



THE SOUL-STEALER BOX

A Savage Worlds One Sheet™ by Anson Brehmer
for use with Deadlands: The Weird West



This tale is a tough one, Marshal! To succeed, your heroes need to use wits as well as brawn.

WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Dr. Oswald Franklin is fascinated by the strange, so he acquired a Smith & Robards camera and began combing the Weird West for interesting things to photograph. This wandering led him into the Coyote Confederation. He was soon surrounded by Comanche under the leadership of the Ravenite medicine man Pale Moon. The photographer tried to escape by taking their portraits—without their permission.

This didn't sit well with the Comanche. Most of them hadn't been exposed to modern technology. The warriors worried Franklin's "picture box" was stealing their souls, and were about to kill him when Pale Moon intervened. The Ravenite had been struck by an evil inspiration. If Franklin's box could capture a spirit, what would happen to the body? Would it sicken and die as his braves feared? Or would they instead become immortal, their spirits tucked safely away?

Dr. Franklin tried to explain that photography doesn't work that way, but was "persuaded" to humor Pale Moon. He took a picture of the whole band, and a dark miracle took place. The superstitions of the Comanche imbued the plate with terrible power. Dr. Franklin had accidentally created a Portrait of Immortality. As long as it remains intact, Pale Moon's warriors are immune to almost everything!

THE CURIOUS TALKING HEAD

As the posse travels near the border of the Coyote Confederation, they hear a weak cry for help. Success on a Notice roll reveals a man buried up to his neck in the dirt, along with some scattered photographic plates and a camera. The man cheerfully calls out:

"I say, what excellent luck! Would you fine fellows help a man in rather desperate need of assistance?"

The man is Dr. Oswald Franklin. When asked about how he came to be buried in the middle of nowhere, he gives cowpokes the highlights of the story above. After that, he says, they knocked him over the head and he woke up here. He's spent almost a day yelling for help.

Once dug up, Franklin asks the heroes to escort him to Blackthorn, the nearest town. If necessary, he offers \$25 payment for the escort. He doesn't have any more money than that, but if pressed he offers to photograph them.

Dr. Oswald Franklin: Use the Mad Scientist profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. He has Persuasion d8, the Snakeoil Salesman Edge, and can use the following powers with his spirit camera

gizmo (20 Power Points): *blind, detect/conceal arcana*. He proudly displays his collection of photographs, ostensibly of spiritual phenomena (which the Marshal can use to plant plot hooks).

PHOTOGRAPHIC TRICKERY

Several hours later, the posse gains a tail. Success on a Notice check versus Stealth spots shadowy figures on horseback decked out in war paint. Once they're noticed, the figures charge! It's a Comanche attack—and these Indians are unworldly, devoid of color as if they'd just stepped out of a tintype. Bullets and knives bounce off their eerie silver skin, and even magic only stuns them. Have the posse make a Fear check and draw Action Cards for initiative.

The braves are showing off, testing their new immortality. They sneak in close enough to count coup on posse members (a Touch Attack dealing no damage) then ride away laughing their heads off. They only attack the posse if their mounts are harmed or one of the heroes displays magic that can actually harm them.

- **Ghost Warriors (1 per hero):** Use the Indian Brave profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but add the Overconfident and Stubborn Hindrances and the Steady Hands Edge. They are armed with Spencer carbines (Range 20/40/80, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, AP 2), tomahawks (Str+d6), coup sticks, 20 extra rounds, and war horses (see *Savage Worlds*). A couple of them carry tintypes of themselves; these have Pale Moon's Invulnerability and Weakness (Magic) Special Abilities (see Pale Moon's profile below).



SMILE FOR THE CAMERA!

In the aftermath, Dr. Franklin seems excited about the ghostly Comanche. He may be a man of science, but he's also spent the last year combing the Weird West. He's quick to posit a theory:

"Psychosomatic aetheric waveform transference!"

When asked what in tarnation he's talking about, he theorizes that people's beliefs can get so strong as to manifest in reality (he knows nothing about the Reckoners, attributing this phenomenon to "manifestations of the collective psychic zeitgeist of humanity" and other highfalutin' talk). Because the braves fear that the picture he took of them holds their souls, they ignore otherwise lethal wounds. He suspects that breaking the picture will "snap them back to reality" — they'll remember they aren't bulletproof and keel over.

"Of course, until that happens they're a threat to everyone around them. Like Blackthorn! We have to warn the town! And we need to get that photograph!"

BLACKTHORN

Fear Level: 3

A Common Knowledge check reveals that Comanche traditionally attack settlements on the night of the full moon. The posse could have plenty of time to act or very little — up to you, Marshal.


A successful Persuasion roll after warning the town can rustle up about 30 townfolk with a mix of El Cheapo pistols, shotguns, and rifles. The Marshal can either divvy them up among the players as allied Extras or run a Mass Combat (see *Savage Worlds*). Remember that the eerie silver-skinned braves shrugging off all forms of harm is mighty unnerving and provokes a Fear check from anyone who hasn't seen it before.

- **Townfolk (30):** See the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

COMANCHE MOON

Pale Moon's warband of 30 braves is five miles from town. Finding the camp requires a successful Tracking check or an Intimidation Test of Wills on a captured brave. There are pickets around the camp who count as active sentries, and if alerted raise up the whole hornet's nest. Pale Moon's tepee is the most intricately decorated one. There's also a rope corral of extra horses if the posse gets a mind to do some stampeding.

Among the warriors is Ghost Wolf, a veteran brave who has serious misgivings about Pale Moon's plan. Ghost Wolf takes picket duty to get time away from the others. He could prove to be a useful ally if the posse can succeed on a Persuasion check.

 **Ghost Wolf:** As Ghost Warriors, but use the Veteran Indian Brave profile instead.

 **Pale Moon:** See profile below.

- **Ghost Warriors (1 or 30):** See above.
- **War Horses (90):** See *Savage Worlds*.

MOVING PICTURES

The easiest way to defeat the Comanche is to find Pale Moon and deprive him of the portrait. If the portrait is destroyed or *dispelled*, the braves lose their magical protection. If Pale Moon is defeated, Ghost Wolf takes command and calls for a retreat.

PALE MOON, RAVENITE SHAMAN

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8, Tracking d8, Tribal Medicine d12

Cha: -4; **Grit:** 5; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Stubborn, Vengeful (Major), Vow (Minor — Serve Raven)

Edges: Arcane Background (Shamanism), Fetish Creator, New Powers, Power Points, Steady Hands

Powers: *Boost/lower Trait, contact spirit world, deflection, healing, shapechange, smite, teleport, vision quest*; **Power Points:** 25

Gear: Winchester '73 (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, AP 2), spear (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach +1), war horse (see *Savage Worlds*), medicine bag, fetishes (*curse*, 12 PP, *entangle*, 12 PP, *quickness*, 12 PP), Portrait of Immortality (see below).

Special Abilities:

- **Invulnerability:** Pale Moon is immune to poison and disease, does not require air to breathe, needs no food or drink to survive, suffers no ill effects from aging, and is invulnerable to all mundane forms of damage. He can be Shaken, but not wounded, as long as the Portrait of Immortality exists.
- **Weakness (Magic):** Pale Moon takes normal damage from arcane powers, though he doesn't suffer wound penalties and can't die while the Portrait exists. If Incapacitated, he's knocked out for 1d6 minutes.
- **Weakness (Special):** If the Portrait of Immortality is destroyed, Pale Moon dies.

RELIC—PORTRAIT OF IMMORTALITY

Power: While the portrait exists, the Ghost Warriors have the Invulnerability and Weakness (Magic) Special Abilities described in Pale Moon's profile. Injuries to the braves appear on the portrait instead.

Taint: Pale Moon's life force is tied to the well-being of the portrait. Each wound dealt to the plate (Toughness 6) inflicts a wound penalty on all the Comanche. If it is "Incapacitated" or the spell is broken (such as through the *dispel*, *exorcism*, or *sanctify* powers) it shatters and Pale Moon dies, while the rest of the braves lose all Special Abilities.

Pale Moon may soak damage and make Spirit rolls on behalf of the portrait, no matter how far away it is from him.