



NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS

RESOURCE GUIDE

BY GARETH RYDER-HANRAHAN



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INTRODUCTION

HOW DO YOU KEEP A SECRET?

You can wall it away. Write it down in an encrypted message. Hide the message in a safe. Put it behind chain-link fences, bury it in the archives in some sub-basement of the Lubyanka. Seal your borders, close the airports, shoot intruders on sight.

That won't stop a y talented and determined spy — like the Agents you're up against. You can't hide your secrets behind a screen.

So, never write it down. Hide the truth in a wilderness of mirrors. Let everything be conditional, variable, uncertain. Conceal your truth among plausible lies.

For in the wilderness of mirrors, only the vampire casts no r

The Director's Screen conceals your confidential files and cryptic notes behind a sturdy shield. It's not bulletproof, but if folded up, it could plausibly be used to bludgeon a brainwashed Conspiracy assassin. More likely, reference the handy quick-reference tables on the Director's side to keep your game running at a thriller pace.

The reference book you're holding contains extra options and advice to help with your *Night's Black Agents* games.

Initiations (p. 5) offers a set of vignettes, describing how an Agent got baptized into the secret world of vampires and capital-c Conspiracies. Each initiation

includes ability rating changes to reflect the Agent's experience, as well as a set of unanswered questions — plug these into your Conspyramid for later payoff.

New Monsters (p. 8) presents a dozen new supernatural henchmen for your vampires, while **Operatives** (p. 15) gives a dozen mid-ranking NPCs that can be dropped into any conspiracy — the sort of useful minions that any sort of vampire might employ to good effect against your Agents.

Combat 201 (p. 21) discusses fighting and point-juggling from the Director's side of the screen, and how to deal with

complicated action sequences like fights and chases.

Thriller Scenes (p. 27) describes story elements that show up in many *Night's Black Agents* scenarios — trailing a suspect, meeting a source, blowing things up — and gives variants, twists, mechanics, and staging advice.

Mission Skeletons (p. 40) describes the nine basic *Night's Black Agents* missions and talks about how to build or improvise stories around each of them.

Locations (p. 51) is a selection of modern-day locations complete with suggested clues or combat options.

INITIATIONS

NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS CHARACTERS MAY start out ignorant of the existence of vampires, discovering the true nature of their foes early in the campaign. Alternatively, they may begin already initiated into the shadowy world of the supernatural. If you're going with this option, have each player pick one of the **initiations** listed in this chapter. They're couched in generic terms; work with your player to connect their chosen backstory and

character concept to that moment of terrible revelation.

Changes to abilities are changes to ability *ratings*, not ability pools, and so last until changed through spending build or experience points.

Each initiation also describes a **resolution** — a goal for the player to accomplish in the course of play. If a player completes their resolution, it's worth 6 bonus experience points.

AFFLICTED

You were attacked — mentally or physically — by a supernatural threat, a horror you had no words to describe.

Changes: Gain **Vampirology** +1 and **Sense Trouble** +2.

Either reduce **Health** by 2 or gain PTSD (*Night's Black Agents*, p. 84).

Unanswered Questions:

- What scars do you still bear from the encounter?
- Do you recall the encounter clearly, or only in fragmented nightmares?
- Did the affliction heal naturally, or does it still trouble you?

Resolution: Kill the creature that injured you. (Alternatively — if the wound is unnaturally hard to heal, find a cure for your affliction.)

BETRAYED

You were betrayed by a close ally or mentor, who was secretly part of the conspiracy.

Changes: Gain **Sense Trouble** +2 and **Bullshit Detector** +1.

Reduce any one of the following by 1: **Flattery**, **Flirting**, **Reassurance**, or **Streetwise**, or reduce your **Network** by 3.

Unanswered Questions:

- Who ordered them to betray you? Why then?
- How did they become part of the conspiracy? Are they willing servants of the vampires, or under some compulsion?
- What was irretrievably lost to you because of that betrayal, other than your ability to trust people?

Resolution: Find the person who betrayed you and force a confession.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

You found the aftermath of a vampire attack. You've seen the bloodless corpses, the mangled remains. Smelled that unholy stench. You've walked those char

Changes: Gain **Vampirology** +1 and either **Notice** +1 or **Diagnosis** +1.

Reduce your **Stability** by 1, and increase any **Stability** losses due to scenes of gore or extreme violence by +1.

Unanswered Questions:

- Who else saw it? Are you being targeted because of what you saw?
- Why massacre all those people? An accident? Revenge? A feeding frenzy? Sending a message — and if so, who was the intended recipient?
- Who covered up the incident after you witnessed it?

Resolution: Hurt the conspiracy the same way they hurt innocent people: arrange an attack that eliminates a large number of enemies in a single blow.

CRIMINAL TRACES

You ran into the conspiracy's multifarious tentacles, and didn't recognize it for what it was at st. Maybe you were tracing money laundering, or human tr king, or political corruption, or arms smuggling, or missing persons. A mundane crime — but you followed the trail until it let you to them.

And when your efforts threatened to expose them, they struck back.

Changes: Gain **Criminology** +1 and **Streetwise** or **Cop Talk** +1.

Increase the cost of any **Network** uses by +1 when buying criminal contacts. Increase the Difficulty of any **Cover** tests by +1.

Unanswered Questions:

- How wide does the conspiracy's network go? How many criminal operations are actually conspiracy fronts?
- Who's covering up for the conspiracy? Who are their moles in the FBI/Europol/Interpol?
- How did they know you'd discovered them?

Resolution: Close out your last case by the book. As a burned spy, you may not be able to bring the criminals to justice yourself, but provide the investigators who come after you with all the evidence they need to secure a conviction.

HEAD-ON COLLISION

The mission was already fraught, even before the vampires. You thought you were operating on the bleeding edge, pushing what was permissible even in a deniable black op. Maybe you were out there to assassinate a target, or trying to obtain vital intelligence



through illegal channels, or pulling off a heist. Then your black op smashed head-on into the supernatural and it all went to hell. Violently. Publicly. Messily.

Changes: Gain +2 to any of the following: **Athletics**, **Driving**, **Explosive Devices**, **Infiltration**, **Shooting**, or **Weapons**.

Reduce **Network** by 3. Whenever you gain Heat, roll a die: on a 1, increase the Heat gained by +1.

Unanswered Questions:

- What happened to the rest of your team on that botched mission?
- Did the vampires know you were coming, or was it a horrible coincidence?
- Who approved the black op? Did they know about the conspiracy?

Resolution: Atone for the fuck-up by sacrificing yourself to save the other player characters in a life-or-death situation. (You get the bonus experience points before you die, so maybe you can buy yourself a chance of escape or at least a big blaze of glory...)

IMPOSSIBLE ANALYSIS —

Analysts live by Sherlock Holmes' maxim: once you've eliminated the impossible, whatever remains — however improbable — must be the answer. Sometimes, though, the impossible remains despite your best efforts to eliminate it. The empty space in the photograph where there should be a pale woman. A chain of mysterious deaths. The same signature on two documents, a century apart. Other analysts glossed over the inconsistencies, told you that you must be wrong, that you were drawing the wrong conclusions from incomplete data. They told you to stop digging.

Maybe they were right. Maybe it'd have been better if you'd been wrong about the vampires.

Changes: Gain **Vampirology** +1 and +1 to any one of the following: **Cryptography**, **Forensics**, **Research**, **Photography**, or **Traffic Analysis**.

Reduce your **Stability** by 2. Reduce your **Network** by 3, and you have no allies or friends remaining at your former employer.

Unanswered Questions:

- You know about some vampiric activity that you haven't yet been able to connect to the larger conspiracy. What is that suspected activity?

- Were your supervisors at the Agency trying to protect you when they told you to stop digging, or covering something up?
- Who torched your reputation and convinced your former colleagues that you're unreliable, paranoid, or compromised?

Resolution: Assemble enough incontrovertible evidence of the conspiracy that you can convince your former Agency to join the fight against the vampires.

OLD FILES —

You found the deep in the archives. Someone buried them there, deliberately miscategorized, hidden among stacks of folders of Soviet grain production statistics in the 1950s. The described encounters with the supernatural. Evidence — fragmentary, circumstantial, yet — of an ancient conspiracy. Other spies from the Agency had tried to piece the clues together and failed, and their death certificates and autopsies were in the folder too. You knew that there's every chance that you'll end up as another page in that . But you inherited a mystery, and you couldn't put it away.

Changes: Gain **Vampirology** +1 and +1 to any one of the following: **Accounting**, **History**, **Occult Studies**, or **Tradecraft**. You also have a 3-point Investigative pool that can be spent on any clues connected to the folder.

Reduce your **Cover** by 2. Your former Agency is monitoring your Solace or your Safety, and visiting either may be perilous.

Unanswered Questions:

- Was that buried file the complete dossier on the conspiracy, or does your former Agency know more?
- Who betrayed your confidence and revealed that you'd taken the file from the archives without permission?
- How much of the dossier is out-of-date – or deliberate misinformation, traps planted to catch over-eager investigators?

Resolution: Strike a major blow against the conspiracy that relies on intel that's at least 50 years old.

THE TRADE

Sometimes, you get intel you weren't looking for. Spies gossip, and trade scraps of information like kids trade Pokémon cards. You get the inside scoop on some eastern European political scandal in exchange for your Agency's assessment of a Chinese missile test, or the name of an arms dealer in Budapest as a swap for a favor from your French allies.

One of your contacts was desperate to make a deal. He needed your Agency's protection. He offered you everything he had, and it wasn't enough. Then, he asked for a bottle of booze, and a bottle of holy water as a mixer. He got drunk, and told you tall tales about vampires. You thought it was nonsense – until they loodless body out of the river.

Changes: Gain **Cover** +2 and **Tradecraft** +1.

Reduce your **Network** by 2.

You're already a target of the conspiracy – they know your contact confided in you. Whenever you fail a **Cover** test, in addition to any Heat gain, you draw the attention of the conspiracy.

Unanswered Questions:

- Who was your contact and what did he know about the conspiracy?
- Did you offer him your Agency's protection? If you did, did someone in Agency betray him to the vampires? If you turned him down, are you responsible for his death?
- Who else did you tell about the contact's testimony?

Resolution: Find out who eliminated your contact, avenge him, and return to his grave to tell him it's done.