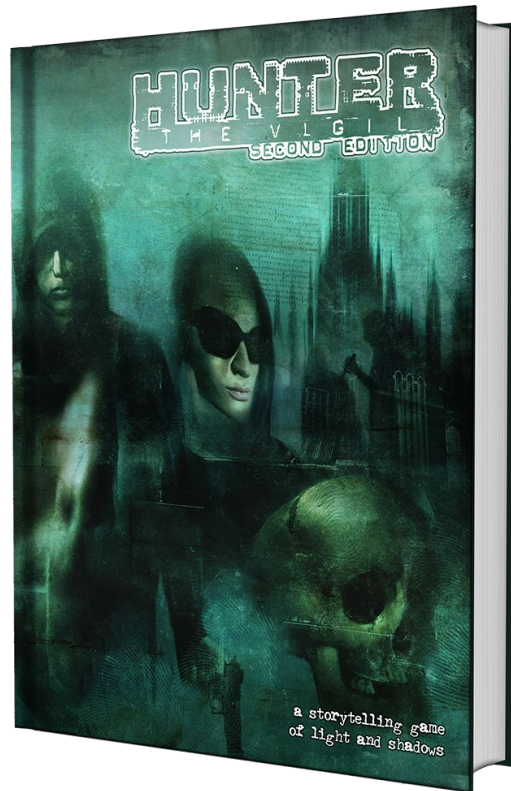


HUNTER THE VIGIL SECOND EDITION

Kickstarter Manuscript Preview

The Slasher Chronicle

Chapter Seven: The Slasher Chronicle is a sample chronicle setting. Yanked from the slasher-movie genre, the Slasher Chronicle is a horror-movie-themed setting that includes a new slasher-specific compact and conspiracy, rules for building slashers, customized approaches for tier-one, -two, and -three gameplay, new Storyteller characters, and more!



Chapter Seven: The Slasher Chronicle

“Becoming a monster sometimes isn’t a choice that you have. We’re all that; we’re all ‘the other’ in one way or another.”

— Emil Ferris, American Writer and Cartoonist

The Slasher Chronicle contains tools Storytellers can use to run a chronicle featuring this type of monster in a unique story. The chronicle may be introduced for tier-one, -two, or -three games and requires some customization to fit the needs of a particular group. It is strongly recommended that Storytellers sketch out scenes and sessions before running a slasher-based chronicle to manage the pace and mood.

Recently, reports of serial killers have dramatically increased all over the world; this rising tide of murderers birthed from the darkest recesses of the human soul threatens everyone in some way. The world’s authorities struggle against the outbreak of brutality as best they can, but they are not aware these killers aren’t human — at least, not anymore. The police might refer to them as killing machines, but hunters have a different, more accurate name for these monsters: slashers.

For the Storyteller: Trauma and Personal Horror

Though the world is filled with shadows, the Slasher Chronicle is set in its darkest and most violent corners. By focusing on slashers, stories set in this chronicle will be squarely placed within a genre built upon the villains found in slasher movies. The type of horror that emerges during gameplay may be generated from human failings but will ultimately veer toward terror, body horror, and death.

Storytellers are advised to closely work with players before running the Slasher Chronicle and, if needed, after sessions to ensure players retain their agency. These discussions should include preferences regarding gore, phobias, and personal comfort levels, but they should also offer ways for players to communicate their needs during a session, like the X-Card p. XX or a consent form, to help facilitate strong themes and moods. Additionally, the Storyteller is encouraged to use downtime p. XX to help players mitigate trauma through therapy sessions or a debrief.

In every cell, compact, and conspiracy hunters feel palatable tension — even fear. Though no obvious links connect the uptick in slasher activity and sightings, paranoid hunters have shared dozens of theories pointing fingers at what (or who) is behind the global phenomenon. Storytellers are encouraged to customize or create rumors for their chronicle to help give players a long-term goal that goes beyond stopping a slasher from claiming yet another victim. These whispers include:

- *There is no reason.* The epidemic is a statistical aberration, an unlikely confluence of events that cells, compacts, and conspiracies are misinterpreting as evidence of some grand design. The plague will recede, eventually, having winnowed the ranks of hunters down to a bloody, traumatized few survivors, but no greater purpose or intent lies behind it.
- *Mass hysteria spawned a nightmare.* The world is more interconnected than ever. Horror stories, nasty viral videos, and filthy internet memes sink their claws deeper into humanity’s

collective unconscious. The slasher epidemic is a manifestation of that psychological obsession with fear, the accidental genesis of a new, deadly type of mass hysteria.

- *Humanity is sick.* The slasher epidemic is an expression of humanity's fallen state. Too much sin, too much cruelty, too much *hurt* has finally taken its toll. Every atrocity, every dehumanizing act, is just another symptom of the larger disease — as some slashers might even proclaim. Now, the pressure is too great, and the virus must spread. Every slasher is a victim overwhelmed by that shared illness, their soul and mind unwittingly affected by centuries of crime and sadism.
- *Hunters are turning into slashers.* Even though movie-goers are still transfixed by silver-screen killers, the real monsters stalk them on crumbling city streets and in moonlit neighborhoods. Most people have trouble believing monsters are real — but not hunters. Despite their efforts to contain the epidemic, the slashers just keep on killing, carving their red journey through humanity's collective flesh and psyche with cruel acts of depravity. Some hunters believe this batch of slashers is more skilled and enhanced than their predecessors and that points to one of two chilling scenarios: Either hunters are helping slashers or the slashers are former hunters. This spells doom for hunters everywhere, whether they're active in a cell, compact, or conspiracy, and will force hunters to face their deepest fears.
- *Monsters are using slashers.* Most hunters agree that slasher sightings are more prominent than any other. While many cells are preoccupied with resolving the immediate threat, some hunters are noticing that other monsters have all but disappeared. This has spurred several conspiracy theories, but only one has caught on: Other monsters are using slashers to cull the population and weaken hunters. Some hunters, who are comfortable working with supernatural creatures, worry an "all monsters must be hunted" stance will affect their ability to hunt slashers. Others fear the exact opposite is true: Slashers have become so great at murder and mayhem, they've emerged as the dominant monster.
- *Hunters are creating slashers.* All hunters understand that upholding the Vigil puts themselves, their friends, and their loved ones at risk. For centuries, hunters have suffered tremendous, personal losses — but no longer. For some bizarre reason, this new crop of slashers is *not* targeting hunters or their loved ones. To explain this phenomenon, some hunters have concluded that other hunters must be experimenting with slashers and have found the means to create, control, and command them to hunt other monsters.

The Slasher Chronicle is marked by blood, screams, and sweat. Slashers live on the edge of a knife; they can only sate their impossible hunger by snatching victims and torturing them. What is the nature of the disease that drives this eruption? What will it take to bring it to an end?

Only a hunter knows the answer to these questions. Only hunters can rescue victims from slashers, put them down for good, and stop the epidemic.

Defining a Slasher

A slasher is a monster wearing human skin, because a slasher is part human, part something else. This type of mass murderer is more terrifying than the gut-churning horror of a serial killer's compulsive murder spree. A slasher's human soul has been bathed in blood and pain until it shattered and there's nothing left to do except force others to feel what it feels. Make no mistake: Slashers are serial killers, but most serial killers are not slashers. Murderers are often angry or desperate people, but they're not legendary butchers. At least, not yet. Not until the light in a

slasher's psyche is snuffed out, drowned by silent waves of darkness, and replaced by a sinister, living force. This supernatural shadow brings power in its wake, a profane vigor that grants a slasher preternatural conviction, capability, and utter lack of compassion.

Sometimes, slashers are ex-hunters. Most cells won't admit they lost a soul to the darkness and are terrified to think of the implication that each hunter can, if they're not careful, fall into darkness. Other hunters believe it's just a matter of time before they lose their way. What is a hunter other than a weapon cutting through the veil to fight an eternal war against the darkness? When hunters forget they're more than a sharpened blade, they start to lose faith in themselves, in their lovers, friends, families, and in the Code. Abandon all that, and hunters start looking for excuses to murder that bully who clearly deserved it, to track down that kidnapper who should never have stepped foot in their backyard, to exact justice turned vengeance when they want to, however they want to. For these hunters, killing "bad guys" overpowers reason, and that morphs into a self-righteous addiction. Oh, they may be great at tracking down bloodsucking vampires, all right, but can cells look away when a hunter doesn't differentiate between a bully and a flesh-eating zombie?

Hunters turned slashers are terrifying reminders of just how necessary the Code really is.

Most of the time, slashers are born from the bloody chrysalis of a career in mundane murder, killing until their integrity is so ruined, their identity is re-forged into the shape of slaughter. Some slashers are experiments by darker forces; their unending abuse and torment is not the kind of hurt from which they can heal. To find refuge, they must carve apart the world that wrecked them — starting with their tormentors. Other slashers are forged by outright supernatural influences, the cracked and castoff vessels of spiritual possessions gone wrong, or the cursed victims of a furious entity's malice. Then there are some who just...*snap* one day, for the pettiest of slights, and suddenly the yawning chasm within their soul craves death.

Types of Slashers

Slashers are defined by **Undertakings**. An Undertaking is part modus operandi, part compulsive craving, and part supernatural force that slithers in the back of their mind whispering, watching, and waiting for the opportunity to strike. Within an Undertaking, the slasher is either a **ripper** or a **scourge**.

A ripper is still mortal. They may be hollowed out by the need to kill, but they're largely held in check by the limits of human ability. They are no longer mentally shackled by society's restraints, however, and a ripper may demonstrate monstrous will or incredible determination. Everything they *can* do can be explained in criminal or scientific terms, which is why they're often easy to miss. Hunters might never identify a ripper as a slasher, and let the authorities handle their viciousness until they have no choice but to deal with them. Sometimes, cells cross paths with a ripper and a monster, choose to fight the monster instead, and later realize that the ripper is now a scourge.

A scourge, by comparison, is no longer considered mortal. Rippers can become scourges, and scourges can manifest on their own. They represent a slasher who's emerged from a bloody, gruesome trail of carnage with a stain on their soul; this stain is represented by dark, supernatural powers. One scourge shrugs off a hail of bullets with an irritated grunt and just keeps coming, hatchet hefted. Another dies, doused in gasoline and set alight by terrified teenagers, but is

reborn a week later, unhurt, waiting for them. A scourge is formed from nightmares and urban legends, a horror that has flesh and blood and a simple purpose: kill, and keep killing.

Undertakings

Undertakings present two sides of one infernal coin. Each slasher archetype may either be a ripper or a scourge.

Avengers seek vengeance; each ripper is obsessed with a supposed wrong which they can never forget and never forgive. Relentless and deeply personal in their pursuit, these rippers can be found wherever one mortal feels maligned by another. **Legends** are scourges who have lost themselves to the stories sprouted from their murderous deeds. Most Legends spring up in urban areas or tightly bound communities, where the terrified whispers of their heinous acts quickly spread as urgent warnings.

Slashers, Bygones, and Mysterious Places

Every slasher needs to find the right creepy morgue, run-down factory, or abandoned warehouse to do their grisly work. In the Slasher Chronicle, the areas they frequent are considered tainted (p. XX). While a slasher might *also* have a nest (p. XX), either inside or at a different location, tainted places are a consequence of the the unnatural tide of murder, death, and mayhem sweeping through communities at an alarming rate.

While slashers have been given supernatural heft for the purposes of running the Slasher Chronicle, they do not use or have access to Bygones. Their traits, abilities, and Dread Powers are specifically honed to torment and kill their victims according to their Undertakings, and their knowledge of the supernatural is limited at best in most cases.

Brutes are rippers that embody pure, angry strength. Everyone is a target to a ripper of this Undertaking; bestial in behavior, they cannot be reasoned with, only driven off or killed. A Brute isn't necessarily less intelligent than other slashers and can often maintain shallow relationships. Ultimately, their purpose for interactions is to lash out and kill. **Masks**, on the other hand, are scourges who've shed all pretenses of their humanity. While a Mask's behavior and choice of victims may be bound by taboos and compulsions, they are otherwise more like a force of nature, a machine made just for killing.

The **Charmers** are serial-killing stereotypes made flesh — murderous intent hidden behind a cold smile. These rippers are often selective in their choice of victim and use their charm and guile to achieve positions of respectability or influence in society that let them take their pick of prey. **Hypnos** are scourges driven by their darkest urges to force people to their point-of-view; they see their charnel achievements as the fulfillment of their beliefs, purifying the world or testing their philosophy's strength through murder. Killers burdened with this Undertaking are more common in regions where strong political or religious ideologies clash.

Undesirables are rippers who lash out because they've either been rejected by society or they see themselves as superior to it. Though Undesirables are often stereotyped physically, the Undertaking draws its power from the slashers' perception of themselves as outcasts. A **Mutant** is that feeling of rejection and self-loathing in a physical form; these scourges are atavisms, prisoners of truly distorted flesh, or with bodies warped by supernatural power. Slashers of this

Undertaking, rippers and scourges alike, usually dwell in the margins of society and civilization, and are the most likely to band together.

The greatest weapon a **Virtuoso** ripper possesses is their mind. Whether they're tormented by their twisted thoughts or are convinced of their superiority to "lesser" humans, these sociopathic rippers plan elaborate murders to play games of cat and mouse with the detectives they know will pursue them. **Puppeteers** believe they possess brilliant insights the human mind cannot conceive and are destined to share their tainted theories with unsuspecting victims. Each scourge is a corrosive element in society that brings about madness in all its varied and terrible forms.

Slasher Undertakings

The Avenger (Ripper)

You'll pay for what you've done. You'll all pay.

As the name suggests, the Avenger wants vengeance. Sometimes, the motivation is a desire for justice; sometimes, it's just furious retaliation. The Avenger may feel they've been individually wronged or might lash out because of a perceived problem in the wider world; either way, the Avenger *hurts*, and the only way to ease the pain is to inflict it on those responsible. An Avenger's journey of vengeance might be deeply personal at first but will rapidly include more victims as the ripper never stops blaming others for all that's wrong in the world. The Avenger can never move on, will never be satisfied, and can never have enough blood on their hands.

An Avenger usually follows a chain of twisted logic to hunt, either working down a list of chosen prey or investigating connections between victims to find more. Many an Avenger believes they're fulfilling the letter of their moral law; they're so girded with self-justification they've rationalized murdering a victim after a petty slight. Innocent bystanders caught in the blast are either acceptable collateral — or were clearly guilty themselves.

The quest for vengeance is a story as old as civilization itself, but while Avengers are a global phenomenon, they're thickly clustered in societies and cultures that hew to myths of nation and identity centered on self-reliance or suspicion of authority. It's no surprise they're most common in Western countries, namely the United States.

Tell: An Avenger's Tell relates to the justifications she lives by. Whether a calling card or a particular form of execution, the Tell proclaims that none of the guilty are safe, or that she is acting where the regular authorities cannot.

Examples: Doctor Guilt is a hunter turned slasher, a broken surgeon who rages at his former cellmates for turning on him in their darkest hour and forcing him to uphold the Code no matter what. Lars settles in the frigid snow, rifle in the crook of his arms and axe lying ready, waiting for the hikers who violated the sanctity of the serene wilderness he protects. Seong-ja brings a slow, agonizing death with her power tools to all those she deems responsible for her family's death — the thugs, their boss, everyone in their whole jopok, the corrupt cops who take the gangsters' bribes, and her husband's employer who sent him out to that place on that day.

Talent: Working the Room — An Avenger's Defense does not suffer any penalty from being attacked by multiple opponents over the course of a turn; always apply the slasher's full Defense to all incoming attacks. This does not protect the Avenger from attacks that completely circumvent Defense, such as firearms.

Frailty: Mission-Focused — An Avenger is utterly obsessed with their mission. If the slasher must choose between pursuing their target or another course of action, the Avenger must succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll or be forced to pursue their prey even if it puts them in harm's way.

The Legend (Scourge)

I'm baaaaaack!

The Legend can't stop killing and is bound by the story told of their murderous deeds. The details say the Legend only kills certain people under specific circumstances. Leashed to the narrative that has sprung up from the scourge's deeds, the Legend is caught in a prison of rumors and empowered by the fearful whispers that follow them. This is no mere psychological compulsion; the *story* is in control now, and it'll twist the Legend to fit, even bend reality around their actions to keep the narrative going.

Whatever the Legend's original motivations, their past actions had an identifiable pattern; perhaps the slasher preyed on hunters, abusers, or police; perhaps they always killed at a crossroads, on a certain street, or after a loud party. It doesn't matter what the Legend's reasoning was, the pattern has been woven into the story's logic. Now, that pattern of behavior is set, and the Legend *must* obey it; if the wild tales say The Dentist is toothless and that's why he always plucks victims' teeth out, he must yank them out — even if he's never lost one.

Traditionally, the stories that fuel Legends emerge in large populations or tight communities where urban legends have a chance to take on a life of their own. The rising tide of the slasher plague has mixed with the viral nature of the internet, however, and this has allowed Legends to flourish in unusual places on a global scale.

Tell: The Legend's Tell is the all-consuming underpinning of the scourge's existence. Whether murdering young lovers out by Devil's Lake or leaving victims alone if a specific prayer is repeated in their presence, the Legend is defined by the rules storytellers have laid out as their modus operandi. Crucial to hunters, the Legend is uniquely vulnerable provided their urban legends outline a weakness, location, or clue that can lead cells to a confrontation.

Examples: The Painted Bride murders husbands-to-be, clad in her blood-spattered wedding dress as she stalks her victims; they say she was murdered by her own fiancé, and claws her way out of the grave to visit vengeance on his ilk. When a maintenance worker vanishes in the metro tunnels under Moscow, the passengers shake their heads and agree he must've crossed to the wrong side of the tracks without greeting old Artyom and offended the slasher. Rusty Nail goes after drunks, and pounds nails into their skulls; the story's been circulating since the Prohibition, and always seems to find a new copycat whenever the newspapers run a story on the serial killer's morbid history.

Talent: Living Legend — Once per scene, when someone fulfills one of the tenets of the Avenger's "rules," the player can roll the slasher's chosen Attribute + Occult. Successes on this roll may be applied on one of the following: restoring spent Willpower, healing damage (one success for a bashing wound, two for lethal, three for aggravated), or applying the bonuses to rolls in pursuit of their goal.

After this has been activated, successes that haven't been spent are discarded. They may not be banked to use in a following scene. Additionally, the Legend may use Dread Powers that *specifically* highlight its storied nature. These might include: Eye Spy, Taint, or Hex.

Frailty: Narrative Chains — The Legend gains a unique and specific frailty enforced by the nature of the tales surrounding them. Additionally, characters investigating the scourge's Tell (see p. XX) gain an exceptional success on three successes rather than five.

The Brute (Ripper)

People ain't nothing more than animals.

The Brute is rage, strength, and a hunger for killing all wrapped up in one unstoppable package. Pushed to the edge of their humanity, the Brute lashes out to satisfy their rage by crushes windpipes and breaking necks. The Brute gains pleasure from watching the life slip from their victims; murder validates their every action to keep their anger at bay.

Brutes can't be reasoned with. Any attempt to persuade them *not* to kill either won't work or will backfire. A Brute isn't necessarily a monster frothing at the mouth. Despite their reputation, a Brute can function in society and often does — right up until their interactions reinforce why the Brute prefers killing to socializing. Murder is easy. Resolving conflict in nonviolent ways is infinitely harder.

Most Brutes live at the fringes of a metropolis or larger community. Often, the Brute wanders near a city to keep up appearances, but never stays longer than the time required to pick up supplies. In the current crisis, Brutes stand out as slashers of pure rage. When a Brute is on the prowl, reports circulate widely of their vicious murders to ensure hunters know to take them out.

Tell: Brutes don't think of people as *people* anymore; other humans exist for the Brute to ignore or kill. As a result, the Brute rarely attempts to communicate through their Tell; the slasher's not making a statement by killing. They just *do*. Brutes' Tells lie in the savage acts caused by their raw, uncontrollable anger.

Examples: Phelps' superiors feared her excessive use of force on the job would one day cause her to snap, and she did. A former police officer, Phelps believes she must kill "the enemy," and *everyone* is a potential villain in her mind. When customers drop by the butcher to pick up their orders, Arturo invites them in, then hangs them up with the rest of the carcasses in the meat locker. They call him "Pig Man" because all he does is grunt like an animal.

Talent: Unstoppable — A brute never suffers wound penalties for any reason, and automatically passes any roll to remain conscious due to damage or pain.

Frailty: Tunnel Vision — A brute suffers a -3 penalty to all Perception rolls, and to rolls to avoid being surprised in combat.

The Mask (Scourge)

(Heavy breathing)

All traces of the scourge's humanity have gone. All that's left in the Mask is a body and the burning need to kill. The Mask does not understand compassion, guilt, or mercy; some targets simply do not interest them, but they aren't spared because the scourge is kind. The Mask doesn't speak or try to communicate. This scourge is the embodiment of murder in a human body.

Masks often wear physical masks that further distance themselves from society. The Mask is faceless; their former identity is subsumed beneath a desperate need to kill. These remorseless slashers may be able to feel heartache, guilt, and remorse, but they don't show it. To their victims, the Mask is an organic machine, deriving no pleasure from murdering victims, and following the only routines left in their shattered mind.

Hunters who believe the slasher epidemic is the work of a greater organization wonder if Masks have been captured and experimented upon. Has someone twisted these mindless puppets for their own, merciless purpose? The evidence isn't clear, but patterns are suspicious. As new Masks emerge, they appear to be preying on one, specific target: hunters.

Tell: Some Masks grasp the scraps of their former, mortal lives; a Mask can never pretend to be human, but might react oddly to stimuli like colors, songs, or pictures that remind them of who they once were. This insight into the Mask's origins might offer some clues to predict the scourge's next move. Once a hunter has studied their patterns of behavior, they are easier to find — but not necessarily to catch.

Examples: The Tin Angel is a failed experiment by a venture capitalist; he comes for anyone who takes from his junkyard lair in Philadelphia and impales their corpses on metal debris like a shrike. In the favelas of Rio, they say the *imparavel* is a brutal secret agent who was shot during a drug raid and got up again to keep on killing; he never left the city, and emerges to exact his brand of "justice." They tortured Sumeyye until her mind took refuge in its own recesses, and something *else* stepped into the gap; now she stalks Ankara's suburbs, butchering anyone who looks like her tormentors.

Talent: Killing Machine — Like a Brute, a Mask does not suffer wound penalties and passes rolls to remain conscious due to damage or pain. Additionally, the Mask does not need to sleep or eat, and only suffers a single point of damage from any attack regardless of the damage or number of successes. This applies to mundane and supernatural forms of attack; only environmental damage such as fire, electrocution, or falling bricks applies damage normally.

The Mask might use Dread Powers like Agonize, Dread Attack, or Unnatural Step.

Frailty: Only the Kill — A Mask has lost the ability to communicate. They are illiterate and are limited to simple gestures or grunts. To understand what's been said to them, they must succeed at an Intelligence + Composure roll.

The Charmer (Ripper)

Good morning, ma'am! Have you heard the good news?

The Charmer is compelling and magnetic. Their warm smile masks the chill behind their eyes; the trustworthy tone in their voice allows them to push boundaries and kick in doors before victims understand what's happening. The Charmer has a knack for seeking out vulnerable people and exploiting their frailties. Many of these rippers manipulate their way to positions of social influence and authority to get a bird's eye view before selecting their next victim. It's just so *easy* to con trustworthy people to do whatever the Charmer wants.

Deep down, Charmers are disgusted by other people and find them repulsive. Some may even go so far as to make analogies about culling the herd or forcing animals back in their place. This is because the Charmer is a sadist who craves power over everyone and anyone they encounter. A

Charmer is a wolf in sheep's clothing who easily blends in because they've pulled the right strings to pick off weaker prey.

Charmers are drawn to well-populated urban areas that teeter on the edge of growth and decay. Some hunters have heard a terrifying rumor: Charmers are building a *network* of slashers. Others heard a puzzling observation; other slashers are picking off Charmers when they can to even the playing field. If the most paranoid conspiracy theorists are to be believed, Charmers are now organizing grotesque little business conventions.

Tell: Charmers usually loathe *something* that gets under their skin. The moral question of whether their angst is valid doesn't matter. They might stroll by a burlesque club and be pissed off the dancers were too exposed, drop by a church and berate a priest for not being faithful enough, or enter a bookstore and lament how nobody reads those books anymore. Whatever that thing is, that's a Charmer's Tell, because it breaks their charming façade and temporarily topples their sense of superiority.

Examples: "John Smith" is an identity thief *par excellence*, sliding into a target's life like a murderous cuckoo and killing them once he's passed for them; he doesn't remember who he really is any more. The Passenger, a late-night Lagos hitchhiker, is armed with a battery of probing questions for anyone who offers her a lift; those she deems sinful won't survive the drive. The Little Green Man uses drugs and sedatives to torture his victims; he likes to leave a survivor or two behind, too confused and traumatized to properly recall who cut their tendons and flayed their skin.

Talent: Disarming — The Charmer is a master manipulator and knows how to use Social Maneuvers (p. XX) to produce excellent results. They enjoy +2 dice when rolling to open a Door, and get a bonus die when making a first impression.

Frailty: Thin Veneer — During a scene, when a Charmer fails to maintain their persona after falling prey to their unique trigger, the ripper must spend a point of Willpower or lash out at the target of their ire. Further consequences to their Social Maneuvers may result depending upon which character the Charmer has shown their "true face" to.

The Hypno (Scourge)

This is all a battle between our beliefs, detective. Whoever is right, lives. Whoever is wrong, dies.

The Hypno's driven by an ideal that underpins every kill. Much like the Charmer, the Hypno is disgusted or repulsed by a specific some element of the world, and that belief of their superiority has hardened into an unstoppable force. The Hypno sees the world as a bigger picture, a clash between philosophies and ideologies. All that matters to the slasher is fighting in this great war, proving their warped beliefs are *correct* through the medium of murder.

Hypnos tend to fixate on rivalries with those in their orbit; they see everything through the lens of a challenge — whether real or imagined. A Hypno will taunt and provoke an investigator to push the boundaries of their beliefs against the detective's. Every time the scourge gets away with murder, it validates them. Often, hunters who encounter Hypnos fall prey to their aggressive force of personality, and stumble when they can't hold on to their own ideals.

Scourges of this kind are a hunter's bane. The Hypno might watch a cell deal with *another* slasher with great interest, and "help" point out what they missed just to mess with them. Other Hypnos might target hunters who struggle with the Code and show them why they've gone

horribly wrong. Then, when hunters are vulnerable and confused, the Hypno strikes to emerge as their superior.

Tell: A Hypno's choice of victims is paramount, because it is an expression of her ideology. Right or wrong, the Hypno acts as judge, jury, and executioner to anyone *they* feel deserves to die. One might murder con artists, for example, because the Hypno feels justified ridding the world of charlatans. Another targets coma patients and pulls the plug because they're "wasting" too much money. The Hypno's calling card is the pattern of the tell, the confessions they leave behind, and the desperation they have to inform hunters and criminal investigators their murders serve a purpose.

Examples: Camo Mike is a trophy hunter playing the most dangerous game: He claims mortals were born to hunt and picking off weaker prey is a favor to others. In Argentina, the police chase the Confession Killer, who arranges her victims in grotesque caricatures of their greatest vices; the hypocrisy of sinners disgusts her. In Italy, Mio Padre selectively targets politicians, reporters, and academics to sway public opinion, hoping to "return" l'Italia to the 1600s, because unification of the city states clearly isn't working.

Talent: Compelling Words — When making a Social roll of any kind to get a target to drop their guard for a moment or to heed the slasher's words, the Hypno treats any success as an exceptional success. If using this moment to get close to the target and attack them, the scourge treats the victim as vulnerable to a Killing Blow, dealing damage equal to their dice pool for the attack plus any bonus for a weapon, with no roll required. If using this to demoralize or sow doubt in a target's mind, the scourge can instead drain a point of Willpower from the victim to regain it; they cannot drain Willpower from a target more than once per scene.

The Hypno has access to an array of Dread Powers that might include: Know Soul, Agonize, and Predator's Sense.

Frailty: Can't Let Go — Whenever a Hypno experiences a failure on a Social roll against a target she intends to kill, she becomes absolutely obsessed with the desired victim. She loses a point of Willpower at the end of every scene wherein she does not directly attempt to torment or attack the target. This effect ends when the target dies, or if the target manages to inflict damage on the Hypno.

The Undesirable (Ripper)

I've seen the disgusted glances you give me when you think I'm not looking!

The Undesirable glances in the mirror, sees a disgusting monster, and wants murderous revenge on those responsible for their twisted features. It's all someone else's fault — the burn scars, the wiry, unkempt hair, the haunting shadows in their red eyes — and they need to suffer in kind. In some cases, the rejection fueling the Undesirable's hatred either did happen, or didn't quite occur the way they remember. In other cases, being spurned is a fiction repeated by the slasher; they've convinced themselves they're unlovable, that everyone laughs at their repulsiveness, or some other delusion fanning the flames of self-loathing and resentment to a bloody crescendo.

Some Undesirables revel in their status as an outcast and monster, and feel free to inflict punishment on a society that judged them by its own cruel standards. Others are miserable wretches, unable to control their own monstrous impulses and desperately wishing for a way out.

In both cases, the Undesirable *acts* bestial because they believe they are a monster — even if they don't fit the conventional definition of one.

Hunters are terrified of Undesirables because of their unusual tendencies for camaraderie amongst other slashers. Undesirables naturally gravitate toward others of their kind and form hateful cabals at the fringes of society. Some go a step further, seeking out “true” monsters to emulate and serve.

Tell: Undesirables usually limit their depredations to specific geographical areas; denied the gregarious bonds of society, the slasher instead builds and maintains a well-protected nest for reassurance. Leaving their nest can be disorienting or even frightening for the Undesirable. The Undesirable's physical appearance is often memorable, whether due to an actual deformity or a self-inflicted harm caused by their self-loathing; this trait looms large in urban legends once they're spotted.

Examples: The Nurse hides in an abandoned hospital; she covers her bleeding mouth, a festering wound of blackened teeth and roughly cut edges, with a thin hospital mask while cutting her next victim's face. The Contortionist hangs from the ceiling of an ironworks by hooks in their bare skin, and “invites” their victims to do the same. Buck can always be found with a cigarette in his hand; he squashes the lit butts on his bare skin, obsessively scarring it until he can find a pristine canvas to start all over again.

Talent: Natural Compass — A Undesirable has a near-perfect sense of direction, and gains a +3 bonus to Perception, Athletics, Investigation, and Survival rolls when present in their nest.

Frailty: Rejection — The Undesirable suffers a -4 penalty on Social rolls that do not involve slashers and other monsters.

The Mutant (Scourge)

So weak and flimsy, this frail human flesh of yours. Comes apart so easily.

The Mutant stares down at their body and doesn't see a human being anymore. Their flesh and features are no longer recognizable as mortal, and those who encounter the Mutant may wonder if they're a cryptid. A Mutant's grotesque appearance may be a terrifying accident of birth, a side effect incited by an experimental drug treatment, or a symptom of a warped influence. In rare cases, the weight of a nascent slasher's self-loathing is enough to stir a cancerous transmogrification, sculpting skin and bone to match their broken self-image.

A Mutant cannot blend in; most dwell in remote nests or in a city's underbelly. The Mutant's appearance is not the *source* of their inhumanity; the scourge wants and *needs* to kill. Some Mutants cling to twisted ideals justifying this urge; their slithering thoughts convince them the next step in humanity's evolution is to transform the body through pain and torture. For others, the driving force behind their transformation is a desire to become a knife honed and pointed at their next victim.

Mutants are the easiest Undertakings to track in the current epidemic, because they stand out as soon as they are spotted. While they are rarer than other scourges, their nests have been found with increasing frequency across Europe and Asia.

Tell: A Mutant often leaves clear signs of their horrific nature behind after they strike. These might include shed hair or fingernails, claw marks on the walls, ichor that has dripped from their sores, or bloodied instruments of torture.

Examples: The Crocodile Killer squeezes through pipes, then savages his chosen victims in their private pools with his filed teeth; he indulges in the luxuries of their palatial homes for a day or two, then escapes back into the sewers. The Taotie craves the taste of human viscera and shovels the guts of his prey into an impossibly wide maw. Contagion Chrissie kills doctors and nurses, blaming medical professionals for the infections that have warped her body into a cauldron of festering diseases.

Talent: Warped Form — A Mutant possesses natural weaponry that has a weapon modifier and armor-piercing quality of 2, with no Initiative modifier, as well as 2 points of Armor. This Talent is supported by the Mutant’s available Dread Powers like Dread Attack, Crushing Blow, and Regenerate.

Frailty: Sensitivity — As well as the Social penalty suffered by Undesirables, a Mutant is sensitive to a stimulus chosen by the Storyteller. This might include bright light, the scent of roses, the feel of velvet, the sound of classical music, cats, extreme heat, etc. When exposed to the stimulus, the Mutant must spend a Willpower point or attempt to flee the scene immediately; if unable to flee, they either attempt to hide, or lash out to destroy or remove the stimulus. Regardless of spent Willpower, they suffer a –2 penalty on all dice pools provided the stimulus remains present.

The Virtuoso (Ripper)

They call that game “cat and mouse,” right? Well, I’m the board.

The Virtuoso *knows* they’re better than everyone else. Their keen intellect separates them from the dullards sleepwalking through their pointless little lives. Virtuosos see the “truth” where others stare at the ground in front of them, and this justifies their actions. Where others might stick to a moral code, the Virtuoso revels in the ability to judge idiot peers, treat naïve customers as playthings, or exercise their hateful spite on unwitting stooges before murdering them in a glorious-to-them fashion. When it comes to the kill, it’s the Virtuoso’s intellect that serves as their greatest weapon. Each murder is a clear demonstration of their superior mind.

Slashers of this Undertaking are in their element when devising elaborate plans, traps, and careful profiles of their targets. The Virtuoso lures victims into their well-defended nests when they’re not present. If the victims get hurt, of course, the Virtuoso has an alibi. The ripper will often make their efforts *personal* to get under their victims’ skin. Every time the victim succumbs to their baser instincts, or the detective can’t figure out the riddle, it’s proof the Virtuoso is still in control.

Most of these rippers emerge in densely populated cities, and they’re comparatively rare elsewhere. They’re often on the move, perhaps more so than other Undertakings, and gravitate toward areas where existing slashers have achieved a high profile — to compete with them by putting another deadly challenge on the board.

Tell: Most Virtuoso rippers have an area of expertise that features strongly in their killings. This misguided sense of pride is a chance to show off how skilled they are — but also acts as a potential lead. Of course, the Virtuoso is often smart enough to realize this, so the fact that every killing features a clever use of chemicals might just be a bluff to lure hunters down the wrong trail of chasing maintenance workers or chemists.

Examples: Cinderella’s Prince Charming never turned up, so she used her abusive stepmother and stepsiblings as guinea pigs to refine her understanding of the poisoner’s art; now everyone’s a lab rat in her eyes, and she does love to experiment. The Red Librarian drops his captives into absurd death-trap puzzles that test their intelligence with lethal consequences; he picks his prey from those he deems academic bores or frauds. “Judge” Kelly’s victims consider her attention a privilege; she serves as spiritual adviser in a demented cult, setting supplicants life-threatening tests that will — if they survive — reveal a flaw or weakness within them that she has observed.

Talent: Profiling — After observing a target, the Virtuoso may roll Intelligence + Empathy, contested by the victim’s Manipulation + Subterfuge if they are actively attempting to conceal their motives or disguise their nature. Should the Virtuoso succeed, they can predict the victim’s actions with alarming accuracy; they win ties in contested rolls against them, may raise Initiative one higher than the target’s Initiative result at the beginning of combat.

If able to spend an entire scene socially interacting with the target before making a roll, the ripper learns *one* unique trait: Virtue, Vice, Integrity or Willpower rating, Conditions suffered, Endowments, etc.

Frailty: Control Freak — Whenever a Virtuoso fails on an Intelligence-based roll, or on a roll using one of the Skills bolstered by their Undertaking, they lose two points of Willpower.

The Puppeteer (Scourge)

I need you to understand. Let me cut away your ignorance.

The Puppeteer’s perspective is irretrievably cleft away from any understand a hunter might possess. The scourge is in thrall to an inexplicable belief or insight that seems utterly rational to them and must be shared with others. The Puppeteer may be frantically attempting to communicate this message to an unwitting public or may believe their knowledge is a gift bestowed on victims they torment and kill. The Puppeteer is more than just an irredeemable killer with a shattered mind; they’re a vector for a corrosive perspective and eager to let it spread.

Puppeteers are often followed by cultists beguiled and manipulated to believe their mad gospel. Some Puppeteers never actually kill in person and work entirely through the hands of their faithful. Other scourges prefer to corner and torture each victim in delicious isolation, hoping to find a glimmer of truth in the eyes of their prey. The Puppeteer might believe a shadow god waits behind reality’s pallid skin and it must be sated with blood. Or, they might be convinced no more murders will be required if just the right amount of lives is brutally taken within a specified period.

Hunters worry that emerging Puppeteers are connecting to “hash out” an infernal doctrine on which they can all agree. Some hunters scour the internet grasping for fraying threads of their presence online. To this end, some cells have devoted all their efforts to hunting Puppeteers because they perceive them to be the most dangerous of all.

Tell: Everything the Puppeteer does is filled with meaning, albeit filtered through their delirium. This meaning is often expressed by details found in the slasher’s crime scenes; they might daub the killing room with prayers to impossible gods or bloody sigils. A Puppeteer plans their murders to match greater, often mundane, patterns investigators can follow. Since Puppeteers are often surrounded by a cult of true believers, their presence can also point to where and when they’ll strike next.

Examples: The slasher called “Y” is a self-proclaimed liberator of the downtrodden, abused, and mistreated—their “problems” can only be solved by killing. The Orchid Killer travels across the Middle East and into Southeast Asia, hunting with a deft touch; she carves flesh and bone into gruesome flowers to understand the secrets hidden in the natural patterns she sees. The Prophet of Black Frequencies sends his cult to carve out the brains of the “agents” serving alien angels on the dark side of the moon, but now he’s at war with the New Messiah of the Static Song; his former protégé became his rival.

Talent: Compelling — A Puppeteer can profile a victim much like a Virtuoso, but additionally benefits from the 8-again quality on any contested roll against a profiled target. They also impose a penalty equal to the scourge’s Intelligence on victims’ rolls to notice traps or react to ambushes set for them in their nest.

Additionally, the Puppeteer may use Dread Powers. These might include Agonize, Eye Spy, and Madness and Terror.

Frailty: Falter — Whenever a Puppeteer fails a Social roll, it becomes a dramatic failure.

Creating a Slasher

In the Slasher Chronicle, rippers and scourges are emerging at an alarming rate while other monsters fade into the shadows. This epidemic of broken murderers with their dizzying variety of methods and motivations follows one of three patterns notable for slasher creation.

Each slasher has one of the 10 Undertakings that cover the possible methodologies and purposes of slashers, divided among the five rippers and the five scourges. The Storyteller chooses whichever Undertaking best fits the antagonist’s backstory, modus operandi, and intended place in the chronicle.

The Tell

Every slasher has a Tell, a consistent and identifying marker that acts as the killer’s personal signature for every murder they commit. The Tell might be tied to a slasher’s preferred victim type, the way they stalk victims, the methods used to “decorate” the crime scene, the torture implements they use, or the way they interact with investigators. The Storyteller determines the slasher’s Tell after creating the character to flesh out the killer’s thematic representation in the story.

The Tell is a source of pride for slashers, but it’s also an extension of their personality. It acts as the last remaining shred of their mortality to say: “Here’s *why* I kill and am such a monster.” A slasher might engage in infernal rituals or even prayer during their slayings; one may be due to a feeling of guilt, the other a sense of power. In either case, the Tell is the linchpin of a slasher’s identity.

Slashers *must* perform the Tell each time they kill. If they don’t, they suffer the Deprived Condition if unable (or unwilling) to do so. The resolution to the Deprived Condition is to perform the Tell for *that* murder; implementing the Tell restores one Willpower point. This can happen in a few different ways. Maybe the slasher finds *another* victim and returns to that scene. Maybe the slasher records a video marking or marring a different crime scene and delivers it to police, to “sign” their murders. Or maybe they inflict self-harm to do what’s required.

The Tell is also crucial to hunters, because it gives them a way to find and deal with the slasher. Tracking a murderer, while using the Investigation Rules (p. XX), will uncover the Tell as an important Clue. Despite this piece of knowledge, the Tell may be too unsettling or gruesome for the hunters to bear, as no two Tells are precisely the same. Storytellers are encouraged to balance the needs of the investigation against the potential for psychological and emotional trauma by using Tilts and Conditions when appropriate.

Slasher Rules Summary

Rules adjustments provided relay a frenetic and desperate feel to this story, as the slasher is the primary antagonist and monster the cells will encounter. This may be summarized as:

- A newly created ripper emerges to prey on a village, town, or city and, if not dealt with, they quickly become a scourge after the bodies pile up. Rippers are created similarly to other antagonists (p. XX) and intentionally seek ways to inflict pain, push characters to breaking points, and force them to suffer Tilts and Conditions. Following the death of their fifth victim or the end of a chapter, whichever comes first, the ripper becomes a scourge. Rippers can, however, be saved *prior* to their first kill.
- A scourge crawls and creeps to prey on victims whenever and wherever they can. Scourges, for the purpose of the Slasher Chronicle, are imbued with the supernatural, have limited Potency, and can wield certain Dread Powers. Suggestions have been included in their Undertakings. Keep in mind slashers cannot fundamentally and significantly alter reality, nor can they actively manipulate their environment by changing the weather, affecting electronic objects, etc. While narrative effects may occur reflexively in their presence, the Dread Powers chosen *must* be a good narrative fit for the slasher's Undertaking. If they don't, the scourge is no longer a slasher and should be treated as a new monster.
- Once a slasher is aware the hunters are on their trail, they may retaliate by conning, stalking, kidnapping, or even murdering people they know. These characters could be a hunter's Touchstones or connected to applicable Merits such as Allies and Contacts. When these characters die or are terrified and no longer want to communicate with the hunter, the hunter feels this loss. The Touchstone needs to be replaced, and the Merit dots are redistributed. For more, refer to the rules for losing Touchstones (p. XX) and the Sanctity of Merits (p. XX).
- A hunter may become a slasher. First, they become a ripper; when they do, they retain membership in their cell, compact, or conspiracy *until* they are discovered. As a new ripper, they may be saved from the darkest parts of themselves. The fallen hunter must work to regain Integrity before killing a victim; when it's clear the hunter has been permanently changed into a ripper or scourge, they can no longer be redeemed. At that point, they become a Storyteller character. The Code has been shattered, and the hunter has fallen back into the shadows to become a monster.

If using a slasher in a regular chronicle, the following modifications apply:

- Rippers appear and transform at a more reasonable rate. They are treated as deadly antagonists that may eventually become a scourge. The chance for their redemption is at the Storyteller's discretion.
- Rippers close to becoming a scourge may acquire Potency and start to use Dread Powers at the Storyteller's discretion.

- A scourge's appearance is notable, and sightings occur in a wider region rather than within the confines of a city. When they do, their presence does not typically go unnoticed.
- A scourge may have a Potency rating like other monsters, at the Storyteller's discretion, but it is not required. Supernatural effects surrounding scourges may also be subdued depending on its Undertaking.
- The phenomenon of hunters becoming slashers is infrequent and ultimately rare. When a hunter turns into a ripper, this becomes the focus of an entire chronicle. The same rules apply, but the scope is tightly focused on dealing with that hunter as the antagonist. Ultimately, it is up to the Storyteller if their group wants to explore this theme.

Creating a slasher may be treated as building a type of monster (p. XX). In addition to Dread Powers (p. XX) and slasher-specific Merits, their Undertaking shapes which type of slasher they will be.

Ripper Systems

Rippers appear more frequently in the Slasher Chronicle than they would in a typical **Hunter** game. The rate of sightings depends on the Storyteller's focus and the cell's capabilities. One group may decide to tightly focus on hunters becoming slashers (p. XX), while another wants to prevent rippers from becoming scourges. The number of rippers in an area will vary accordingly.

To create a ripper, keep the following in mind:

- **Attribute:** Each ripper gains a favored Attribute appropriate to their Undertaking. This Attribute rating is raised to five at no cost.
- **Skills:** Next, the Storyteller picks two Skills that best represent the slasher's motivations or methods; the slasher receives a free Skill Specialty in each.
- **Virtue and Vice:** Rippers must be assigned a Virtue and Vice.
- **Slasher Merits:** Rippers have access to slasher-specific Merits when created; the Storyteller must decide if the ripper has already made their first kill or not.
- **Size:** Rippers may have a Size of 4, 5, or 6 at character creation.
- **Integrity:** All slashers have an Integrity score of 0 as a representation of their murderous intent. The lack of Integrity doesn't mean the slasher has suffered trauma or abuse, however, nor does it automatically speak to a history of ghastly acts; some slashers "break" for trivial or banal reasons.
- **Addiction:** Every slasher possesses the Addicted Condition to reflect their addition to killing. The specifics of the Condition vary from slasher to slasher; some are possessed of a bloodlust that means they crave the release of regular murder, whereas others can bide their time and are satisfied with only the occasional spot of brutal carnage.

If the Condition is suppressed (or removed) but the slasher's Integrity is not raised above 0, it will eventually resurface in a later session at the Storyteller's discretion.

- **Mortality:** Unlike scourges, rippers do not possess Potency. For all intents and purposes, rippers are still human. They may be monstrous, but they are not supernatural with few exceptions.

- **Rehabilitation:** Rippers may be rehabilitated before their first victim dies. To save a ripper from themselves, two things must happen: The Addicted Condition must be resolved, and their Integrity rating must be raised to 1.
- **Transformation:** When a ripper becomes a slasher, their Merit dots may be reallocated to purchase up to three relevant Dread Powers. The total number of Merit dots informs the new scourge's maximum Potency rating. For example, if a ripper has a total of nine allocated Merit dots, then their maximum assigned Potency as a scourge would be five. The Storyteller is encouraged to make further adjustments to the scourge's Potency rating to balance them against the cell's capabilities.

Scourge Systems

Like rippers, scourges are preying on communities at an alarming rate. The number of sightings depends on the Storyteller's focus and the cell's capabilities. A chronicle focused on dealing with scourges increases the threat level and the grisly details.

To create a scourge, keep the following in mind:

- **Attribute:** Each scourge gains a favored Attribute appropriate to their Undertaking. This Attribute rating is raised to five at no cost.
- **Skills:** Next, the Storyteller picks two Skills that best represent the slasher's motivations or methods; the slasher receives a free Skill Specialty in each.
- **Virtue and Vice:** Scourges also require a Virtue and Vice.
- **Slasher Merits:** Scourges have access to slasher-specific Merits when created in addition to Dread Powers.
- **Size:** Scourges may have a Size of 4, 5, or 6 at character creation.
- **Integrity:** All scourges have an Integrity score of 0.
- **Addiction:** Every scourge possesses the Addicted (Murder) Condition. If the Condition is suppressed (or removed), but the slasher's Integrity is not raised above 0, it will resurface in the following session.
- **Taint:** Scourges have a Potency rating and may purchase Dread Powers applicable to their Undertaking. However, Scourges have a maximum Potency rating of 6 and cannot have more than three Dread Powers.
- **Rehabilitation:** Scourges may not be rehabilitated, even if their Integrity raises to 1.

Hunter's Fall from Grace

The grim truth of the Vigil is that it exacts a terrible toll from the hunters who uphold it. The world is revealed to be a terrible place of nightmare powers and devious conspiracies, where predators wait in the shadows for the slightest opportunity to kill, maim, or torment. A hunter risks — and likely loses — life and limb on a regular basis, for little or no reward beyond the immediate satisfaction of doing what is right. The wages of the Vigil are often pain, madness, and eventually death.

It's little wonder that an alarming number of slashers emerges from the embattled ranks of hunters. Hunters are exposed to a mix of thoughts, feelings, and experiences that can incubate the slasher's broken mind and soul. A hunter can become a slasher via several means.

Hunter-to-Slasher Systems

For the Storyteller: Winning Scenarios

The Slasher Chronicle offers a set of tools to tell a story and isn't presented to introduce horror for horror's sake. As such, you'll need to decide if, when, and how the players can earn a win. While the supernatural may be overwhelming, reminding the cell that the odds are always too great doesn't encourage them to fight.

One way to balance the pace, tone, and emotional weight of the story is to give hunters opportunities to win. All hunters, regardless of tier, can save victims, solve crimes, help other hunters, or figure out how to stem the rising, red tide. These moments of hope give the narrative heft and keep the players' interest to see the chronicle all the way through. So how does a hunter become a slasher?

The hunter may simply be ground down by the relentless weight of the Vigil. Each time the hunter kills, she loses a little piece of herself; each time, it becomes easier to justify the loss of an innocent. Convictions give way to practicality and idealism gives way to bitterness and spite. The hunter might decide it's acceptable to torture a cultist because, after all, they *really* need that information to catch up with the monster they seek. Soon enough, that hunter pushes the line because it gets the job done.

- **Integrity:** When a hunter's Integrity score falls to 0, they are in danger of becoming a ripper.
- **Losing Touch:** Touchstones, Allies, Mentors, and other supporting characters are not automatically lost. When they come into the hunter's orbit, they become part of the hunter's rehabilitation or fall. Rules for losing them continue to apply as normal.
- **Rehabilitation:** A hunter who hasn't transformed may be saved before their first victim dies. Their Integrity rating must be raised to 1.
- **First Transformation:** When a hunter becomes a ripper, their Merit dots may be allocated to purchase relevant Slasher Merits that fit the fiction.
- **Addiction:** The hunter acquires the Addicted (Murder) Condition after making their first kill. If the Condition is suppressed (or removed) but the slasher's Integrity is not raised above 0, it will eventually resurface in a later session at the Storyteller's discretion.
- **Victims Claimed:** When a fallen hunter can no longer regain Integrity and it's clear they've permanently become a ripper, they are no longer playable as a character. The Storyteller may make an exception to increase drama and tension by extending the number of victims to three instead.

Additionally, hunters with low Integrity begin to have an impact on their cell, compact, or conspiracy, but they aren't lost yet — not until they emerge as a ripper before or after they make their first kill.

Across the Tiers

Mechanically, a hunter may be a ripper — but the characters may be unaware that's the case. The following adjustments occur when the hunter has shattered the Code and thwarted the Vigil.

- **Tier One:** The cell may not know their cellmate is a ripper, but it's clear something's off. Teamwork and Tactics no longer work as intended, as the ripper cannot participate in them. This effect is a clue to help the cell uncover and deal with what's wrong.
- **Tier Two:** As above. When the hunter is discovered, they immediately lose membership in their chosen compact and any other benefits, including Hunter Status, they may have enjoyed. This may also strain relationships the hunter forged during their time in the compact. The Storyteller is encouraged to leverage Social Maneuvers to help facilitate this part of the story.
- **Tier Three:** As above. In addition to losing the ability to use teamwork and Tactics, the hunter cannot use their Endowments at an Integrity rating of 0. This may occur before they leave (or are forced out of) their conspiracy.

Once a hunter leaves their cell, regardless of tier, it is assumed their participation in the story builds to a climactic moment. However, narrating a session of underdogs when one character is acting as the antagonist can be incredibly difficult — *especially* since **Hunter** is a game about teamwork.

Ultimately, how to handle the finite details of hunters becoming slashers is up to the Storyteller.

Slasher Merits

The following new Merits are only available to slashers. They may either be used for the purposes of the Slasher chronicle or in a regular chronicle.

Atavism (•)

Prerequisite: Dexterity ••• or Wits •••

Effect: The slasher is a throwback, closer to beast than human in either body or mind. They run on instinct, completely lacking any hesitation or restraint when it comes to violence and reacting swiftly in accordance with fight-or-flight reflexes rather than taking the time to stop and think. They use the higher of Dexterity and Wits when calculating Defense, rather than the lowest, and cannot be subject to the Beaten Down Tilt.

Drawback: In the heat of the moment, the slasher finds it tricky to think and plan rather than just go with what their instincts are saying. They always suffer the untrained penalty for using a Mental Skill while undertaking vigorous physical activity — whether combat, pursuing, or fleeing — regardless of whether they actually have any dots in the Skill.

Cover-Up (••)

Prerequisite: Intelligence •••; one of Crafts •••, Investigation •••, or Medicine •••

Effect: The slasher is an expert at covering their murderous tracks; they disguise their killings to mask the method or motivation of each deed. If the slasher spends at least an hour in either preparation for the killing or clean up afterwards, roll Intelligence + Crafts, Investigation, or Medicine (depending on the method used) to implant false clues into the scene. Success means any Clues derived from the scene via investigation are tainted.

Damnably Certain (•••)

Prerequisite: Composure ••• or Resolve •••

Effect: The slasher possesses utter conviction that what they're doing is right. Every time they kill, it scours away even the slightest traces of doubt or guilt that worry them. Once per scene, when the slasher kills another character, they regain a single point of Willpower.

Hands of a Killer (•)

Prerequisite: Dexterity •••, Weaponry ••

Effects: Everything is a potential weapon for this slasher, and every environment a plethora of opportunities to kill in intriguing new ways. They ignore the penalty for using an improvised weapon, can reflexively grab an improvised weapon from her environment if unarmed, and add their Weaponry dots to their Initiative score when doing so.

Telltale Murder (••)

Prerequisite: Intelligence •••, Investigation ••

Effect: The slasher can use their Tell as just another weapon in their arsenal — a way to avert would-be pursuers or taunt an investigator. The character spends at least five minutes arranging the scene of the crime to match her message — moving bodies into a symbolic display, carving messages into flesh, or other macabre stagecraft. Afterwards, any character who attempts to use the slasher's Tell to investigate must spend a point of Willpower before doing so.

Weaponry Obsession (••)

Prerequisite: Weaponry •, a specialty in the chosen weapon

Effects: For whatever reason, the slasher is obsessed with a specific weapon and it has become their murderous signature. When using that favored weapon — the *specific* knife with which the teenagers stabbed them, the *specific* rifle they used while deployed in the war — they gain the 8-again quality on all dice pools involving its use.

Drawback: The slasher cannot voluntarily dispose of the weapon; it's almost a part of them, and they can't bear to let it go. If separated from it by circumstances outside of their control, they gain the Deprived Condition until they get it back.

Slashers Around the World

In the Slasher Chronicle, an epidemic of remorseless killers erupts across the globe. It is a chronicle setting Storytellers may customize for their purposes.

In **Hunter: The Vigil**, slashers are not a new phenomenon — but the fact that hunters are bombarded with slasher sightings and police reports on a weekly basis certainly *is*. Whatever's happening, the increase in slasher activity is driving other supernatural denizens into hiding. Slashers are so terrifying they've become what other monsters fear.

This chronicle setting is tightly focused on an increase in slasher sightings and activities all around the world. To facilitate this view, the rest of the supernatural community has fallen silent, and waits anxiously to see who'll emerge from the oncoming storm: hunters or slashers. Storytellers seeking to add more variety to a chronicle may drop in brief encounters with other antagonists who are either on the run or who've ended up in a slasher's crosshairs and need help.

Who are the slashers? They're not all freshly minted murderers or copycat killers. Many slashers have been forged in the brutal crucible of modern life; their empathy for the rest of humanity has been choked out of them by the growing urban and industrial sprawls where most people are reduced to mere cogs in the vast, unfeeling machine.

For the Player: New Slasher Compact and Conspiracy

A new compact and conspiracy have been added for use in the Slasher Chronicle. Nine Stars is a brand new concept inspired by true crime movies set in Hong Kong. VASCU, which appeared in first edition, is a conspiracy filled with chemically-modified hunters who exhibit psychic powers. Both Nine Stars and VASCU may be used outside of the Slasher chronicle in regular gameplay. The Storyteller will have to make an adjustment to their view of the enemy and their motivation to hunt in a setting where slashers are not the primary antagonist.

Crime enthusiasts have picked up that something's feels unnatural in their city and long-forgotten urban legends are getting revived. Unfortunately, there's more truth to the rumors than hunters are comfortable admitting. Masked figures drag themselves out of the dirt to take up the knife and the hunt once more. Wily old predators, once soaked in the blood of 100 screaming victims, know it's time to set aside that whole idea of retirement. Murderous cults and wild-eyed sects that were long since disbanded start to drift back together, looking to foster a fresh generation of executioners.

The addiction to cruelty, to the sense of power over life and death, never really releases its grip. Whatever tide of darkness now rises, it's like an alarm bell in the psyche that wakes the monster within. The wolf in sheep's clothing can only lie to itself so long that it's just another face in the herd.

Of course, no one's clear how many slashers there are, because the authorities are tight-lipped. Cells have their hands full trying to extract information out of allies, because local governments are desperate to prevent a widescale panic. Most people sense the world's that much more dangerous around the edges. Those who uphold the Vigil, though? Oh, hunters know. They know, because the darkness nestling in the human soul is coming for *them*, eager to snuff out their candle, and threaten the peace they're so desperate to maintain.

Tier One: Neighborhood Killers

Tier-one chronicles tend to be the most reminiscent of the horror movies that inspire them, because the scope of the story is focused and can be resolved within hours, weeks, months. That does not mean a tier-one cell cannot make connections between similar events or understand that the issue is happening elsewhere, however. The challenge of running the Slasher Chronicle for tier-one hunters is simply the knowledge they possess and the resources they have at their disposal.

All games thrive on personal connection. In a tier-one chronicle, the cell doesn't have the framework of a compact or conspiracy to back them up, so they'll be forced to forge new connections with law enforcement, lone hunters, or cells new to the Vigil. Somebody needs to stand up and do *something*, and new Storyteller characters can be introduced as allies to show just how bad the problem is. This helps keep the cell in the spotlight as the experts: they've taken down a monster or two, after all, and they can teach or even mentor other characters. This may also point to a deeper tragedy should one of the cellmates fall.

The Slasher Chronicle may be the cell's first brush with the supernatural, or it may not be. A good narrative tool to use is a series of hauntings caused by recently deceased victims; though technically these ghosts would be considered monsters, for narrative purposes they may simply inflict the Obsessed Condition on the players, and the nature of that Obsession is "Solve My Murder." Once that Condition is resolved, the spirit departs, satisfied justice has been done.

Tier Two: Forging Connections

Tier-two chronicles have a larger scope that narratively weaves in and out of hunter compacts in a tangled mess of fallen hunters, pointed fingers, and conflicting motives. Tier-two chronicles allow Storytellers to broaden a cell's knowledge of who *else* is out there trying like hell to uphold the Vigil and failing miserably.

Members of The Long Night act as moral compasses — until one of their own becomes an Avenger. The Loyalists of Thule suddenly fall silent and test each of their members to ensure they haven't fallen. Network Zero hunters question exactly how and when were they able to take *that* particular video. Null Mysteriis is hard at work, attempting to find a reasonable and scientific explanation for what's happened; its leaders might even give members ultimatums to ensure they solve the problem quickly. The Union, S.W.O.R.N., and Nine Stars take a more pragmatic view. People are dying, and that means hunters must step up and help when they can, wherever they can.

The scope of a tier-two story can reveal more of the mystery behind the epidemic, but at the same time it doesn't necessarily *have* to. Some Storytellers may decide that hunters becoming slashers is enough, and concentrate on that as both the hook and foundation for the chronicle. Should supernatural elements be dropped into the chronicle, either through ghosts and spirits, scourges, mysterious places, or other monsters, the Storyteller should prepare a compact's reaction that will affect the cell.

Tier Three: Impossible Design

Tier-three hunters have more abilities, resources, and knowledge than other hunters, but they also have something else, too: a greater chance to lose Hunter Status in their chosen conspiracy should they take matters into their own hands.

VASCU will assume command as the authority in most cases — whether other hunters want it to or not; Task Force Valkyrie will back them up by lending firepower to their investigations while keeping an eye on them. The Ascending Ones will be hard at work trying to find a "cure" for the slasher condition, while The Cheiron Group will be in disarray as many of its members refuse to play ball with those in charge. Upper management has given an unusual order to "monitor, but not capture" at all costs, even when the hunt becomes personal, when a slasher is one of their own. What most of their members are unaware of, is that The Cheiron Group considers the slasher epidemic is a perfect opportunity to sit back and watch a full-scale gruesome experiment.

The Lucifuge has turned its attention to *other* pressing matters, fearing the epidemic is designed to spread until it claims the Lady of Milan. Members understand how violent and deadly slashers can be but must weigh their dedication to finding Lucifer's children and protecting the Lady's interests against the other demands of the Vigil. The Malleus Maleficarum is more fixated on the other troubling news it's learned and sends its hunters to investigate scourges and mysterious places that inflict supernatural harm.

Lastly, the Council of Bones is busier than it has ever been, instructing members to conduct séances and communicate with victims whenever possible. Unfortunately, the uptick in victims has caused a surge of ghosts, and the Council isn't always getting the right information on which to act. What's more, some members feel uncomfortable interacting with VASCU agents and fear they've assumed control to learn the Council's methodology and secrets.

Storytellers have a wealth of possibilities for a tier-three chronicle that can focus on the epidemic, figuring out why scourges are imbued with the supernatural, or simply getting their house in order. Because there's so much story for tier-three hunters to explore, the Storyteller is encouraged to think of its scope and, if necessary, plan an additional chronicle to explore desired themes.

Teleinformatic Endowments

Teleinformatic Endowments are available to VASCU agents (p. XX) and may be selected during character creation. The Wintergreen Process is a free Endowment all agents receive, but it is their choice whether or not they want to go through it. It is, however, required if a VASCU agent wants to use Teleinformatic Endowments.

Wintergreen Process

Named after Dr. Barbara Wintergreen, this process uses a series of chemical and unconventional therapy techniques to unlock an agent's mind. Dr. Wintergreen's process is a refinement of methods used in the 50s and 60s for altering human mental patterns. Agents undergo an extensive process where they are injected with a series of psychoactive drugs from hallucinogens, growth hormones, dimethyltryptamine (DMT) with a heavily modified Harmala alkaloid, to other chemicals to spur a physiological change in their brain. This is followed with a number of therapy techniques used outside their intended purpose, such as EMDR, hypnosis, and ASMR sensitization. The unlikely result of these techniques is that the agent is able to "unlock" a part of her mind she could not access before, giving her access to Teleinformatic Endowments. Not every VASCU agent receives the drug therapy, but to use Teleinformatics, one must undergo the process.

When agents use their power, it is an act of will. Her mind goes into overload and it can sometimes cause damage, such as a nosebleed or headache, as her body tries to keep up with her mental capacity.

When purchasing a new Teleinformatic Endowment, the agent must go through another chemical process for the Endowment to take hold in the hunter's mind. VASCU administers the treatment to any agent in good standing, though the process generally takes a day in the labs to complete. At this time, it is not clear if the Wintergreen Process can be reversed, but agents suspect several attempts have been made. Agents who leave VASCU undergo monitoring and, as long as they don't use their abilities in an overt way, are often left to their own devices. Hunters who might pose a threat to others are not treated with such leniency and are instead returned to VASCU headquarters indefinitely.

Codex

A side effect of an increased mental capacity and processing power is the ability to remember literally anything an agent has ever read, and to recall, collate, and process that information at

speeds of which most people could only dream. This doesn't just make recalling information easy, but it makes the hunter a hyper-effective researcher and investigator.

Cost: 1 point of lethal damage and 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Halve the time it takes for the agent to perform a single investigation or research action as she cross-references available information with information she has already read. Additionally, she achieves exceptional success on three successes instead of five successes when performing these actions.

Hall of Mirrors

The Hall of Mirrors is a mental meditation technique VASCU agents use to meditate on the future. These agents take what they know about a situation and meditate on it while viewing possible futures. While VASCU claims the Hall of Mirrors is not a physical place, but some a hallucination shared among all agents, many agents believe they go somewhere else when they do this meditation. They claim they don't just look inside themselves for answers but go to an actual place. There, they view the future through "looking portals" stationed throughout the hall.

The Hall of Mirrors shows probable futures — the most likely outcomes if nothing changes. Because the future is malleable by action, the Hall of Mirrors is unable to show anything more than a week into the future. Unfortunately, the experience is trying on operatives and visiting the hall causes them pain.

Cost: 1 point of lethal damage

Dice Pool: Wits + Occult

Action: Extended. Each roll represents 5 minutes spent meditating and searching in the Hall of Mirrors for a specific subject, such as a person or event. The meditation requires five successes to complete.

Success: The hunter advances toward finding information in the Hall of Mirrors. If the required number of successes is met, the character is successful.

Exceptional Success: The agent is so positively overwhelmed by visiting the Hall of Mirrors, they gain the Inspired Condition until the end of the session, may ask an additional question regarding the information they seek, and reduce the time between rolls by two minutes.

Failure: The agent fails to acquire information. She can abandon the attempt or continue in meditation but must gain the Spooked Condition.

Dramatic Failure: The agent gets too deep into her own mind and cannot reach the Hall of Mirrors. The attempt fails and she gains the Guilty Condition.

Upon completing the mediation, the player may ask the Storyteller a single question pertaining to her subject's future. This cannot be more than a week out, or the meditation fails. The question must pertain to the subject and be specific: "Will Marcel get the job he's interviewing for?" or "What does Janette plan to do tomorrow?" The Storyteller determines what is going to happen in the future and gives the player information, though it doesn't have to be perfectly detailed:

“Marcel doesn’t get the job, but he interviews elsewhere.” or “Janette follows her daily routine without any changes.” The hunter gains the Informed Condition about her subject.

Polygraph

Every investigator knows that sometimes suspects lie. VASCU agents can tune into the churning emotions of a target’s thoughts and can draw the truth out from their treacherous emotions.

Cost: 1 point of lethal damage

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Duration: One scene

The agent attunes herself to her subject, watching the rise and fall of emotions during the interrogation. For the rest of the scene, the player’s rolls achieve exceptional success at three successes rather than five successes when dealing with the subject.

Postcognition

Some people have the ability to feel the psychic impressions left on an area, recalling emotional resonance and gathering clues about what happened. A well-trained VASCU agent can relive a crime scene as though she were the victim, taking what little she already knows and turning it into hard facts by extreme deductive reasoning. She can even will herself into seeing the crime as it happened through the victim’s eyes.

The agent must be at the location the crime took place to use this power, she cannot simply look at pictures to recreate the crime. The psychic residue of a location touches the echoes of what has gone before. Unfortunately, this causes some agents to suffer due to the excruciating toll reliving traumatic events takes on their mind.

Cost: 1 point of lethal damage (and 1 Willpower, see below)

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation – Time (see below)

Action: Instant

This power’s roll is modified by how old the crime scene in question is: over a day old (–1), over a week old (–3), over a year old (–5)

Roll Results

Success: The agent concentrates on the crime on which she wants information as she activates this power. She gains a Clue per success on her activation roll, pertaining to this crime. If she spends a Willpower during activation, she may instead relive the last five minutes of the crime as though she were the victim. This nets the same number of Clues, but additionally gives her the Informed Condition about the crime for further investigation.

Exceptional Success: Additional successes are their own reward.

Failure: The agent is overwhelmed by the psychic impressions left in the area and she cannot make sense of the scene.

Dramatic Failure: The scene grips the agent. Though she cannot make heads nor tails of what is happening, its violence marks her. She suffers a breaking point.

Speed of Thought

Every VASCU agent needs an edge, but Speed of Thought gives them several. When active, the agent kicks their nervous system into overdrive, becoming hyperaware of the world around them. Details come through with crystal clarity and time itself almost seems to slow — though they're bound by physical limitations as they struggle to cope with the flood of information crashing into their mind.

Cost: 1 point of lethal damage

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Duration: One scene

The agent may immediately move to the top of the Initiative order. Additionally, he may use the higher of his Wits or Dexterity to determine his Defense, rather than the lower.

Talon

The agent focuses their thoughts and feelings into a honed spike of anger, fear, and confusion. Then, the agent rams that psychic talon into the mind of a target, punching through their psyche in a disorientating surge of emotions.

Cost: 1 point of bashing damage

Dice Pool: Resolve + Intimidation vs. Composure

Action: Contested

Roll Results

Success: Through sheer force of will, the agent focuses on a single target to attack them with a toxic mix of emotions. The attack acts as a mental assault with a weapon rating of 2 bashing damage. A successful hit inflicts the Insane Tilt on the victim.

Exceptional Success: The agent inflicts the Insensate Tilt instead of Insane.

Failure: The hunter is unable to affect her target's emotional state.

Dramatic Failure: The agent's emotional spike rebounds and slams into her instead. She gains the Shaken Condition.

Tag

The agent can extend her senses into nearby cameras and through an unseen network to spy. The cameras do not need to be networked together for the hunter to utilize them; anything from a smartphone's camera to a CCTV camera works. She can even jump between cameras as long as they can see each other. The agent can co-opt the senses of simple animals, such as rodents or small birds, but nothing larger than that. This is a one-way viewing window — she can't command or direct animals to, say, follow her target.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Duration: One scene

The agent can send her sense into any nearby camera or small animal to begin spying. The agent can then follow the network to find her target instantly. Each viewing target (such as jumping from one camera to another or one animal to another) must be within line of sight of one another. The agent doesn't need to know where the next camera is, she just flows into it. She can watch her target for up to one scene. Her cell gains a +2 bonus to track the target or on investigation rolls regarding the target's location for the duration of this power. Additionally, the hunter gains the Informed Condition regarding her target once the scene is over.

Backlash: The hunter must concentrate to use this power. She suffers a -2 penalty to take any other action and cannot react to being surprised.

Slasher Sightings

Slashers are appearing all over the world and hunters are on high alert. Many struggle to balance the demands of the Vigil while keeping their loved ones safe, fearing someone they know will be a slasher's next target.

No matter how or where the slashers are presented, it is strongly recommended that cells have a few successful hunts and lingering mysteries under their belt to make the story more compelling. This will also allow more opportunities for players to master and create new Tactics, acquire more equipment, and beef up their characters before tackling the horrific epidemic.

Rumored sightings and reports may be modified at the Storyteller's discretion to fit their chronicle's needs. Each city yields more clues for the hunters to piece together, and reveals more about the supernatural and their connection to slashers.

Philadelphia, United States

Philadelphia's homicide rate has always been high, and the official figures don't account for the tally of kills the city's many hunter cells rack up each year. Now, though, both have shot up. Every single one of Philadelphia's seven regions that hunters recognize as being a distinct territory has seen the emergence of its own terrifying slasher, all within the span of roughly six months.

All seven slashers are rumored to be connected. One may be a former minister, a hunter turned slasher who's widened her net to encompass any "sinner" who catches her attention. Another is a Brute who masquerades as a maintenance worker and likes to leave his victims on the city's train tracks. The Blood Mummer is a Mask with a craving for the red stuff; Crimson Blade is a grotesquely warped Mutant, their flesh broken and twisted by a spirit of murder. The rest are just as strange and varied. They all share the same Tell, though, and leave a message in the crime scene; a Sator Square, accompanied by the statement *You will reap what you sow*.

As far as anyone knows, the slashers are not acting in conscious concert; they may be largely unaware of each other — though at least one copycat has sprung up in their wake. What little communication leaks out to the press indicates they all experience the same dream of an endless field of black soil under a red sun.

Some veteran hunters, remembering stories passed between those who uphold the Vigil — of a slasher called "the Sower" — are frightened of what this may portend. Has the bloodshed of the Vigil here in Philadelphia primed the city as some sort of hunting ground for the Sower? Does

the Sower come to aid the hunt, to take a bloody toll, or both? Is there anything they can do to stop what the signs seem to be pointing toward — the return of the legendary slasher?

For now, the fractured hunters of Philadelphia struggle to contend with the killers painting their territories red, refusing to look across their borders for help from one another and instead tackling each symptom separately. As the killings intensify, hunters wonder if or when the harvester of this grim crop will arrive.

They have yet to figure out that it's already here.

The Sower (Legend)

Quote: *“You’ve let this whole mess get out of hand. I’m here to clean everything up, you included.”*

Background: There's always been a Sower, so the stories go. When the Sower walks the Earth, hunters die — and so do monsters. One life for one life; the Sower slays a beast, and a hunter pays the tithe. Over the centuries, hundreds of men and women have taken the Sower's mantle, letting the Legend live on in their bodies and minds for a little while. Now, it's back — but vastly more powerful than ever before.

All the bloodshed in Philadelphia has served as a libation in its honor, and it rides the tide of slashers unleashed across the globe. The Sower's not behind that wider epidemic, and it doesn't control the slashers currently tearing paths of carnage through Philadelphia — they're just symptoms of its arrival. It's only here as a presence, for now, a lingering chill at the nape of the neck, a stirring of anger deep in the gut. It's watching the hunters as they work, waiting for one of them to step over the mark, and then it'll call to them, and they'll come to the field of dark earth, and accept its bargain.

Then, the Sower will kill them all: all the monsters of Philadelphia, the sick broods of parasites left to fester and grow fat by the discord in the Vigil, and all the hunters, a grand tithe paid for this great cleansing. Once it's done, the City of Brotherly Love will be clean of darkness, all traces of the Vigil washed away in a tide of blood.

Appearance: Whoever becomes the Sower displays the traits associated with its legend: hands and feet caked in dirt, a burlap sack over the head with eye slits cut into its fabric, and a physical frame that seems to strain and bulge at its fleshly limits, barely containing the power within. The Sower can take on a mundane appearance if they desire but stepping on bare earth immediately sheds the illusion and shows the slasher for who they truly are.

Storytelling Hints: Once the Sower appears, they will begin to systematically purge the city of hunters and monsters, hitting each in turn to grow matching tallies of kills. The very slashers who precede the Sower's coming are on the target list, too. The Sower isn't obeying their usual protocol of two monsters for every hunter killed and will attempt to take down multiple targets in one go. They can restrain themselves from killing for a week at most while gathering information on potential prey and maneuvering for their next attack, after which they are compelled to strike again.

Virtue: Conviction

Vice: Wrath

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts 3, Investigation 4, Occult 5, Medicine 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Foot Chase) 5, Brawl 4, Firearms 3, Stealth (Shadowing) 4, Weaponry 5

Social Skills: Intimidation (Physical Threats) 4, Persuasion 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Fast Reflexes 3, Fleet of Foot 3, Hands of a Killer, Iron Stamina 3

Health: 10

Willpower: 9

Integrity: 0

Size: 5

Speed: 17

Defense: 8

Initiative: 10

Armor: None

Special: Suffers from the Addicted (Murder) Condition. For the purposes of the Slasher Chronicle, the Sower has a Potency rating of 5 and may use the following Dread Powers: Regenerate, Madness and Terror, and Dread Attack.

Tier One

Small cells of hunters focusing on the local picture mirror the wider problem in Philadelphia — everyone's looking after their own backyard, and few take kindly to anyone nosing into their turf. A cell is likely having to deal with both the slasher marauding its section of the city and a population of monstrous horrors who are increasingly active, as if something were stirring the hornets' nest. Pursuing leads is tricky, though; the moment the cell leaves its usual stomping grounds, its hunters face delicate negotiations with belligerent hunters who have little interest in helping them out.

Old and the New: Many of the fresh crop of slashers are somehow linked to the city's old problems. Spirits, monstrous denizens, and old traitors serve as the source material that instigates the creation of the new killers. If someone brings the district's slasher down, a new one will pop back up from among such lingering scars. If the cell can catalog such relics of Vigils past, it might be able to predict where or how the next slasher will come to be.

Building Bridges: It should rapidly become clear to the cells on the ground that the fractured situation of Philadelphia's Vigil is untenable. The boots on the ground need to start working together, if they want to make any headway. Building those bridges requires the cell to make itself vulnerable, take a risk, and reach out — and given the fear of slashers emerging from among the ranks of the hunters, everyone is *exceptionally* paranoid of outsiders right now.

Tier Two

Compact members will struggle with the slasher outbreak in the city for a variety of reasons. Locals are fiercely territorial, rival cells and compacts have little patience or inclination to give ground, all while the slashers keep anointing the city's streets with libations of blood. Something dark and horrific is coming, but the compacts might have the power and influence needed to put a stop to it.

Active compacts in Philadelphia include:

The Hunt Club: Things are about to take a sharp turn from bad to *worse*. The situation in Philadelphia has garnered the attention of a sinister compact with a blood-soaked history: the Hunt Club, a gentleman's club of serial killers and even outright slashers, with a hankering to hunt for the most dangerous game and pat one another on the back for the cruelest or most stylish murders. Sometimes the club's efforts coexist with real hunters, going after exciting and supernatural prey, but more often it picks its victims from average citizens. The outbreak of slashers in the city has caught the club's eye, and members wonder if it's time to extend an invitation to increase their ranks. More broadly, though, club members speculate about hosting a grand hunt of slashers in the city, ignoring its old, entrenched divisions in favor of a wide-ranging spree of killing the killers. The fact that *new* slashers may emerge from this bloodbath isn't a downside — it just makes the city into an incredible hunting ground of challenging targets that will restock itself after each hunt.

The Union: Slowly but steadily, the Union is getting ready to make a move. Naturally predisposed to a decentralized structure built from informal ties, the Union's inherent flaws resonate with those of the wider Vigil in Philadelphia — but when ties are forged between comrades in the compact, they're strong as steel. Many in the compact remain deeply suspicious of VASCU, and component cells are having a tough time overcoming their naturally territorial tendencies, but the Union's efforts are gaining pace. They've cottoned on to the fact that taking one slasher down just seems to bring another out of the woodwork, and now realize they need to seek a permanent solution to the problem.

Tier Three

The connections between the slashers has caught the attention of several conspiracies who are converging on the city in record numbers. Understanding the slasher phenomenon could yield incredible insights into the connections between slashers on the wider, global scale, a prize that can hardly be passed up. Once the nature of the Sower's great harvest becomes clear, it could stir the conspiracies into more drastic, even unwise, actions.

Active conspiracies in Philadelphia include:

Task Force: VALKYRIE: Until recently, the TFV presence in the city was pared down to a lean, efficient team called the Liberty Unit, whose commander can count his agents with one hand. Now, the diminished unit struggles to cope as the situation in Philadelphia threatens to flare wildly out of control. Agents attempt to keep a lid on news of the slasher sprees, strong-arming whatever local government assets they have influence over into cover-ups and damage control. Local hunters assume the shadowy TFV agents are just trying to stop anyone finding out the truth, but they're hoping to keep the problem contained until back-up arrives. Thankfully, reinforcements *are* on their way; the Unit's commander has finally managed to hammer the critical nature of the crisis through to the high-ups. Once their ranks are bolstered, the conspiracy is likely to take a heavy-handed approach to the problem.

VASCU: VASCU hoped for a fresh start but its members worry Philadelphia may be their undoing. Their relationship with the FBI remains frosty but the detente between the two agencies should have ensured a smooth transition to the new order of things. Obviously, that hasn't happened. The global reach of their operations means most agents spend their time deployed in far-flung regions, and the HQ staff grows nervous that a lack of manpower in Philadelphia could leave them open to attack — whether from slashers or paranoid hunters. Agents primed with the Wintergreen Process are attempting to investigate the slasher sprees in the city, but they're often rebuffed by unfriendly locals who feel the psychics are intruding on their turf. Of all the organizations caught up in the crisis, though, it's the VASCU agents who have the best sense of the bigger picture here; through psychic analysis of potential future outcomes, they've come to believe the Sower is already present in the city.

London, England

In London, the uptick of slashers has started a rash of copycat murders, inspired by timeless slasher villains and the resurging interest in horror movies. Each attack is splashed on the covers of weekly rag magazines throughout the city, chronicling the gruesome course of killers as they act throughout the city. The surge has caused a significant upswing in tourists and fans hoping to see a real-live slasher. Sensationalism is the word of the day, and “helpful” vigilantes, reporters, and curious tourists do little more than clog up any serious attempt to identify and locate the serial killers.

Another result of the phenomenon is that Scotland Yard has received multiple confession letters, detailing recent crimes as well as crimes planned for the future. These letters appear to come from several sources, and it is difficult to determine which to take seriously until a crime is committed. The letters were sorted, and some of the less-graphic sections were published in local papers, in order to ask the public to assist in finding the perpetrators of these violent crimes.

The local tabloids are taking it all in stride. Some assert these murders are occurring because of a government conspiracy to give the economy a boost, others because the Queen's family is actively hiding a scandal that could rock the throne;, or because the killings are nothing more than a publicity stunt for a new novel. There are hundreds of reasons given for these occurrences, each more fanciful than the last. What is certain is that people are dying, and there seems to be no clear path to the end.

Smiling Jake (Puppeteer)

Quote: *“It's all about the story.”*

Background: Jake Edwards is the editor of the Daily Windmill, a cliché-spouting political newspaper that makes its money from sensationalist headlines, illegal wire-tapping, and reckless paparazzi. Although Smiling Jake has a degree in business from Oxford, Jake turned his minimal writing talent (and proclivity to be bombastic) into a career, and his weekly newspaper is now one of the most widely read in the city. He hires private detectives, solicits tips from corrupt police, and buys interviews or pictures from anyone who comes to him with a good story. He's currently making a grip on the copycat killer fad for an insidious purpose: to throw detectives off his trail. No one suspects the oh-so-charming Jake Edwards is a scourge who selectively targets anyone who manages to put the pieces together. Surrounded by groupies and socialites, Smiling Jake is well integrated into London society and knows exactly which strings to pull to get his way.

Appearance: Smiling Jake is tall and lean; he has a sharply angled face and clear blue eyes. His hair is dark, and his clothing is carefully chosen to maintain his crafted image as a middle-class scion — while still carrying designer labels and high price tags. Smiling Jake is recognized by his winning, world-class smile.

Storytelling Hints: Smiling Jake has no conscience, no need for ego, and an almost incalculable greed. Before he became a slasher, he was driven to use one person after another, burning them out in pursuit of a story or greater revenue.

Virtue: Determined

Vice: Egotistical

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 3, Politics 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Drive 2, Larceny 2, Stealth 1

Social Skills: Empathy (Vices) 2, Expression (Writing) 1, Persuasion (Readers) 3, Socialize (Politicians) 3, Investigation 3, Weaponry 2, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Contacts 4 (Informants, Journalists, Police, Politicians), Resources 4, Fame 1, Staff (Investigation, Streetwise) 2, Cover Up 2, Hands of a Killer 1

Health: 7

Willpower: 5

Integrity: 0

Size: 5

Speed: 9

Defense: 3

Initiative: 4

Armor: None

Special: Suffers from the Addicted (Murder) Condition. In the Slasher Chronicle, Jake has a Potency rating of 4 and uses the Know Soul and Eye Spy Dread Powers.

Tier One

At the local level, hunters with minimal resources and only a handful of connections are going to interact with the slasher problem as a very personal issue. In London, these hunters have become reactive and intuitive, responding when they hear a crime has happened, and trying to put together enough information to predict — and hopefully stop — the next one. They watch hotspots of activity, staking out alleys and well-trafficked areas of the city, and listen to police broadcasts in order to get ahead of the slasher. Due to the high-profile nature of the cases, many of the city's local hunters have bumped into significant police and political resistance to their efforts, and the curfew continues to restrict these hunters from operating at their full capability.

On the Beat: The killer has their finger on the pulse of the city, and their methods can be studied. A London hunter or hunter cell might stumble upon the aftereffects of their activities: ritual circles, possessed innocents, or a cursed implement. Worse, the murderer may be creating spirits of vengeance to possess a new host — one of the hunters. That knowledge could cause the cell to come under fire both from the slasher (who wants to get it out of the way) and the police (who will arrest its members for possible involvement). How can hunters trust anyone when ghosts are being weaponized against them?

Rescue Mission: An overeager tourist is taken captive in the London Underground, and is being held in a condemned tunnel by one of the copycats sending letters to the police. Clues in the letters lead the players toward the copycat's hiding place and their hostage — but an ambush is certain. When the hunters follow the trail and rescue the tourist, they discover the kidnapper was a front for the *real* slasher, who manipulated the post and engineered the trap to throw hunters off their scent. The real killer's out there, using a network of groupies as a front to keep the police guessing. However, the groupies are starting to get out of control and may turn into slashers themselves. Can the information they know be turned against their master?

Tier Two

Compacts in the city of London are well-established, and their years of investigation might help stem the bloody tide.

Active compacts in London include:

Ashwood Abbey: These hedonists and thrill seekers are all but native to London and the U.K. While they have been instrumental to many London-based investigations for decades, their loyalty to the Vigil is in question. The latest uptick in slashers has caught their attention, but there's some reticence to dig deeper as members are concerned that this moment could be the compact's fall from grace. They've all heard of the fabled Hunt Club and worry that the steps they take to solve the hunt will finally, irrevocably, shatter the Code and spawn the very thing they've been tasked to hunt.

Null Mysteriis: Local Null Mysteriis members have been fixating on the problem, using the latest scientific advancements to perform handwriting analyses, test recovered forensic evidence, and build a "foolproof" method of determining who has the potential of *becoming* a slasher with 99.9 percent accuracy. Further, hunters have focused their attention on connected crimes: hauntings, false accusations, breaking and entering, petty theft, and car accidents. These scientists are also hard at work extrapolating new data from old evidence, utilizing ultramodern techniques and technology they hope will shape the course of slasher investigations going forward.

Tier Three

A campaign centered on global conspiracies and overarching hunter agencies might see the copycat murders in a larger perspective, related to the global uptick of slashers worldwide. England occupies a select place in pop culture, and conspiracies worry the popularization of slashers will eventually spread to reviving historical killers in body or spirit.

Active conspiracies in London include:

Council of Bones: Members of the Council of Bones are angry with the way London's media and government are dealing with the outbreak. Some members think the unusual ghost sightings

prove the supernatural is real, and welcome new hunters who want to join their ranks. Other council members believe the coverage of the slasher epidemic is a total disaster, because it's forced hunters to spend more time sifting fact from fiction and dealing with charlatans who have no business conducting a séance without training. This level of infighting in the London chapter threatens to bring the conspiracy's hunts to a standstill. Should the two factions resolve their differences, they might be able to utilize their swelling numbers in a more productive way to solve the matter at hand. Unfortunately, the conspiracy may be unaware that introducing more members without careful procedures can lead to monsters infiltrating their ranks.

The Lucifuge: Members of the Lucifuge have been drawn to London to investigate a series of copycat killings rumored to be demonic sacrifices. As one member put it, "London's a mess." Some of the "murders" are elaborately staged mannequins with fake blood and prosthetic scars — and real demonic sigils. Others are gut-wrenching scenes that *seem* demonic but are regulated to the dark and twisted corners of one slasher's mind. To date, members of the Lucifuge haven't found any signs of demonic activity or cults in the area, but that doesn't mean they don't exist. The conspiracy is worried, however, that what's happening in London is a ruse to distract their members while they strike elsewhere — maybe at the Lady of Milan, herself.

New Delhi, India

New Delhi's developers have a unique vision to integrate information and communication technology into the municipality. This includes local information systems, schools, transportation systems, law enforcement, and other community services to protect them with advanced technology and updated security measures. Facial-recognition systems are utilized through every security camera watching the city, and new chip cards maintain individual information on a secure level. Sensors integrated with real-time monitoring systems provide up-to-the-minute data that's collected from citizens and their smart devices; this information is then processed and analyzed by law enforcement and other agencies maintaining city security.

With all these modern techniques, slashers in the city of New Delhi tend to possess high intelligence and big-picture ideologies that veer toward their vision of a hopeful future — with only the *right* kinds of people, of course. Some scourges find targets on social media and dating apps by evaluating their activities, profiles, and reach. Meanwhile, other slashers are rejoicing in the ability to scrub their identities by hacking into the tech on which law enforcement is so keen on relying. Any hunter who wants to catch this new breed of slasher must be able to think three — or five — steps ahead of them, or they will simply vanish away into the populace, never to be found.

For the Storyteller: It's a Slasher's Bloody World

The cities, Storyteller characters, and hints provided can be woven into a single chronicle or act as the set piece for a unique story. When building a chronicle, start with the truth. You, as the Storyteller, *know* who is murdering innocent people, why they're doing it, and where they can be found — even if that "who" is a cabal of scourges or a nascent community of rippers. You also know why the slasher epidemic is occurring, too. Maybe a rogue hunter cell is the cause of it all.

Using the truth as a starting point, create a rumor at the other end of both spectrums. Instead of five scourges, there's none. Instead of rogue hunters, a devious monster is to blame. Following this, you can flesh out the story's clues and enigmas to offer

plausible leads on which the hunters can follow up regardless of tier. Lastly, attach one or more leads to relevant characters who radiate around the slasher in a wide arc. Be sure to give them movement and placement in the setting, to ground the epidemic in a place the hunters can explore. For more Storytelling advice, visit p. XX.

One of the more popular slashers in New Delhi has recorded their kills, releasing the victim's complete personal data along with a video file of their horrible demise. The slasher calls themselves the "Herald" and claims the victims were all high-profile members of the upper class; the division in caste is less important than the individual's wealth and corporate success. This has brought a great deal of interest to these cases, and technology experts worldwide have been brought in by the New Delhi law enforcement, to investigate the crime and hopefully catch the individual(s) involved.

Hunters, however, have recently learned from artist Amrita Vyarawalla that the Herald isn't just *one* slasher, there's a group of them who are working together. Amrita, who hasn't decided whether she'll take up the Vigil yet, accidentally uncovered the connection after reviewing the audio and visual recordings from her most recent installation, "The Body", a gallery-sized exhibit that mimicked the functions of the human body. In place of eyes, Amrita used monitors. In place of a brain, she connected a giant server — and even went so far as to use LED lights, dry ice, and battery acid to replicate certain functions. The popular exhibit spawned several thousand visitors over the course of six weeks, and Amrita is convinced she's found evidence the Herald is kidnapping and torturing in greater numbers than ever before. Rumor has it the slasher even managed to hack into the city's power grid, to selectively shut off power in the dead of night.

Amrita Vyarawalla

Quote: *"Through technology, we upgrade not only our world, but the very nature of the human soul."*

Background: Amrita Vyarawalla is an installation artist in New Delhi, specializing in exhibits that utilize technology and modern instrumentation — computer parts and working mechanical assets, among other materials — to create three-dimensional works designed to transform the perception of space and time. Her art has been featured in many popular areas of New Delhi, usually in lower-wealth neighborhoods as limited-run installations.

Appearance: Amrita is extremely tall but has a great deal of grace and elegance. She is often a featured speaker for artistic workshops and seminars, as well as for corporations interested in utilizing the most updated technologies within their organizations.

Storytelling Hints: Amrita is an artist, and enjoys both the creation and installation of modern art. She has several disciples and students, and a great deal of pull in the society pages (as well as a number of social invitations). Many of her works contain cameras and other recording devices, even accessing and recording in wavelengths humans can neither see nor hear. She uses her art to maintain a watch throughout the city, alerting her whenever anything supernatural or violent happens near the art piece. Amrita is not aware she sits at the fulcrum of events in New Delhi, but often knows more than she's willing to admit.

Virtue: Vigilant

Vice: Obsessive

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Crafts 3, Investigation 3, Occult 2, Politics 1, Science 3

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Stealth 3, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Contacts 2 (Artists, High Society), Fame 1, Fast Reflexes 3, Resources 3, Trained Observer 3

Health: 7

Willpower: 6

Integrity: 7

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Defense: 5

Initiative: 10

Armor: None

The Dollmaker (Charmer)

Quote: “Don’t cry, honey. This is really for your own good.”

Background: Bette Sleet doesn’t remember a time when she didn’t play with her dolls. From a young age, she loved her dollhouse and spent hours rearranging the toy furniture and her dolls to her satisfaction. Sometimes, Bette would recreate scenes she’d watch on television, and carefully craft new pieces of doll furniture to match her vision of an idealized world. Her parents let her play by herself and she would spend all her time rearranging dolls and staying out of trouble — at least until someone tried to mess with her carefully arranged creations.

As she grew older, Bette abandoned her dolls. Her plastic figurines weren’t as much fun to manipulate, because they were always within her control. Instead, she found a new plaything: real people. At first, they were more of a challenge for someone like her; it was fun to watch them squirm. Of course, she could never make someone do what she wanted them to. That’s why she had to pick the right person: someone vulnerable, maybe even lost.

Bette is interested in only one thing: control. She treats people like inanimate objects. When they do what she wants, they make her very, very happy. When they don’t, she flies into a rage and shows them who’s in charge. “Just a little cut,” she tells herself. A tiny punishment — or so she believes — until there’s so much blood pooling all over the floor. Of course, she’ll clean it all up and put her toys away. It’s what a good girl should do, and Bette is always *good*.

Bette is now a self-appointed guru who attaches herself to people seeking the help of an expert. Under her direction, hopeless souls can learn to dress and talk and act the way they should. That

is to say, the way Bette *thinks* they should — which is often a problem for her clients. The socialite decides his new makeover isn't the look he wants. The technophile realizes Bette isn't getting his grand vision. The couple knows their therapist isn't helping them work out their problems, but they're afraid to leave and find someone else. When her clients are unhappy, that's when Bette throws a tantrum, causes an accident, and then cleans up yet another mess right before she finds someone else to play with.

Eventually, the police will get another call: another body was found in the same condition as the others. The corpse was carefully dressed, hair fashionably styled, even their makeup was perfect. Next to each corpse lay a doll, dressed and styled to match. By the time the police think they have a lead, the Dollmaker has already moved on.

Appearance: Bette is an attractive woman in her 30s who uses makeup, wigs, and clothing to change her appearance. She can look up to 10 years younger or older, and dresses according to the needs of her personas. Bette is never spotted with a wrinkled shirt or a missing button; she is impeccably neat and is on top of the latest styles.

Storytelling Hints: Bette's behavior toward an intended victim comes across as earnest because she's convinced herself that she can help them. At first, she'll show no signs or hints of a temper and will cringe at the sight of blood. Right from the beginning, though, she won't hesitate to incapacitate, disable, or kill anyone she believes threatens her relationship with her target. When an established relationship begins to sour, she'll concoct an elaborate plan to "put away" her latest toy and will carry it out with no remorse.

Virtue: Idealistic

Vice: Jealousy

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts 4 (Fashion), Politics 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Gymnastics) 4, Stealth 2, Weaponry (Knives) 3

Social Skills: Empathy 4, Intimidate 3, Persuasion 5, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Barfly, Contacts 5 (Celebrities), Trained Observer 4, Damned Certainty 3, Hands of a Killer

Health: 7

Willpower: 4

Integrity: 0

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Defense: 7

Initiative: 5

Armor: None

Special: Suffers from the Addicted (Murder) Condition.

Tier One

On the local level, New Delhi is a microcosm of the modern world. The slasher in the city uses updated technology, illegal tracking and investigation programs, and has their thumb on the pulse of the city — however fast it moves. To keep up (and hopefully get ahead), the hunters must be capable of predicting the city’s movements and adjusting to a constant flow of information. Slashers have a keen eye even for forensic technology, and no bodies have been recovered by law enforcement. Most of the evidence obtained comes in the carefully recorded and processed video and audio files released by the Herald.

Lost in Recording: For every rumor about the Herald, another one pops up to relay that the slasher is only one killer — but a powerful one, an elite citizen with brains and connections. Certainly, the slasher’s access to technology is remarkable: They find ways around every precaution that law enforcement puts into place. As such, New Delhi police are constantly searching for more cutting-edge and creative solutions to track down the murderer. Hunters who focus on social connections will become embroiled in New Delhi’s high society of venture capitalists, social-media darlings, and technophiles. Can technology solve these murders before other victims are claimed?

Ghost in the Machine: Some hunters believe the killer was made of flesh and blood at one time — but no longer. Through the wonders of modern technology, the Herald is more machine than mortal and now “inhabits” a fleet of identical drones — some human-shaped, and others more utilitarian — to remotely murder their victims as a warning to humanity. Unfortunately, catching one of these drones does little to harm the killer’s true purpose, and gives investigators even less to go on. Hunters worry the drones are not inert, even when turned off, and wonder if the slasher is setting up deadly targets at police, fire, and hospital stations.

Tier Two

Compacts in New Delhi operate with a great deal of latitude. The population of the city is massive, and it’s easy to operate in secrecy — so long as hunters don’t get caught on the city’s security grid.

Active compacts in New Delhi include:

Network Zero: In a city like New Delhi, you might expect Network Zero to have a significant edge. Certainly, members are attracted by the city’s patronage of technology, and their attitude toward integrating the best tech into their law enforcement and communications technology. Several Network Zero servers are hosted in New Delhi, and many of their agents spend their time protecting those valuable assets. However, the Herald’s activities have put a significant hold on Network Zero’s operations. The slasher’s technology seems to veer more paranormal than cutting-edge science, and even their best agents have difficulty keeping up with the curve. Several cells are dealing with the issue by forging stronger ties with local police and coroner’s offices, instead, to uphold the Vigil by watching out for *them* and warning them of suspicious activities.

Together Now: Together Now is a Hindu-based compact that focuses on the comfort of the survivors and their families by encouraging them to light a candle and stand united against the darkness. Together Now feels the best way to deal with the slasher epidemic is to keep their communities alert but not paranoid. Often, they provide the muscle for weddings and other

celebrations, hold midnight vigils to light up the night, and maintain city watches to keep New Delhi safe. When they do encounter a possible suspect, there are plenty of Together Now members that can go toe to toe with a slasher, but some hunters think the only way to deal with the slasher is to use more teamwork than bravado. As such, Together Now has managed to do in real time what tech does automatically: build an unstoppable whisper network.

Tier Three

Every time a conspiracy devises or acquires new technology to capture the Herald, its members realize the slasher has *already been utilizing* the same advancements to cover up their murders. This killer is connected to the hunting community, has a significant amount of money to dedicate, and has a keen eye for up-and-coming scientific disciplines and techniques.

Active conspiracies in New Delhi include:

Aegis Kai Doru: The Aegis Kai Doru has suddenly taken an interest in New Delhi, believing the cause of all the city's ills is due to a rumor so bizarre even conspiracy members question its accuracy. Some members think a lost relic holds the key to the slasher's gift with technology. The item in question? The Iron Pillar of New Delhi — or at least that's what the conspiracy theorists believe. Buried far beneath the city, lost to time, some members propose that a series of Iron Pillars built to act as a supernatural conduit has been manipulated by a slasher. Somehow, this monster found the means to not only get underground, but also manipulate the fabled relics for supernatural purposes — to turn New Delhi into their personal playground.

The Cheiron Group: One of the largest global conspiracies, the Cheiron Group has a long history of sticking its nose in the fringes of science. In New Delhi, it maintains corporate interests in the medical field, from chemists and burgeoning pharmaceutical companies, to hospitals and large-scale research initiatives for new treatments and modern medical advancements. Unknown to most, the Herald's killings have come uncomfortably close to the Cheiron Group's interests — several of the dead are Cheiron researchers or employees, and those murders utilized the Cheiron Group's most secret, potentially explosive research methods.

Hong Kong, China

Like other major metropolises, Hong Kong has always been a draw for supernatural predators to attack its everyday citizens. The stresses of modern life, when combined with the feeling of disconnection, also create opportunities for the criminally-minded to prey on the lonely. Now, the rising epidemic of slashers has had an interesting effect on the city's dark underbelly: Gangs are working with police to anonymously inform them of suspicious activity, violent crime is down 40 percent as vigilante patrols (a mix of rogue hunters, gangs, and off-duty cops) watch the streets, and victimless crimes have skyrocketed. The police believe there are at *least* six slashers operating in the city and have been recruiting members of gangs, such as the Triad, and local police. Whenever one murderer is caught, another pops up to take their place. Worse, these are just the slashers of whom the authorities are directly aware.

Some of the slashers gaining notoriety in Hong Kong seem like they've stepped out of a movie and onto the streets. The gluttonous Dumpling Wife is a Mutant so warped in form and hunger she can't possibly be mistaken for anyone else. The Needle Man is aggressive toward other slashers and actively chases them out of the nests he claims. Copycats are a problem, though, and in some cases it's not clear if urban legends are professing the situation is worse than it seems.

Unfortunately, the sensationalized Dinner Party Killer murders has frightened tourists and the city's economy is showing signs of wear and tear. Despite the slasher's capture, the gruesome depiction of the crime scenes has had a profound effect on the city's psyche; victims were strangers plucked off the streets, their bodies carefully arranged in different apartments at tables, and the meats were their organs cooked into grisly, "gourmet" meals. In one terrifying video, the victims were dressed as police officers and were still alive.

Despite this, neither Hong Kong police nor its citizens are giving up and won't abandon the city to a grisly fate. Instead of stepping down, the police force's numbers swell as capable citizens step up to help analyze and process evidence. Some officers are so desperate to find answers, they are hunting slashers by using themselves as bait. Their aggressiveness has driven some monsters out into the open, but not the slashers they were hoping to find. Now the police are just starting to realize slashers aren't the only terrifying creatures to fear.

Out of their desire to save Hong Kong from the supernatural, a new compact has formed — Nine Stars — while other police officers, like Kenneth Hua, contribute to the problem by becoming slashers themselves.

Kenneth Hua

Quote: *"The only good hunter is a dead one."*

Background: Kenneth, a former marathon runner, was a rising star in the Hong Kong Police Force until his temper got the best of him. When the Dinner Party Killer first began cutting their bloody path through the city, Kenneth was the one who made the decision to release early information about the investigation to the media, hoping to protect future victims and to encourage anyone who knew more to come forward. Unfortunately, the affair blew up into a media circus, driving journalists to perform their own investigations that resulted in the slasher's capture. Heads had to roll, but luckily Kenneth wasn't in the line of fire — not until he beat up a hunter with their own camera. Despite having been relieved of active duty, Kenneth's still hounded by the media and faces accusations that he's withholding key details about multiple cases — even from his former colleagues.

Appearance: Kenneth is wiry, and his long years of marathon training have kept his body in peak physical condition. Though some find him affable, he has a temper that gets the better of him. Kenneth rated top of the class in firearms training and is always prepared to fight. Usually soft-spoken, Kenneth's voice begins to rise whenever he talks about the Dinner Party Killer, Hong Kong's rising problem with serial murderers, and the hunters' interference in police investigations.

Storytelling Hints: Kenneth's a dedicated officer who believes he was wronged by the journalists, a.k.a. Network Zero hunters, who brought the Dinner Party Killer to justice. While Kenneth cares for his city, he firmly believes law enforcement, rather than vigilante hunters, should be in control of the slasher epidemic. He's aware of the existence of the Nine Stars compact (see p. XX) and has already turned down a membership offer. With each headline, Kenneth's anger grows, and it's only a matter of time before he replaces the Dinner Party Killer as Hong Kong's number-one slasher to murder hunters, and let the real police do their job.

Virtue: Loyal

Vice: Stubborn

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 1

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Crafts 1, Investigation (Hunters) 4, Occult 1, Politics 2

Physical Skills: Athletics (Running) 3, Brawl (Subduing) 3, Firearms (Sidearms) 4, Stealth (City Streets) 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy 2, Intimidate 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise (Criminal Gangs) 4, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Contacts 2 (Criminals, Police), Fleet of Foot 2, Iron Stamina 2, Resources 2, Small Unit Tactics 2, Trained Observer 3, Damned Certainty 2

Health: 9

Willpower: 5

Integrity: 0

Size: 5

Speed: 14

Defense: 7

Initiative: 6

Armor: None

Special: Kenneth's rash of violent acts have gotten him fired recently. He is a ripper — even though he hasn't made his first kill...yet. Hunters have the option of working with Kenneth to save him or may wind up pushing him over the edge. When Kenneth encounters a hunter, he must successfully roll Wits + Composure to retain his sense of calm.

Tier One

The city's a target-rich environment for a hunter cell; leering hives of nightmares made flesh lurk in the city's forgotten spaces, plucking their prey from the teeming masses, and a fresh crop of dangerous monsters is on its way to Hong Kong.

Hunters must navigate a complex and tense situation to figure out where they fit in the city. Hong Kong's tightly knit communities may reject well-meaning local and foreign hunters, and a sense of loneliness and isolation among some civilians translates to an overall feeling of distrust. Despite the police's best efforts, plenty of citizens are still falling through the cracks, and are victims in one sense or another.

Spreading Cancer Cells: Hong Kong-based cells that hunted before the slasher epidemic are seeing a rash of new hunters form poorly organized teams. They worry these new hunters don't care about The Code or solving the problem, and are simply using the murders as an excuse to stalk people and rough up witnesses. Some hunters believe these cancer cells are causing bigger problems in the city and wonder just how many there are. They may not know there's only one cancer cell — because the amateur cell's M.O. is to make it seem like there's more hunters than there are slashers.

Desperate Cover-up: The Dinner Party Killer case is a sore spot for local cells. Shoddy investigations, rushed analyses, missing evidence, lost eyewitness accounts, and a questionable arrest is forcing hunters to wonder if the Dinner Party Killer was one of Hong Kong's finest. Was the department struck by freakish misfortune, or is someone like Kenneth Hua actively covering for the real slasher? Worse: some hunters are convinced the Dinner Party Killer is still on the loose, and it's just a matter of time before they strike again.

Tier Two

Compacts in Hong Kong must navigate the city's bureaucracy and cultural kaleidoscope to track the movements and activities of slashers within the city.

Network Zero: Despite a clear and desperate need for other compacts to work with Nine Stars in Hong Kong, hunters are reticent to form ties because they fear that once the slasher epidemic is resolved, the compact will fall apart, leaving their operations exposed to the authorities. Network Zero is one of the few compacts that has a chance to monitor Nine Stars while providing assistance when needed. Though local members have informed American cells to "keep out" due to heightened fears Hong Kong's slashers will trash the city and move on to other major metropoli, the compact's leaders don't want them to leave just yet. Increasingly, however, the slasher outbreak is dragging Network Zero's attention toward more sensationalized cases, which distracts some members from lending a hand to Nine Stars. Should they be able to regain their focus, Network Zero may be able to find key intel needed to end the epidemic once and for all.

Nine Stars: Nine Stars (see p. XX) is a Hong Kong-based compact; its formation is a reaction to the police force's recent cases involving slashers and the supernatural. As police officers, Nine Stars is a hidden organization that operates within the framework and limitations of their precincts while exploiting their connections when they can to help keep citizens safe. That said, Nine Stars has recently told its members that they're going all in, In the founders' minds, either their members prioritize the hunt over everything else — jobs, families, friends, etc. — or they can leave the city and uphold the Vigil elsewhere. Some officers believe the push for a round-the-clock hunt is not going to work, but for now tensions are running high and the compact is desperately trying to get the slasher epidemic under control.

Tier Three

In a world where violent crime is sharply on the rise everywhere, Hong Kong's bustling streets easily swallow up the symptoms of its bloody illness caused by slashers. Only when the conspiracies dig a little deeper will they see the particularly strong and malevolent thread of commonality that binds the slashers of the city together. The killers of Hong Kong are hungry, driven, and gluttonous; many are cannibalistic, or mutilate their mouths or their victims'. Slashers who burn out are often driven to stomach-churning self-mutilation. The same gory message is daubed on walls by murderers who have never met one another and share nothing but that whispering voice in the back of their mind: *Eat your own name. Swallow it down. Kill who you are and find freedom in murder.*

Regardless of what's happening on a global scale, something monstrous and ravenous simmers in the bones of Hong Kong, taking the minds of the vulnerable and the cruel firmly in its grasp and twisting them to a darker purpose. Conspiracies with the power to capture and question true creatures of the night will find some horrors are just as afraid as the hunters are, because the slashers of Hong Kong are targeting them, too. Like rats fleeing a sinking ship, the transient

population of monsters is thinning out; more flee the city than come into it. Given enough time, will the slasher epidemic simply purge the iconic city of its monstrous parasites?

Aegis Kai Doru: Several agents of Aegis Kai Doru live and work within Hong Kong, operating as leaders of prominent business and financial interests within the city, and utilizing Hong Kong's thriving black markets to deal in the acquisition of unusual, historical, or supernatural items. Though Aegis Kai Doru has not found any mythic relics to add to its considerable collection, it has uncovered several cursed objects. In fact, local members are convinced a cursed object may have been wielded by the Dinner Party Killer; an eternally sharp knife once owned by a Qing emperor that has a white jadeite scabbard and a bronze handle.

The knife, which vanished from the Hong Kong Museum of History, was linked to decadent feasts held for nobles, politicians, and wealthy merchants while the less fortunate starved to death. Similarly, Aegis Kai Doru agents who were hoping to purchase a bronze funerary jar etched with a taotie motif have noticed most objects depicting the Chinese demon have all but disappeared. Unfortunately, the answers to these riddles may lead members to the truth: A slasher has infiltrated their ranks hoping to use their considerable resources to acquire the Sword of Goujian, which some scholars compare to Excalibur.

Ascending Ones: While other hunters focus on saving victims, the Ascending Ones have figured out that some slashers can be saved — before their first kill. Their presence in Hong Kong has not gone unnoticed by other hunters, because while cells often track down slashers to confront them or rescue kidnapped victims, the Ascending Ones have been capturing murderers to rehabilitate them in an unnamed facility. Local members are tasked with capturing, detaining, and transporting rippers to random locations throughout Hong Kong, no questions asked. Others have been ordered to wipe out any scourge they see and have clearly been told that any inhuman-seeming murderer must die.

Those who catch wind of the conspiracy's comings and goings see a pattern but have leapt to the wrong conclusion. Cancer cells believe the conspiracy is coming for *them*, even though that's not the case. Police are beginning to draw lines tracing the conspiracy's activities to certain murders and have assumed the group is a criminal organization snatching slashers to release them in other cities all over Southeast Asia. Though this is not the case, it has caused some Ascending Ones to second guess their orders to avoid being harassed by the cops. Unfortunately, no one is certain if the conspiracy's efforts have made a difference or if the Ascending Ones have managed to save a few blackened souls from themselves.

Nine Stars

Quote: *"We will not let slashers destroy the people of Hong Kong."*

Like a rising tide, slashers crawl from the margins in ever-greater numbers, indulging their monstrous appetites upon Hong Kong's unwitting populace. Blood pools in the gutters of Hong Kong. The city's lights are ever bright, bathing its streets in a neon glow through the deepest hours of night, throwing the shadows into even starker contrast. The growing epidemic throws officers of the Hong Kong Police Force face to face with relentless killers, weird phenomena, and stomach-churning crime scenes caused by the supernatural. In this roiling crucible of horror and carnage, Nine Stars is forged.

Nine Stars is a recently formed compact founded out of necessity following the plague of slashers terrorizing Hong Kong. The compact is almost entirely embedded within the city's

police force, drawn from among officers who have witnessed a slasher's anomalous capabilities or experienced the terrifying wake of a rampage — but held their nerve and asked the questions no one else dared to. It's convenient for the administration to treat slashers as nothing more than serial killers, brushed under the carpet of the yearly violent-crime figures, but Nine Stars members know how dire the situation truly is. They know the supernatural is real.

The compact principally values investigative skill in its members, backed up by a selfless dedication to duty. Members know that, at any point, they could be fired for taking the law into their own hands and disobeying orders. Ultimately, Nine Stars often prioritizes saving victims over killing slashers, and many members join the compact because they want to save the city from the supernatural. Other hunters believe that the sooner an individual slasher can be studied, predicted, and brought to a halt, the lower the cost in innocent lives will be. The compact craves a greater understanding of the slasher epidemic; discovering the cause might let them strike at the root of the problem, rather than always chasing after the gore-spattered symptoms.

Strung out across the departments of the Hong Kong Police Force as an informal network, members share information and evidence, use their leverage to promote other compact agents, and shift cases featuring supernatural or anomalous elements onto the laps of their own people. Agents are well-equipped, highly motivated, and backed by colleagues willing to cover up their trails and make problematic paperwork go away. They are often skeptical of outsiders, however, and don't always treat visiting hunters as allies until they've proven they can be trusted. Members worry they have more to lose because their careers are a tangled mess of pursuing justice while upholding the Vigil.

The closest Nine Stars has to a leader is Chief Superintendent Annie Kin-Lau, one of its founding members. She's a tough-as-nails hunter who's willing to go toe to toe with any slasher, but also has the political instincts the compact needs to survive. Under Kin-Lau's oversight, Nine Stars has gone from a last-ditch effort to wielding considerable power behind the scenes. Now, though, Nine Stars risks becoming a victim of its own success; it's drawn the attention of the Complaints and Internal Investigations Branch. After all, from the outside Nine Stars looks like any other conspiratorial network of supposedly crooked cops. Rules, when broken, tend to draw interest and hunters need to balance the weight of the Code against the demands of being a police officer.

The Enemy

Nine Stars members hold the line fearing no one else will. They know something's wrong, deep in the city's bones. It's a hunger, a ravening appetite that seethes in Hong Kong's shadows and twists citizens into monsters. Nine Stars may not know the source of this malign presence, but they do recognize the fruits of its human corruption — the slashers plaguing the city. The compact focuses its efforts to end the corruption that threatens the safety of all and is slowly piecing together ways to capture, detain, and find new slashers before they strike.

Despite this focus, Nine Stars' members do not intentionally shy away from dealing with other supernatural predators. At its core, the compact is served by retired veterans who were traumatized by overseeing cases in areas that now spawn urban legends, such as Sau Mau Ping in the Kwun Tong district in Kowloon, the Lake Ad Excellentiam (or Lotus Pond) at Chung Chi College at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Bride's Pool Road. The compact has learned the hard way that spirits of vengeance may be more dangerous than a cold-blooded

slasher but has its hands full. Until the slasher epidemic subsides, its primary focus will be figuring out how to keep Hong Kong safe.

Hunters

You literally stumbled onto The Glutton as he was hunched over a victim, plucking out viscera and feeding it into his wide mouth as if each goblet was a delicacy. You welcomed the Hong Kong Police Force's counseling afterward, until they kept trying to convince you your memory was faulty, that the slasher hadn't shrugged off bullets or picked you up with one hand. You were there later, in that dimly lit room, with the other officers who were too disgusted, scared, and anxious to do something. You swore the oath that forged Nine Stars.

No one could figure out how the Cardboard Killer got into her victims' homes, but something in your gut told you Mrs. Fang was next on the list. You broke the rules, broke into Mrs. Fang's home, and saw the stomach-churning way the Cardboard Killer entered the apartment. You were disciplined for your actions — but you also saved Mrs. Fang. The superintendent pressed a single gleaming star into your lapel and told you to come meet him in the bar that night.

You're on the Serial & Spree Killer Special Response Task Force, a hotshot young officer armed to the teeth with the best gear your precinct could provide. The veterans keep muttering about killers who are inhumanly strong or tough. You haven't yet gone on your first dispatchment, but you'll show the timid old timers you've got what it takes. You're not afraid of anything and scoff at urban legends about bulletproof murderers and hungry ghosts.

You never caused trouble. You spent months methodically putting together the villain-hitting case; the woman practicing *da siu yun* who made sure her petty "curses" always worked because she brutally murdered the targets. You carefully cracked the mysterious Cure Murderer cases and discovered a doctor who was injecting a deadly cocktail of drugs and viruses that drove his patients mad. You dutifully excised every part from the reports that would upset your senior officers. One day, Chief Superintendent Kin-Lau called you to a meeting, more interested in what you'd been leaving out than what you'd been keeping in.

Fellowships

Compact members are awarded stars following their service to the people of Hong Kong. A case or incident where an officer successfully saves any lives wins them one star — with nine stars being the highest grade that can be achieved. Additionally, Nine Stars is roughly divided among three fellowships.

Those officers under the umbrella of **Special Response** focus on the slasher epidemic troubling Hong Kong. Forming the bulk of the compact, Special Response coordinates the analysis of slasher outbreaks and helps reassign members to cases involving suspected or confirmed slasher activity.

By comparison, **Five and Nine** is a smaller, informal network of retired officers. Five and Nine is assigned to investigating other supernatural phenomena the Hong Kong police stumble upon and includes the compact's most learned occultists and experienced agents. When a breath-drinking vampire or shapeshifting demon rears its head, Nine Stars looks to these grizzled veterans for guidance.

Most Nine Stars members are officers on active duty in the Hong Kong Police Force, but the **Friendly Hands** are outsiders who've been temporarily welcomed into the fold. Used as a

sarcastic term, the Friendly Hands are kept at a safe-but-useful distance, for its members are a motley group of gang members, ex-cons, petty thieves, and dirty politicians who'd rather work with police to end the slasher epidemic than flee the city. Though many members believe this branch will fold following the arrest or capture of the last remaining slasher, for now the officers begrudgingly accept their help to save Hong Kong.

Status

Members of Nine Stars earn recognition by performing a service to their community. Exemplary deeds are also awarded with the gift of a star-shaped pin.

- You've saved a family's life from a slasher through your savvy investigation. You gain a free Skill Specialty in the Investigation or Occult Skill.
- You know success doesn't come from being a loose cannon, but from working together as a team. When you participate in a Tactic, your successes gain the 8-again quality.
- You're a founding member of Nine Stars, or you've reached the full nine stars on your lapel and just kept going. You gain the three-dot Trained Observer Merit, even if you don't meet the usual prerequisites.

VASCU

Quote: *"There is no mind we can't unlock. No secret we can't find."*

The Vanguard Serial Crimes Unit (VASCU) discreetly serves an international portfolio of clients that includes a mixture of governmental bureaus, law-enforcement agencies, and wealthy magnates. Officially, VASCU's specialists aid with the investigation and profiling of serial and spree killers on a freelance basis through a corporate front called the Vanguard Initiative; the Unit also produces reports and writes papers tracking rates of mass murders and violent crime on an international scale. Due to the dramatic rise in monster activity, VASCU has branched out to include hunting true monsters as well slashers.

Most of VASCU's clients know their agents possess unusual talents — every operative is a psychic — and they specifically hire the conspiracy for this reason. Only certain retirees who once worked at the Federal Bureau of Investigation know the full truth, because they were part of VASCU's creation and oversaw the group's efforts through its final reorganization in 1982. For most of the 1980s, despite a dramatic rise in violent crimes, the FBI allowed VASCU to lead the charge, expecting their newly reconstructed arm to step up where other agents could not. For over 30 years, VASCU agents doggedly tracked serial killers and mass murderers all over the country, informing FBI agents when they could of a suspect's hideout or a victim's location. In fact, VASCU's success rate was a little too high for some FBI agents, who began to distrust their psychic abilities and favor data, hard sciences, and cutting-edge technology instead of what some agents called "an artifact of the Cold War."

Following yet another change in leadership, VASCU eventually lost enough funding it could no longer maintain its core function and was officially shut down in 2008. Then, a few years later, an anonymous private citizen broke ground on the Vanguard Institute in Philadelphia, collected what remained of VASCU's agents and administration, and allowed them to move in and resume operations on a freelance basis. To date, rumor has it no one inside VASCU is certain who's footing the bill for their expenses — which is extremely odd for a group that prides itself on its

psychic abilities. Most members believe VASCU is being secretly funded by a bipartisan committee in Congress but is largely left alone to avoid undue scrutiny.

Using a bioengineering research group called the Vanguard Initiative as a front, VASCU remains headquartered in Philadelphia, and continues to work with US government interests as a contractor — including, upon occasion, with the few VASCU agents who remained in the FBI. However, as word of the institute's talents worm their way through the dark underside of international law enforcement, VASCU increasingly sees profitable opportunities overseas.

VASCU psychics now operate on every continent, whether in long-term partnerships with law enforcement branches and wealthy private citizens, or short-term deployments for emergency situations. Thankfully, the group is profitable and can refuse services when required. Some VASCU agents are rumored to abandon their duties, however, and take on extra work themselves.

VASCU's secret weapon is the Wintergreen Process, a drug-based therapy that inductees undergo in order to overclock the information-processing centers in the brain to preternatural heights. The process is dark fruit born from the sinister tree of the MK-ULTRA psychic research program run by the CIA, and VASCU's possession of this classified information is one of the key sources of contention between them and FBI.

The Enemy

Much like its previous incarnations, VASCU is under attack. Someone — or something — fears its psychic agents and will stop at nothing to destroy the agency despite the fact that its existence is well-cloaked within the Vanguard Initiative. Reports of slasher attacks against agents and support staff, uncannily timed warnings to slashers, and political sabotage have forced VASCU agents to face the possibility they've been compromised. Worse, many VASCU agents are starting to think the only reason they're still around is because the FBI wants them to find Doctor Wintergreen, the missing pioneer who championed the Wintergreen Process.

Modern VASCU agents share a burden with their predecessors — their actions are restricted by the laws and regulations of the countries in which they operate. “I know he did it because I read his mind” won't pass as evidence in most courts. This fosters an atmosphere of cynicism mixed with frustration, as VASCU agents often believe themselves to be superior to other hunters. After all, they've managed to do what other conspiracies could not: tap into the power of the mind.

Of course, when it comes to dealing with monsters, the rules don't apply. New VASCU recruits are even taking their cues from other agencies such as Task Force: VALKYRIE or the Cheiron Group.

Hunters

You were part of VASCU before the conspiracy went freelance. So many dark secrets, so many cold truths you can't tell anyone after you signed all those ink-smeared documents. At the end of your first term of service, you signed on to work or you were packed off to the bright new Vanguard Institute, with its sterile Philadelphia headquarters and its new, international remit. You remember your old buddies in the FBI, though, and the price VASCU paid in blood, sweat, and tears.

The college recruiter had a funny look on her face when she read through your test results. Next thing you know, you were being offered a chance to join some hotshot bioengineering group

with a serious pay package. Once you got to the Vanguard Institute, you were put through even weirder tests, and apparently, you're psychic. Things can't *possibly* get any stranger than this, right?

You're an angry ex-pat who left your country after losing everything you loved. It's a cold rage, burning in your guts, and it won't ever go away. You can't get them back, not after the killer finished with them. VASCU offered a way to take that fury and harness it, to steal something back from the killer and make it your own. You keep an eye on VASCU's reports to glean news from your homeland. One day, you're going to tear that bastard's mind apart, thought by agonizing thought.

A career in law enforcement left you disillusioned. It was corruption and brutality from top to bottom; you joined to serve and protect, and instead you found out that bad apples filled the whole fucking barrel. Thing is, you were a damn good investigator — so good that VASCU's recruiters were waiting to pounce when you handed in your notice to the police chief. Retirement's going to have to wait a little longer.

Departments

Most of VASCU's staff are professionals who are not gifted with psychic abilities. Candidates suitable for the Wintergreen Process are rare, and VASCU treats every agent as a valued asset.

By far the largest department is the **Operations Department**, consisting of agents deployed to clients in order to profile, investigate and, when necessary, aid in bringing down serial killers and slashers. Ops agents deal with the vicissitudes of the conspiracy's rather mercenary approach to clients, and sometimes compete with one another for the choicest assignments.

Agents are assigned to **Field Liaison** based on operational need or prior experience with the supernatural. This department deals with other organizations like its front, the Vanguard Institute. Liaison's agents build contact networks among other hunters to work with local cells in areas VASCU visits. These agents also trawl through such communities for potential recruits; the conspiracy is not above poaching conspirators suitable for the Wintergreen Process.

Finally, the innocuously named **Synergies & Market Growth Potential** takes up the darkest corner of VASCU's organizational chart. The name's just another veneer; this department is dedicated to exploiting psychic potential for more than just tracking down slashers in the wild. Synergies agents use their Teleinformatic Endowments to conduct industrial espionage, sway politicians, and dig out blackmail material VASCU can use to protect itself. The department justifies its operations through its outrageous claims: Plenty of inhuman monsters dwell in the upper echelons of government and corporate power, and until mortals are back in charge they'll do what it takes to stop them.

Status

Status in VASCU is earned when the conspiracy's goals are met. For the time being, the conspiracy is less concerned about personal glory and is more focused on bigger initiatives — at least until the Slasher epidemic ends.

- When you signed up for VASCU, you didn't know they'd run you through a series of tests for psychic aptitude you'd pass with flying colors. Your new job scares the shit out of you, but you *know* this is the best place for you to hunt. Gain a free psychic-related Skill Specialty in Occult.

••• You've been doing this for a while. You've traveled the world, worked with law enforcement and investigators across the globe, and have seen how the horrors of human atrocities are repeated time and time again. You're hardened by what you've experienced, and you've earned respect among those who matter. You gain a bonus dot of the Status Merit with the government or law enforcement agency of your choice.

•••• Few hunters understand what it's like to get a bird's-eye view of the Vigil on a global scale. You've seen and stopped innumerable killers in more countries than you can count. You gain the Tactical Insight Merit, whether you would normally qualify for it or not. If you already have the Merit, you may reroll your dice pool when performing a Tactic once per session.