than incapacitation. A failure means that the injury has nagging effects that will linger until the character heals all of the injury points, and will reoccur in the future if the character is not careful. A disastrous failure means the character faces a permanent debilitating effect! Characters can spend Heat to affect this roll.

Before any potential players reading this fly into a tizzy (you don't get many chances to use tizzy), realize that the 'permanent' effects aren't necessarily permanent. A player character can spend experience points to overcome long term effects through vigorous therapy. A nagging injury costs 3 XP to remove, while a permanent injury costs 5 XP. You can still save your character, but it's gonna cost you.

After determining the severity of the injury (nagging or permanent), the GM needs to decide what type of injury the character suffers. The following list breaks injuries down by area of the body. The listing for general applies primarily to incapacitation caused by amassed lesser injuries, or damage from burning. The GM can choose one appropriate to the injury taken in the game if the damage was clearly sustained to one spot, or can randomize using a d20.



INJURY LIST

HEAD

Injuries to the head trigger off of injury points from slams and drops (GM's discretion).

1-2 The character suffers 2 difficulty to agility checks, skills governed by agility, and initiative checks.

3-4 The character suffers 2 difficulty to wits checks, skills governed by wits, and initiative checks.

ARM/SHOULDER

Injuries to the arm/shoulder trigger off of injury points from throws and holds targeting the area.

5-6 The character cannot fully utilize one arm. The character faces 2 difficulty to grab, hold, and lift checks. The GM may apply the penalty to other situations where the off arm is needed.

SPINE/NECK

Injuries to the spine/neck trigger off of injury points from slams and holds targeting the spine (GM's discretion).

7-8 The character faces 2 difficulty for all strength checks. The character loses a point of vitality for every point a strength check is failed by. Disastrous failure threatens to stun the character.

9-10 The character is stiff and only applies agility level minus two as difficulty to attacks. The character also faces 2 difficulty to initiative checks.

TORSO/RIBS

Injuries to the torso trigger off of injury points from tackles or strikes to the torso.

11-12 The character loses 2 fatigue and must pass a conditioning check to reset fatigue.

13-14 The character reduces damage from attacks by conditioning level minus two.

LEGS

Injuries to legs trigger off of disastrous high risk moves (risk from altitude) or injury points taken from holds to the legs (GM's discretion).

15-16 The character faces 2 difficulty to agility checks to rise from being prone and for gaining risk from momentum. The character also loses 5 feet off of base movement, and faces 2 difficulty for checks to sprint.

GENERAL

General injuries trigger off of any injury points taken.

17-18 The character suffers 2 difficulty to all conditioning checks.

19-20 The character pays one extra fatigue for reactions, and must pass a conditioning check to reset fatigue.

NAGGING INJURY

Characters with a nagging injury suffer the penalties described above until they heal all of the injury points currently taken. The nagging injury can reoccur if the associated trigger happens to the character. A reoccurrence faces the penalty until the character has a chance to recuperate with a good night's rest and a successful conditioning check.

PERMANENT INJURY

Characters with a permanent injury constantly suffer the penalties described above. On the bright side, the injury cannot get worse.

REDUCING INJURY POINTS

While injury points serve an important role in the game, they can work against the GM's purpose. A single high impact hit with a very successful attack check can put a lot of injury points on a character without warning. High impact moves are supposed to end a fight, but not necessarily put a character in the hospital.

If you are finding that your player characters are spending too much time in the hospital after unlucky fights, then you might want to place a cap on the amount of injury points that a character can take from 'normal' attacks. Normal attacks in this case refer to those that do not employ special rules for generating injury points. Sharp, barbed, and flaming attacks are supposed to inflict injury and would not be subject to a cap. Weapons should also be immune to the injury cap to emphasize the increased danger of bringing a weapon into a fight.

The injury cap I recommend is the strength level of the attack plus one for every level of risk involved. Thus, a strength level 3 aerialist executing a 3 risk suicide dive could not inflict more than 6 injury points on the target. If said nameless aerialist connects with a margin of success of 12 and yields 27 damage in a single blow (3 for S-level, 3 for tackle, 9 for risk, and 12 for MOS), the impact would normally inflict 18 (subtract 3 for C-level, and 6 for resilience) injury points on an average citizen. Using the injury cap, the suicide dive could only achieve 6. The citizen still loses 24 vitality in a single move, and 6 injury points is nothing to sneeze at, but he is not at a point where he could die from the attack.

Applying an injury cap can have a big impact in your game. The players can have wrestling matches without killing one another, and a lucky blow is less likely to incapacitate a character. Missed high risk moves would also be less likely to leave a luchador crippled. On the other hand, characters lose the ability to put injury points into unliving opponents through high risk moves. Zombie disposal is hard enough without such a limitation. The GM might opt to lift the cap with proper narrative (I dive off the car and throw a forearm into the back of his spine), but leads to uncertainty about what will and will not cause high end injury. The GM must always strive to convey the gravity of the situation to the players. Consider carefully the full effects before deciding if you want to introduce an injury cap to your game.



6 STUNNING BEATDOWNS

You've seen it at least a dozen times if you are a wrestling fan. Your hero is trapped in the opposing ring corner surrounded by heels. They have him isolated from his tag team partner and are beating him down. Then, he gets a boot up into the face of the charging enemy. While that guy is spitting up blood and checking his teeth, the hero throws an elbow into the face of the guy that is holding him. The crowd rise to their feet as the momentum of the match suddenly shifts. Can their hero capitalize on the precious seconds he's bought to make the tag?

Wrestling matches are full of sudden blows that leave a combatant reeling, changing the complexion of the fight dramatically. Action films also boast several examples of heroes using a solid hit to take one enemy out of play long enough to confront the others. The use of stunning hits is one of the best tools for one hero to fight multiple enemies. Juggling strikes from foe to foe as they regain their senses is the key to many victories. Stunning also allows an attack to have significance even if the enemy is a long way from being down for the count. Without stunning, all blows into an opponent have no effect (except knockdown, initiative modification, restraint, etc.) until the one that finally brings him down. An attack that stuns a bad guy, particularly early in the fight, makes the attacker feel like his action mattered even if the foe is still in the fight. Despite all of our rationale for including stunning attacks, they can get out of hand.

A player character that gets on a roll can prevent opponents from ever getting a move in by spending Heat to make every strike an exceptional success. As most of the bad guys we have presented so far have determination ratings around 9 to 11, even a strength level 3 attack leaves them only a forty percent chance of resisting being stunned. Even a single stunning attack can be devastating, as the target now offers no resistance in the form of stat levels against the following attacks. One exceptional blow can leave the character stunned until he has been grabbed, lifted, and slammed with enough force to stun him again. While this was sort of the idea behind stunning, it can lead to fights being nothing but setting up an opening stunning attack and then

pressing the enemy until he's finished. Many players have no problem with this until the stunning shoe is on the other guy's foot.

A popular term in game design is 'negative play experience.' Anything that makes a gaming session less enjoyable is a negative play experience, and few things typify this term more than preventing a character from taking action. If a player character continually suffers stunning attacks, the player may become frustrated. A player who cannot endure any setback is probably a hindrance to your gaming group, but spending entire fight scenes stunned can dampen the spirit of even the most enthusiastic gamer. Characters have a number of ways of trying to prevent taking exceptional or high damage hits that cause stunning, and they get determination checks to shake off the effect, but it can still happen. If it happens too often then it could cause a problem for your campaign.

REDUCED STUNNING

You can choose to remove stunning from your game if you think it is dragging down the action scenes. Doing so will radically change the feel of the fights. As stated above, there is a very strong precedence from both wrestling and action films to include stunning. Furthermore, the amount of damage a character (friend or foe) can take before being beaten to unconsciousness far outstrips the damage output of most PCs, so the fights will drag on without pause. Bad guys with high vitality scores will be devastating to the PCs and mass combats become marathons.

A better option is to make stunning less likely. If you remove the difficulty from the determination check to resist stunning then most opponents have around a 50 percent chance to avoid being stunned. Player characters usually have better stats than the bad guys and will rarely lose their actions. The threat remains, and should still have impact, but characters should spend less time reeling and more time fighting.

As with all optional rules, you should carefully consider the way this option will affect your game before implementing the change.

7 BREAKING THEIR WILL: MORALE FOR THE IMMORAL

Many players enter each conflict with the assumption that they must beat each and every opponent into a senseless quivering mass before they can claim victory. This attitude can lead to excessive overkill on the one hand, and an unjustified fear of being overwhelmed on the other. Players and GMs alike need to view the conflicts within the game through the lens of an action film. You don't have to beat all of the bad guys, just enough of them to make the rest see that they cannot win. Some players have a great instinct for what needs to be done to break the enemy in a scene. Others focus on the tactics of controlling the numbers and forget to factor in the self preservation instincts of their foes. To help everyone, we present the following guideline to bad guy morale.

Most bad guys are not intent on fighting to the last man. Betraying your allies is part of what makes them bad guys and there

is no better time to bail on your cohorts than when it will get you out of a savage beating. On the other hand, if you run and your buddies win, they have no compunctions about repaying your lack of loyalty with a far more ruthless beating. It's not easy being a bad guy, and the GM needs to treat each opponent's commitment to the conflict on a case by case basis.

THE MORALE CHECK

The GM can choose to make morale checks for NPCs to determine if they will stay and fight or flee.

The morale check is a determination check for the character. The difficulty includes the standard modifiers for fatigue and wound level, as well as the presence level of the enemy if the character is currently intimidated. The GM can add other



modifiers if they seem appropriate. A failure means the character flees if possible, but will fight on if cornered. A disastrous failure means the character gives up if he cannot escape. A successful check means the character has not had enough yet, and an exceptional success means that he does not have to check again for the rest of the fight.

When do we make these morale checks? First off, no check is needed as long as an opponent is actively attacking the NPC. Only make morale checks during pauses in the pummeling when the character has time to consider how badly he wants to stick around. If a thug recovers from being stunned while his masked attacker is power slamming his partner in crime, he may stop to consider retreat. Aside from that little caveat, an NPC makes a morale check when he drops to the appropriate wound level, as described next paragraph, and every wound level thereafter. So, if an opponent passes a 'required' check at bruised, he would have to check again after he hits battered providing the opportunity arises.

The GM needs to decide what the villains in a scene are trying to accomplish and how badly they want it. He then needs to convey that intensity to the player characters so they know how hard they have to hit the opposition. Skaterpunks tagging a parking lot at an arena require a lighter hand than an Umbral Accord assault team abducting a dignitary. The GM should set the morale level of the opposition based upon what wound level the NPCs have to reach before they start taking morale checks. The same bad guys might have different morale levels at different times depending on what is at stake.

BRUISED

A casual fight is a bar room brawl or an intimidation attempt that got out of hand. It is driven by machismo and wounded pride but has no real purpose and could have been avoided altogether had cooler heads prevailed. Casual fights start making morale checks when bruised. Suffering an injury point also requires a morale check.

BATTERED

A scrap is a planned attack, but a simple one with an objective that could easily be obtained elsewhere. The attacker wants something but isn't expecting much resistance. Bullies, petty robberies, and gangers exerting their dominance fall into this category. Scraps make morale checks when battered. Character suffering injury points in excess of their conditioning level must also face morale checks.

BROKEN

A fight is a serious undertaking. The participants came to fight and are prepared to get hurt in the process. The NPCs have a serious stake in the outcome, either emotionally or financially. They want it badly enough to fight for it, but not badly enough to die for it. Professional criminals after a big payday, gang members in conflict with rival factions, and violent monsters fall into this category. Characters start making morale checks at the broken wound level or after suffering injury points in excess of their resilience.

BEATEN

An assault is a dedicated effort to achieve an objective valuable enough that fatalities are acceptable and even expected. At this point the participants are willing to die if doing so will accomplish their goal. Military assaults, open gang war, and rampaging monsters are all examples. The characters don't face morale checks until they reach the beaten wound level. Injury points don't factor into morale at this point.

BEYOND

Some attackers are fanatical enough that they will in fact fight to the last man and the very last vitality point. Nothing dissuades them from their chosen course of action, and they will die if they cannot succeed. Aztec warriors in service to a mummy, madmen bent on vengeance, and the undead all qualify as fanatical.

GROUP MORALE

Bad guys often give up their individual identity to be part of a group. As such, their personal interests and desires have to take second place to the demands of those in control. If your gang leader tells you to do something, you aren't going to say no twice. If the GM determines that the bad guys have an undeniable leader present, the subordinate members can use the leader's determination to make the morale check. The leader must be present and in a position to encourage the pack to follow orders for this to work. If the leader is tapping out to an armlock, then nobody is going to listen to him when he tells them to stay in the fight. In addition to the possibility of the leader having a higher rating, using the leader's determination has the added advantage that the difficulty of the check uses his current wound level.

Example

An Umbral Accord assault is going badly. The team's enforcer is pulling himself to his feet after suffering a two story swan dive from El Magnifico. The enforcer has only 4 of his 40 vitality points left, and suffered 8 injury points despite the body armor. The GM decides this is a perfect opportunity for a morale check. The team leader is still present, and due to her tactical expertise, completely unharmed. She cocks her head towards the enforcer looking to abandon his duty and rolls the morale check using her 13 determination and facing no extra difficulty for wound level. She rolls a 10, and the enforcer reluctantly searches about to recover his assault rifle.

LAST COMMENTS

The morale check is a tool for the GM to use when considering if the NPCs have had enough. Like all tools it must be used properly to have the desired effect. As the GM you never have to roll a morale check unless you want to do so. Roll morale checks for the minions of the main villains and other intermediary threats. For major characters, decide for yourself what the character should do based on the NPC's personality and what you need for the story at that moment. Use the morale ratings here as a guideline for when the character should be trying to escape, but only randomize the matter if the outcome is not pivotal to your story. This is an optional rule (guideline really) and you should feel even less constrained by it than you do other rules of the game. I'm tempted to break out the role playing vs. roll playing line, but I will resist.



8 NEW SPECIALTIES

In our previous books we introduced specialties to the character advancement process. These exciting rules premiered in *Painted Honor* and were then built upon in *Bright Lights* and *Barbed Wire*. If you do not already have these books I'm sure you will run out and get them at once. However, if you cannot get to your local gamestore right now, allow us to give a quick recap on how these additions function.

A character can take one specialty for every fame level. The specialties also use up signature move 'slots' for the character. A 3 fame luchador could have 1 specialty and 2 signatures, or three signatures. All of these abilities require experience points to purchase, and all purchases must be made between sessions (or at least before things officially get started). A character cannot take the same specialty multiple times to 'stack' effects.

ERRATA FROM BRIGHT LIGHTS AND BARBED WIRE

The Comedy Act specialty should cost 3 XP not the 5 listed in section 4.5 of *Bright Lights Barbed Wire*. Characters who have already purchased the specialty at the previous XP cost should be reimbursed 2 XP and awarded 1 Heat for the inconvenience.

PREVIOUS SPECIALTY COSTS

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Tag Team | 3/5 |
| Crimson Mask | 3 |
| Daredevil | 5 |
| Tough | 5 |
| Mist | 10 |
| Hardcore | 3 |
| Sidekick | 5 |
| Quick Healer | 8 |
| Eternal Champ | 3 |
| Comedy Act | 3 (Amended cost) |
| Feud | 2/3/5 |
| High Pain Threshold | 8 |
| Celebrity | 5 |
| Combat Reflex | 10 |

ALERT

All the quickness and combat skill in the world does no good if you don't see it coming. Luchadors with keen senses can avoid being caught flat-footed in and out of the ring.

A character with this specialty can re-roll any wits check for perception purposes. It is useful for spotting ninjas sneaking up or noticing a man in black slipping away into a crowd. Wits checks to oppose Trick attempts do not benefit from the re-roll.

ALERT COSTS 8 XP.

RELENTLESS

Submission holds are among the most dangerous weapons in a luchador's arsenal. A few moments in a hold can break almost any opponent's will to fight. Knowing this fact, most luchadors do whatever it takes to escape before the damage gets too great to endure. However, some grapplers refuse to let up once they begin wearing an enemy down. Such characters (usually technicians) seem to sense weakness in an opponent's body and doggedly pursue a series of punishing holds until they achieve victory.

A character with this specialty can punish the same body part of an opponent over and over again. If an enemy escapes from a hold, the Relentless character can attempt to apply the hold again on a following turn to continue the punishment. If successful, the base damage of the hold continues to build as if the hold were never broken! A character can only use this ability to resume damage to an opponent within the same fight/scene.

A Relentless character that causes injury points through a hold may be able to apply this specialty in future scenes. If the target has not had time to recover the injury points from the hold, then the luchador can attempt to capitalize on the previous injury. After applying a hold to the target, the Relentless character can spend Heat to add to the base damage of the hold as if the hold had been in effect for that many turns. One Heat adds 1 free turn to the hold up the number of injury points the target still endures from the previous encounter. This ability cannot increase the base damage of the hold beyond the normal limitations of twice the character's strength level.

The advanced application of the Relentless specialty requires the GM to keep track of injury points caused by a hold which can cause extra bookkeeping. GMs may wish to omit this option for simplicity (or just make up numbers for injury points to former opponents).

RELENTLESS COSTS 5 XP.

DYNASTY

Many wrestlers enter their craft as a continuation of a long family tradition. These wrestlers must carry not just their personal honor into the ring but the honor of all of their family that have entered the squared circle before them. The lineage can open many doors, but every misstep is noted and there is little room for error. Great things are expected of the wrestler that stems from greatness.

Player characters can take this specialty to represent a direct decadency from a famous wrestler or training at a prestigious school beneath such a wrestler. The luchador may wear the very mask that has been passed down through generations of masked grapplers. When the character steps out of the shadow of his mentor he buys the specialty and carries the mantle of the family fame on his own shoulders. A character with this specialty adds 1 Heat towards buying Fame at the end of every session. If the extra Heat does is not enough to gain the next point of fame, then it is lost.

A character may choose to take this specialty during character creation to reflect a famous lineage. The character must spend 10 skillpoints to acquire the specialty and the 3 Fame that comes with it! The Dynasty specialty counts as the first specialty available at 1 Fame Level, but the character can immediately begin working on learning the family's signature moves. The starting 1 Fame also opens opportunities to compete for titles earlier (see section 3.4 of *Bright Lights and Barbed Wire*).

DYNASTY COSTS 5 XP.

DYNASTY COSTS 10 SKILLPOINTS DURING CHARACTER CREATION.



FACE

Luchadors are the heroes of the modern age constantly struggling against adversity at any odds. Some luchadors are of such high moral character that they earn a reputation of decency that goes above and beyond even their fellow masked men. They are champions of the people who are loved by all. A face can always be trusted to do the right thing even when it is to his disadvantage. He is a paragon of virtue and mercy that serves to inspire others in an oft-corrupt world.

A character with this specialty gains extra Heat for being true to the ideals that make him a nice guy. Specifically, the character gains 1 Heat every time he chooses not to press the advantage on a stunned or downed opponent. Allowing an enemy to regain their wits or footing exemplifies a spirit of fair play that maintains the luchador's face status. The GM should grant the character Heat in other situations where he goes out of his way to help others or grant an opponent a sporting chance.

The player needs to play the role of a face to purchase and maintain the specialty. If the luchador is nice when he's winning but pulls off the kid gloves every time things go against him, the GM is free to temporarily or permanently repeal face status.

FACE COSTS 8 XP.



DESIGNER NOTE

The Bag of Tricks specialty was inspired by a player at a demo. He continuously drew semi-useful props for Mother Mercy in exceptionally dramatic style, and the scenes were just too good for me to try and hold him back. Afterwards I knew I had to include rules to accommodate such flair.

BAG OF TRICKS

Luchadors generally have little use for tools and weaponry, preferring to take care of problems with their own two hands. When something is needed, most luchadors improvise with whatever may be at hand. However, some characters like to carry around a few semi-useful items to ensure that if they need a tool it will fit in with their ring image. These items can occasionally prove extra useful.

A gimmico can purchase this specialty to have an assortment of props on hand to reinforce his shtick. Most of these items are of little practical use and are called trinkets for the bag of tricks. Headshots (pre-signed), kid-size versions of your mask, or other fan cherished giveaways are readily available to the character. The GM may require Heat expenditure for handing out items to everyone in line outside the arena, but tossing a few trinkets into the crowd is free.

More useful items from the bag of tricks are called tools. A trademark ring weapon, a pager to give to an NPC, or that sword you kept from the adventure in Japan all fall into the tools category. A tool requires 1 or more Heat every time the luchador wants it on hand. Any item that the character has never employed in their act before requires a free wits check in addition to the Heat in order to have had the foresight to pack it. The difficulty of the check is determined by the game impact of the item and how much the player has to stretch to get it under his concept. Any tool that the GM can envision a wrestler bringing to the ring should cost 1 Heat with a difficulty of 0 or 1 if it is a new addition to the act. Items that the character could have found a rough equivalent to in the scene should fall into the same Heat cost. Heat should go up to 2 for sharp or barbed weapons, and tools that would not otherwise be available in the scene. The difficulty for Wits checks for items in this category should be 2 to 3 depending on how outlandish the player is getting. Once a luchador starts looking for more extreme tools such as ranged weapons or tracking devices, the GM should step in and say no. In the event that the adventure in question seems to merit such extreme options a Heat cost of 3 (or more) is appropriate and a difficulty starting at 5, as this should be the only time such nonsense is allowed.

Any trinket or tool that the character produces from the bag of tricks must be appropriate for the character. Ideally, the item should be something that feeds into the character's gimmick. A matador themed gimmico could produce a near limitless number of red capes, or a sword for more violent scenes, but couldn't get a pair of handcuffs to restrain a captured bad guy. He would have to settle for tying the villain up in one of those capes. The further the item strays from the theme, the harder the Wits check. The GM should add 1 to 3 difficulty for items that don't fit well into the character's theme. Don't be afraid to say no to an item that is completely out of character.

In all cases, the items in question do not magically appear. An actual bag is not necessary, but the character must have some means of producing the desired tool. Thus, a luchador attending a formal dinner in a tuxedo could have a few business cards or even a spare mask in his pockets, but would have to call his trusted driver to fetch a weapon from the car. Likewise, a luchador placed in a deathtrap by the bad guys is on his own until he gets free.

BAG OF TRICKS COSTS 5 XP.

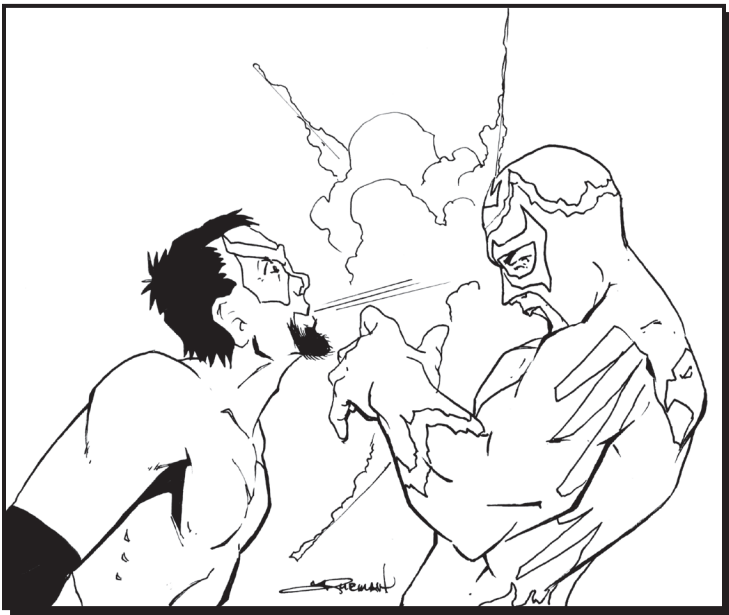


SHOW OFF

When a wrestler hits a signature move the whole world sets up and takes notice. When a Show Off hits a signature move no one takes more notice than him. The signature move is like signing your name to a victorious battle, and the Show Off wants his name written in 10 foot neon. He draws confidence and strength from the familiar steps towards what must be his next victory.

A character with this specialty heals 1 vitality point every time one of his signature moves generates Heat! Yes, it is that awesome! The recovery of vitality is instantaneous and occurs even if the character is in a hold (possibly trying to fight out). Remember that a presence check is needed for a signature to generate Heat in subsequent uses during a given fight, and the GM is always the final arbitrator on signature use. If the Show Off has taken no vitality loss at the time a signature move generates Heat, then the specialty yields no benefit. Likewise, the specialty cannot get around the restrictions on vitality recovery caused by injury points.

SHOW OFF COSTS 8 XP.



SPRINTER

When the action spills out of the confines of the wrestling ring, a luchador's ability to quickly cover distance becomes important. Craven enemies often have no desire to face justice at the hands of masked men, and catching up to them is the first step to getting them to tap out! Through natural aptitude or extensive training a luchador can gain a head start in the race to kick evil's butt.

A character with this specialty adds 3 feet to starting movement rate, meaning that characters without the slow trait start at 18 feet plus agility level. The sprinter also gets to re-roll conditioning checks when sprinting, for running or swimming, as detailed in section 7.3.1 of *Luchador: Way of the Mask*.

SPRINTER COSTS 3 XP.

REST HOLD

Often a luchador's greatest adversary is fatigue. The blistering pace of non-stop action can leave even the fittest warrior winded and struggling to finish an enemy on the verge of defeat. The grinding style of the tecnico is most vulnerable to fatigue, as even a momentary lapse can allow an enemy to slip free. To combat this problem many luchadors master rest holds that allow them to temporarily restrain an opponent with minimal effort. This brief respite is just enough time for the properly trained wrestler to catch his second wind.

A character with this specialty can gain sufficient control of an enemy to refresh their fatigue while maintaining a grab. The character must have an exceptional grab with a margin of success of 5 or more to employ the specialty. The character then spends 1 Heat and a turn of inactivity to reset fatigue. The grab remains in place at current MOS, and the opponent can attempt to escape as normal facing all standard difficulty as if the grabber was still active.

REST HOLD COSTS 3 XP.

JADED

All luchadors are accustomed to facing dangers that would paralyze a lesser man. Leaping off of moving vehicles, running down gunmen, and wrestling the undead is all part of the life of an adventuring masked man. Some characters spend so much time on the edge of danger that they build up a tolerance to the adrenaline rush. Staring down strangeness in the dead of night becomes routine to these poor souls. They must constantly seek new and greater challenges just to shake off the ennui that hangs over them. The upside of this state is a high resistance to being swayed by others through pure charisma or even supernatural means.

A character with this specialty gets to make a free Determination check to oppose any intimidation or promo attempts. The difficulty for the check is the Presence level of the acting character. If the Jaded character takes a turn to make an active check to shake off intimidation, he does so with a re-roll. The GM can allow Jaded characters to employ this specialty against any strange ability that influences the mind, such as the alluring gaze of the vampire women. Luchadors with this specialty can be hard to hang out with as they have trouble getting excited about anything.

JADED COSTS 5 XP.



STUDENT OF THE GAME

Professional wrestlers who want to be the best study the best. Through painstaking hours of watching matches, live or on tape, the luchador gets to learn through the mistakes of others and sees how to capitalize on those mistakes. Some luchadors develop a knack for analyzing the fighting styles of others and learn how to spot weaknesses in even the most well honed techniques.

A student of the game can spend a turn in a fight sizing up an adversary, looking for a way to gain an advantage. Of course, the target must be fighting at the time or there is nothing to study. The character cannot take any action or reaction for the turn other than studying, although he still applies A-level as difficulty against any attacks. Obviously it is better for the character to do this while the enemy is fighting somebody else, but that is not always an option.

During the turn of observation, the student makes a wits check using the target's wits level as difficulty. A success grants the character an assessment of the target's strength, agility, and conditioning levels as well as the expertise levels in any skills employed during the period of observation (the student can spend more than one turn if desired).

If the wits check above was successful the student may also prepare to adapt his style to the enemy. He may prepare a defense against the target, choosing one combat or wrestling skill and lowering the target's expertise in that skill by the margin of success of the wits check. This reduction only applies when the skill is employed against the student and cannot reduce the level of expertise below 0.

The student may instead choose to tailor an offense against the target, choosing a specific attack to employ such as a DDT, dropkick, or any signature move. The student lowers the target's strength level and agility level by the margin of success of the original wits check for purposes of applying difficulty to

the student. The target also faces difficulty equal to the margin of success on any checks to react to the move.

Example

The Red Scorpion finds himself under attack by renegade rollergirl Helen Wheels. Fortunately, he suspected she might be the mysterious new enforcer for the crime lord he had been tracking, and took the opportunity to catch her game earlier that night where he had ample opportunity to study her techniques. He knows she will go for her patented high speed shoulder tackle and has planned a modified belly-to-belly suplex that will turn her momentum against her and customized it to take advantage of the way she shifts her weight from her left leg at the second of impact.

He passed his wits check by 2 while employing the specialty during her match earlier, so he can drop her strength and agility levels by 2 for difficulty on his grab, lift, and slam checks. A quick glance at the rollergirl statistics in Luchador: Bright Lights and Barbed Wire reveal that Helen Wheels still applies 1 difficulty (S-level 3-2 for Red's wits check) for her strength to his lift and slam checks, while she will add 2 difficulty (A-level 4 -2) for the grab.

A character with this specialty must spend 1 Heat to tailor an offense or defense against the target, but retains the advantage for an entire scene/fight. Studying a target to assess ability levels does not cost Heat. The character can prepare a counter (defense or offense) against a target that had been observed earlier as the Red Scorpion did in the example, but it automatically fails if the target has had time to alter any of the statistic or skill levels observed through experience point expenditure. Even a slight change can throw off the careful fine tuning of this specialty. If a luchador wants to get an edge on other wrestlers he must remain ever diligent in observing their progress.

STUDENT OF THE GAME COSTS 6 XP.





MAN OF ACTION

Some luchadors really come to life when things get out of control. They may not seem that impressive during training, but when outnumbered and fighting for dear life they bring their game to a new level. In these moments where the odds look grim a man of action can change the tide of battle and snatch victory from the confused jaws of defeat.

A character with this specialty can spend 1 Heat to remove the hasty check modifier from a reaction. This rule means that defensive actions are more likely to protect the character and allows counterattacks to be every bit as dangerous as a normal attack. If the Man of Action's fame level is high enough to allow spending more Heat (and it has to be at least 1 to get a specialty), then he can adjust reactions to multiple attacks in a single turn at 1 Heat per reaction.

MAN OF ACTION COSTS 5 XP.

MASTER

All luchadors have a basic understanding of the skills of their craft before they lace up the mask for their first match. Each luchador then develops expertise in the skills they deign most essential to their style. Many of the most athletically gifted wrestlers spend surprisingly little time honing their talents, believing raw physical prowess can carry them through their career. Others develop their skills beyond technique into an art form all their own. Training in the time-honored traditions of their families, testing their talents in the dojos of the Far East, and questing to the technical masters of the North; the student goes to any length to master his chosen skill.

A character with this specialty has dedicated himself to the absolute mastery of a skill. In order to attain this specialty, the character must have as many levels of expertise in the skill as his determination level allows. The character must also have a determination rating of 12 or more in order to have the resolve necessary to pursue mastery. Once these restrictions are met, the character may purchase mastery and is now free to buy further levels of expertise without restriction of determination level. A character may only master one skill.

MASTER COSTS 3 XP.

REQUIRES MINIMUM OF 12 DETERMINATION.

VETERAN

Sometimes it is obvious when you need to react to an incoming attack. If a maniac with a chainsaw is trying to cut you in twain, you need to do whatever you can to stop him. At other times the need to react is more uncertain. The zombie lumbering forward to grab you looks pretty unskilled, but a lucky grab could expose you to untold vileness within its rotting grasp. With time and training these decisions become easier to make as any veteran wrestler will tell you.

A character with this specialty has the luxury of declaring reactions after seeing if the attacker is successful! The GM makes the check for the attacker and reveals the margin of success before the Veteran commits fatigue to reacting. The Veteran cannot employ evasion or standing as a defensive reaction after the attacker has already made the check, but all other defensive actions are open. Through this specialty a character can conserve fatigue by not reacting to clumsy attacks and assess whether a reaction can prevent an exceptional success for the enemy. While Minis pay no fatigue for reactions, the Veteran specialty still allows them to decide what reaction to make after the attacker has acted, allowing a Veteran Mini to choose counterattacks when they know the enemy has already failed and defensive actions to counter success. It takes time and a successful career to be considered a Veteran, so characters must attain a Fame of 6 before acquiring this specialty.

VETERAN COSTS 8 XP.

REQUIRES 6 FAME.



LUCKY

Sometimes it is better to be lucky than to be good. It's really best to be both, but then you're getting greedy as well and who has the right to be three things at once? Some wrestlers seem to always get the breaks at the right moment, and characters that take this specialty can be one of those guys.

A lucky character can spend a point of Heat to make the GM re-roll one check! Take a moment to catch your breath. The GM's chance of success remains unchanged, so use your powers wisely. If the enemy was facing a COS 17 then luck probably won't save you, but the narrower the odds get the more useful luck becomes. The use of this specialty costs 1 Heat the first time a character uses it in a session, and one more each time thereafter. Keep in mind that you cannot spend more Heat than your fame level plus one, so there is a cap on how many times you can pull this trick.

Luck likes to wax and wane like most forces of the universe. Every time a lucky character has a disastrous failure, and does not use Heat to negate it, the character takes one step back on the Heat cost for future luck use to a minimum of one Heat.

Lucky characters can also benefit from other advantages where chance is involved. Catching an elevator to tail a suspected spy, getting a good seat on the bus, or any other trivial advantage can fall to the character. Minor advantages of luck are at the mercy of the GM, cost no Heat, and never involve another character acting in opposition.

LUCKY COSTS 8 XP.

TRADEMARK MOVES

Signature moves can be fight changers, but they can also be very complicated. With the flourish steps, athletic displays, demonstrations of strength, and building up risk there is plenty of opportunity to slip up before you even engage the opponent. Mastering a complicated signature move takes a lot of time and discipline. Those luchadors who put in the extra work make it look easy.

A character with this signature can re-roll any one check while executing a signature move. The check re-rolled must be a required step in the signature. Any additional embellishment in this particular execution of the move does not benefit from the weeks of practice in mastering your signature. The specialty applies to all signatures in the characters repertoire. You can buy a second level of this specialty allowing a second re-roll for an additional 5 XP. Remember that any one check can only be re-rolled once!

TRADEMARK MOVES COSTS 8XP.

SECOND RE-ROLL FOR +5 XP.

BRAWLER

Some luchadors prefer fisticuffs to full nelsons. Through rigorous training and possible extracurricular practice at taverns of questionable repute, the character has increased his ability to give back as well as he gets. While this may not always be acceptable in the ring, the talent can come in handy on the path of adventure against those who do not have a sense of sportsmanship.

The character can employ counterattacks as reactions until he reaches the broken wound level. All other restrictions to reactions still apply.

BRAWLER COSTS 8 XP.

IMPOSING

There are many approaches to employing the intimidation skill. Threats ranging from intricate rearranging of the anatomy to epic soliloquies of violence are hurled across the ring depending on the style and taste of the speaker. Some prefer a simple steely cold stare to put their opponents in their place. Others develop a trademark motion to announce the impending destruction of a foe. However you do it, intimidation can change the complexion of a fight quickly. Wouldn't it be nice if you could do it quicker?

Characters with this specialty can execute an intimidation attempt as part of a combat or wrestling action. Any time the character makes an exceptional success with a combat skill, drop, slam, or strength check; he may add an intimidation check to the move as a complex action. The intimidation check must be the last step of the complex action, as the character must engage the attention of the target after finishing the move in order to be duly intimidating.

IMPOSING COSTS 3 XP

FREIGHT TRAIN

High risk moves often steal the show with the excitement and danger they bring to a match. Alas, such high speed impact usually remains outside of the reach of most bruisers and giants who find the agility check too hard. However, wrestling sets a clear precedence for big men who employ high speed collisions into the ring corner on a regular basis. How will our game address this matter?

Characters can take the Freight Train specialty to help incorporate risk even in less graceful individuals. The character gains the ability to utilize risk from velocity (not altitude) without an agility check! The character must spend 1 Heat (you knew there was going to be a catch) for each level of risk desired. Obviously the normal restrictions about distance apply. The character does not have to make an agility check, but also cannot gain the exceptional success to advance to the next step. Advancing a step requires an additional point of Heat. This ability can end up burning lots of Heat, but it also can allow powerhouses to deliver amazing amounts of damage. Remember that the most Heat you can spend in a turn is your fame level plus 1.

FREIGHT TRAIN COSTS 8 XP.

TUMBLER

All aspiring luchadors spend their early days learning to fall correctly. Constant repetition teaches them to roll with the momentum in order to minimize what could be disastrous injury. Many of the more nimble wrestlers incorporate this training into their fighting style, rolling and springing from a prone position into flight in a single fluid motion.

Characters with this ability can re-roll the agility checks to rise from a prone position. The character is also accustomed to fighting while disoriented from rapid motion, meaning they only face half initiative modifier from a throw. The GM can extend the ability to other forms of disorientation such as the Umbral Accord vertigo generator.

TUMBLER COSTS 4 XP.



So you have gotten together a group of fellow roleplayers who share your love of lucha libre action and are ready to start a campaign of Luchador: Way of the Mask. You have a great story idea with lots of potential and are eager to see what the stars of your adventure are going to look like. Your players are all excited and bubbling with backstory and flashy mask designs. Everything is going great until one player rolls nothing higher than a 5 on his stat generation checks.

Role playing games are supposed to be about playing your character and interacting with an exciting adventure and your friends, so the statistics of your character really shouldn't matter. But they do. I'm not trying to defend those players who cannot describe their character without rattling off a laundry list of abilities and percentile scores. You know the ones. You ask them what their character wants to do in a situation and they have to look at their character sheet. What are they looking for, a motivation matrix? Sorry, started to rant there. Getting back to the topic at hand, while the assorted rules and numbers scrawled on your character sheet don't even begin to encapsulate the personality and drive of your character they do dictate what the character is capable of doing in the story. If another character in the group is better at doing what you do best, and that thing is not what he does best, then it can be difficult to feel like your character is contributing much.

The exceptional character, or uberluchador, is a potential problem to your campaign. A staggeringly high strength allows a character to casually plow through obstacles that the other characters were struggling to overcome. Characters with superhuman agility scores master the majority of combat skills by having mere proficiency, and their agility levels mean that only the most talented opponents can hope to hit them at all, let alone deliver a telling blow. If one character on the party has a conditioning level 3 or more higher than any of his allies then he is laughing off blows that leave them floored. We intended a certain degree of disparity among the character abilities, particularly along class divisions. The aerialist is supposed to be quicker than most characters. However if the aerialist ends up with a 22 agility while the next highest score is 12, then problems can arise. For starters his grab rating starts at 21, forcing any technicos to burn skillpoints just to get in the same league. All of these problems are compounded when one character excels in multiple statistics. There is a reason that we lowered strength to raise agility and vice versa.

What is a GM to do? You could just give up, but then you would be a punk. Some players will nip the problem in the bud by recognizing that their character could be disruptive and volunteer to take another shot at the dice. If you are fortunate enough to have such luck, reward the player with an extra re-roll on the new character or some other bonus for playing well with others. Most GMs will not be so fortunate. This is not to say that most players are selfish jerks with no concern for their friends (just a few of them), but rather that the line between a strong character and an unbalancing one is very subjective. One man's uberluchador is another man's decent character for once.

GMs that find one of the characters has a clear advantage on paper over the others now have to determine if the matter is actually a problem for the game. While I was all doom and gloom

a moment ago, some players really don't mind if one of the team has a clear lead on the pack. Players who game together regularly may have a strong sense of team spirit before they even roll up characters, so they see the advantages of one as an advantage for all. They take pride that their bruiser is stronger than an ox, and he in turn makes sure to step up and apply that muscle when the team needs him to and steps back when other members can handle the problem themselves. Once again, this is a situation where a good group of players with a similar approach to gaming can make a potential problem just another asset of the game.

Most gaming groups, even good ones that have played together frequently, consist of players with very different outlooks. One player may simply not see that his character is causing a problem for the others. The GM can explain how the character is overshadowing his teammates and see if a solution can be found. Asking the player to abandon the character can be difficult, particularly if he has already developed a good personality to go with it.

The GM can also just make sure that the player knows that the bad guys are going to react accordingly to the outstanding abilities of the uberluchador. The character has superior abilities and he will be expected to bear the brunt of the trouble aimed at the cadre of masked men. This must not be a punitive action by the GM, but rather an acknowledgement of the uberluchador's potential. Superman has to fight the giant robots, while Batman gets to beat down gunmen. The problem is that this approach can just draw more attention to the uberluchador's abilities and further exacerbate the rift between him and the rest of the team.

THE NEW BUILDPOINT SYSTEM

For GMs who want a more concrete manner of moderating character statistics, we present one final measure. GMs can choose to employ the following alternate character creation system! That's right, we went back to the drawing board and created a new system just for you. Honestly, the 'new' system is just a slight modification on the original.

The major change is the introduction of buildpoints to purchase statistics. The player rolls up stats as before but must now purchase those bonuses to the basic stat-line from a pool of 20 buildpoints. Characters pay a premium for stats that are 6 or greater than the base stat-line of the class, so a character with an extreme statistic is unlikely to be able to afford much else. The downside to this method is that some players will not want to 'waste' buildpoints on statistics outside of their area of focus. Consequently you will see a lot of characters with basic stat-line ratings in presence and wits, so they can maximize strength and agility.

NEW CHARACTER GENERATION CHECKLIST

- 1) Choose a class
- 2) Generate primary statistic potential
- 3) Allocate buildpoints to statistics
- 4) Calculate secondary statistics
- 5) Spend skillpoints
- 6) Paint and finish



CHOOSE A CLASS

The first step remains the same. Decide which of the 6 available classes best suits your playstyle. The chosen class provides the base stat-line and any additional abilities. Do not record statistics on your character sheet at this point, you have 2 more steps to go.

GENERATE PRIMARY STATISTIC POTENTIAL

This step looks a lot like the old step 2 except for the addition of 'potential'. The player makes a check against a rating of 11 for each of the 6 statistics. The margin of success adds to the base stat for the class to generate the statistic potential for the character. Failed checks subtract 1 from the potential and disastrous failures subtract 2. Remember that classes with clipped stats make hasty checks with all of the related math involved. Even the old safety net of a check avoiding a failure if the number rolled is not higher than the base stat-line applies. The difference from the original classic character generation is you don't get the statistics until you pass the new third step below.

ALLOCATE BUILDPOINTS TO STATISTICS

Here we go with the new stuff. The character has 20 buildpoints to allocate to statistics. Each point of a stat costs 1 buildpoint for the first 5 points above the base stat-line. Starting at 6 points above the base stat-line, the cost increases to 2 buildpoints to add 1 to the rating in the statistic. No stat can be raised above the potential generated in step 2. For clipped statistics, the cost is always 2 buildpoints per point of rating increase.

For failed checks, the player has a new option. The character can take the reduced stat as before and gain 1 buildpoint per point of reduction, or spend buildpoints to bring the statistic back up to the base stat-line on a 1 for 1 basis.

CALCULATE SECONDARY STATISTICS

There is no real change here other than having to make it through an extra step to get to this point. Plug your now finished stats into the formulae as before and fill in all the boxes on your character sheet. Fame and honor begin at 0. Write neatly.

SPEND SKILLPOINTS

Again there is no real change on spending skillpoints. Consult section 3.3 of Luchador: Way of the Mask for rules on spending skillpoints so we can keep selling our basic book (Bwah ha ha ha!).

Gaining skillpoints has changed a little. Characters start with 15 skillpoints to spend. Characters that didn't roll as well in generating statistic potential get bonus skillpoints. They had to train harder to keep up with the guys with hot dice. To keep things in line with the classic character generation system, the character gets bonus skillpoints equal to unspent buildpoints -5. This means that a character with 12 unspent buildpoints gets 7 bonus skillpoints. If the character could not spend at least 5 buildpoints on statistics, the GM should allow the option of rolling a new character.

PAINT AND FINISH

Once again it is time for the player to bring his creation to life. Add all the intangibles that make your character unique and exciting. This is the most important step so don't slack off.

EXAMPLE

A new player with a lucky (and probably not loaded) die decides to roll up a giant to join his friends in an ongoing campaign. He makes it to step 2 and rolls checks against each statistic to generate the following potential.

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|----|
| Strength | (MOS 6) | 22 |
| Agility | (MOS 3 after hasty check) | 11 |
| Conditioning | (MOS 7) | 19 |
| Presence | (MOS 4) | 16 |
| Wits | (MOS 4) | 12 |
| Determination | (MOS 2) | 12 |

This is exactly the sort of luchador that the new character generation system was created for. If he kept all of the statistics listed above he would overshadow the rest of the players.

The player now has some difficult decisions to make, as his potential statistics outstrip his buildpoints by a lot. Keeping the 22 strength costs the character 7 buildpoints, 5 for the first 5 and 2 more for the sixth. Agility is a clipped stat for a giant, so he pays 2 for each point above the base 8. Keeping the 11 agility requires 6 buildpoints. The 19 conditioning costs 9 buildpoints (5 at 1:1, and 2 at 2:1). The remaining statistics fall into a simple 1 buildpoint per rating cost, but that still adds 10 more buildpoints to the tab for a grand total of 32 buildpoints!

Needing such a drastic reduction, the player starts with the high price statistics. The last point of strength costs an extra 2 points, and a 21 strength is enough to get a 7 strength level for delivering hammering blows. Two down, ten to go. Next is agility at a straight 2 to 1 across the board. The player really wants a 10 agility so the character can start with ratings of 15 in combat skills, but a 9 is enough for to get a 3 agility level to avoid attacks and figure in to initiative. He sticks with a 10 which shaves 2 more buildpoints off of the total. A conditioning of 18 gets the character a 6 conditioning level, which goes to an 8 for resisting damage due to the Massive rule for giants. The player cannot bring himself to drop that, so he only knocks 2 more buildpoints off his total. Six more still have to go.

The giant has a 16 presence which is very high, but with a 21 strength somewhat appropriate. The player checks to find that the group's gimmico sports a 17 presence, so he won't be completely out of line in keeping the 16, particularly since he doesn't plan to buy proficiency in any mike skills except intimidate. Keeping the presence means that he has to lose all of the wits and determination, since he still needs to shave 6 buildpoints. The player likes the idea of playing a simple minded giant, so he spends no buildpoints on wits. This takes 4 more buildpoints off, but he still has 2 to go. He drops his presence to a 15, saving 1 buildpoint and creating a greater gap between him and the team gimmico. The last point comes off of determination, leaving him a respectable 11. His final statistics are as follows.

S21/7 A10/3 C18/6(8) P15/5 W8/2 D11/3

The character is still a monster, but his lowered agility and wits keep him from beating his teammates out on initiative in addition to dominating the power game. His determination level also dropped from a 4 to a 3 which restricts his purchase of expertise, so his ratings in combat skills should fall even with other characters. While the character will be a dominant force in the game, he shouldn't completely overshadow his allies.



Exotic locations are an integral part of both action and horror films. Panoramic shots of bodies of water are commonplace in these scenes to display the isolation and beauty of the expensive locale. These scenes help set atmosphere and provide character to the setting. They also provide a brand new arena for luchadors to ply their skills. Beware, the only thing more dangerous than taking to the air is diving beneath the waves.

HOLDING YOUR BREATH

The first and most pressing matter with being underwater is the lack of air. Luchadors need air. Without it they pass out and die.

For our purposes, a character's ability to hold his breath depends on conditioning and fatigue. A character deprived of air must spend 1 fatigue at intervals of his conditioning level in turns. If he has no fatigue to spend, he pays with 2 vitality points instead. When he has no vitality to spend, he drowns. Needless to say, a character cannot recover fatigue while holding his breath. Using these rules a luchador can technically hold his breath for a very long time, but will be losing precious vitality if he remains submerged for very long. If he has to engage in strenuous activity, then his air won't last nearly as long.

If a character does not get the chance to take in a healthy lungful of air before diving into the water, or if he has air knocked out of him by being stunned, then the expenditure of fatigue occurs every turn. The character must also pass a determination check to avoid panicking and racing for the surface.

If a character runs out of vitality before reaching air, then he has drowned. At the GM's discretion he might be resuscitated if reached quickly (conditioning level in turns), but otherwise he has fought his final match.

Characters involved in adventures where they have to spend an extensive time underwater should seek out scuba tanks to carry their air with them. The GM can determine how much air is in a tank based upon how much scuba experience he and his players have, or just assume they have enough air to do what needs to be done. Strapping that much extra weight to your back applies a penalty of 1 to initiative checks. The GM is free to apply additional penalties, particularly if the characters walk around wearing the tanks on land. Generally speaking, the PCs are already facing an uphill battle underwater and additional penalties can be cruel.

PERCEPTION

The next problem facing the submerged luchador is perception. You can't pound the bad guy if you can't find him. Worse, you can't apply your agility level against attacks you don't see coming.

Being underwater can be a little disorienting. The amount of impediment to perception depends on the setting. A character in a clear, well-lit pool is no worse off than if on land. However, a character in a lake or the ocean will have to make checks to spot things that would normally be apparent without a roll.

As a general rule, a submerged character must make a wits check to spot anything further than 10 feet from him. The difficulty of the check is based on lighting and clarity of the water. A clear pool has a difficulty of 0. Murky lakes and other obscured

bodies of water have a difficulty of 2. What passes for water is sewers and factories has a difficulty of 4 or higher and may present far greater problems than just impairing visibility. Darkness can add more to difficulty.

PRESSURE

Particularly deep dives can have additional dangers due to the increased pressure at such depths. The genre of the game demands that the luchadors regularly perform nearly superhuman feats, but when confronting the hard facts of surviving the ocean depths we need to dial things back a touch in order for the characters to call themselves human. You will be surprised how many players call you on something like this.

The greatest danger of deep dives, assuming you have already acquired an air tank, is the bends. Characters lingering at depths greater than 50 feet run the risk of decompression sickness if they surface without allowing time for the excess nitrogen to work its way out of their system. A character can remain at around 50 feet for nearly an hour without danger, but the time limit reduces with greater depth. As our game plays fast and loose with time, it is usually enough to let the players know that their characters are in danger to keep the necessary touch of realism. If the players insist on pushing their luck, then a character afflicted with the bends suffers 1 injury point per hour and makes all checks as hasty until he can get to a decompression chamber for proper treatment.



MOVING AROUND

As noted in section 7.3 of *Luchador: Way of the Mask*, a character moves at a third of their land movement in the water. Calculate the full ground movement rate, including agility level, before division. As always, round all fractions down. Remember that characters can 'sprint' for greater speeds as detailed in section 7.3.1 of *Luchador: Way of the Mask*.

Characters underwater have to deal with moving in three dimensions. Luchadors are very familiar with thinking in three dimensional movement, but are not used to being able to stay above an opponent, and have to adapt to losing the normal downward momentum that follows going up. It is more difficult to dive deeper than to swim upward. Generally double movement rates swimming upward, and halve it diving down.

As always, we keep movement fairly loose. Swimming speeds matter mostly for chasing other swimmers or getting away from them. In these situations compare speeds to get a general idea of the relative maneuverability of all parties, and then tweak things as needed for dramatic effect. The major concern for movement involves risk.

RISK

It is much harder to build up a good head of steam moving through water than it is in air. First off, the risk from falling is right out once submerged. Characters can utilize risk from a dive into water, but cannot generate vertical risk while in the water.

Risk from velocity is limited by the character's movement rate in the water. A character cannot generate more risk than the maximum distance they can travel in a turn. In the air, the character can build up a head of steam from greater distance, but a submerged character cannot due to water resistance. This does mean that a luchador can build more risk by swimming up from below the target.

In addition to the cap on the maximum amount of risk generated, the character also faces double the normal difficulty on the agility check to utilize risk. Simply stated, the difficulty becomes 2 for every level of risk. This penalty only applies to the agility check. See the next section for the actually hitting a target underwater.

COMBAT MOVES

Water resistance takes a lot of sting out of your punches while submerged. This means that a lot of combat options simply are not going to perform the way you want. Characters face an extra 2 points of difficulty on all combat skills while fighting underwater. Note that characters fighting on the surface can avoid (or reduce) this difficulty by making sure their actions keep their limbs out of the water. An overhead forearm bash to a fellow swimmer could avoid the penalty entirely as long as the GM believes both characters are adequately treading water and keeping the narrative flowing.

Combat moves also face a reduction to base damage as the water slows down the impact. Before you freak out at all the penalties piling up on your character, there is a small reprieve from this last rule. A character with at least 1 level of expertise in the skill can avoid the reduction to base damage on an exceptional success. The skilled striker attempts to use spear hands and chops to minimize water resistance.

Throws are the most penalized of the combat moves, as there is usually nothing to throw an opponent into. The target still suffers the extra difficulty to initiative, but no damage is dealt unless the GM delivers a suitable solid object to bounce your opponent into. On the plus side, the normally free strength check to resist the throw becomes hasty as the target is floating rather than standing.

At the GM's discretion certain weapons, particularly thrusting ones, also ignore base damage penalty. Harpoons and tridents were made for use in water and should suffer no reduction in effectiveness. Larger swinging weapons can face greater reduction to base damage or even be completely unusable at the GM's discretion. The quickest and easiest rule is to reduce the base damage by the difficulty of the weapon.

WRESTLING MOVES

Wrestling skills generally fare a little better in the water, but the power moves are all but neutralized. All wrestling skills require the character to employ most of his body to tie up the enemy which makes it very hard to swim. A character using or maintaining a grab is limited to the movement restrictions discussed earlier in this book (section 2). The grabbed character is also limited to the even more restricted rules.

A grab suffers the same extra 2 difficulty as the combat moves. Once in place, the grab has no additional penalties. The hold functions exactly the same in water or on dry land. The lack of air only adds another imperative to the target's need to escape.

As with the throw, the slam and drop skills depend on gravity and a hard surface to inflict damage. Even when the circumstances occur to slam an opponent into the side of a boat or other surface, the moves lose most of their impact. Both the slam and drop skills suffer the extra 2 difficulty and a 2 point reduction of base damage even when the GM determines the move is feasible. Expertise and exceptional success do not help here.

DEFENSIVE ACTIONS

'What about defensive actions,' you wonder to yourself. The same factors that detract from the violence also hinder the responses that could save you. A flat plus 2 difficulty applies to all defensive checks while in the water. Consult the reasons listed above as to why, and accept that it is mostly for game balance and keeping all the new rules from getting even more complicated. If the GM is allowing strikes thrown at the surface to avoid the penalty than blocks to those strikes should be exempt as well.

PRONE

Attacks that render an opponent prone simply knock a swimming character off course, spinning him in the water. The target becomes disoriented and suffers the standard plus one difficulty to checks on the turn as he rights himself back on course. The character is not knocked down and other characters cannot add risk by dropping on to him. The 'prone' character can apply his full agility level against incoming attacks.

Characters in water are also less likely to be knocked away by the force of a blow. The resistance of the water reduces the distance that a character can be knocked back by half.



The first roleplaying game I wrote was INFERNO, a fantasy game set entirely in Hell. My thinking was that the heroic actions of the player characters could not help but shine against a backdrop of absolute evil. The problem was I forgot to tell the players to be heroes. It was implied, but the suggested heroism was oft overshadowed by the demonic imagery of the opposition and the intent was lost on many who saw the book.

I told you that story to tell you this story. During many demos and playtesting sessions of *Luchador: Way of the Mask*, I have noticed the heroic ideal slipping from the players. I didn't repeat my past omission, but the point can stand further stressing. You play masked HEROES who right wrongs, oppose tyranny, and wrestle to entertain the masses. The luchadors in the classic films don't need any encouragement to go confront the supernatural evil that has recently awakened, they do it because it has to be done and nobody else is as qualified as them.

It is important to keep in mind that the adventures outside the ring are ultimately the focus of our game and the source material that inspired it. The action inside the squared circle matters to the characters and possibly to the players, but the story of a game session usually reaches far beyond the ropes. While I strongly recommend including matches in a campaign, there are only so many stories that can take place entirely within the ring. The travel from match to match serves to move the player characters to new locations and new adventures. Wrapping up an adventure in time to get back to a big match is a convenient device for adding a time limit to an adventure, but the players must never lose sight of the adventure itself. Stopping the bad guys is always more important than any match. It is fine for the characters to try and do both (expected really) but personal gain must always take second place to saving the day. You can always get another match against El Magnifico, but you only get one shot at preventing the Umbral Accord from destroying the town (this town anyway).

That brings up another important tip for GMs: Nothing helps heroes be good more than villains being bad. The best movies are the ones with the best villains. The biggest matches are the ones where the good guy finally gets his hands on the heel that has been interfering in his other fights. As GM you get to set the tone with the bad guy, and the tone you want is hard core villain. Normally I am a big fan of throwing in some moral ambiguity into an RPG so the players can stop and think about what their characters are really out to accomplish, but this is *Luchador: Way of the Mask*! The player characters fight bad guys because they need to be fought. The bad guys need to be fought because they are really bad. They will walk right over anyone smaller and weaker than them to get what they want, or just for the fun of it. I'm only exaggerating a little bit here, the game runs best when the villains have an unreasonable desire to be evil. It can be hard to identify with the noble hero as he sacrifices his personal desires to serve the greater good, but it is a lot easier to get into that character when he gets to deliver a much deserved beating to the despicable villain.

On the topic of beatings, your luchador characters should not be looking to beat their opponents to death. I know that's how things are done in a lot of genres, but not so much in this one. Luchadors only seek a permanent pinfall when the bad guy isn't really alive to begin with. The undead refuse to acknowledge defeat



until you remove the un- from them. Particularly vicious monsters can also earn rougher treatment. If the thing from the ocean depths is eating the crew of the ship one by one then you stop it anyway you can. Luchadors should treat most situations as they would a wrestling match. They beat the opponent until he realizes he has lost, then let the referee or police take it from there while the luchador basks in the glory of another victory. Furthermore, the level of violence visited upon the opponent should be in accordance with his abilities and/or transgressions. A running powerbomb is excessive against a purse snatcher. You save that kind of offense for big matches and werewolves. Wrestlers who go all out in the ring on a rookie are heels. Characters who follow suit outside the ring are bullies on their way to being full-fledged villains.

You may have noticed that the bad guys presented in *Luchador: Way of the Mask* aren't all that overpowering. I'm not saying that they are pushovers, but if you are used to games with *Ancient Blood Dragons* and the like, then the bad guys listed here seem far more manageable. You can take on almost anything we have presented with a starting character and still not expect to be insta-killed. The statistics for player characters stack up well against the majority of the opposition. In most cases they are superior to the common bad guy and even the uncommon villain may not overshadow some characters. This aspect of the game is again intended to reflect the source material. The luchador heroes are expected to stand fast against the endless minions of tyranny and the things that go bump in the night. They are expected to meet these threats armed with little more than their masks and wrestling talents. They must fight the good fight and swagger while they do it. This is a lot to ask of characters and it would be nearly unthinkable if they were not luchadors.

So, you saw a section titled 'extras' in the table of contents and wondered what juicy new goodness it would contain. Don't get too excited. This section includes some revisions that didn't fit neatly elsewhere. It's sort of errata by another name. Wait, that's not accurate. Errata implies correcting mistakes, where this is more like improvements based upon playtesting and demo sessions. We are streamlining and improving upon our already awesome game. Forget what I said earlier. Get Excited! This is gonna be great!

SHAKING OFF DAMAGE

Rolling out of the ring to walk off a solid thumping is a time-honored tradition of professional wrestling that allowed us to include a healing function without the need for a specialty class or magical energy drinks. The determination check required to recover also reflects the source material where the guy who wants it more always finds a way to get back in the fight, as well as emphasizing the 'mental' statistics of the characters. The problem arises when a player hits the determination check exactly and heals nothing. What a rip off! You burn Heat on a gamble, pass the check despite the wound level modifiers, and get bupkis. I've seen it happen many times now and realize that something has to be done!

From this point on, a successful shake off damage check restores vitality equal to the character's conditioning level plus the margin of success! This ruling means you heal more vitality when you spend your Heat, making it a more attractive prospect. It also means that conditioning figures into recovery once again, making it the statistic that just keeps giving. Don't whine about getting rid of the determination check, because that is not happening.

THE TWINS RULE

The pre-generated Bruisers used in our demos and examples are the Eviscerators, also known as the Brutality Brothers. Despite being two individual characters, they have only one character sheet! This is an example of the previously unstated twins rule. If a player, or pair of players, wants to generate twin characters, then roll a single character and make two copies. It's just that easy.

I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, 'even identical twins are not exactly alike.' You are correct, they are not. Once each twin character completes the character generation process and enters play, they can spend experience points in different ways. They may even gain different amounts of XP. If Eviscerator II is in the hospital healing up after the Chairmageddon Pay-Per-View, then he may miss out on the XP from the Phantom of the Folding Chair Factory adventure that his brother E I encounters. The extra XP could allow E I to explore his love of model making with an extracurricular skill that his brother sadly lacks.

MINI MODIFICATION

When Luchador: Bright Lights and Barbed Wire went to print, there was some trepidation about the new Mini class. Was he too powerful with his +2 agility level and free reactions, or was he too underwhelming to be a desirable character class? The Mini

generally falls in line with the other classes, but the free reactions can make the character a little too dominant in big brawls with multiple opponents. After consulting with playtesters, the Mini now has one free reaction per activation and must pay fatigue as normal for additional reactions. It may not be a popular ruling with those of you who have already fallen in love with your Mini character, but that is where it stands at this time. Write your complaints to us at Spartacus Publishing if you need to vent.

GIANT MODIFICATION

The new Giant class was a little more secure than the Mini, even though it was often seen as just a Bruiser by another name. The durability of the Giant is its selling point and one that has served it well in playtests. We so have one small amendment nonetheless. The Giant does not pay extra fatigue for Brace reactions! He still pays 1 fatigue to brace, and a second point of fatigue when bracing as a reaction, but does not pay a third point of precious fatigue due to his Massive rule.



Cue the ring music, 'cause it's time to introduce a new pack of NPCs to populate your campaign. As always, these characters can be brutal bad guys, colorful background, and everything in between.

A few of these characters snuck across the border to avoid being drafted into Luchador: Bright Lights and Barbed Wire. Others are visiting Canada from even more distant and mysterious locales. Feel free to employ these characters wherever your luchadors may travel.

FLESHING OUT THE NPCs

Many of the characters from 'In This Corner' are supporting archetypes that GMs may need for a story, and as such no real motivation appears in the entry. If the PCs get framed for a crime and are forced to resist arrest, the GM has stats on hand for the police. If the GM needs some toughs to lean on the Ma and Pa store for the evil corporation, he can choose between gangers, mercenaries, bikers, and Mafioso goons to fill the role. If Hollywood made a movie based on our game (don't laugh, it could happen), these characters would be played by extras. That doesn't mean they aren't important, but their role is usually to carry out the plans of a bigger villain.

The main characters should always be fleshed out to fit their role in the story. The villains provide the conflict for the story, and the more life you breathe into them, the more enjoyment the players get in defeating them. Again, the characters in this section are painted in broad strokes to leave room for fine tuning by the GM. Each character that is motivating the story forward should have clear goals and reasons for being involved. The PCs are unlikely to question running across mimes or Mounties while visiting Canada, but a Medusa demands a backstory and should be involved in something more compelling than shopping for groceries.

MOUNTIES

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are one of the most iconic peace-keeping forces in the world. While the modern Mounties spend most of their time in simple blue rather than the legendary Red Serge, the traditions of the organization remain deeply ingrained in the force. Those foolish enough to flaunt the law find themselves tracked by diligent soldiers fluent with both cutting edge technology and the old fashioned skills of their cavalry past. The Mounties always get their man!

S11/3 A11/3 C11/3 P11/3 W10/3 D11/3 I16 F6 R6 V30

Strike 16/1 Throw 16/1 Tackle 15/0 Armed 17/2
Grab 16/1 Hold 15/0 Intimidate 15/0 Promo 16/1

EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS

Knowledge: Law 17/2

Knowledge: Canadian Wilderness 17/2

WEAPONS

Baton LOD 1 Damage 7

Pistol LOD 0 Damage 8 Sharp Range 45

MIMES

What drives one to become a mime? Why do they drain all color from their being and occupy seemingly random points throughout the parks and cities to enact ceremonial rituals. Are they mere street performers entertaining pedestrians with their pantomime antics, or do they wrestle with invisible forces imperceptible to the normal mind? Nobody will ever know the secrets they hold for the Mimes live in a world of silence, communicating only through their eerie motions.

S9/3 A11/3 C9/3 P11/3 W10/3 D10/3 I16 F6 R6 V30

Strike 15/0 Grab 15/0 Promo 16/1
Intimidate 15/0 Trick 17/2 Beg 16/1

BEARS

An adult male grizzly stands up to seven feet tall and weighs in excess of 700 pounds, making them heavyweight opposition by any standard. Most of the time bears are relatively peaceful hunter gatherers albeit defensive about their territory. They also possess an inquisitive nature that can lead them to explore new environments particularly if they smell food. If threatened or provoked, all cuteness gives way to the savage beast within. As has been noted on television, bears are godless killing machines.

S18/6 A12/4 C15/6 P12/4 W9/3 D11/3 I17 F8 R11 V55

Strike 17/1 Tackle 16/0 Grab 17/1 Hold 20/1
Intimidate 17/1

CLAWS LOD 0 Damage 8 Sharp

MAUL

On an exceptional hold check, the bear applies a hasty claw strike in addition to the hold damage. Calculate the damage for each attack separately and apply conditioning level to each. The claw strike does not allow a reaction.

IMPOSING

On any exceptional attack, the bear may make a free intimidation check.

DISEMBODIED BRAIN

Pulsing with evil intent, the disembodied brain represents a particularly patient threat to the masked luchador and the world at large. These fiends seek to circumvent grievous injury and death itself by sustaining themselves through technology pioneered by the late (?) Dr. Nikoli Sidious. The procedure is still highly experimental and dangerous. The brain usually floats in a tank with an array of wires and tubes feeding it nutrients and sensory input while voice modulators offer soulless speech. Only those with the right combination of wealth and scientific know-how can attain this state. Only the mad would desire it.

The disembodied existence only serves to further unhinge the disturbed mind leading to ever more eccentric behavior. The



intent of each brain varies and should be fully developed by the GM. Some seek new fit bodies, like those of luchadors, so they can continue to enjoy their extended existence with all the pleasures that the flesh can deliver. Others find that the removal of corporeal constraints frees them to develop psionic abilities that move them further and further from the mundane existence of lesser beings.

S0/0 A0/0 C0/0 P12/4 W18/6 D16/5 I16 F10 R 8 V-

Intimidate 13/1

IMMOBILE

The equipment that keeps the brain alive is massive and hard to move. The creature has heavy 6, and cannot move. GMs wishing to employ a brain with a mobile life support unit can do so, granting the creature a move of 10 feet and reducing it to heavy 4.

IMMUNE TO PAIN

The creature does not feel pain. It cannot be stunned or forced to submit to a hold.

UNLIVING

The apparatus that houses the brain is a machine and counts as unliving. The unliving do not have vitality and only track injury points from combat situations. It becomes inert when it suffers more than 3 injury points.

METAL SHELL

Most evil brains house their life support equipment within a sturdy metal shell. The shell applies a C-level of 6 against attacks, and offers a resilience of 8. It is armored, allowing full resilience against sharp attacks.

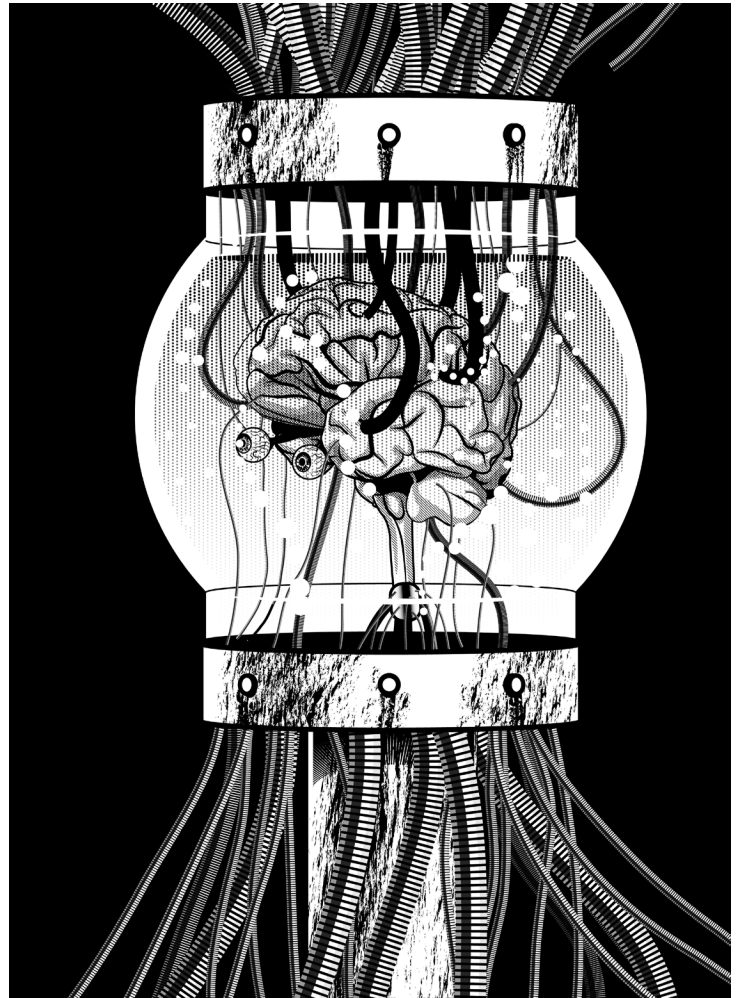
GMs may opt to have a more exposed evil brain for aesthetic or plot purposes, and omit the metal shell rules. The resilience of the brain then drops to 4.

TELEKINESIS

The creature can move objects at range through this strange ability. This ability has two 'settings'. The first allows it to use a strength of 8 to move objects within a range of roughly 50 feet. It costs 2 fatigue to activate the ability and 1 per turn of use after the first. Use wits checks in place of agility to manipulate objects or attack with them.

The second setting allows the creature to employ a strength of 16 against objects and characters. The range remains 50 feet, but the fatigue cost increases to 3 for every turn of use. This setting can be used directly against a character without the need for any tools, allowing the creature to hurl enemies about like rag dolls.

The Telekinesis ability violates most of the normal combat rules, making it complicated and a little heinous which is why the creature cannot maintain it for long (10 fatigue). The brain uses a wits check to grab the target, but faces no difficulty from the opponent's agility level as the strange power is imperceptible. Any success on the wits check allows a free strength check to lift the target. The wits check grab does not function as a normal grab and applies no penalty to the target, nor can the target react to it. The target can react to the strength check, but only with a resist attempt. The brain can attempt a hasty strength check to slam a lifted opponent, but this must occur on a new turn or through an exceptional success on the lift.



MEDUSA

Descending from Greek mythology the strange creatures called Medusas are snake skinned women with serpents for hair and the chilling ability to transform living flesh into cold stone! While myth attributes this power to an unimaginably hideous visage, it actually stems from their gleaming eyes. Any victim that meets the gaze of a Medusa risks petrification. The transformation is instantaneous, capturing the victim's horrified expression for all time! The only cure is the creature's tears which must be applied within three days or the victim is doomed. Unfortunately, the cold heart of a Medusa is rarely moved to weep.

The modern world has left few secluded locales for Medusas to avoid the presence of man, leading a few to walk in the shadows of human society. Advancing technology of the internet has granted them unprecedented opportunity to cast a covetous gaze across the world and extended their interests from the glitter of jewels to more luxurious pleasures. Although history claims them to be monstrous in appearance, most Medusas possess an exotic allure. Modern make-up can hide their scaly skin allowing them to pass for human to the casual viewer. Their stony stare keeps their secret safe from those who are more curious.

S10/3 A14/4 C13/5 P13/4 W13/4 D13/4 I18 F8 R7 V35

Strike 17/0 Armed 18/1 Grab 17/0 Drop 17/0
Intimidate 17/1 Trick 17/1





STRANGENESS

PETRIFYING GAZE

Anyone meeting the gaze of the creature suffers 6 petrification points. The victim is allowed a wits check to look away, with the margin of success reducing these points on a one for one basis. Any character accruing petrification points equal to resilience transforms into stone. Characters risk gaining more points every turn that they engage the creature. Characters can close their eyes entirely to resist the effect, but must face hasty checks for all attacks while blind and are unable to apply agility level as difficulty to incoming attacks or use reactions.

The Medusa's gaze requires no action on her part.

VENOMOUS TRESSES

The serpents of a Medusa's hair can bite any character grabbing or grabbed by her. The bites do no damage, but deliver poison that inflicts 4 vitality loss per turn until the victim passes a conditioning check. The difficulty of the check is the number of turns spent grappling the Medusa, up to a maximum of 5. Characters with the armored rule are too tough for the snakes to bite into, and thus immune to the poison.

TEARS

The tears of a Medusa can cure her victims if applied within 3 days. Getting the creature to cry is left to the whims of the GM, but should involve a great angle by the PCs and a promo check with a difficulty no less than 6.

GILLMAN

Countless life teems in the inky darkness beneath the waves much of it unseen by man. Our innate curiosity draws us to seek out the unknown, and sometimes curiosity calls the unknown to seek us.

Gillmen are strange creatures that live primarily underwater, but are capable of limited excursions on land. It moves slowly and with trepidation on dry land, but is swift and graceful when it returns to its watery home. While bipedal, the creature has traits resembling both fish and reptile. The fingers and toes of the creature are webbed to optimize swimming, but this feature interferes with use of tools.

Use the Gillman stats for any aquatic humanoids from the ocean depths or lost lagoons. Increase levels of expertise for more advanced characters.

S 14/4 A10/3 C13/5 P11/3 W 9/3 D11/3 I16 F7 R8 V40

Strike 16/1 Tackle 15/0 Armed 16/1
Grab 15/0 Hold 17/0

WEAPONS

Trident LOD 2 Damage 7 Sharp Barbed

STRANGENESS

AQUATIC

The creature can breathe water. It moves at 15 feet plus agility level in the water and does not suffer additional penalties for risk while in water. It ignores pressure penalties at the depths it normally inhabits (GM's option). It halves the difficulty for wits checks to spot things underwater.

AMPHIBIOUS

The creature can journey on to land, but pays double fatigue costs while doing so. It faces a maximum duration on land, after which it loses 1 vitality point per turn until it can return to the water. The maximum duration is set by the GM depending on the type of gillman, usually between 30 minutes and an hour.



KILLER DOLL

Puppeteers have always sought to infuse their replicas with the appearance of life. Toys meant to entertain the young and the young at heart are an innocent enough wish, but from this simple illusion begins the terror of the unloving behaving as if alive. Whether through the sorceries of deranged puppeteers or the transferred souls of the brutally slain, the effigy given life is a myth in most cultures and one that rarely plays well with others.

S6/2 A14/6 C10/3 P11/3 W11/3 D11/3 I17 F6 R5 V-

Strike 18/1 Armed 19/2 Grab17/0 Trick17/2
Intimidate 15/0 Beg 16/1

WEAPONS

Knife LOD 0 Damage 4 Sharp

STRANGENESS

UNLIVING

The unliving do not have vitality and only track injury points from combat situations. It becomes inert when it suffers more injury points than its conditioning rating. It does not breathe and is immune to toxins and disease.

IMMUNE TO PAIN

The creature does not feel pain. It cannot be stunned or forced to submit.

FLAMMABLE

If exposed to any open flame, the creature starts to burn taking 1injury point every turn until the flames are doused. Larger quantities of fire can be more damaging. If more than half the body is exposed to fire, it is engulfed in flame and takes 2 injury points per turn. Putting out the flame requires falling prone and an agility check for a normal burn, and an A-check with difficulty 4 for an engulfing flame. Full immersion in water or various modern fire suppression systems automatically extinguish fire.

NIMBLE

The creature can make one free reaction per turn. Until destroyed, it has the reaction options of an unharmed character.



HOCKEY GOON

Hockey is the favored sport of Canada and is avidly followed by most of the populace. Most of the athletes that pursue the sport understand the spirit of competition that motivates luchadors and to a lesser degree other sports. A few would-be players are not drawn to the challenge of the ice, but rather the opportunity to take their violent tendencies to a semi-acceptable venue. This tendency is not limited to hockey, but the protective gear and weapon application of the hockey stick make the hockey goon far more dangerous than overly aggressive players of other sports. With guidance some of these players could find the true meaning of the sport rather than just being a brawl on blades.

S13/4 A11/3 C12/4 P10/3 W8/2 D11/3 I15 F7 R8 V40

Strike 16/1 Throw15/0 Tackle 16/1 Armed 17/2
Grab16/1 Hold 16/0 Intimidate 15/0

WEAPON

Stick LOD 1 Damage 8

Skate Blade LOD 3 Damage 6 Sharp Strike (Kick)

Kicking with the skate blade uses strike rather than armed skill.

PADDED

The character adds 2 to C-level for reducing damage. Competitive padding does not apply this bonus against sharp attacks.

SKATES

While on ice the character only faces 1 level of difficulty for every 2 levels of risk for velocity, and has a base speed of 25.





INBRED MUTANTS

Through exposure to radiation, toxic waste, or simply generation of inbreeding; entire families of mutants have grown in isolation. They survive by scavenging and hunting the area that they call home, preying on unwary travelers and terrifying other locals. They generally prefer staking out an isolated wilderness or abandoned towns, but can occasionally be found in the sewer and squalor of urban settings. Their raids seek meat to sate their family and fresh blood for future generations. Inbred mutants usually follow a dominant elder, but the hierarchy can be disrupted as young hunters demonstrate their growing predatory talents. Whatever the outcome of such conflicts, the family perseveres.

S13/4 A8/2 C14/5 P10/3 W9/3 D11/3 I15 F7 R8 V40

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|----------|
| Strike 16/2 | Tackle 15/1 | Armed 16/2 | Grab16/2 |
| Hold 17/1 | Slam 17/0 | Intimidate 15/0 | |

WEAPONS

Shotgun LOD 0 Damage 10 Sharp Range 25
 Knife LOD 0 Damage 6 Sharp
 Chainsaw LOD 3 12 Damage Sharp

STRANGENESS

IMMUNE TO PAIN

The creature does not feel pain. It cannot be stunned or forced to submit.

MAFIOSO MOOK

The Italian based Cosa Nostra immigrated to North America to take advantage of growing opportunities in the late 1900s. The organization took on new character combining the traditions of their past with a more overt arrogance of their new home. Beyond the pretense of old world sophistication and new world business sense, these criminals were little more than a well polished gang with a stronger sense of solidarity. The Mafia families have had ups and downs since their early days due to the attentions of the law and internal rivalries. At present, the Mafia is no longer at the peak of their influence. The current members are mostly small time thugs trying to relive the glory days of their predecessors.

S12/4 A8/2 C11/3 P11/3 W10/3 D10/3 I15 F5 R7 V35

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| Strike 16/2 | Armed 15/1 | Grab15/1 | Hold 16/0 |
| Promo 15/0 | Intimidate 16/1 | Trick 16/1 | Beg15/0 |

WEAPONS

Pistol LOD 0 Damage 8 Sharp Range 45
 Pool Cue LOD 1 Damage 7 Fragile

PSYCHIC STALKER

We are not alone in the Universe, and some of the life out among the stars has the ability and desire to cross the void. Signs of visitations occur throughout human history. Most of these cases are harmless if sometimes disturbing to those present, but that is not always the case.

The Psychic Stalker is the latest threat to descend from the stars. The creature is surprisingly humanoid, but decidedly monstrous. It has three powerful fingers and toes developed for climbing. Its lipless mouth is lined with hooked teeth that add to its fearsome appearance. It is devoid of pigment making it sensitive to sunlight despite having no eyes. It navigates our planet with an inexplicable sixth sense that grants it exceptional spatial awareness at close ranges, but leaves it oblivious to objects beyond a radius of 50 feet.

This sixth sense pales in comparison to the creature's more bizarre abilities. The Psychic Stalker name derives from the creature's apparent telepathic abilities. It can connect to the mind of a victim allowing the creature to anticipate any attempts to escape. It also seems capable of locating its intended prey at any distance after initial contact. Worse still, the creature enjoys toying with its prey, sending impulses into the mind of the target to heighten the fear of being stalked. After the kill, it extracts the pineal gland from its victim's brain.

While it seems to understand our technology it employs none of its own. The creature's purpose on earth is unknown. It may be harvesting pineal glands for its planet, hunting for a specific target here on Earth, or surveying our world as a prelude to the arrival of a larger force.

S15/5 A13/4 C15/5 P14/4 W17/5 D15/5 I19 F10 R10 V50

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Strike 19/3 | Throw 18/2 | Tackle 17/1 | Armed 17/1 |
| Grab 18/2 | Hold 19/2 | Intimidate 18/1 | Slam 18/1 |

WEAPONS

Claw LOD 0 Damage 7 Sharp





The target can attempt a trick check to use the mindlink against the stalker and hide his true intention. If the check is successful, the stalker cannot apply agility level or react to the next attack, but the link remains. The stalker can only link to one mind at a time.

UNNERVE

The stalker can project a constant barrage of disturbing thoughts through that cause a panic response in the target. The creature spends a point of fatigue and makes an intimidation check. The target suffers the normal effects of intimidation and cannot recover fatigue until the initiative adjustment ends.

FIRESTARTER

The transition from child to adult is tumultuous and fraught with crisis both real and perceived. The frustration and rage of adolescence can strain family relations and at times manifest in even more destructive forms. A Firestarter's fury can lash out in a conflagration of fiery destruction engulfing anything unfortunate enough to raise the child's ire. The ability to create flames is linked to the emotions and often acts without conscious intent, incinerating random objects or even individuals viewed as an impediment to the firestarter. With time the ability may fade away as the individual gains patience and serenity, or the power may fall under the Firestarter's deliberate control. To what end depends on the individual.

S8/2 A11/3 C9/3 P10/3 W11/3 D14/4 I16 F7 R5 V25

Strike 15/0 Beg 15/0



STRANGENESS

SURE GRIP

The creature can re-roll any agility checks for climbing.

EXTRA SENSORY PERCEPTION

The creature is aware of any objects within a 50 foot bubble around it. It cannot be surprised unless the attack originates from beyond this boundary.

TRACK MIND

The creature can pursue quarry by tracking a target's brainwaves. Once it has been within 50 feet of an individual, it can locate that target again across any distance with a wits check. Difficulty is the number of hours since it last was within range (50 feet) of the subject.

TELEPATHY

The creature can read the thoughts of those around it with a wits check at a difficulty of the target's wits level. Using this ability costs 1 fatigue.

MINDLINK

The creature can link to the mind of an opponent to anticipate each attack in advance. The stalker spends 1 fatigue and makes a wits check at a difficulty of the target's wits level. The margin of success determines how long the ability lasts until before it must spend more fatigue to reestablish the contact. While linked to the enemy's mind, the creature can react to attacks without a hasty check.

STRANGENESS

SUBCONSCIOUS ACTIVATION

Whenever the GM decides the character is frustrated or pressured, the character must pass a wits check to avoid activating the ignite ability at the source of irritation or a random object.

Meltdown

The character's inner rage can completely overcome all rational thought, leading to a violent meltdown. The exact trigger for a meltdown varies by individual, ranging from simply suffering injury points greater than conditioning level to a more abstract culmination of rage over a sense of loss. Whatever the cause, the result is a firestorm of destruction as the firestarter pours all fatigue and vitality into pyrokinesis. The character ignores all wound level penalties during the meltdown and does not stop until the last vitality point is burned up.

IGNITE

The Firestarter causes an object, or person, within 20 feet to spontaneously ignite. The flames begin at 3 damage and increase by 1 per turn to a maximum of 6. Half of any damage taken causes an equal number of injury points! Flames can be extinguished by dropping prone and passing an agility check. The ability costs 2 fatigue. Hitting a person with ignite requires a wits check.



FIREBURSTS

The Firestarter simultaneously ignites (as per the previous ability) multiple targets. Up to 5 characters or objects can be targeted with hasty wits checks. The ability costs 4 fatigue.

WALL OF FIRE

The character creates a protective barrier out a sheet of roaring flames. The wall is roughly 5 feet high and 20 feet long. Anyone passing through the wall suffers 8 points of burning damage and starts to burn. Creating the wall costs 3 fatigue which lasts for a number of turns equal to the firestarter's determination level.

INCINERATE

The Firestarter's rage focuses into a single terrifying attack. The target suffers 8 damage plus the margin of success from a determination check by the firestarter. All damage uses the burning rules. The ability costs 5 fatigue.

MOST DANGEROUS HUNTER

For some hunters, the thrill of the hunt becomes the only reason to live. When success comes too easily, the search for new and greater challenges grows from preoccupation to obsession. The most extreme cases crave an adversary that can engage their wits as only a fellow human can. Their desire for a challenge subverts any sense of decency and they turn to hunting people to satisfy their need. Some of these hunters turn to contract killing, but the true thrill of the hunt demands that they isolate prey in a secluded area where they can play their cruel game of cat and mouse. Those with the means have resorts in distant wilderness or private islands.

S11/3 A13/4 C12/4 P11/3 W15/5 D12/4 I19 F8 R7 V35

Strike 17/1 Throw 17/1 Tackle 16/ Armed 19/3
Grab 17/1 Hold 15/0 Promo 16/1 Trick 18/1
Intimidate 15/0

WEAPONS

Rifle LOD 0 Damage 12 Sharp
Hunting Knife LOD 0 Damage 5 Sharp

SPECIAL RULES

EXPERT SHOT

The hunter can re-roll any agility checks for employing ranged weapons.

SNIPER

The character can make a wits check to account for difficulties in long and extreme range shots. A success reduces the penalties by one category, while an exceptional success reduces penalties by two categories.

ALERTNESS

The character can re-roll wits check for perception.

CAT BURGLAR

Unlike most criminals, the cat burglar does not take up a life of crime because it is easier than working. Cat burglars refine their talents with a diligence that would be admirable in any other undertaking. Their considerable skills could easily procure a living through petty crime, but they have no interest in committing petty crimes. To the contrary, cat burglars live for the challenge of a truly difficult crime. They prefer high profile crimes that yield high cash rewards and the bragging rights for stealing that which could not be stolen.

S9/3 A16/5 C11/3 P11/3 W12/4 D12/4 I19 F7 R6 V30

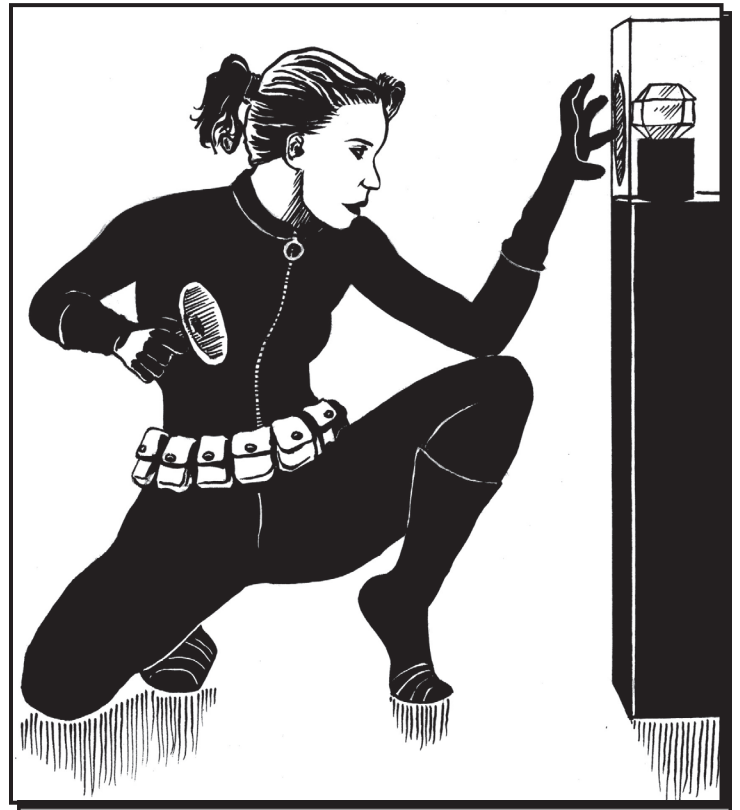
Strike 19/1 Throw 20/2 Armed 19/1 Grab 19/1
Drop 19/1 Trick 19/3 Beg 17/1

EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS

Knowledge: Security Systems 20/4
Craft: Locksmith 22/4
Knowledge: Jewelry 19/3

MAN IN BLACK

Dressed in simple black suits that are simultaneously imposing and forgettable, the men in black are the epitome of the non-descript government agent. They represent no particular government agency but seem to have connections to all of them. They operate around the globe with no concern for jurisdictional restraints that hamstring other organizations. At the first whispers of strange occurrences, the Men in Black appear on the scene to investigate the phenomenon. They quickly and quietly ascertain what is going on and who knows about it. By the time the Men in Black disappear, no concrete evidence will remain.



The Men in Black stats can be used for any mysterious organization in your campaign. The MIB serve as a useful stabilizing element for a campaign world, actively covering up the strangeness that luchadors uncover. The GM can fill in the intent and background to fit campaign needs. There could even be more than one faction of MIBs for GMs wishing to add an extra level of conflict.

S11/3 A11/3 C11/3 P11/3 W12/4 D15/5 I17 F6 R6 V30

Strike 16/1 Throw 16/1 Tackle 16/1 Armed 17/2
Grab 16/1 Hold 16/1 Intimidate 17/2 Trick 20/4

STRANGENESS

JADED

The character gets to make a free Determination check to oppose any intimidation or promo attempts.

BADGES

The MIB always have the optimal documentation to gain access to whatever they seek. This ability includes appropriate identification to any legitimate organization in the world.

TRACKING DEVICES

The Men in Black carry a number of discreet tracking devices that they attach to most surfaces. Once placed, the MIBs can follow the tracker anywhere.

WEAPONS

Pistol LOD 0 Damage 8 Sharp Range 45
Concealable Baton LOD 1 Damage 6



GIANT SNAKE

Constrictors hunt by wrapping around their prey and squeezing the life out of it. The giant constrictor presented here is no different, it just works on a larger scale. These snakes grow up to 50 feet in length and can consume a full grown man, even a luchador, with little difficulty. Snakes of this size are extremely rare, usually found in remote jungles, ancient temples, and the death traps of your more exotic evil geniuses.

S20/6 A16/5 C15/5 P14/4 W9/3 D12/4 I18 F9 R11 V55
Strike 19/1 Grab19/1 Intimidate 17/0 Hold 21/1

LIMBLESS

Grab and hold checks suffer an additional 2 difficulty against the giant snake.

Bite LOD 0 Damage 8 Sharp



SCARECROW

Scarecrows are simple tools meant to trick birds into believing a field is guarded. These pastoral protectors are garbed in tattered rags and usually bound in the pose of crucifixion. Button eyes stare day and night over the fields they are confined to. Is it any wonder that they become figures of horror to the young? Is it so hard to believe that if given a life of their own they might voice their grievances in the language of violence?

Scarecrows are a very specific form of animated effigy akin to the killer doll. They gain mobility in equally varied manner, but always command a greater affinity for fear due to the form they wear. Farming implements are their weapons of choice.

S10/3 A13/4 C10/3 P14/4 W11/3 D11/3 I17 F- R6 V-

Strike 17/1 Armed 18/2 Grab17/1 Hold 17/2
Intimidate 19/2

WEAPONS

Scythe LOD 3 Damage 7 Sharp
Pitchfork LOD 2 Damage 6 Sharp Barbed

STRANGENESS

UNLIVING

The unliving do not have vitality and only track injury points from combat situations. It becomes inert when it suffers more injury points than its conditioning rating. It does not breathe and is immune to toxins and disease.

TIRELESS

The creature does not use fatigue and can effectively function indefinitely. The creature must advance through complex actions on a turn by turn basis.

IMMUNE TO PAIN

The creature does not feel pain. It cannot be stunned or forced to submit.

FLAMMABLE

If exposed to an open flame, the creature starts to burn taking 1 injury point every turn until the flames are doused. Larger quantities of fire can be more damaging. If more than half the body is exposed to fire, it is engulfed in flame and takes 2 injury points per turn. Putting out the flame requires falling prone and an agility check for a normal burn, and an A-check with difficulty 4 for an engulfing flame. Full immersion in water or various modern fire suppression systems automatically extinguish fire.

STRAW BODY

The scarecrow's straw body suffers little discernable damage from bullets. The GM may opt for concentrated fire and shotguns to inflict injury points at half the normal amount, but single shots have no effect.

Sharp weapons are also less effective. Calculate injury points as normal, then cut the number in half. Blunt force works as normal.

SCARY

The scarecrow is an archetypal figure of terror. A character suffering an initiative modifier from a scarecrow's intimidation check cannot react to the scarecrow's attacks.

CEREBRAL PARASITE

The cerebral parasite crawls about like an insect with a leg span of roughly 18 inches. It can crawl on walls and ceilings with equal ease and can leap up to 10 feet to attack a potential host. Its body is extremely flexible, allowing it to wrap around the head and neck of a human target from any angle. The underside of the creature has two stinger-like appendages that it injects into the spine of its host. Once connected, the parasite overrides control of the entire nervous system of the host. The victim retains limited control of speech while the creature adapts to the new host, but this fades in mere minutes and the host becomes a powerless spectator trapped within his own body.

Once the parasite has control over a host it can ride on the head where it can more easily detach if the host is compromised, or climb around to hide on the back of the host where it is less likely to be detected. Even while hiding the legs of the parasite are usually visible around the throat of the host (W-check 3 to spot). The parasites can slow the functions of a host's body to put it into a coma-like sleep so the creature can separate to operate covertly. The state lasts for several hours and can be fatal to frail hosts. The cerebral parasites seem to communicate telepathically with one another over short distances of about 15 feet. An unsubstantiated report theorizes that this range increase exponentially when three or more parasites are in contact. This could allow hives of parasites to communicate across a city or even further.

S7/2 A14/6 C11/3 P12/4 W13/4 D13/4 I18 F7 R5 V25

Grab20/3

STRANGENESS

WALLCRAWLER

The creature can move along walls and even ceilings as easily as along the ground. The creature has a base speed of 10. It can leap up to 10 feet.

PARASITE

Opponents can direct attacks against the parasite on a host. The attack faces an additional 2 points of difficulty. Apply the full damage to both the host and the parasite.

OVERRIDE NERVOUS SYSTEM

Once the parasite grabs a potential host, the stingers attach to the spine and assert control. The target makes a determination check every turn in the grab to resist the alien's influence. The difficulty increases by 2 for every turn in the grab. A failed check mean the alien has gained control and the victim is now a helpless host for its evil!

BREAKING FREE

If the parasite is detached by force or choice, the former host must regain control of his nervous system. The character must make a successful conditioning check to regain control. Disastrous failure causes the character to collapse, regaining consciousness at the GM's discretion.

TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION

The aliens can 'talk' to one another through telepathic means.



VAMPIRE EXECUTIVE

The world is constantly changing and even the eternal undead must adapt to the march of progress. They trade their ancient titles and desolate villages for corporate positions and stocks. The spires of Carpathian mountain castles are exchanged for the steel and glass towers of the modern sprawl. From their new vantage point the lords of old rule untold masses of new prey, feeding on their blood and money with endless hunger. Although wrapped in the decadent trappings of modern moguls, in their dead hearts they remain draconic rulers of their domains and go to any lengths to remove an obstacle to their dominance.

CEO Vampires often have a small number of vampires in their service. They keep these numbers to a minimum as they hate to share the supply of blood with anyone, but the additional strength of the undead is too great a temptation to ignore entirely. Living thralls serve most purposes and money can buy anything else they might require. Vampire executives prefer to remain above direct involvement, but if a challenge becomes personal their arrogance usually gets the better of them.

S19/6 A15/5 C15/5 P16/5 W13/4 D14/4 I19 F9 R11 V-

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Strike 20/3 | Throw 19/2 | Tackle 18/1 | Armed 21/4 |
| Grab 20/3 | Hold 20/2 | Slam 20/2 | Promo 20/2 |
| Intimidate 20/2 | Trick 18/2 | | |

STRANGENESS

UNDEAD

The undead do not have vitality and only track injury points from combat situations. Once the creature takes more injury points than it has conditioning rating, it is damaged to the point of being inert. It may not be dead, but it cannot function. It does not need to breathe, and is immune to toxins and disease.

ALLURING GAZE

A vampire can charm a mortal with his stare. He makes a presence check with the victim's determination level as difficulty. A success causes the victim to follow the vampire for a number of turns equal to the MOS. An exceptional success causes the victim to meekly accept the vampire's kiss without resistance. The ability costs 1 fatigue.

OBEDIENCE

The vampire can give commands to a character under the influence of the alluring gaze above. The target gets a free determination check to resist, using the vampire's presence level as difficulty. Commands that go directly against the target's morality can have lower difficulty at the discretion of the GM. This ability costs an additional point of fatigue.

VAMPIRE'S KISS

A vampire can feed off the blood of a victim to restore his cold, white flesh. The kiss drains 1 point of conditioning from the victim for each turn of feeding. Each point stolen restores 1 injury point to the vampire. If the victim resists, the vampire must grab the target to maintain the vampire's kiss.

A victim reduced to 0 conditioning dies, and rises as a vampire if the vampire so desires.

BEAST FORM

The vampire can assume the form of a bat or wolf. The transformation takes 1 turn. The bat form flies at a base speed of 20 feet. The wolf runs with a base speed of 20 feet.

MIST FORM

The vampire can transform into mist to slip through cracks. While in this form, the vampire cannot be harmed, but



likewise cannot harm enemies. Damage from sunlight and sacred items is doubled while in mist form. The transformation from flesh to mist or vice versa takes a full turn.

MASTER OF BEASTS

The vampire can command wolves, rats, bats, and other creatures of the night at the GM's discretion. The vampire must make a presence check with difficulty equal to the determination level of the target. Success allows the vampire to direct the creature to perform actions normal for the creature (wolves will attack on command, bats fly into where the vampire dictates).

FORBIDDEN

Vampires cannot enter a person's home without being invited. They cannot enter a church or walk on consecrated ground.

The presence of holy items causes the vampire to recoil. Any character brandishing a holy symbol towards a vampire may make a presence check to drive the vampire back. The difficulty is the P-level of the vampire, and 0-3 points for the lack of piety in the character. The vampire may attempt to oppose with a determination check. Direct contact with any consecrated item causes the vampire to suffer an injury point.

CREATURE OF THE NIGHT

Sunlight causes the vampire to burn, taking 2 injury point per turn of exposure. The vampire must pass a free D-check to remain in the sunlight with the difficulty being the amount of injury points taken. During daylight hours, the vampire sleeps in his coffin. If forced to act in the day, the vampire suffers the lumbering flaw (see zombies)

HEART OF DARKNESS

A stake through the heart paralyzes the vampire. It takes an exceptional success to hit the heart, and the blow must inflict 3 injury points to penetrate. Treat the damage of a stake as a knife.

POSSESSED TREE

There are evil spirits hailing from before the creation of the world lurking beyond the veil of this reality. When the stars are right and the forbidden incantations are uttered, these forces can tear their way into our world for a single night. They take whatever host bodies they can find, and frequently corrupt the massive forms of trees over the frail animals that scurry beneath. Anyone encountering one of these horrors will be lucky to see the sun rise, for it exists only to destroy.

S30/10 A4/0 C20/6 P18/6 W8/2 D15/5 I12 F11 R16 V-

Strike 16/4 Grab16/4 Intimidate 19/0

STRANGENESS

ROOTED

The tree cannot move or be moved while rooted to the ground. The tree can uproot itself to move at a base speed of 5. The act of uprooting costs the creature 5 injury points.

TERRIFYING HORROR

The creature makes a free intimidation check every turn. It does not face the normal penalty for multiple intimidation checks in a single fight.

BRANCH ATTACK

The creature attacks with massive branches, inflicting 12 base damage including strength. Even on a missed attack, the smaller branches whip at the target inflicting 5 damage. Only a disastrous failure (after any reactions modify the attack) prevents this damage.

IMMUNE TO PAIN

The creature does not feel pain. It cannot be stunned or forced to submit.

FLAMMABLE

If exposed to an open flame, the creature starts to burn taking 1 injury point every turn until the flames are doused. Larger quantities of fire can be more damaging. If more than half the body is exposed to fire, it is engulfed in flame and takes 2 injury points per turn. Putting out the flame requires falling prone and an agility check for a normal burn, and an A-check with difficulty 4 for an engulfing flame. Full immersion in water or various modern fire suppression systems automatically extinguish fire.

ANIMATE THE DEAD

The unclean spirit can animate the bodies of any corpse as shambling zombies to carry out its will.



UMBRAL ACCORD INTEL AGENT

When the Umbral Accord wants to make its presence known, they send in the faceless shadow soldiers to apply influence with ruthless precision. The hail of bullets and more exotic weapons makes a desirably terrifying impression, but the most dangerous agents are rarely seen at all.

The intelligence agents of the Umbral Accord are the true key to expanding the influence of the unseen empire. It falls to them to infiltrate rival forces, allies, and potential targets. All of these terms are virtually interchangeable in the minds of the agent, for anyone not sworn body and soul to the Umbral Accord is just a future pawn. Their secrets must be unearthed, their weakness must be detected, and their intent must be redirected to serve the dark agenda of the Shadow Cabinet.

The Intelligence agent adopts new identities frequently, becoming whoever he needs to be to gain the trust of his current target. He lives this falsehood for as long as it takes to achieve his goal, then casts it aside to vanish back into the shadows when new orders arrive. His only true identity lies in the featureless black mask he dons when dealing with the Accord.

S9/3 A12/4 C10/3 P11/3 W13/4 D11/3 I18 F6 R6 V30

Strike 18/2 Throw17/1 Tackle 16/0 Armed 18/2
Grab16/0 Promo 16/1 Intimidate 15/0 Trick 19/3
Beg 15/0

EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS

Languages (Choose 3) 16/0
Knowledge: Local Politics 17/1
Knowledge: Security Systems 18/2
Knowledge (Choose 2) 16/0
Pilot: Car 17/1

WEAPONS

Pistol LOD 0 Damage 8 Sharp Range 45
Hidden Knife LOD 0 Damage 5 Sharp

SPECIAL RULES

ELITE TRAINING

Agents of the Umbral Accord can re-roll checks with firearms.

MASTER OF DISGUISE

Intelligence agents of the Umbral Accord specialize in impersonating others. With appropriate clothing and make up, the character can make impressive changes in appearance to take on the role of innocuous background characters. Becoming a delivery man, police officer, or other uniformed personnel is a casual task for the agent. Taking on a more specific role is more involved.

Through a combination of acting skill, state of the art make up, and even surgical alteration; the agent can perfectly impersonate a given target. A complete replacement is no small undertaking, and must be worth the Umbral Accord's investment. The right agent must be chosen and months of preparation go in to the project.

BLOODSHADOW ASSASSIN

The Umbral Accord has always pursued exotic means of eliminating enemies quickly and quietly. The most recent flavor of assassination is the bloodshadow assassins. Trained in an abbreviated version of ninjitsu and advanced weapon training, the trademarks of these killers are the camouflage stealth suit and the bloodsurge drugs employed to grant blinding speed. Bloodshadow Assassins can appear out of nowhere and cut through a squad of elite bodyguards to kill their target and vanish before reinforcements can arrive. The bloodsurge drug is highly addictive and there have already been some missteps due to its side effects. Despite these problems, the Umbral Accord has had great success with the new killers and it is doubtful they will fall from use, at least until a more effective weapon is found.

S12/4 A15/5 C12/4 P11/3 W10/3 D11/3 I18 F7 R8 V40

Strike 19/2 Throw17/0 Tackle 17/0 Armed 19/2
Grab17/0 Hold 16/0 Intimidate 15/0

Weapons

Mono Blade LOD 0 Damage 8 Sharp

THE MONO BLADE

The Bloodshadow Assassins wield a laser sharpened blade that can cut through armor like butter. The sword ignores the armored rules of a target, and only faces half of the character's conditioning level when inflicting damage! If the assassin suffers a disastrous failure with the weapon, the edge is damaged and becomes a simple sharp weapon.

STEALTH SUIT

The Bloodshadow Assassins employ camouflage stealth suits that allow them to blend into any surrounding. An array of sensors and holographic projectors render the wearer virtually invisible while standing still. Spotting a stationary assassin requires a wits check with a difficulty of 1 per feet from the viewer. Remember that such checks are hasty unless the character is specifically surveying the area in question. Any movement ends the effect, as does any injury points taken by the assassin, since the experimental equipment is easily damaged.

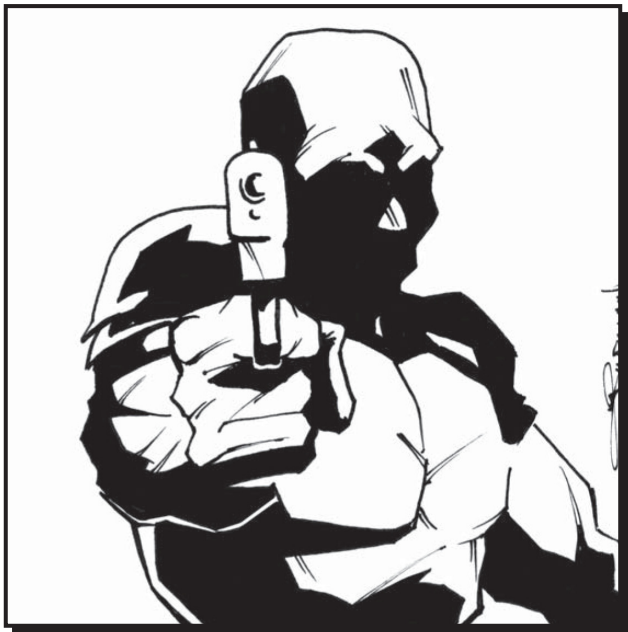
BLOODSURGE INJECTOR

The Assassins wear a neck harness that on command injects a series of chemicals into the brain and bloodstream collectively referred to as the bloodsurge. This chemical cocktail accelerates the reflexes of the assassin to superhuman levels and accounts for the success of the Bloodshadow Assassin program.

To activate the bloodsurge, the assassin makes a free conditioning check to endure the potent chemicals. A failed check costs 1 vitality for every point in the margin of failure. A disastrous failure stuns the assassin for 1 turn! Once activated, the bloodsurge persists until the assassin stops to reset fatigue. If the assassin continues to act while fatigued, he pays 3 vitality rather than the normal 2 for each point of fatigue used.

The Assassin can re-roll all initiative and agility checks while under the effects of the bloodsurge. The character can also make a flurry of attacks, striking up to 4 times with strike or armed attacks but each of the swings becomes hasty. The Assassin has a base movement of 20 while under the effect of the bloodsurge.





OBLIGATORY INTRODUCTION

If this is your first time with one of our adventures, it may not be what you are used to. I'll take this one last opportunity to remind you that you should have purchased our previous books 'cause it's kind of theme at this point, then tell you not to worry about our loose-knit approach to adventure writing. The GM, that's you, should read through the adventure overview and *dramatis personae* sections carefully to make sure you understand what is going on in the story. Next, read through the scenes that we think are likely to occur in the adventure so you can know where to turn if the players start following a plotline. Don't feel that the scenes have to take place in the order they are listed in, or even at all. Once you have a handle on it, make any changes you like. Expand upon elements you think could be more exciting, or cut out anything you feel is distracting. You are the GM, the responsibility of showing your gaming group an exciting time of masked mayhem falls on you. If it goes well I will take all the credit, but it is still your campaign so don't be afraid to make it yours.

Experienced Characters

Most roleplaying games have experience levels to help GMs know how tough the players have to be to go through a given adventure. As you know, this is not one of those games. I could ramble on about the difficulty of assessing challenge level to character ability, but instead I'll cut to the point. This adventure is a little rough with lots of opportunities to get into fights. Some of those fights are against heavily armed bad guys attacking in number. Worse, some of those fights are with enemy wrestlers who can meet the player characters on their own terms. I recommend that GMs only run this adventure after the players have gotten a few games of *Luchador: Way of the Mask* under their belt. This allows the GM to get an idea of how well the characters can handle themselves, and lets the players get a feel for the game and a few XP. The extra games also give the GM a chance to introduce the *Umbral Accord* in an early session so the unseen empire will have a score to settle (see *Matt Black* in *Dramatis Personae*).

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The psychotic mobster Faceless Falcone was hiding out in Canada after a vendetta killing spree made it too dangerous for him to remain in the States. While in exile, his gambling interests uncovered the inventor of a highly addictive sugar substitute. The compound's addictive properties were undeniable, but its high is comparable to a sugar rush making it hard to market as a recreational drug. Falcone's solution was to sell it to kids through the concession stands at the local arena, but the taste didn't compete. He needed a way to encourage kids to drink *Pola Cola*. Enter the wrestling fans. *Great North Wrestling* put on a packed show every week and a few of their performers were not adverse to some extra money to endorse his beverage. *Pola Cola* started to take off locally, and Falcone tightened his hold on *GNW*. This gained him the attention of Canadian wrestling legend *Lamont La Croix*, who was appalled to see wrestling used to promote poison to children. He nearly ended the operation single handedly until Falcone abducted his wife and kids.

With *Lamont La Croix* at his mercy, *Faceless Falcone* decided it was time to step up his operation. He used *Lamont's* fame to put *Great North Wrestling* on the map in exchange for a piece of the action. He could have stopped there, but *Falcone* saw the possibility to expand the league and his addictive soda sales. He forced *Lamont* to challenge the league's top wrestlers to career ending matches, both to draw more press to *GNW* and to make *Lamont* destroy what he loves to protect his family. Now *Falcone* plans to pit the champion *Monsieur Mauler* against *Lamont La Croix* at *GNW's* first pay-per-view event. Unbeknownst to *Monsieur Mauler*, the fix is in. *Lamont* must throw the match if he wants his family to live! If things go according to plan, the defeat of *La Croix* will take *Great North Wrestling* and *Pola Cola* nationwide, at which point the wrestlers he defeated can return to *GNW* if they sign with *Faceless Falcone*. *Falcone* cannot decide if he will let *Lamont* live with the shame of his role in the plan, or murder him to keep him quiet.

It is at this pivotal point that the player characters intervene. The PCs hear about *La Croix's* bizarre return to wrestling and the career vs. career matches. They go to *Great North Wrestling* to see for themselves. *Lamont La Croix* has to keep everyone at bay or his family suffers, so he plays the heel and tells the PCs to get lost. If the confrontation gets physical, he takes the opportunity to point them towards *Pola Cola*. The PCs also have to deal with *Monsieur Mauler* who sees the outsiders as a threat to his upcoming match with *La Croix*. Wrestling smack talk often culminates with impromptu bouts, and this will be no exception. During the brawl, *Ms. Mapleleaf* (secretly *Lamont's* niece) drops a lead towards *Falcon Entertainment* in case the PCs missed the lead from *Lamont*. With the plot and preliminary villains introduced, and up to two leads to follow, the adventure is off and running.

Players following the *Pola Cola* lead end up at the small plant that produces the glorified sugar water sold at a number of concession stands in the area. Everything seems on the up and up except for the goons working security and the small lab above the plant. The mere presence of security on such a small factory is weird enough, made more suspect by their *Mafioso* demeanor. Characters getting past security discover *Professor Vernon Dinkley* trying to find a means to remove the addictive properties of his formulae. *Dinkley* provides some much needed exposition about the *Pola Cola* plot and drops *Faceless Falcone's* name. As soon as he's told them what he knows, a mysterious phone call warns them that *Falcone* is on his way.

The voice on the phone belongs to *Matt Black*, intelligence agent for the *Umbral Accord*, and his intervention is by no means benevolent. *Faceless Falcone* has history with the *Accord* (see *Dramatis Personae* entry) and needs their help to take *Pola Cola* to the next level. Their backing could finance the expansion of the company and provide the 'influence' needed to keep authorities from discovering *Dinkley's* sugar substitute. *Black* is here to evaluate the potential investment. He has already decided that *Pola Cola* is a waste of resources, but is stringing *Faceless Falcone* along for an opportunity to steal the formulae and set *Falcone's* fury against the player characters. This is the moment he has been waiting for. If *Matt Black* has his way, the PCs leave



the Pola Cola plant looking for Faceless Falcone, he sweeps in to grab Dinkley, and Falcone thinks the masked men have his secrets and scientist. If things go less smoothly, the two squads of shadow soldiers at his command make an appearance elsewhere in the adventure.

Dinkley's introduction to Faceless Falcone was through Jimmy Pitt, a bookie and loan shark who operates out of a surprisingly high end pool hall. Our heroes can reenact the 'where is he scene' from your choice of action films. Jimmy's not much of a fighter, but he's one hell of a runner. Not only does Jimmy know where Falcone lives, he is one of the few members of the gang who knows where the La Croix family is being held. You see, Jimmy has always had a soft spot for Falcone's girl, Loretta. After what Falcone did to her face, Jimmy has been her shoulder to cry on. When Faceless Falcone needed someone to watch the La Croix kids, he saw a chance to get Loretta out of his hair for a while. Falcone doesn't know Jimmy visits her and subsequently knows more than he should. If the players can catch Jimmy Pitt, he tells them where Falcone lives, and may give them the prize they really seek, the hostages at Lost Lake Estates, if he thinks they will let him and Loretta get away from their boss.

What if the players took the other fork in the intro scene and investigated Falcon Entertainment? The company is allegedly a talent agency currently representing Monsieur Mauler and other GNW wrestlers as well as a few would-be actresses. All of the wrestlers under contract endorse Pola Cola, providing a second link to the scene at the factory. It also is the front for Faceless Falcone's investment in Great North Wrestling. Officials with GNW only have contact through the company representative, Eli Bolin. Falcon Entertainment has no offices currently, but Mr. Bolin's number is readily available. Your players may have any number of schemes to draw out Bolin for a meet through his phone, or they can wait for him to come to the arena for routine business with Monsieur Mauler.

Following Bolin leads to an ice rink that is starting to carry Pola Cola at the concession stands. Bolin is there to meet with Jimmy Pitt, but his reason for us is to draw the PCs into their first encounter with the main villain. The heroes have a gratuitous fight on the ice with hockey goons and the Torsky Twins, a pair of chemically enhanced thugs in service to Faceless Falcone. As things get interesting, Falcone makes a personal appearance to demonstrate his evil by threatening Lamont's wife if the masked men don't back off.

By now you know how we love to leave the ending of these adventures open for you and your players to write, so it should come as no surprise that we have a few options for you. The heroes could raid Faceless Falcone's mansion in a gloriously dangerous battle with the gang's full forces which might not get them the hostages they seek. They could be negotiating a hostage

exchange with Tony the Torch if they captured Faceless Falcone in a prior scene. If they manage to attain the location of the hostages from Jimmy Pitt, they still have to extract the hostages from a probably burning building while fighting an arsonist and chasing a madwoman who wants to keep the La Croix boys for herself. All of this while under the shadow of the Umbral Accord and the deadline of making the pay-per-view. Check out the Finale options for help on bringing the adventure to a big close worthy of Luchador: Way of the Mask!

COUNTDOWN TO THE PAY-PER-VIEW

Faceless Falcone's plan culminates at the Great North Wrestling pay-per-view event. As such, it becomes an obvious deadline for the players. The GM can use this to help set the pace for the adventure. It is up to you how long the players have before the big night. The problem with having a deadline in the game is it prevents the GM from slowing things down if things went bad for the PCs. If the opening backstage beatdown went horribly for your gaming group then they may not be ready for the next round for a couple of days. My point here is that the GM should let the time limit add pressure to the game rather than upping the threat levels. If the PCs have skated all the way through to the rescue without a scratch, feel free to turn up the heat a little. In the beginning, let things build with threats of fights yet to come.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LAMONT LA CROIX (Retired Wrestling Legend)

Lamont is the latest legend of the La Croix dynasty. The grandson of Liam La Croix, he reinvigorated the family's legacy with a sixteen month reign as the Global Wrestling Alliance's heavyweight champion. Before he attained the title, or the New Japan belt before that, he fought his way around the world in any venue he could find. He sought out the best talent to test his skills against, resulting in matches that the fans would never forget. Lamont never assumed that his family name entitled him to anything more than extra rigorous torture in the Crucible.

Several years ago, Lamont chose to retire from the ring to spend more time with his wife and kids. Constant life on the road had cost him his oldest son's first words and steps. Lamont was determined to be there for all the firsts to come. He disappeared from the wrestling scene except for a few appearances as a guest at pay-per-view events, and interviews from the Crucible concerning new talent he was helping train. Then, he returned without explanation to a growing promotion called Great North Wrestling.

Lamont had heard a rumor about GNW facing a mob problem from a student at the family school. He decided to look into it, and discovered the connection to Faceless Falcone. Lamont was fast on his way to unraveling the whole Pola Cola plot and

FORCED TO FIGHT

A hero being forced to fight other heroes is a classic staple of comic books and action pieces. This adventure presents plenty of opportunities for the GM to employ this proud tradition. If Falcone feels pressed he might demand that Lamont dissuade the masked men personally. Obviously he can only do this if he retains custody of the La Croix family.

The GM needs to have Lamont hold back as much as the situation allows during such a fight to reinforce the idea that Lamont doesn't want to hurt them. Hopefully they will feel the same. Faceless Falcone needs to be present to motivate La Croix, and to ensure his claim to the role of villain in this adventure.

putting Falcone into traction, but the monstrous mobster had an ace up his sleeve; he had abducted Lamont's family! Faceless Falcone demanded Lamont stand helpless for a beating at his hands or watch his wife die. Afterwards, he dictated the terms of Lamont's return to wrestling.

Lamont is now forced to help Falcone carry out his plan to take over Great North Wrestling. Worse still, he must turn his skills to destroying the league's wrestlers so they must sign with Falcon's men or end their careers. He desperately seeks a way to save his family and put an end to the monster's plot, but he will need the PCs to save the day and preserve the honor of professional wrestling.

LAMONT LA CROIX

S14/4 A14/4 C18/6 P13/4 W12/4 D19/6 I18 F12 R10 V50

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|------------|
| Strike 19/2 | Throw 20/3 | Tackle 19/2 | Armed 18/1 |
| Grab23/6 | Hold 23/6 | Slam 20/3 | Drop 21/4 |
| Promo 17/1 | Intimidate 16/0 | | |

EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS

Language: Spanish 16/0
 Language: French 16/0
 Knowledge: Wrestlers 18/2

Fame 17/5

SPECIALTIES

Relentless, Dynasty, Student of the Game

TECHNICO

The character may re-roll any wrestling skill check.

MS. MAPLELEAF (Laura La Croix)

Laura La Croix is Lamont's niece and another piece of the family dynasty. She has trained diligently her entire life to follow in the family's tradition, desperately waiting the time when it would be her turn to step through the ropes. When she graduated from high school last spring she believed her time was near, but instead she was placed under her uncle's scrutinizing glare. Lamont said she needed to refine her presentation and polish her mike skills if she was going to get signed, which she took as a last step before getting to wrestle. She threw herself into his training, but nothing was good enough. Weeks turned into months, and she was still not getting a chance to ply her trade. Laura began to suspect that her fondness for high flying might have something to do with Lamont's disapproval.

When her uncle stopped showing up to the Crucible, she thought she must have done something wrong. She tried to confront him, but he was nowhere to be found. When she saw him on television shooting a promo for Great North Wrestling, she was furious. She raced to the arena rehearsing rants with her new promo skills, but when she arrived she was stunned. She could see it in his face. Lamont wore a look of defeat that he had never had before. No La Croix had ever had before. The pompous thug that claimed to be his manager kept her at bay, but she knew something was terribly wrong. When Lamont told her to get out and stay away from him, she knew he was being coerced. Laura played the part of confused family member and left in tears, but she came back

the next day under the mask of Ms. Mapleleaf looking for answers.

Laura is a proud and impetuous rookie sticking her neck out to save her uncle and avenge the family honor. Although she would never admit it, she is also enjoying the opportunity to take action without her family reining her in for 'her own good'. She is following the wrestling angle of Falcone's scheme. If she thinks the PCs are out to save the day, she will enlist their aid. She serves the GM by conspiring with the PCs and feeding them extra information when they get stuck, or the GM needs to draw them into a scene.

LAURA LA CROIX

S13/4 A14/4 C14/4 P13/3 W12/4 D14/4 I18 F 8 R8 V40

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Strike 17/0 | Throw 17/0 | Tackle 18/1 | Armed 17/0 |
| Grab 19/2 | Hold 17/1 | Slam 17/1 | Drop 19/2 |
| Promo 17/1 | | | |

EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS

Language: Spanish 16/0
 Knowledge: Wrestlers 16/0

TECHNICO

The character may re-roll any wrestling skill check.

MONICA LA CROIX (Lamont's Wife)

Monica's first meeting with Lamont involved putting six staples in his head after he was driven through a table. She was a nurse working at a wrestling event and he was a rising star fighting any match he could find. Their courtship revolved around a series of injuries that Lamont often jokes he endured just to see her more. She always patched up his flesh and lifted his spirits. Their inevitable marriage followed on the heels of his successful campaign in Rising Sun Wrestling. Their first anniversary saw him entering the Global Wrestling Alliance in what was destined to be the pinnacle of his career. However it also heralded the birth of their first son, Lance. Monica never returned to work so she could spend more time with her son. Lamont always felt guilty about her giving up her career for the family leading to nasty speculation that she was pressuring him to quit. These rumors were crushed when Monica La Croix made her only in ring appearance to beg her husband to stay in the title hunt.

Monica is a resilient and resourceful character, but she is not a combatant despite a few wrestling lessons from her husband. She is cast in the unfamiliar role of damsel in distress. Her distress centers on the fear of harm to her children. She remains calm and level-headed as she searches for a means to get them out of harm's way. Only then will she focus on her own safety, and finally seeing that Tony and his boss face justice.

MONICA LA CROIX

S 9/3 A11/3 C11/3 P11/3 W15/5 D15/5 I18 F8 R6 V30

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Strike 15/0 | Throw16/1 | Armed 15/0 | Grab17/2 |
| Hold 14/0 | Promo 15/0 | Trick 17/0 | |

EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS

Knowledge: First Aid 22/5



MONSIEUR MAULER (Elitist Giant)

Monsieur Mauler is a giant early in his career as a wrestler. His size and power have made him a force to be reckoned with from the very beginning, but they also lead others to assume he is nothing more than a simple brute. He finds this presumption extremely insulting for he believes himself far more refined than most. His primary response to this stereotype is to talk down to the offending party at length in a scathing manner. For those who don't get the point, or don't speak French as Mauler refuses to speak anything else, he resorts to particularly vindictive acts of violence. Monsieur Mauler delivers a methodical and deliberate beating to his opponents, grinding them down beneath his might and then swaggering imperiously over the vanquished. It is only the accusation that he is simple that riles him. He never contests the charge of brutality.

Monsieur Mauler's career has had a rough start. He has gained a reputation of being hard to work with due to a dispute with past management. Great North Wrestling took a chance with him, but they were reluctant to advance him up the card for fear of the possible damage to their limited roster. Everything changed when Faceless Falcone stepped into the picture. Falcone took an immediate liking to the big man, and met with him after a show to discuss the future of the company. Falcone assured Mauler that there would no longer be anything holding him back from attaining his full potential. With the red tape removed, Monsieur Mauler quickly cleared a path of destruction to the GNW title.

Monsieur Mauler is primarily the in-ring villain for this piece. He is an aloof bully who enjoys using his might to make others show him the respect he believes he deserves, but he limits his sadism to the world of professional wrestlers. He has no inkling about Faceless Falcone's greater plans, but is predisposed to remain loyal to the first person to back him. He serves the GM as the bad guy for GNW, and can add extra muscle to the finale if needed.

MONSIEUR MAULER

S19/6 A8/2 C18/8 P12/4 W13/4 D10/3 I16 F8 R12 V60

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|------------|
| Strike 17/3 | Throw 14/0 | Tackle 14/0 | Armed 15/1 |
| Grab 16/2 | Hold 20/1 | Slam 20/1 | Drop 14/0 |
| Promo 16/0 | Intimidate 16/0 | Trick 16/0 | |

Fame 4/1

SPECIALTIES

Sidekick (Demi, valet)

HEAVY

Any strength check to lift or move the giant faces 2 difficulty in addition to strength level. The giant suffers 2 difficulty for agility checks for risk.

MASSIVE

The giant adds 2 to conditioning level for resisting damage.

The giant pays 2 fatigue rather than 1 for reactions.

SLOW

The giant has a base move of 10 rather than 15.

FACELESS FALCONE'S GANG

Faceless Falcone's gang consists of a handful of lesser mobsters who sided with him during his bloody rampage through Chicago, and a number of malcontents he has collected along the way. Despite their small size and former rank, the gang behaves as major players thanks to the ruthless ambition of their Boss and the fortune he stole from his former employers. The gang is a cult of personality built around the monstrous mobster.

Only the relevant members of the gang receive write-ups in this section. Some of the write-ups are rather brief as their role in the game is simply to carry out Falcone's orders. The named characters are as follows.

Faceless Falcone (Boss, Monstrous Mobster)

The Torsky Twins (Hyde Enforcers)

Eli Bolin (Lieutenant, Business Manager)

Jimmy Pitt (Lieutenant, Bookie)

Tony the Torch (Arsonist Toady)

Bobby the Ball (Lamont's Handler)

Loretta (Falcone's Estranged Girl)

FACELESS FALCONE (Monstrous Mobster)

Freddy Falcone fought his way to a position as a top enforcer for the Valachi Crime family, one of the last great crime syndicates in Chicago. It was unheard of for someone outside of the family to attain such a position, and Freddy was keenly aware of this fact. He took great pains to always show due respect to the bosses and their traditions. He also made sure everyone else paid the same respect and then some. Falcone was the model by which the other soldiers of the family were judged, and he always came out ahead. Nothing ever rattled him, and he accepted each assignment with a nod and a smile that always heralded success. His loyalty and value to the family were beyond reproach.

Someone in the district attorney's office decided to test his loyalty. Falcone was arrested on a trumped up weapons charge. Freddy plead no contest and smiled as the judge threw the book at him. He wasn't afraid to do a little time for the family. What he didn't know was that rumors were reaching his bosses about an informant giving the district attorney enough to take down the whole family. Shortly after his incarceration, the DA told him he was a marked man, but Falcone knew the family would never turn on him. Within a week, he was attacked by three men in the prison kitchen. The fight was brutal and Freddy was holding his own until one of the attackers threw a cleaning solvent in his face. Blinded, temporarily, he was quickly overpowered and doused in the acidic cleanser by his spiteful opponents.

Falcone's recovery was slow and painful. He had chemical burns over his entire head and much of his upper torso. He nearly lost his vision in the ordeal. The pain, disfigurement, and sense of betrayal ate at him for weeks as he convalesced in the prison hospital. Then a hand reached out to help him. The Umbral Accord wanted someone to bring down the Valachi family, and thought that Falcone might have some ideas on how that could come to pass. The once loyal enforcer gave them everything they needed to know in exchange for his freedom and a shot at vengeance. A month later, Falcone escaped from prison and



returned to pay his last respects to his former employers. His homecoming was a bloodbath that dominated the news for weeks, leaving 37 dead. In the resulting chaos, the Umbral Accord whisked him and his crew away to Canada to lay low while the heat died down. Freddy played along at first, but as months passed with little contact, he grew weary of waiting for his new patrons. He decided it was time to do a little business, and this time it would be Faceless Falcone who called the shots!

Falcone devoted his life to ruthlessly supporting an organization that turned on him without a second thought. This betrayal destroyed his entire sense of purpose and identity. Without direction, his violent impulses are merely self-serving, and they consume more and more of his thoughts. He has recreated himself as Faceless Falcone, a monstrous mockery of the gangsters he once idolized. He has refused the plastic surgery that could allow him to pass for normal. Why would he want to settle for being normal? Faceless Falcone is a monster on the rise. He continues to go through the motions of building his own criminal empire, but what he really wants is to make others suffer. His treatment of Lamont La Croix draws from his desire to take everything away from anyone who champions an ideal. Any scene including Faceless Falcone should be unsettling for he is a man rapidly abandoning his humanity.

FACELESS FALCONE

S14/4 A11/3 C16/6 P14/4 W13/4 D16/5 I17 F9 R9 V45

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Strike 20/5 | Throw 16/1 | Tackle 17/2 | Armed 18/3 |
| Grab 18/3 | Hold 19/2 | Slam 18/1 | Promo 18/1 |
| Intimidate 21/4 | Trick 17/1 | | |

EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS

Language: Italian 18/2

Language: Spanish 16/0

Pilot: Car 17/2

STRANGENESS

NUMBED TO PAIN

Faceless Falcone can re-roll determination checks to avoid stunning or submitting.

HIDEOUS

Falcone's scarred face causes a free intimidation check against any character the first time they see him. This check is not optional.

WEAPONS

Brass Knuckles LOD0 Damage 7 Uses strike skill

Tommy Gun LOD 0 Damage 12 Sharp Auto 5 Range 60



THE TORSKY TWINS (Hyde Enforcers)

Tim and Tom Torsky were always accused of being too aggressive. Their teachers, mother, even some of their coaches felt the boys needed to take things down a notch. That was just loser talk! They gave everything 100% and then some, because that was the only way to win! The extra "then some" became a steady stream of steroids that helped put them at the peak of their game. All the extra effort paid off when they got signed to play professional American football. They had finally put all the naysayers in check! They were winners!

They were out celebrating when everything went wrong. Somebody at the bar started to question the twins' 'natural talent'. It got ugly fast as it always did with the Torsky boys. The fight spilled into the parking lot and didn't stop until the police drew down on them. As the dust settled, the cops found one of the participants dead with a broken neck. Nobody could say for sure which of the brothers was responsible. The trial brought their drug use to light, cost them their dream jobs, and put both of the brothers in prison for manslaughter.



For the first time in their lives, the Torsky twins were scared. Then Freddy Falcone took them under his wing. He was connected and nobody would touch them as long as they were in good with him. Falcone thought the boys got a raw deal and started planning a new future for them. When their ray of hope was disfigured by some punks in the kitchen, they took it upon themselves to seek retribution. Two of the attackers ended up in the hospital with him, the other wasn't so fortunate. The twins remained loyal to him while he recuperated, and loyalty is everything to Falcone.

The Torsky Twins are Falcone's loyal enforcers. He protected them in prison, got them out when he escaped, and provided them access to the new X-13 performance enhancers (courtesy of the Umbral Accord) that have made them into the walking terrors they have become. They follow him with the loyalty of a pair of blood-thirsty guard dogs. They are in the story to up the threat level, and help elevate Faceless Falcone from mere mobster to the monstrous villain.

THE TWINS

S17/5 A16/5 C13/4 P11/3 W9/3 D8/2 I18 F6 R9 V45
 Strike 20/2 Throw18/0 Tackle 20/2 Armed 19/1
 Grab18/0 Hold 18/0 Slam 18/0 Drop 18/0
 Intimidate 15/0

WEAPONS

In Scene 5
 Hockey Stick Damage 9
 Skate Blade LOD 3 Damage 7 Sharp Strike (Kick)
 Kicking with the skate blade uses strike rather than armed skill.

STRANGENESS

RAGE

The altered brain chemistry of the boys leads them to violent outbursts at the slightest provocation. If anything hinders one of them, he must pass a free determination check to avoid lashing out in violence. Taunts of any kind as well as most tricks can play upon this aggression, requiring determination checks to avoid attacking.

Immune to Pain

The twins do not feel pain. They cannot be stunned or forced to submit to a hold.

PUSHING YOUR LIMITS

The X-13 takes the body beyond its normal capabilities, placing immense strain on the system. Every turn that a user continues to act while fatigued, he must pass a free conditioning check or suffer an injury point. A disastrous failure sends them into cardiac arrest!

TONY THE TORCH (Arsonist Toady)

Tony is a petty arsonist who was occasionally useful to the Valachi cartel. He is a pyromaniac and general social outcast who fixated on Freddy Falcone the first time they met. Falcone had all the style and confidence that Tony lacked. Tony developed an obsession on Falcone and did his best to emulate the enforcer, but failed to advance in the organization. Worse, he failed to win

the attention of his hero. Then he met Faceless Falcone. Freddy had been too successful, too accepted to relate to a loser like Tony. Faceless Falcone was an outsider. He knew what it was like to be shunned. He knew what it was like to be hated. Only Faceless Falcone didn't have to take it. Faceless Falcone made his enemies pay. He made them burn!

Tony the torch is a dangerous loner with an obsession for starting fires. More importantly, he has pinned all of his delusions onto the new and improved Faceless Falcone. He worships the monstrous mobster and will do anything to win Falcone's approval. He is Renfield to Falcone's Dracula. Tony serves the GM as the agent of Faceless Falcone's wrath upon the La Croix family.

TONY THE TORCH

S11/3 A12/4 C13/4 P10/3 W 8/2 D11/3 I16 F7 R7 V35

Strike 18/2 Tackle 17/1 Armed 18/2 Grab18/2
 Hold 16/1 Intimidate 15/0

WEAPONS

Pistol LOD0 Damage 8 Sharp Range 45
 Molotov Cocktail Damage 6 Range 11
 Also applies 6 burning damage
 Knife LOD 0 Damage 5 Sharp

LORETTA (Falcone's Estranged Girl)

Loretta was a struggling lounge singer when Freddy Falcone first took interest in her. He brought all of his friends to see her sing, and convinced the owner of the club she worked at to make her the headliner. All of Loretta's friends warned her about the crowd he ran with, but Freddy made her feel important. Even when he was convicted, he had the bailiff pause so he could kiss her good bye. Freddy may have been bad, but he was fun.

When he got out of prison, Freddy was no longer fun. He told her that he was protecting her from his enemies when his boys picked her up. He said he was just taking care of unfinished business when the news reported the body count night after night. He explained that they were just laying low for a while when they moved to Canada. He didn't say anything the night he burned the left side of her face to match his. He no longer felt a need to justify his actions. He no longer cared enough to tell her why.

Loretta is a somewhat shallow character who has paid horribly for her poor choices. She was drawn to Falcone's swagger and air of danger. Now she must live with the monster without the affectation of civility. She has been a captive audience to the birth of Faceless Falcone and has not endured the experience well. Watching the La Croix children has given her a reprieve from Faceless Falcone's world, and she has created her own fantasy to avoid going back. She wants to keep the boys for herself. They accept her as nobody else ever will. She serves the GM as a tragic villainess and another example of Faceless Falcone's baseless cruelty.

LORETTA

S 8/2 A11/3 C12/4 P13/4 W 8/2 D9/3 I15 F6 R6 V30

Strike 16/1 Armed 16/1 Promo 18/2 Trick 14/0
 Beg 16/0

WEAPONS

Scissors LOD1 Damage 4 Sharp



ELI BOLIN (Criminal Accountant)

Eli was a mid-level mob accountant with the added bonus of not being afraid of getting his hands dirty. He handled a number of minor fronts for laundering money for the family. Eli was well paid for his work, but generally neglected. He wasn't a first rate soldier or accountant, but he was good enough. Nobody paid him much attention until Faceless Falcone came back to town. Falcone wasn't content to just spill the blood of the men who betrayed him, he wanted to take everything from them and he needed Eli to help him do that. Eli was always a pragmatic individual. Given the choice between helping steal millions from the men who never acknowledged him or dying horribly at the hands of a psychopath, he didn't hesitate. Now he is Falcone's number one financial advisor.

Eli Bolin handles the majority of the gang's investments. He is Faceless Falcone's go-to lieutenant for most matters that don't revolve around violence. Eli is well aware of the Boss's paranoia and keeps highly detailed records on hand at all times so he can allay any suspicions on command. He serves the GM as the face man for the gang and the linchpin that connects Falcon Entertainment and Pola Cola.

ELI BOLIN

S11/3 A10/3 C11/3 P11/3 W14/4 D12/4 I17 F7 R6 V30

Strike 16/1 Armed 17/2 Grab15/0 Hold 15/0
Intimidate 16/1 Trick 17/0 Beg15/0

EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS

Knowledge: Accounting 19/2

Knowledge: Business 19/2

BOBBY THE BALL (Lamont's Leash)

When Bobby was made a soldier in the Valachi family he achieved the only real goal he had in life. Being a mobster is all he ever wanted, and it lived up to all of his expectations. People were afraid of him and showed him the respect he desired. He made good money and lived well. Not as well as some of the other guys, but better than all the working stiffs. Bobby fell in with Falcone when Freddy was still making his name with the family. Bobby backed Falcone's revenge scheme without question, and didn't really understand what was going on until it was too late. Still, the new gang made out pretty good and now he lives in Falcone's posh new mansion, so it wasn't all bad.

Bobby is a thug who delights in being a thug. His rotund physique and boisterous personality makes him very popular with other members of the gang. His lack of ambition makes him no threat to the Boss. He serves the GM as a gleeful bully who torments Lamont for Mr. Falcone.

BOBBY THE BALL

S12/4 A8/2 C11/3 P11/3 W10/3 D10/3 I15 F5 R7 V35

Strike 16/2 Armed 15/1 Grab15/1 Hold 16/0
Promo 15/0 Intimidate 16/1 Trick 16/1 Beg15/0

EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS

Language: French 15/0

JIMMY PITT (Bookie)

Freddy Falcone got his start with the Valachi family running collections for Jimmy Pitt. Jimmy was already a respected bookie and his approval opened doors for Falcone. Jimmy mentored the young enforcer on family etiquette. Freddy quickly moved on to areas where his talents could be more useful, but even as he took his place in the Boss's inner circle he kept his ties to Jimmy. Falcone always invited Jimmy to any festivities he threw. It was at such an event that Jimmy met Loretta and truly envied his pupil just a little.

The night Falcone escaped from prison, his first stop was to visit Jimmy Pitt. He needed to know that Jimmy hadn't turned on him, and Jimmy did everything he could to convince him. Falcone had always been intense, but now he was flat out insane! Jimmy won his confidence, but couldn't talk him out of his plan. What Jimmy hoped would be a drive out of town with Falcone to 'regroup' turned into the first hit of a series of murders. Jimmy had been seen with Falcone at the scene. His lot was cast and he had to play it out.

Jimmy is a far more experienced yet less ambitious criminal than Falcone. He has tried to make the new gang work, both out of fear for Faceless Falcone and the desire to help out the rest of the guys. However, it gets harder every day to tolerate Falcone's growing madness. He has distanced himself from the gang even though doing so increases the likelihood that Falcone will turn on him. The inexplicable disfigurement of Loretta was the final straw for him.

Jimmy is the key to finding the hostages as he holds information that he should not have. He also sees that Faceless Falcone is on a course of self-destruction and is likely to take the entire gang with him. If he believes that the PCs have a chance of stopping Faceless Falcone, Jimmy will tell them what he knows in exchange for saving Loretta. The rest of the gang chose the mobster life even if they didn't choose this. Loretta got pulled in and she has suffered the most at Falcone's hands.

JIMMY PITT

S10/3 A10/3 C11/3 P12/4 W13/4 D11/3 I17 F6 R6 V30

Strike 16/1 Throw15/0 Armed 17/2 Grab 16/1
Promo 17/1 Intimidate 16/0 Trick 18/2 Beg 16/0

MATT BLACK (Umbral Accord Auditor)

Agent Black has been sent to Canada to deal with the latest chapter of the Falcone Fiasco, an ongoing project that he considers a new paradigm for flawed execution. What should have been a simple subversion of a syndicate enforcer's loyalty became a media-event revenge rampage. Between the body count and the police response, the prized Valachi criminal empire was lost to the Umbral Accord. Falcone should have been left to take the fall for that disaster, but instead he was hidden away in Canada in the hopes that they could find a use for him. Now Falcone has a plan and wants the backing of the Umbral Accord, and it falls to Black to determine if his scheme has any merit. While the Pola Cola scheme is doomed to eventual failure, Falcone's petty revenge against La Croix has drawn in some masked men who have crossed the Accord in the past. Faceless Falcone can serve one final use in helping balance a long overdue debt.



Black's role is to represent the Umbral Accord's interests in Falcone. He leads the mobster on with promises of possible support if the GNW takeover is successful, uses him to take revenge on the PCs, then abandons him in a final act of betrayal.

MATT BLACK

S10/3 A13/4 C13/4 P13/4 W20/6 D16/5 I20 F9 R7 V35

Strike 18/2 Throw 18/2 Tackle 16/0 Armed 19/3
Grab 18/2 Hold 16/1 Drop 17/1 Promo 18/2
Intimidate 17/1 Trick 25/5 Beg 16/0

EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS

Language: Spanish 20/0 Language: French 20/0

Language: Italian 20/0 Language: Russian 20/0

Language: Japanese 20/0 Language: Farsi 20/0

Knowledge: Local Politics 21/1

Knowledge: Security Systems 23/3

Knowledge: Economics 21/1

Knowledge: Accounting 23/3

Knowledge: Finances 22/2

Knowledge: Law 21/1

Craft: Demolitions 18/2

Pilot: Car 18/2

Pilot: Airplane 17/1

WEAPONS

Pistol LOD 0 Damage 8 Sharp Range 45

Hidden Knife LOD 0 Damage 5 Sharp

SPECIAL RULES

ELITE TRAINING

Agents of the Umbral Accord can re-roll checks with firearms.

MASTER OF DISGUISE

Intelligence agents of the Umbral Accord specialize in impersonating others. With appropriate clothing and make up, the character can make impressive changes in appearance to take on the role of innocuous background characters. Becoming a delivery man, police officer, or other uniformed personnel is a casual task for the agent. Taking on a more specific role is more involved.

Through a combination of acting skill, state of the art make up, and even surgical alteration; the agent can perfectly impersonate a given target. A complete replacement is no small undertaking, and must be worth the Umbral Accord's investment. The right agent must be chosen and months of preparation go in to the project.

SERVANT OF THE SHADOWS

The character has fanatical loyalty to the Umbral Accord. The character may re-roll any determination checks to avoid surrendering information about the unseen empire, and is likely to provide partially false information even if the check fails.

ALWAYS PREPARED

Black thoroughly researches anyone he expects to be present on an assignment. As a result, he knows relevant facts about their background and has a rough estimation of their skill sets.

PROFESSOR DINKLEY (Indebted scientist)

Dinkley has spent the last seven years trying to perfect a synthetic sugar substitute of his own design. He made his first breakthrough last year and shopped his formulae around looking for the funds necessary to test and perfect it. He was convinced that if successful, he could revolutionize the diet industry. Unfortunately, none of the companies he tried to pitch the idea to shared his vision. Undeterred, the good doctor continued working diligently. Then his finances began to run out. Working menial day jobs took up too much time, so he sought a less conventional means to support himself. He learned online how to maximize the likelihood of winning at poker and began paying for his research with his new gambling skills. Things went smoothly at first and he sought out higher stakes games so he could get back to his life's work. Then his system suffered a bit of a hiccup. He tried to bounce back, but things only got worse. Before he realized it, he was in debt to some very unpleasant individuals. He attempted to work out a payment plan, but that just made them laugh a not-at-all comforting laugh. Dinkley had nothing of value to offer up as he was already behind in his mortgage, and had sold his car to fund his research. Then it hit him, he could pay with his formulae! He wanted the accolades not the money from his invention. Seeing no other means of recouping the debt, Jimmy Pitt reluctantly took Dinkley's proposal to Faceless Falcone.

When Falcone came to visit the Professor he fully intended to end Dinkley's life, but as he stalked around the makeshift lab he noticed the cages of lab mice straining to reach Dinkley's creation. He saw a new use for the doctor's 'diet supplement' and demanded human testing at once. Dinkley knew enough not to protest. The new testing revealed a side effect that he had overlooked during the animal trials, his formulae caused a near immediate dependency! The doctor was shocked but Falcone was thrilled! He explained in no uncertain terms how this wonder drug was going to make all of Dinkley's problems go away, and how he would make Dinkley go away if he gave anything less than full cooperation.

Dinkley is a bumbling scientist with good intentions and poor judgment. He has inadvertently created a highly addictive drug and handed it over to a remorseless psychopath. Dinkley continues to work feverishly on removing the defect from his sugar substitute under the delusion that if he succeeds he can get out from under Falcone's thumb. He is terrified of Falcone to the point of stammering when he has to speak to the monstrous mobster. Dinkley is the key to the Pola Cola plot. He also knows that Falcone has mysterious investors that he is courting to take Pola Cola nationwide. He specifically remembers Matt Black as the man who inspected the plant in Mr. Falcone's presence.

PROFESSOR DINKLEY

S 8/2 A9/3 C 10/3 P9/3 W15/5 D10/3 I16 F6 R5 V25

Strike 14/0 Beg 14/0

EXTRACURRICULAR SKILLS

Knowledge: Chemistry 20/3



SCENE 1: WELCOME TO GREAT NORTH WRESTLING

The adventure begins with the player characters hearing about Lamont La Croix returning to wrestling. The exact introduction depends on your campaign. One or more of the PCs could have history with the La Croix family, either having trained or aspiring to train at the world renowned Crucible. News of Lamont's return and new attitude could be sufficient to prompt a road trip to Canada. The GM could even have a friend or family member from the school call and ask the PCs for help if the GM feels the players are a little slow to take the hook. If your PCs don't jump at the chance to get involved, you can simply have their tour lead them to Great North Wrestling as further promotion for the upcoming pay-per-view.

LAMONT LA CROIX'S HISTORY IN GREAT NORTH WRESTLING

The simplest approach is to just spring the news on them during their ongoing travels. The PCs go to Canada as part of a wrestling tour, and learn that the legendary grappler has returned from his self-imposed exile to begin wrestling for a small company



called Great North Wrestling. Stranger still, Lamont has entered the league with a terrible new attitude. During his first appearance he decried the entire GNW roster as a collection of 'talentless nobodies unfit to lace my boots.' When the locker room emptied to answer his challenge, La Croix who always prided himself on accepting all challenges refused to acknowledge any of them as worthy contenders. Over the next months he goaded three of the top wrestlers into accepting career vs. career challenges in order to get in the ring with him. In each case, the challengers fought valiantly but proved no match for the living legend. With three rising stars struck down with callous ease, the promoters for Great North Wrestling turn to their reigning champion, the massive Monsieur Mauler to stop La Croix. The giant will put his title on the line against Lamont's career at GNW's first pay-per-view event. The entire wrestling world has taken note of the bizarre turn of events, just as Faceless Falcone planned.

ENTER THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

Our heroes enter the story at a GNW show leading into their first pay-per-view event, and all talk is about the showdown where Lamont fights Monsieur Mauler. The event takes place at the Grove Arena, the home of GNW, which is filled to capacity with fans both die-hard and new. The GM can use the first scene of excited fans as an opportunity to introduce the hyped up Pola Cola kids (see sidebar). Fans are hotly divided over who they want to come out on top. Mauler has a long history as a heel, but he is defending the league's honor against the overbearing legend.

TALKING TO LAMONT

The players should be looking for a confrontation with Lamont, but that is easier said than done, even for famous luchadors. Faceless Falcone keeps his favorite toy on a tight leash. Bobby the Ball acts as Lamont's manager and handler. Bobby and two of his mooks accompany Lamont to the arena where they keep him sequestered in his private dressing room until he's needed. Bobby walks Lamont to the arena entrance, but does not accompany him to the ring where television cameras could broadcast his whereabouts to former friends in Chicago.

If the player characters attempt to reach Lamont backstage, Bobby the Ball tells them to buzz off. If they don't take that well, and are not intimidated by his thugs, then he cheerfully sicks Lamont on them. The GM needs to play up Bobby's glee at ordering around the big shot wrestler, as well as Lamont's revulsion, to give the players clues that something is wrong. Lamont uses his promo skills to tell the characters to stay out of his business in a manner befitting an in-ring feud. He resorts to violence only if the PCs are persistent. With Bobby so close, he cannot afford to try and convey a message. The GM can have Lamont mention that he has to get to the ring, if you want to drop a hint to your players.

Confronting Lamont when he goes out to hype the pay-per-view provides the best opportunity to talk without his manager around. Lamont is scheduled for ring time to antagonize the crowd with claims of how he will make GNW better once he is the champion. Anyone who



watches wrestling knows that event security will not stop wrestlers running in to the ring unless a referee calls for backup. Even then, help will be slow coming. The PCs can do a run in and confront Lamont. He continues to play the heel as Falcone has ordered, but will quickly escalate things to a physical confrontation with the PC that takes point on the mike. If Lamont can lock up with his opponent (note the grab skill and technico abilities) he quickly says, 'Faceless Falcone has my wife and kids. They're dead if I disobey. Go to the Pola Cola plant if you want to help'.

At this point Monsieur Mauler and his translator, Demi, make their entrance. Mauler is here for the final verbal confrontation with Lamont before the big match, but the giant is not pleased to see outsiders getting involved with his opponent. The fight with Lamont is going to make him a legend, and he will not tolerate anything endangering his opportunity. Lamont rolls out of the ring as soon as he is able after Mauler arrives. The two adversaries exchange heated stares before Lamont stalks off to his waiting manager. Faceless Falcone has made it clear that he must back down from any direct confrontation with Mauler until the big night. Monsieur Mauler then turns his attention to the interlopers, dressing them down in coarse French that Demi is hesitant to translate. A glare from her boss reminds Demi of her duties and establishes the abusive relationship between Giant and valet that should instantly assure wrestling fans of Mauler's villain status. If this breaks into a brawl, and I can't imagine how it could not, the aforementioned event security and a squad of referees race out to break things up.

OBLIGATORY BRAWL

No wrestling promotion worth its salt would let guys from another league make a scene like this without getting a match out of it. As security (Use Referee stats) forms a living wall between the combatants and things start to calm down, Monsieur Mauler lets the intruders (and audience) know that there are procedures for getting a match with the champion. If they can prove themselves worthy against the GNW roster, he will honor one of them with a title opportunity after he defeats La Croix. Talent spills out of the locker room to face off against the PCs with the promise of a title shot in the air. Chaos should reign in the ring once more, and a smug Monsieur Mauler makes his way back to the locker rooms.

The GM can take this opportunity to have Laura La Croix (Ms. Mapleleaf) contact the PCs in a manner similar to Lamont or just have a wild free-for-all to let the PCs work out any frustrations.

LOCKER ROOM

The GM can customize the GNW locker room to fit the needs of the campaign. If you are running Loss of Face as a one off adventure then you can simply have a collection of random wrestlers rush the ring for the Obligatory Brawl. Use basic rookie luchador statistics to represent the fact that the company is still in the developing stage and to minimize the threat. It helps to personalize a couple of the wrestlers just to keep the scene exciting. GMs intending to incorporate GNW into the campaign can take this opportunity to introduce characters for future adventures.

HOSTAGE CRISIS

If you are going to threaten hostages, as GM, you cannot be afraid to pull the trigger. If the players do not feel that the hostages are in danger, then the adventure loses its threat. If you are too quick to act, then the adventure shifts to a revenge piece. Faceless Falcone will not kill his only leverage over the wrestler while he still needs Lamont, but he won't let any defiance go unpunished. His first response will be to have Tony break Mrs. La Croix's arm, preferably while Lamont can hear her scream over the phone. Falcone then assures Lamont, or anyone else present, that Tony will break her neck if he doesn't get a little compliance. This is not an idle threat. He still has the children as hostages, and he will kill Monica if he needs to make his point. Remember he is the villain, and it is acts like this that make him a villain.

If the player characters beat up Bobby the Ball and his boys, then Lamont's family will pay. Lamont knows this and has no doubt that Falcone will carry through on his threats. If Bobby does not answer every time Falcone calls (roughly every three hours), then Faceless Falcone will retaliate. Lamont chastises the PCs for rash action and puts them on a fast track to the Pola Cola plant which is the only lead he has to Faceless Falcone's plans. Lamont knows the gist of the Pola Cola scheme, and has gathered that Monsieur Mauler and some of the other wrestlers promote the drink and are probably on Falcone's payroll. He then has to stay behind and try to convince Bobby that he had nothing to do with the attack.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The two key things to accomplish here are to tell the players about Lamont's return to wrestling in a manner completely uncharacteristic for him, and get the PCs close enough to pick up a lead from one of the La Croix participants. Lamont's change of personality is the hook here. The players need to recognize that he is supposed to be a good guy who stands for all of the things that luchadors hold dear, and his current actions are highly suspect. If this does not come across, the entire adventure crumbles, so do whatever you have to in order to get them on board. Recite great matches from his career where he gave opponents that management didn't think were ready a shot at his title. Tell the characters how Lamont and his family helped train other supporting characters. Remind them of how he has told wrestling magazines about all of the great talent in Mexico during his numerous interviews.

If you want to keep things a little more linear (nothing wrong with that), then save Laura La Croix's lead for later. Lamont tells them to go to Pola Cola and that is the only way to go. Laura can point them towards Falcon Entertainment later if they get stuck.

Some players are going to jump straight to the in-ring confrontation because that is how wrestlers get things done. Others might come up with complex schemes on how to talk to Lamont backstage. As long as they are trying to move the story forward, give them whatever encouragement they need to keep moving.

The obligatory brawl is included primarily as a stress release for characters getting frustrated with information gathering



and aborted confrontations. It also adds some appropriate action to let the characters make a splashy introduction at GNW. If you are running this adventure over multiple sessions, the brawl lets you get a fight in on the first session. Unfortunately, the opportunity for a title match can distract some players. GMs wishing to keep the players focused and the characters healthy for later scenes may wish to omit the obligatory brawl. In such a case, Monsieur Mauler can simply depart with threats of future violence.

Now, for you GMs looking to make things more complicated, this scene has lots of possibilities. The players could send things rocketing out of control by trouncing Bobby the Ball and his goons. See the Hostage Crisis sidebar for more. They could also change the story up by beating Monsieur Mauler to a pulp. The main event for the Pay-Per-View is jeopardized, and the PC responsible is the first candidate to join the hot seat. The league wants a three way dance for the title, and Monsieur Mauler wants revenge. Worse still, Faceless Falcone sees his plans getting ruined by another wrestler and orders Lamont to cripple the luchador in the ring before Mauler takes him out.

POLA COLA KIDS

One of the things that makes Faceless Falcone's plan so evil is that the goal is to sell a dangerously addictive substance to kids. The fact that he uses wrestling to promote it is an added slap in the face to our heroes and all that they hold dear.

The GM should include rambunctious young fans in the background on any scenes at the Grove Arena, or anywhere else that Pola Cola is sold, to illustrate the prevalence of the peril. Start by sprinkling them in to descriptions. Build up with groups of kids arguing heatedly over who will win the big match, divided between those who remember Lamont's past heroism and those who believe Monsieur Mauler is the defender of the faith for GNW. Work in a squash encounter with a few kids 'wrestling' in the parking lot as our heroes transition between scenes.

The major effect of Dinkley's drug is roughly equivalent to a 'sugar high', with an exponentially stronger drive to get more. The kids attending the matches regularly are using it heavily and practically vibrate with energy. Lacking the wisdom of age, they run around like maniacs getting into all manner of mischief. They also show poorer judgment when confronted with authority, meaning they may lack the sense to quit playing when your masked men step in to restore order.

TRY SOME

With Pola Cola endorsed by so many popular wrestlers, it is possible that your PCs may succumb to peer pressure. The Pola Cola drinks are sweetened with Professor Dinkley's wonderful sugar substitute which turns out not to be that pleasant. Describe it as having a kind of diet soda aftertaste. However, the more one drinks, the more desirable the taste becomes. Anyone drinking the beverage makes a free conditioning check. Failure means the drug effects the character and creates a strange craving for more Pola Cola. From that point on, the character must pass free determination checks when exposed to Pola Cola to avoid the desire to once more imbibe its pleasing Pola Cola taste.

SCENE 2: THE POLA COLA PLANT

Eventually the player characters should stick their masked noses into the Pola Cola plant. Lamont directly tells them to investigate, Falcon Entertainment handles endorsement deals for the soda, and the advertisements are conspicuous all over the Grove Arena.

POLA COLA HISTORY

The Pola Cola company was a locally owned business that sold glorified sugar water at youth sporting events for the last 12 years. When Faceless Falcone found himself looking for a vehicle for his new product, Pola Cola fit the bill. One of the owners had an unfortunate accident, and Falcone bought Pola Cola for a song under Dinkley's name. Since the change of ownership, Pola Cola has taken an aggressive policy in securing concession contracts all over town. They find some initial resistance to their product, but it quickly begins to outsell previously carried beverages. Pola Cola has recently expanded into Pola Cones, snow cones in the great Ploa Cola flavors of Red, Green, and Blue. The company is test marketing direct sales of the cones from ice cream trucks that tour the neighborhoods around the Grove Arena where their core fan base continues to grow rapidly. You gotta give the kids what they want.

THE FACILITY

The ascending beverage juggernaut operates out of a simple two story brick building in an industrial area of town. The front façade has a sign bearing the company logo, but has no offices for the public. The only door on the front of the building is clearly marked 'employees only' which will surely keep out any visitors. For those who don't get the message, a security guard works the former reception desk and keeps out unwanted guests. Any reasonable inquires about business to the guard prompts him to recite a prepared speech about this being a factory and the company offices being located in Quebec. Persistent types can acquire the phone number of a sales rep, which leads to a voice mail for Eli Bolin. He gets back in touch with any messages that check out as actual vendors. This screening is less to avoid PCs than it is to dodge legal inquiries.

For those looking for a more clandestine entrance, the factory has a loading dock and service door in the back. A chain link fence roughly 12 feet in height (round up to 3 risk) surrounds the back lot and a pair of guard dogs roam the area when the plant is closed. The lot contains the company's delivery truck with Monsieur Mauler painted on one side, and the two converted ice cream trucks that make sure young fans can get their fix between events.

The interior of the building has two small offices in the front: the security desk and a manager's office. The manager's office contains the former owner's file cabinets filled with poorly organized paperwork that hasn't been touched since the buyout, and a laptop which contains schedules for delivery and staff payroll. The plant runs entirely off of the laptop, but no information about payments to Pola Cola appear here. Bolin keeps the official records and the undoctored ones with him at all times.

The back of the building is the factory itself. This is where the magic happens. Large vats house and mix Pola Cola. Conveyer



belts move bottles to the loading docks for crating. Tall stacks of Pola Cola product stand ready for shipping. The security team has a small lounge with card table and television set up next to the loading docks. Stairs lead up from the docks to the mezzanine on the second level that overlooks the factory area. This floor contains Professor Dinkley's lab and the Professor himself. Embellish as needed to provide your players with a rich environment for the fight to come.

SECURITY AND OPERATIONS

During the day, the factory has half a dozen workers who bottle and ship Pola Cola. They are relatively honest people just drawing a paycheck with no idea that they are involved in an evil scheme to poison the youth of their city. The foreman of the plant is in with Falcone's boys and knows the company is 'mobbed up' but does not know what criminal activity they are hiding here. He finds it kind of exciting but does not want to learn too much. He has never met Falcone face to face, but he has seen the reaction of the guards when they talk about Mister Falcone and is pretty sure he should fear the boss.

Falcone keeps heavy security on the factory, as this is where he almost lost everything to Lamont La Croix's involvement. There are four guards on duty at all times (including the one on the front desk). For the most part, their job involves pretending to be security for the legitimate operations of the factory and keeping an eye on Professor Dinkley upstairs. Most of their time is actually spent playing cards and watching TV in a lounge area in the back of the factory, but they are quick to respond to any disturbance.

GUARDS (4)

S12/4 A8/2 C11/3 P11/3 W10/3 D10/3 I15 F5 R7 V35

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| Strike 16/2 | Armed 15/1 | Grab 15/1 | Hold 16/0 |
| Promo 15/0 | Intimidate 16/1 | Trick 16/1 | Beg 15/0 |

WEAPON

| | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Pistol | LOD 0 Damage 8 Sharp Range 45 |
| Lead Pipe | LOD 1 Damage 7 |

DOGS (2)

S 8/2 A12/4 C10/3 P11/3 W 9/3 D9/3 I17 F6 R5 V25

Strike 16/0

SPECIAL RULES

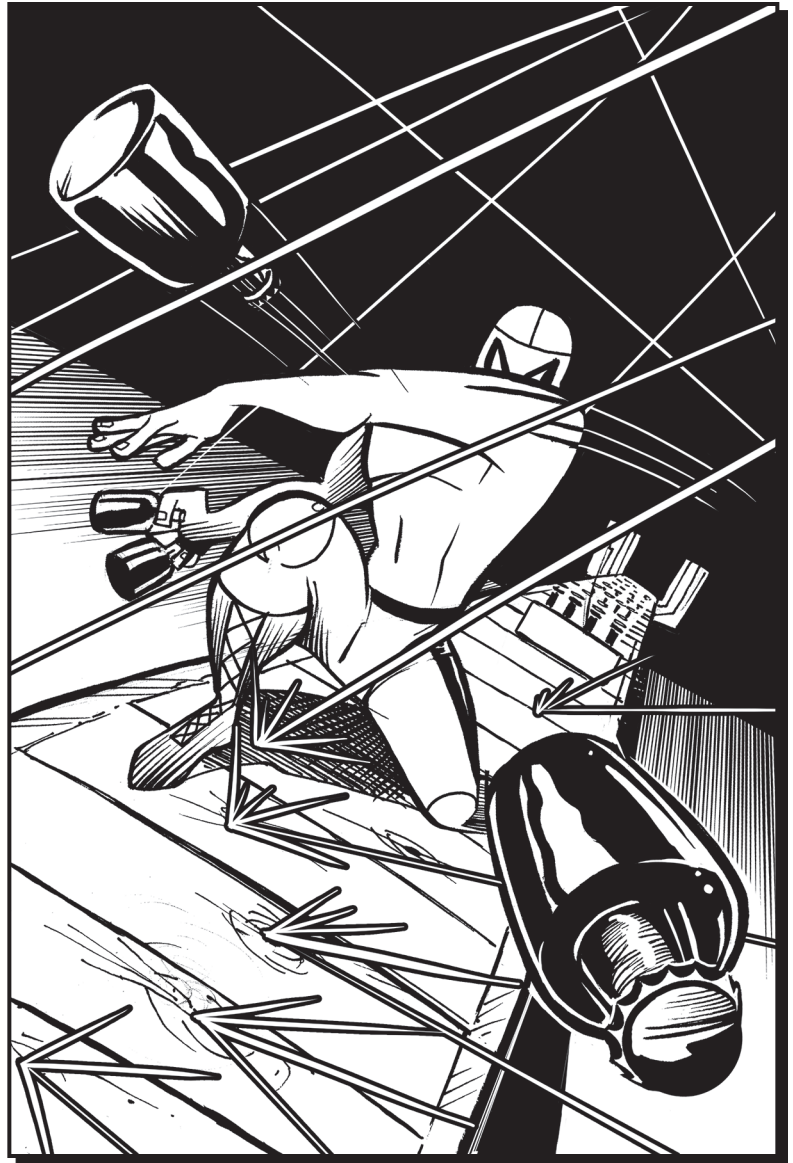
BITE

Dogs make a single bite check that is treated as both a strike and a grab. The attack does strike damage on the first turn using MOS to increase damage. On subsequent turns the bite continues to do damage with half MOS until the grab is broken. The dog can make a new bite check to do more damage or to get a better grab.

PROFESSOR DINKLEY'S LAB

The Professor lives on the second floor of the plant at the insistence of Faceless Falcone. He spends all of his time trying to remove the addictive properties of his invention. His living quarters are at the far end of the converted flat-style apartment, behind an array of test tubes and beakers that would make a fledgling mad scientist proud. Dinkley's only companions are dozens of lab mice that he tests his work upon. Characters examining the lab discover a sealed tube labeled 'X-13' stored in a container of dry ice.

If the PCs get this far without making a commotion, they discover the Professor hard at work in his lab and he is unlikely to



notice them until they choose to get his attention. He assumes the masked men work for Falcone in some fashion and reports his progress. He lets them in on the promising signs of his latest variant. It is too early for him to be sure, but he thinks this will be the one that his little friends will be able to turn down. The base difficulty for any trick checks against him is only 2 as long as the players don't say anything that gives away their non-involvement



with the gang. Left to his own devices, he rambles on about the prospects for a legitimate sugar substitute which will undoubtedly make far more money for their boss than the current batch.

If the characters smashed their way in, or reveal their actual role, the Professor takes cover behind his beakers and makes a childlike attempt to keep the labtable between him and the intruders. He only calms down if the characters give him some assurance that they are not here to hurt him (Promo check to win him over, difficulty 0). Intimidation can also compel obedience out of him, but he becomes too befuddled to get information out of him quickly, and the player who intimidates him is a bit of a heel.

DINKLEY TALKS

Once won over, the Professor tells the PCs his sad story and assures him that he is very close to fixing the formula. He knows that Falcone is selling it to kids, and is very ashamed of his involvement. He clings to his delusion of buying his way out of debt with his new improved sugar substitute. If the PCs start pumping him for information, he cooperates to the best of his ability, but he doesn't know the answers to any of the big questions. The Professor knows nothing about Lamont, his family, or the whereabouts of Faceless Falcone. He was introduced to Falcone through a bookie named Jimmy Pitt, and can point the heroes to his whereabouts (See the Pool Hall scene XXX). The Professor can give an abbreviated version of Faceless Falcone's history (minus the Umbral Accord connection) and is visibly terrified just talking about the man. He also knows that Falcone is bringing in an investor. Two weeks ago, Falcone gave a tour of the plant to a man named Matt Black. The tour included an introduction to Dinkley. The Professor thought it very odd, as Falcone rarely meets anyone.

SAVED BY THE BELL

Once the player characters have gotten a few answers from Dinkley, interrupt the scene with a phone ringing. Obviously the Professor isn't allowed a phone, so let the players track the sound to the security lounge presumably full of battered goons. Who could be calling? What will happen if nobody answers?

When somebody finally picks up, a voice on the other end says, 'Falcone is on his way'. The caller hangs up after the single utterance. Called ID gets an unlisted number, and calling back gets no response. Dinkley breaks into hysterics if he thinks Falcone is on the way. Use his fear to convey the ruthlessness of your villain. He trembles at the thought of what Faceless Falcone will do to him when he finds this mess. Clever players might muse on what he will do to the La Croix family.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This scene lets the player characters mix it up with mobsters and learn the secret of Pola Cola. If the characters are not horrified to learn that Falcone is using wrestling to push drugs to kids, then you have some cynical friends even by my standards.

The X-13 vial is a reward for inquisitive characters. It is a sample of the hyde drug taken by the Torsky Twins. Falcone gets the serum from his Umbral Accord contacts, and has held some back to see if Dinkley can reverse engineer the stuff. Dinkley hasn't put much time into the matter, but knows it is a highly advanced and unstable growth hormone used by two of Falcone's men.

The scene ends with the call from Matt Black. He has had the factory under surveillance since the luchadors arrived at the arena. Black's intent is to get the masked men to flee the scene before their presence gets the La Croix family hurt. He is after the Professor, but needs the heroes to take the fall for the abduction.

Falcone is not actually on the way, which may frustrate players intent upon a confrontation. Let Dinkley's apprehension grow as they await the monstrous mobster. When it eventually becomes obvious that he is not coming, Black watches to see their next move. If they leave Dinkley behind for any reason, shadow soldiers enter the building and take him. If the masked men leave with Dinkley in tow, Black shadows them until an opportunity arises to grab the Professor when he is unguarded. See Out of the Shadows Scene 3.

The scene doesn't directly lead to the hostages of the villain, which can be frustrating. The clearest line to the villain is through Jimmy Pitt as mentioned by the good Professor. If your players come up with something that sounds plausible, run with it.

SCENE 3: OUT OF THE SHADOWS

The Umbral Accord can make their appearance at many points in the story. Their primary plan, and the simplest for the GM, is to grab Professor Dinkley off camera at the Pola Cola plant so they can secure his formula and shift blame for their action to the PCs, locking Falcone into a feud with the masked men and killing a flock of birds with one stone. If the heroes were sneaky and doubled back to the factory, then they can catch the shadow soldiers in the act. Prepare for a gunfight in the plant with stray bullets bursting bottles for dramatic effect. If the heroes are even less cooperative and don't leave the Professor unattended, then the dark host and GM need to decide when to attack.

The Accord prefers to attack at a moment when the target is vulnerable and guardians are otherwise engaged. The GM wants them to strike when their presence can add a little action to one of the slower scenes. I propose the following options:



Hit the luchadors at their hotel (or wherever they sleep). This adds another scene and keeps the pressure on the PCs. It also gives the Umbral Agents a good chance at grabbing the Professor.

Hit the heroes while they pursue Jimmy Pitt in scene 7. If the PCs are chasing Jimmy then they will be hard pressed to protect the Professor. This scenario depends on the PCs taking Dinkley into the field with them, but as he is the lead to Jimmy this is reasonably likely. This option also gives the GM the opportunity of having Faceless Falcone tipped off about the Accord's treachery through the extra eyes he has on Jimmy.

If all else fails, they can enter late in one of the more action oriented scenes to steal victory from the heroes.

CHASING SHADOWS

So you ran the adventure with the Umbral Accord grabbing the Professor in the factory as scripted, and now the PCs want to get him back. Now what? Yet more choices for the overworked GM.

The easy answer is to have the Accord make another appearance after the heroes have taken down Faceless Falcone. Black wants to wipe out the masked men and chooses an attack after they are already worn down (see Dark Finish in the Bonus Pay-Per-View Scene section). GMs looking for a happy ending can give the heroes a chance to follow Black or his men back to their lair where the Professor can be recovered.

GMs running a campaign can choose to create another adventure to track down the Professor and whatever nefarious purposes the Umbral Accord has come up with for his formula.

THE LAIR

Matt Black has 2 assault teams of 5 agents each at his command, and two additional intelligence agents. Each team has a non-descript van for assaults, while Black and each of the other spies have a surveillance car. They run this operation out of a suburban house secured through a needlessly elaborate false identity. Use the layout of the home of your choosing for the lair.

SCENE 4: INVESTIGATING FALCON ENTERTAINMENT

The players may find their own way to the company through the Falcon Entertainment business cards carried by Bobby the Ball or Monsieur Mauler. Ms. Mapleleaf can direct the PCs towards Falcon Entertainment at the beginning of the adventure, or whenever the GM feels that the players are stalling out in their current pursuits.

BACKGROUND

Falcon Entertainment is the thinly veiled front for Faceless Falcone's interaction with Great North Wrestling. The company only exists on paper, with nothing more than a PO Box and a phone number to mark its presence. It doesn't even have a web site, as Falcone leans towards an old school approach.

Falcone created FE to sign talent from the GNW locker room as the start of a plan to muscle in on the wrestling company as well as getting endorsements for Pola Cola. After putting Lamont La Croix under his thumb, Falcone used the new acquisition to leverage his way into the company. Falcon Entertainment signed Lamont to wrestle exclusively with GNW in exchange for a piece of the company. The owners of GNW were thrilled with the deal until Lamont began rampaging through the roster. All attempts to rein him in have fallen on deaf ears at

Falcon Entertainment. The agency stands by the adage that there is no such thing as bad publicity, and Lamont's change of heart has garnered enough attention to give GNW its first pay-per-view.

Falcon Entertainment's liaison with Great North Wrestling is Eli Bolin, and he makes weekly visits to the Grove Arena for tapings of events. The PCs may find other ways to lure him out for a meeting if they are creative.

INVESTIGATION TECHNIQUES

Let's cut right to it, this is not a game about detective work. Your PCs are men of action, so their investigations should take their cues from action films where the way to get to the bottom of anything is to follow the bad guy or interrogate the bad guy. Falcon Entertainment's connection to various wrestlers is all over the locker rooms. The 'secret' buy in to the league and management of Lamont are rumors available through a montage scene of backstage gossip or reliably produced by Ms. Mapleleaf as the result of her work to date. The PCs need to draw out Bolin to get closer to Faceless Falcone.

FOLLOWING BOLIN

As noted, the players can pick up Bolin's trail from a regular scheduled visit or through one caused through their machinations. Bolin is not that hard to follow as most of his mob experience is in cooking books not losing tails. Go to scene 5, Luchadors of Ice.

GRABBING BOLIN

If the PCs decide to ambush Bolin backstage or in the parking lot they only have to overpower him and a single guard. Bolin will try to get security to aid him if outnumbered, but we've already covered the reliability of security stopping wrestlers at an arena. Bolin is not a brawler, but he also isn't a rat. He won't turn on his boss without ample persuasion. Faceless Falcone detests betrayal above all else, and Bolin knows how the boss expresses his displeasure.

Eli has a great deal of information if the PCs can get it from him, but lacks the single most important piece: the location of the hostages. Falcone is too familiar with interrogation to trust any of his subordinates to keep his most important secret. Eli can provide the names of Falcone's gang, and even knows that Tony the Torch is watching the hostages, but only Mr. Falcone has his new number. He can lead the PCs to the Boss's house, but assures them that the hostages are elsewhere and will be burnt to ash before they get Faceless Falcone to reveal their whereabouts.

Eli's phone also has phone numbers for most of the key members of the gang (not Tony) as well as voice mail for Pola Cola and Falcon Entertainment.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This is a linking scene, and hence less action-packed than others. If the players pursue Falcon Entertainment, the important thing is to move them towards a confrontation.

Bolin should not be that hard to lure in through any remotely reasonable ruse. The GM could skip ahead by simply having a character run into Bolin at the Grove Arena and catch his name from an NPC. If the GM really wants to push things to a head, have Ms. Mapleleaf tail Bolin to the ice rink in scene 5 and call the PCs for help when she spots Faceless Falcone.



SCENE 5: LUCHADORS ON ICE

What would a trip to Canada be without an obligatory battle on the ice with hockey goons? This is admittedly a forced scene, but a really fun one. Characters shadowing Eli Bolin end up at the Midland Skating Rink, a favored playground for local kids and practice rink for a dozen amateur hockey teams. It has recently signed to carry Pola Cola at the concession stands. More importantly, it is where the Torsky Twins have begun studying hockey. Bolin is here to meet up with the Boss and Jimmy Pitt.

When Bolin arrives, he passes a conspicuous limo parked out front. The beefy driver standing beside it nods to Bolin as he approaches and indicates that the Boss is inside the building. Play up the limo and driver to let the players know that they have found something.

Bolin heads inside to the rink area past signs clearly stating that the rink is reserved for the Condors Hockey Team practice. Characters up on their local hockey teams know that the Condors have a reputation for playing rough. The stands around the rink are lightly sprinkled with family and friends of the Condors, a few hyperactive kids waiting impatiently for the rink to open to the public for the afternoon, and a certain disfigured mobster. Falcone is talking with Jimmy Pitt at the start of the scene. Two guards linger nearby, playing the heavies and keeping everyone away from the Boss's seats.

In the rink, the Condors are giving hockey lessons to the Torsky Twins. The two play without pads or uniforms, showing off their unnaturally augmented physiques. The X-13 serum gives them abnormally formed musculature and pronounced veins across the upper torso. Despite their lack of experience, they take on the entire team with gusto.

Bolin moves around the rink and straight to Falcone and Jimmy, receiving an acknowledging nod and a warm greeting respectively. Jimmy is the closest thing Falcone has left to a peer, and the rest of the gang show deference to him. This fact is important to draw PC attention to the as of yet unnamed character. Left undisturbed, the three conspire until the hockey lesson starts to get too rough and the Boss has to pull the Torsky Twins out. More likely, the player characters will make their presence known.

A VIOLENT GAME

The rink lies between the entrance and Falcone's meeting. There are plenty of ways to go around it, but where is the fun in that? In all seriousness, the fight on the ice is the best action scenario for this scene. The players might realize this and seize the opportunity. If not, you can have the Twins try to taunt them into the rink, or have Jimmy try to escape across the ice. If the Torsky's have trouble, Falcone can offer the Condors a bounty of 5 grand per mask.

Falcone is a fan of violence as entertainment, and he will gladly let things break into a brawl as long as his side is giving as good as they get. If the Twins and Condors cannot handle things, he tries to bring the action to a halt with a threat to the hostages. He puts his phone on speaker so everyone can hear Mrs. La Croix scream as Tony breaks her arm. See the Hostage Crisis sidebar. If threats fail, he resorts to the tommy gun stereotypically stored in a violin case to cover his retreat.

MASKED MEN OF MYSTERY

You don't have to force the hockey match if you don't feel like it. Players having fun playing luchador spies can attempt a subtle approach. Winter wear common to skating rinks can help hide masks from the bad guys allowing PCs to blend in to the crowd. Getting close enough to hear what's going on is another matter. Falcone's guards enjoy scaring off people as it makes them feel important. Falcone himself is paranoid and has a good eye for ambushes. Anyone entering his section of the stands gains a scrutinizing glance (active wits check to size up), and he watches the arena as a whole for problems. If the players come up with clever ideas the GM should provide encouragement, but don't make it a cake walk.

Falcone eventually leaves with the Twins in his limo and Bolin following. They drive out to his stately and well-defended home. Jimmy Pitt leaves by cab returning to the Excelsior Hall.

If intruders are detected the scene plays out as above with The Twins trying to bring the fight to them. Falcone works to draw the attackers to the rink where his augmented soldiers can defend him.

RULES OF THE RINK

Fighting on ice is tricky. Characters face an additional 2 difficulty to agility checks for generating risk through acceleration, as well as checks to rise from being prone. A disastrous failure on any agility check sends the character sliding.

Characters on skates negate the penalty above, but must pass a free agility check every time they attempt to lift or slam an opponent or they fall and end the move. Walking off the ice is limited to a base speed of 10 (5 for slow characters). Running in skates requires agility checks.

Lastly, characters smashed into the ice through a drop or slam suffer an additional 1 difficulty to avoid being stunned. Cold makes pain worse.

HOCKEY GOON

S13/4 A11/3 C12/4 P10/3 W8/2 D11/3 I15 F7 R8 V40
Strike 16/1 Throw15/0 Tackle 16/1 Armed 17/2
Grab16/1 Hold 16/0 Intimidate 15/0

WEAPON

Stick LOD 1 Damage 8
Skate Blade LOD 3 Damage 6 Sharp Strike (Kick)

PADDED

The character adds 2 to C-level for reducing damage. Competitive padding does not apply this bonus against sharp attacks.

SKATES

While on ice the character only faces 1 level of difficulty for every 2 levels of risk for velocity, and has a base speed of 25.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This scene introduces your heroes to Faceless Falcone and his enforcers. Experienced GMs know that any encounter



between the player characters and the villain may become the final encounter with that villain. Eager players may make a hard press to take down the main bad guy despite the costs. We have already covered the hostage options, but players may feel that the best way to get them is to grab Faceless Falcone.

The scene is written with the intent of a good brawl between luchadors and hockey goons before Falcone plays the hostage card and makes his getaway. We at Spartacus Publishing don't encourage forcing the script. If the players grab Falcone they have to decide what to do next. His high pain tolerance makes it unlikely that he will succumb to interrogation, and extended application of duress to a helpless opponent is decidedly un-heroic. He will ensure his captors that the La Croix family will die horribly if he doesn't contact Tony the Torch before midnight (or a deadline of your choosing).

The players are under pressure to act. The GM should let them generate ideas and see where things head. If they get stuck, you can throw a few options their way. Falcone demands his release, and promises that only Mrs. La Croix will be beaten for this transgression. Shrewder PCs may negotiate a hostage exchange: Falcone for the family. See scene 6, Hostage Exchange. Optionally, the players may attempt to trick Tony the Torch by pretending to be Faceless Falcone.

In the unlikely event that your heroes appear to be losing the brawl in the rink, Faceless Falcone calls the Twins off and leaves the Condors to deal with the trash while he makes his exit. He appoints Jimmy Pitt to pay off the bounty, leaving a trail for the PCs to track if they turn the fight around. Faceless Falcone hasn't developed a taste for deathtraps yet.

SCENE 6: HOSTAGE EXCHANGE

Use this section if the player characters convince Tony the Torch that he needs to release the hostages. This could happen because they have tricked him into believing the Boss wants it done, or because they have the Faceless Falcone. Nothing less will lead Tony to let the hostages leave his care alive.

TRICKING TONY THE TORCH

It is entirely possible that your players will attempt to pull the wool over Tony's eyes and impersonate the Boss. Falcone's phone has numbers to all of the gang on an easy to use first name basis. Tony the Torch is the only Tony he is still on speaking terms with, and thus the only Tony on his phone list.

As noted in the Dramatis Personae section, Tony desperately craves the Boss's approval, making him quick to respond to Falcone's orders. The key is to make it seem like Falcone's orders. If the players can do a decent job impersonating your presentation of Faceless Falcone, then they have a shot at a trick check. The base difficulty is 2 for Tony's wits level, modified by the player's story and performance. Consult section 5.3 of the core rules for a guide to difficulty.

LOCATION

Tony negotiates for an isolated location for the release. The parking lot of the Grove Arena after hours is his first choice as it is known to all parties. Players can offer other options. He rejects any crowded locale for fear of police involvement.

THE EXCHANGE

Tony arrives at the location promptly in a gasoline soaked convertible. Mrs. La Croix drives cuffed to the wheel with a gun to the back of her head. The boys set in the front and rear passenger seats while Tony rides behind mommy. All hostages look worried and the smell of gasoline hits anyone within 20 feet of the car. Tony the Torch's madness should be abundantly apparent to anyone present. A second car follows him to the location. This one is far safer and driven by Loretta as the intended getaway vehicle.

Tony's plan is simple. He drives up and takes the keys from Mrs. La Croix. He stands up in the backseat and lights a road flare, holding it high enough that it shouldn't ignite the gasoline fumes (he has some experience with these matters). He abandons the gun in favor of the flare as a threat against the hostages. He exchanges the keys to the luchadors when the Boss tells him to or when the Boss is safe, depending on the situation that brought him here. Then he escapes in the second car and gains the Boss's acceptance for being such a loyal soldier.

Odds are someone will throw a monkey wrench in the plan at some point. If the heroes don't, then Falcone might. He would rather risk returning to prison than let the heroes win the day. Yeah, he's that twisted. Given the opportunity, he orders Tony to burn the hostages.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Despite all the setup, this is a pretty straightforward scene. The tension comes from the danger to the hostages, not the danger towards the PCs so play up is clear instability with long pauses as he stares into the sparking flare.

If things get violent before Tony leaves the car, then he drops the flare and sets it all ablaze unless the arm with the flare is controlled through a grab. Attacks that knock him out of the car (requiring 4 feet of knockback) also keep the hostages safe, although the flare should roll under the car to keep the threat alive.

Freeing the hostages requires a key for the cuffs, lock picking skills, or some force. Breaking the cuffs that hold Mrs. La Croix requires a difficulty 8 strength check. Breaking the steering wheel loose has a difficulty of 4, and Monica directs her savior to go for the wheel if he fails with the cuffs. The boys have their hands zip tied, but are only held in the car by concern for their mother. Neither will leave while she is trapped unless it is to find a means to free her.

GMs wanting to add another complication can have Loretta exercise her strange maternal instinct and try to 'save' her boys. She won't be able to control both of them at once, but her attempt creates more chaos that PCs have to put in check.

SCENE 7: JIMMY RATS

Faceless Falcone needs to keep the La Croix family hidden to keep Lamont under his power. He knows all too well that anyone can be made to talk by a determined interrogator, so he has kept the location of the hostages limited to himself, Tony the Torch, and Loretta. Tony and Loretta stay with the hostages at all times, except when Tony drives in to town for supplies. Tony isn't the brightest soldier, but he is slavishly loyal to Falcone and obeys the Boss's security protocols to the letter. Loretta is far less dependable, but Falcone assumes she won't stray for fear of letting others see what he did to her face. While this presumption is



partially true, it does not take into account Jimmy Pitt's fondness for the former singer.

Jimmy has been her shoulder to cry on since Falcone disfigured her, and he got her to disclose the location of the hostages so he could come visit her. Jimmy never calls her as phone records would leave a trail that might bring Faceless Falcone's wrath down on him. Nonetheless, Jimmy now holds the key to saving the La Croix family.

PICKING UP THE TRAIL

Player characters may seek Jimmy Pitt at the request of Professor Dinkley, or they might have followed him from the ice rink in scene 5. The GM may also have Jimmy come to the luchadors, See Jimmy Steps Forth.

CHASING JIMMY

Jimmy Pitt hangs out at the Excelsior Pool Hall, where he takes bets on all manner of sporting events. He is well known and generally well liked by the locals. He has recruited a couple of regulars (Use rabid fan stats from the core rulebook) from the hall to lend a hand from time to time, but he hasn't officially recruited them into the gang due to his fear of what Falcone has become.

If anyone comes around looking for Jimmy Pitt, the crowd at the Excelsior will stall to help him escape. Only his 'friends' will step in to a violent situation for Jimmy, and even they are only loyal until bruised.

The moment Jimmy is cornered, he will beg off. He's savvy enough to know why the masked men are here and feels this may be his last chance to part ways with Faceless Falcone. If nothing else he can try to save Loretta.

JIMMY STEPS FORTH

It is entirely possible that Jimmy Pitt might seek out the PCs. Jimmy has sought a way out of the gang ever since Faceless Falcone showed up on his doorstep for the first time. After Falcone mutilated Loretta, Jimmy has found it harder and harder to uphold his duties to the Boss.

Jimmy is most likely to come forward at the ice rink if the player characters are successful. If the masked men can trounce Falcone's pumped up monsters then they might be up to the task of taking down the monstrous mobster himself.

WHAT JIMMY KNOWS

He prefaces things by explaining that his main concern is for Falcone's girl, Loretta. The heroes have to agree to try to get her somewhere that Falcone can't hurt her anymore, or he tells them bupkiss. If he gets his assurances, he sings like a bird. The other informants may have fallen short, but Jimmy Pitt delivers in spades.

Jimmy knows where the family is being held. Falcone bought into Lost Lake Estates, a housing development outside of town, and is keeping the hostages under lock and key in one of the finished units. He knows who is guarding the hostages. Loretta is taking care of the kids. She's a little messed up after Falcone burned her face, but she doesn't mean to hurt anyone. Tony the Torch guards the house, and he's the one you gotta watch. The guy's screwy and will kill anyone to impress the Boss. He's also got a thing for fires.

That's not all. Jimmy knows about the whole Pola Cola plot, including Faceless Falcone's attempts to bring in the Umbral Accord in on the deal. He explains how the Accord sprung Falcone from prison, starting his rampage in Chicago. This is not a pleasant memory for Jimmy, and GMs wishing to elicit a little sympathy for the mobster can recount his reluctant indoctrination into Faceless Falcone's gang.

HIDDEN THREAT

If the player characters confront Jimmy Pitt at the Excelsior Pool Hall, their actions are observed by curious locals. One of those locals is secretly on Faceless Falcone's payroll to keep an eye on Jimmy. Faceless Falcone has noticed Jimmy distancing himself from the inner circle of the gang, and he needs to know if his oldest friend is preparing to stab him in the back! The information relayed to the PCs reaches Falcone leading to his appearance in later scenes.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Jimmy Pitt is the only lead to the hostages. This is traditionally a huge design flaw in adventures. The general rule is to have at least three leads in the hopes that the players will follow one. I have left only the single path to victory so the villain's plan (at least the hostage part) looks well-thought out.

If things stall out, the GM can have Monica La Croix get a hold of Loretta's phone while Tony is away. She sends out a short distress call with a rough description of the lake and how far from town she thinks they are. The message goes through the La Croix family to Ms. Mapleleaf, and finally to the PCs.

SCENE 8: FALCONE'S LAIR

The player characters may shadow Bolin, or Falcone himself, back to his home. Faceless Falcone invested a good deal of the money he stole from his former bosses in acquiring a formidable manor for himself in a fashionable neighborhood on the outskirts of town.

THE HOUSE

We don't do maps on Luchador: Way of the Mask because it leads to methodical dungeon crawl play that detracts from the high action style of the game.

A twelve foot privacy fence surrounds the grounds (Difficulty 4 to climb due to poor handholds). The front gate is easier to climb (difficulty 1), but is the only part of the fence under video surveillance. The gate is automated and has a speaker so guests can request entry. From the gate, a circle drive leads visitors to the house itself. Falcone's limo usually rests in front of the house.

Falcone's home is an old but well-maintained mansion with detached garage and servants quarters. The garage houses a vintage corvette that Falcone rarely drives, Bolin's sedan, a van used for messy business, two mid-grade sports cars of your choice, and room for one more. The servant's quarters above the garage are home to the mercenary soldiers that Falcone recruited into the gang. They have comfortable accommodations with all the amenities and a sizable arsenal.



The main house is three stories tall with extensive window coverage towards the front. Falcone lives here with the inner circle of his gang from Chicago. The top floor belongs to the Boss, with his spacious personal bedroom, a spare bedroom for Loretta when he tires of her whimpering, and his private study. The study has his safe full of assorted bits of incriminating evidence, cash, and the X-13 serum he dispenses to the Twins. It also has a cellphone used to call his Umbral Accord contact. The phone is wired to detonate if any other number is dialed (15 points of burning damage!) to ensure that it does not fall into the wrong hands. Only Falcone knows the correct number.

The second floor has quarters for Bolin, Bobby the Ball, and the Torsky Twins. Their rooms all reflect their individual character, but contain little of note. The Twins rooms are next to the staircase so they can respond quickly to any alarm. The ground floor has the expected common rooms including kitchen, dining room, and den with full entertainment center. The back of the house has a renovated gym fit for any professional athlete. The Twins live in the gym when not called upon by Falcone. Many of the rooms of the house are haunted by dust cloth ghosts over the old furniture.

The back of the house has an oval swimming pool (roughly 30 by 20 feet, and 12 foot deep on one end) with solidly constructed patio furniture. Stairs next to the pool lead down to a basement door with a slit at eye level. This leads to Falcone's favorite part of the house. The basement is remodeled to resemble a speakeasy from the classic Chicago mob tales of his youth. It is dimly lit with a full bar, six tables for guests (usually the rest of the gang), and a stage where Loretta can sing. Since her disfigurement these events have become far less festive. The basement also has a billiard room and a near-empty wine cellar from the previous owner.

SECURITY

Faceless Falcone is not fond of security cameras as they leave unwanted evidence of the comings and goings around his home. Only the front gate has a camera, and it is solely for viewing who is at the gate before allowing admittance.

Despite the number of guards at the house, security is rather lax. Two of the mercenaries patrol the grounds immediately around the house at night. During the day, the presence of heavily armed thugs hanging out in the ground floor den or downstairs with the Boss is sufficient to deter intruders. Luchadors trying to scout out the house should have little difficulty sneaking around until they get inside.

MAFIOSO MOOK

S12/4 A8/2 C11/3 P11/3 W10/3 D10/3 I15 F5 R7 V35
 Strike 16/2 Armed 15/1 Grab15/1 Hold 16/0
 Promo 15/0 Intimidate 16/1 Trick 16/1 Beg15/0

WEAPONS

Pistol LOD 0 Damage 8 Sharp Range 45
 Pool Cue LOD 1 Damage 7 Fragile

MERCENARIES

S10/3 A12/4 C12/4 P11/3 W10/3 D11/3 I17 F7 R7 V35
 Strike 18/2 Throw16/0 Tackle16/0 Armed18/2
 Grab 16/0 Hold15/0

WEAPONS

Rifle LOD 0 Damage 12 Sharp Range 120
 5 shots
 Pistol LOD 0 Damage 8 Sharp Range 45
 Trench knife LOD 0 Damage 5 Sharp

TROUBLESHOOTING

This scene is a problem because it offers the hardest fight in the adventure, and the hostages aren't even here! What a rip off! We include it primarily because obstinate PCs might doggedly follow the villain to the most obvious hideout. The GM can dissuade the PCs from attacking Faceless Falcone's stronghold to save them this frustration, or use it as the monstrous mobster's opportunity to throw the hostage dilemma in their masked faces. As another option, the GM can let this be the villain's last stand, particularly if the PCs trounce his forces.

Dissuading the players can be tricky unless you just want to have the voice of the GM ring down from the heavens and say this is a dead end. Characters who manage to talk at length to Lamont could be informed directly that La Croix knows his family is being hidden somewhere and that only Falcone himself knows where. His house doesn't qualify as hidden. The same info can come from Bolin if he was interrogated. However, if the players found their way here as the first stop on the adventure then these warnings don't exist. The presence of guards likewise may not deter them, and the high threat level may even strengthen their belief that this is the place. As always, we leave it to the GM to decide how much free will to give the players.

GMs wishing to split the difference can have Falcone and his goons depart for some unrelated business to provide a window of opportunity where the house defenses become more manageable. The downside is that the players may follow him instead of seizing the opportunity (every answer creates more problems). If pursued, the bad guys go to meet with Bobby the Ball for dinner and a micromanaging meeting. Back at the house, the GM now faces the problem that the PCs don't get their hands on Falcone if they win, so they have tipped their hand and won nothing. Obviously this is a risky decision, and the GM should think carefully before employing it.

If you make this Falcone's last stand, then you get to go out on a big fight. The downside, other than the extreme threat level, is that retrieving the hostages can seem anticlimactic after this. Of course, the PCs might be going into the next scene worse for wear.





SCENE 9: RESCUING THE HOSTAGES

Finally, the heroes have the goal in sight. The hostages have been located and it's time for the rescue mission. There is still time for things to take a turn for the worse.

LOST LAKE ESTATES

Faceless Falcone purchased lots for a dozen houses under construction in a scenic if somewhat isolated land development about 30 minutes out of town. This was originally done to appease Bolin's desire for some legitimate investments for the gang. When Falcone needed someplace discreet to stash his hostages for a few months that investment paid off.

Twelve lots overlook the lake. Three have buildings partially constructed and two are complete. One of the two completed homes now serves as the prison for the La Croix family. The house is a two bedroom, one and a half baths, with finished basement. The basement door is bolted and padlocked. The one window is nailed shut. Loretta has turned the basement into a bizarre playroom for the young La Croix boys. There is a television with video game system, board games, and a plethora of toys. She acts as spooky surrogate mother for them during the days. If they

behave, they get to have dinner with their mother upstairs before Loretta tucks them in.

Mrs. La Croix remains under the care of Tony the Torch, who plays the psychotic disciplinarian to Loretta's indulgent enabler. Tony keeps Mrs. La Croix shackled in her room except for their dinner time ritual. The boys know that their mother's welfare depends on their compliance with the rules Tony sets.

Tony has spent his free time over the months of guard duty preparing the house to burn to the ground. It's what he does. Incendiary devices throughout the house will turn it into a blazing inferno at the touch of a button. Worse still, he can use his cellphone to set it off allowing him time to get clear. He knows the Boss will be proud of him for this one.

THE HOSTAGES

Monica La Croix has suffered the most at the hands of the villains. She watched her husband take a savage beating at the behest of Faceless Falcone. She gets to talk to him over the phone when Falcone needs to encourage Lamont to obey, and she never knows when these brief talks will turn into torture sessions. The ordeal is trying, but she endures it all as long it keeps her



children safe. She recognizes Loretta's obsession with the boys and counts on it to keep them safe. She's even dropped hints that Loretta needs to be ready to save the boys if Tony decides to burn the house. Protecting herself is harder, as Tony checks her bonds obsessively.

Liam (age 9) cooperates with his captors and watches over his brother as per his mother's instructions. He wants to make a break for it, but fears for his mother's safety. He bides his time quietly waiting for a chance to punish Tony for hurting his mom. Lance (age 7) is more taken with the fantasy world Loretta has created for them. He feels bad for the scary lady and tries to make her feel better by playing along with her games. He still sometimes wants to go home, but mom says they have to stay here for now. Both boys count dozens of Pro-wrestlers as extended family and are accustomed to assorted scars and disfigurement. As such, Loretta's appearance has little effect on them.

LIAM LA CROIX

S8/2 A10/3 C9/3 P 9/3 W9/3 D9/3 I16 F6 R5 V25

Strike 15/0 Armed 15/0 Grab16/1 Hold 14/1

LANCE LA CROIX

S6/2 A10/3 C8/2 P 8/2 W7/2 D7/2 I15 F4 R4 V20

Strike 15/0 Armed 15/0 Grab15/0

SECURITY

Tony watches the construction crews through the blinds when they are present. Watching them work keeps his thoughts off of fire, and how easily he could engulf the house in beautiful flames. Any vehicles approaching the house outside of the work hours also earn his scrutiny, but his view is limited from the windows. Falcone has given him very clear orders not to open the door to anyone. He leaves the building only on a weekly supply run.

Tony has no delusions about his fighting abilities. His first impulse when confronted with danger is to burn it all down. Fire is his only friend and he is quick to call upon it. If he hits the switch, the house ignites. PCs can grab his arm with the detonator (his phone) to prevent this using the limb control rules from section 3.2.2 of Luchador: Painted Honor. If the players manage to come up with a way to get to Tony before he sets the place aflame, then they deserve to escape unscorched.

Even if detonated, the house is not destroyed instantly. Characters near the front door (GM's option) are caught in one of the blasts and suffer 12 damage and begin to burn. Burning characters take 3 damage the first turn, increasing by one point per turn until it reaches 6 damage (see burning rules in section 8 of Bright Lights and Barbed Wire). All walls in the house ignite creating fire hazards for anyone left inside. The structure begins to collapse in 3 turns raining flaming debris everywhere. Characters within the house after the third turn take agility checks. These are active checks if all they do is move and hasty checks if they are taking other actions. A failed check means the character is hit with burning debris for 6 damage and the character begins burning. A disastrous failure means the character is pinned by debris for 10 damage, he burns, and must make a strength check difficulty 5 to escape!

Mrs. La Croix is shackled to her bed. Tony has the keys. Players can open the lock with lock picking skills, or snap the cuffs with a difficulty 8 strength check. Dragging the entire bed takes a strength check difficulty 2, but slows the characters' escape.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The PCs have to break in and get the hostages before Tony sets off the bomb they are all setting on. Like the Hostage Exchange, the tension here comes from the danger to the hostages rather than the danger to the heroes. It falls on them to devise a plan to get in and stop Tony before he heats things up.

If the PCs have gotten this far with minimal injury, the GM can turn things up a notch. The simplest way to draw out the tension is to have Loretta try to run away with the boys. She jimmy's the lock downstairs and steals away with her make believe family while Tony entertains guests upstairs. The boys in turn escape from her, leading to a deadly game of hide and seek through the neighboring construction sites. Loretta chases the boys and the luchadors chase Loretta. If Falcone is still at large, he can show up and add another component to the chase. A running chase/brawl through a partially constructed building while the hostage house burns in the background makes for a fine final scene.

BONUS SCENE PAY-PER-VIEW FINALE

Wait a minute. Didn't we already offer up three scenes that could be the finale? We did, but they don't have to be the finale. Monsieur Mauler still awaits his comeuppance, Lamont still needs to be reunited with his family, and Great North Wrestling needs its honor restored. A luchador's work is never done!

BIG FINISH

At this point, there is no telling how things have shaped up in your game. There are lots of ways to bring this to a close. The simplest and most exciting is to have Faceless Falcone lash out against Lamont La Croix at the Great North Wrestling Pay-Per-View. He gathers his remaining forces and shows up looking for revenge on Lamont, the PCs, and anybody else he can vent his anger upon. Obviously, this ending requires Falcone avoid capture in all previous scenes.

This ending works best if the PPV occurs the same night as the hostage rescue. Faceless Falcone races to the Grove Arena ahead of our heroes, and moves Lamont out of his dressing room. The PCs show up with the recently rescued hostages eager to tell Lamont that he doesn't have to throw the match, only to find the villain waiting to curb stomp the happy ending! Lamont is already at ringside with the announce team predicting his victory and discounting the title he intends to win without breaking a sweat. The PCs can watch him play out Falcone's script on the big screen TV in the dressing room.

Not big enough? Falcone informs Monsieur Mauler that the masked men are intent on interfering in his match. Mauler recruits the other talent signed to Falcon Entertainment to make sure the heroes don't make it to ringside. The PCs have to beat Falcone and his remaining men, fight past Mauler's stable of wrestlers, and get to Lamont so he can have a clean match. If this doesn't lead to a series of running fights through the arena I don't know what will.



IN-RING FINISH

If the PCs are looking worse for wear after their ordeals, the GM may opt for the in-ring finale. The PCs show up with the hostages after Lamont and Monsieur Mauler's match is under way. Lamont is taking the beating he was ordered to until our heroes get his family to ringside, then he finally gets to fight back and win the day. Before that can happen, the PCs have to get past the wrestlers that are guarding the backstage area to prevent interference. In this scenario, Bobby the Ball keeps the Falcon Entertainment talent on task. The PCs may be able to talk their way out of the fight if they are inclined to try. Bobby's defeat is still theirs for the taking.

DARK FINISH

Only use this if the PCs have gotten to the end fairly unscathed. The Umbral Accord hit the PCs en route to the arena with the goal of killing everyone! Matt Black has watched the heroes destroy Falcone's insane plans, thus ending any investment in the area. Now he wants to settle debts with the PCs for past interference and leave the blame with the monstrous mobster (or his henchmen if Falcone is already captured). The death of the La Croix family is collateral damage that will help place guilt with Falcone.

Two vans intercept our heroes on the road before they can get back into town. Each houses a shadow soldier assault team of 5 agents. The PCs get hasty wits checks difficulty 2 to realize they are about to be ambushed. Success lets them respond with reactions to the opening attack, while exceptional success lets them check for initiative. (This is a slight modifier to the normal surprise

check to account for vehicle involvement) The agents open fire from the vans, with half of them shooting to incapacitate the car. We don't have vehicle combat rules, so if the villains gain surprise the car is rendered undrivable in the opening barrage. Otherwise it takes 4 hits to bring the car down, and the driver can use pilot skill as evasion. Other shots are sprayed at targets inside the car. The bad guys face difficulty 3 for cover, but the heroes only get agility level if they are not surprised and even then only half applies as they don't have room to dodge around much in the car. Black observes from a car further down the road, and only enters the fray if success appears imminent so he can tell the masked men why they are dying.

Truly sadistic GMs can use the Dark Finish as a prelude to one of the other finales.

SLOW FINISH

If the story shifted to one of the PCs getting in the ring with Monsieur Mauler, then the GM can have the touching family reunion happen before the big event. Lamont tells the world what happened. He releases his defeated opponents from their career ending contracts and apologizes for his actions. He can bow out of the fight against Mauler, or the GM can make it a three way battle. The future of Great North Wrestling hangs on this being a big match so the PC in the ring has to bring his best game.

EPILOGUE

If all has gone well then the player characters have thwarted the plans of the monstrous mobster and the Umbral Accord, making the world safe for pro-wrestling and soft drinks! Depending on how things worked out in each scene, the GM could have a happy ending or loose ends as hooks for future adventures.

The La Croix family should be reunited and indebted to the player characters. Now the PCs have an opportunity to train at the Crucible, but don't expect an easy time of it. Then again, if the PCs got Mrs. La Croix hurt through their carelessness they might have enemies in the La Croix family. Does Ms. Mapleleaf return to her training as Laura La Croix, or does she take up the way of the mask full time? How does her family react?

Great North Wrestling should end up with a great pay-per-view event that puts their league on the map. They still have a lot of healing to do from the damage caused by Lamont and Faceless Falcone. The PCs could stick around for a bit and help keep the momentum going. One of the PCs might end up with the GNW title. Did Monsieur Mauler realize that he was being played by Falcone, or does he still view the monstrous mobster as a supporter that the PCs stole from him?

Did Professor Dinkley escape or is he in the clutches of the Umbral Accord? What use do they have for his formula? Is the Professor free from Faceless Falcone's control and able to resume his research into making a better sugar substitute? Does he hold on to the Pola Cola company that Falcone purchased in his name, or does he abandon it and any potential legal action from the distribution of his flawed formula?

What is the fate of Falcone's gang? Did Jimmy Pitt go down with the rest of the gang, or did he get a pass for his help? What about Loretta?

As always, the GM should keep track of any characters that made an impact in the story for future use. As your roster of characters grow, your campaign world will begin to take on a life of its own which will make it easier and easier for you to develop new stories.

