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54

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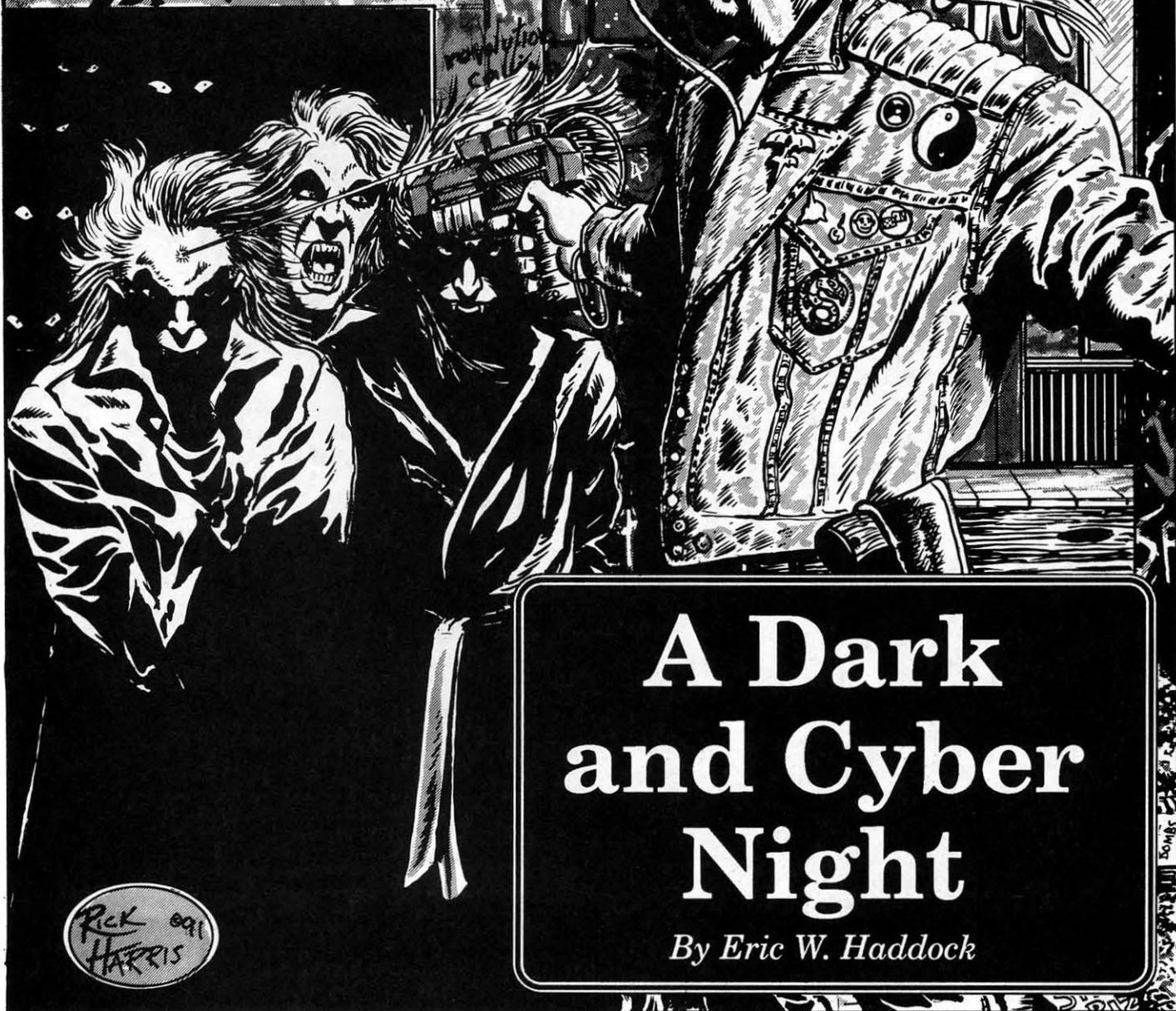
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It Came
From Cyberspace

Marcus L. Rowland

GDW

Walking the streets of Seattle is *always* dangerous—all sorts of folks out there would like to ruin your day. But on some occasions, like Halloween, the especially nasty types come out—ghosts, vampires, zombies, nuggoths and werewolves. This article details some of the people and places you just might run into on a dark and stormy night. Each of these encounters can be used as a subplot for an existing campaign, an impetus for a larger plot or a quick diversion for a night's play.



A Dark and Cyber Night

By Eric W. Haddock

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everyone's heard of theme gangs where all of the members have some kind of surgery to make them look alike. Not everyone's heard of the smaller—more violent—gangs that roam the streets. Most of these groups try to work with at least some amount of subtlety. Some are underground gangs, which don't establish a turf or make themselves a public force.

Each gang, almost by definition, has to have a leader. These leaders could be fanatic individuals or corporations hoping to achieve some grand plot. Players can come in contact with these gangs in a variety of ways. Attributes and other statistics for the gangs described below have been left out so the referee can tailor the gang strength to suit his needs.

Ghosts

People who have encountered the Ghosts recall travelling down a street and suddenly being aware of a light, faint moan coming from all around them. As they walk, the moaning grows louder until it is almost unbearable. Suddenly, the traveller is ambushed by spectral figures brandishing old-fashioned weapons like spears and bows. Although the Ghosts aren't more violent than others, they are a threat that has eluded police for some time.

The Ghosts number at least 100, but like the Nuggoths, they tend to stay underground, and their overall purpose appears to be extortion and other petty offenses.

The weapons they use imply that they might have more powerful means at their disposal and that the hand weapons are for show.

Using the Ghosts: When shadowrunners have an occasion to walk down a dark street, they could be ambushed by the Ghosts. Depending on the cyberware the player characters are equipped with, they may be able to tell that the spectral effect surrounding each of the gang members is caused by an unusual type of gas that looks slightly neon-like in tone. PCs may also discern that the Ghosts use artificial amplification devices in their throats to create the haunting moans. Characters with low-light enhancement will see that each of the gang members is wearing a small gas mask or filter.

If the PCs subdue and question the Ghosts that attack them, they will find out that the Ghosts are indeed on a mission—they are robbing people, convenience stores and other shops to raise enough money to make a shadowrun against a corporation that has been destroying large portions of wilderness outside of Seattle.

The PCs can, of course, join in the shadowrun.

Vampires

It's becoming more common nowadays to hear stories about a vicious gang that makes very unusual attacks on people in the residential sections of Seattle.

When the Vampires strike, they always hit a group of people at once—such as small meeting groups, bingo halls, and the like. When they hit, they burst into the building, sealing off the exits, and throw stun gas and stun grenades into the crowd. Once everyone is out, the Vampires (of course) steal blood from each of their victims.

Each Vampire has pure white hair, red eyes and (naturally) a pair of extended canine teeth. The teeth, however, are not capable of drawing anything into them—the Vampires extract blood from their victims with syphons and other means. They do not seem to care about how much blood is withdrawn from each person, just the total they leave the building with. Because of this, some people will be totally drained of their blood and dead, while others only slightly drained and dizzy.

Police have theorized that the Vampires actually work for a research company that has a crying need for human blood.

Using the Vampires: The PCs might come across some clue as to the Vampires' purpose during another shadowrun—such as a company or individual buying large amounts of blood. The specific use of the blood is left up to the referee—perhaps an individual or research firm is studying ways to exterminate a certain race (metahuman or not) via a biological attack, like a virus or contamination.

Zombies

It's no secret what the Zombies want: "Liberation of the mind through advanced chemical stimulation." Unfortu-



nately, they want this "liberation" for everyone, and they've taken it upon themselves to make sure everyone experiences it.

A few years ago, when the Zombies first formed, they poisoned the Seattle water treatment plants (those plants that take sea water and desalinate it into drinking water) by introducing a hallucinogenic into the water. A few people in Seattle died before authorities discovered the drug. Since then, they've tried to be more subtle and have concentrated their attacks in the past few months on bottled water companies in Seattle and the surrounding towns.

Their efforts have produced paranoia among people everywhere. Although the city strengthened the security around the desalination plants, no one likes to drink that water anyway (the taste is terrible). Now, not even water imported from a water factory is safe. "One sip, and your mind could trip" is a common phrase. Authorities are trying to locate and eradicate the Zombies but have so far had no luck.

The gang gets its name from the effect the drugs have on the members. When they aren't out on a mission to contaminate something, they usually wander around in a daze, stumbling about like they have no mind of their own.

Zombies generally wear Jamaican rastafarian hairdos, have beads and dress like "elite hippies"—their clothes are of the best quality and their vehicles of the best class. They detest the "peace" sign (a fist but with the index and middle finger extended). Both humans and metahumans belong to the Zombie gang.

Using the Zombies: Clearly, the Zombies are a threat to everyone. Someone will eventually hire shadowrunners to follow up on a lead as to their whereabouts. In addition, the Zombies and the Ghosts have conflicting interests (purity of the environment verses chemical alteration) which could mean a kind of underground gang war that the player could become involved in.

Nuggoths

The Nuggoths are a gang of only 10 to 15 members. Although they don't have any policy or practice of racial purity, the gang is composed of humans only. Their mission seems to be anarchist in nature, as they target individuals in government, especially low-level government employees.

They don't really have a turf, and no one knows for sure who the leader is or where their headquarters is, but a few things mark their presence: First and foremost, they like to kill—that much is obvious. They also like to do it in a ritualistic style. Bodies of their victim aren't mutilated or found in a grotesque manner. But the victims are always found with knife wounds that suggest the use of hand razors (page 128 of *Shadowrun*) of an unusually long length. In addition, the wounds always originate from the back of the neck, suggesting that the Nuggoths attack from behind.

It is unclear where the gang gets their name.

Using the Nuggoths: Nuggoths tend to attack anyone remotely associated with city or government institutions—even runners who take part in government-sponsored raids. And few things are more frustrating than having your government contact ritualistically killed by a gang of anarchists.

Werewolves

The Werewolves are the simplest—but most dangerous—of all the gangs. They are also very predictable—every full moon, they go on a violent rampage akin to the apocalypse.

The Werewolves howl before they strike, and they have tapped into the air raid and public warning sirens. As soon as the full moon rises, all the sirens around the city go off, producing a chilling howl that lasts for several few seconds. Residents have learned to be leery of full moons, and the howling and sirens strikes terror in the hearts of many. Those who are smart stay inside during the full moon, and many 24-hour stores and businesses close down.

Their methods are simple—hit something big with everything possible. Favorite targets are large structures or places that “go up with a big bang.” They have some sort of intelligence information that tells them what targets

are the best defended, so naturally they always avoid them and go for places easy to hit. They have already hit nearly all of the major corporate headquarters, stadiums and fireworks factories in Seattle.

The Werewolves begin a strike with some kind of shoulder-launched missile, then gang members throw grenades through the windows and shower automatic gun fire at anyone in the area.

After a single big target is hit, they go on to create mayhem throughout the city. Apparently the gang members split up and go on a crime spree, trying to accomplish whatever acts of violence they can during the night. Once the night of the full moon is over, they retreat to wherever their headquarters is and do not return until the sirens carry their howls over the air a month later.

Using the Werewolves: It would certainly spook the PCs if they are about to steal some data from a corporate building and find that it is suddenly under attack by a bunch of crazed gangsters. Not only do the PCs have to worry about getting blown up or shot, but the Werewolves tend to attract maximum attention very quickly—almost worse, during a shadowrun, than getting shot at.

PLACES

Groups are not the only source of danger in the city. Some places, too, offer their own threat. The PCs might some night walk innocently into a store or other business—and find themselves in the midst of illegal implants, psychokillers or mysterious murders.

A Special Service Body Shop

There's really no place more dangerous than an illegal body shop. If a character goes in to have something done, the outcome can be more horrific than a botched operation or a lost limb.

Brain Chip: The characters have the misfortune of picking a body shop whose doctor for reasons of his own (or to extend a plot of the referee) decides not to follow procedure to the letter. In addition to implanting the equipment desired by the patient, he introduces something of his own creation—the nightmare chip.

The nightmare chip alters the user's

perception, although the actual senses of the character remain the same. The result is that every time the character is in a stressful situation (as defined by the referee) the chip begins to make the situation seem much worse than it really is. This happens automatically, with no real chance of resistance. The effect is that opponents seem tougher and stakes seem higher—so the character is likely to shoot a few more bullets than normal or not call as many bluffs.

During excessively stressful situations (like a firefight, melee combat, recovering a stalled plane) the chip also induces an extreme sense of paranoia and hopelessness, causing the victim to collapse or retreat. This effect can be resisted as an opposed success test. The strength of the nightmare chip in producing the debilitating paranoia is four dice, and the target number is also four. The chip will make an “attack” into the person's willpower every five minutes of extreme stress.

The chip can easily be identified by even a novice cybertechnician and can be removed like any other implant.

The A-Train to Hell

Monorails are an important part of public transportation. Almost every train is in good condition and is reasonably well secured—but there are some that you wouldn't want to carry cash on. PCs on such a train might experience some of the city's more diverse night life.

Catching the A-Train: Jacob Nelson knew he liked movies, especially the classics from the 1980s and 1990s. But it wasn't until he started to hear voices that he knew exactly how much those movies meant to him. So he's decided to follow those voices and see how many people he can visit on a monorail at night.

Jacob's mission the night the characters run into him is to kill as many people with his butcher knife as possible. He's pretty sure he saw a movie once about a middle-aged businessman killing people on a train with a butcher knife, but it doesn't matter anyway—the voices are helping him out.

His first job is to get on a train that goes a long time between stops. The second is to kill the interior lights, including the emergency ones, so he can run about in his night goggles easier. The third is to disable the emergency

NED NEUTRON

LUCKILY FOR OUR GROUP, THERE WAS A **TEXACO**™ STATION OPEN! NOW OUR INTREPID GROUP OF **DINOSAUR HUNTERS** CAN EFFECT A REPAIR ON THE LIMO'S BLOWN OUT TIRE.

BUT FIRST, LET'S GO TO THE...

1991 HALLOWEEN PARTY



WHAT THE HEY...

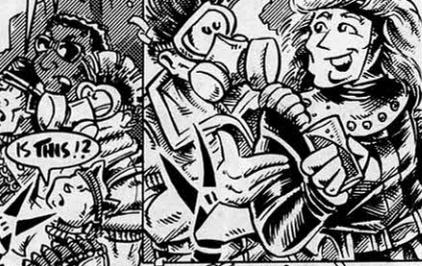
SO LET'S MINGLE!
BUT STEVE YOU GOTTA GET ME OUT OF THIS STORY!!

SORRY DUDE, THAT'S OUT OF MY HANDS.

NICE COSTUME MAAM'.
THANKS!
DON'T MENTION IT.

COMON' LOREN HAVE A BIT OF PITY ON ME, HUH?!

NO, NED NOT IN MY AREA.



CHUCK, ARCHIE, I'M NOT GOING TO GET YOU A NEW ARTIST SO YOU'LL HAVE... "COOL LOOKING GUNS!!"
AWWW.

SAY MARC, AREN'T THOSE GUNS IN THAT COMIC STRIP WE RUN IN CHALLENGE? SAY...

OK YOU LAZY BOZOS, FUN TIMES OVER, NOW BACK TO WORK!! GEEZ, WHAT COMIC CHARACTERS GET AWAY WITH THESE DAYS?

YOW!
EEEK!
WHOA!



TO RETURN CHARACTERS TO STRIP PULL EVER →

NEXT: WAIT, HERE'S THE SCRIPT. HEY, WHAT THE DEVIL IS GOING ON HERE?!

16. M... 91

brakes, and set off some smoke grenades to cause panic and hide his presence. Jacob works for a company that makes demolitions, so he's well prepared to have everything happen at once with preset charges and timers, while Jacob sits comfortably in the train.

Jacob is wearing armor (a lined coat) and hopes to be able to kill at least one person. When the lights go out and the smoke starts filling the cars, he will stand and go after the closest person to him, hoping to strike from behind. By some coincidence, he will be in the same car as the player characters....

Jacob has no cybernetic enhancement but will fight with an uncanny zeal. Use the Humanis Policlub Member (page 168 of the *Shadowrun* rules) statistics and skills for Jacob.

Possible Subplots: Jacob might have been influenced by the nightmare chip and gone insane, or he might have ingested some of the drugs the Zombies are trying to spread, or he might have been brainwashed for learning too much about one of the gangs (the voices tell him not to tell anybody) or

traumatized to prevent him from spreading the word.

You Check in...

The PCs at some time may stay in an hotel. They might expect the visit to be short and sweet, without incident. But even with all the usual precautions of the experienced shadowrunner, something unexpected might happen.

A Cry in the Night: The PCs are startled awake by the screams of what sounds like a human female in the next room. If the PCs put their ears to the door, they can hear what sounds like a baseball bat striking a side of beef.

If the PCs call the front desk and complain about the noise, nothing will happen to them for the rest of the night. If the PCs decide to take action and burst through the door, they will find that the room is empty, but a trail of blood leads from a pool on the bed to the open window. There is no fire escape, and the ledge beneath the window shows only a few drops of blood. Nothing out of the ordinary can be seen from looking out the window.

The next day, the PCs hear from the

hotel staff that a hotel guest was horribly mutilated a block from the hotel. The victim was a human female and she was very difficult to identify. Police have no clues or motive for the slaying.

The woman was killed by a troll suffering from an acute mental disorder. He believes that he is a troll because human women gathered in a council and had his genes altered. Therefore, he is on a mission to kill human females as an act of twisted revenge. Unfortunately, he's good at skulking around the city. He was able to rapell down to the hotel window of the victim, kidnap the woman, and use his incredible strength to practically propel himself back up the rope before anyone knew what was going on. He will continue until he is caught or killed. Use the Troll Bouncer (page 173 of the *Shadowrun* rules) for statistics and skills.

Subplots: The troll could be part of a gang or cult that is like a policlub, only sadistically violent. The poor troll could be a victim, like Jacob, or he could be the escaped experimental specimen of a local research firm. That firm might need someone to hunt the troll down and bring him back in secrecy. Enter the shadowrunners. ♪