

HEX DIVISION

AN EXPANSION FOR SPITE

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Nightgaunt Publishing
<http://rpgbynight.blogspot.com>

Based on Hexcommunicated
A novel by Rafael Chandler
www.rafaelchandler.com
Includes passages from the novel

"There are no heroes. In life, the monsters win." (George R. R. Martin)

WARNING:

This expansion contains spoilers for Hexcommunicated.
So read the novel first!

Introduction

Based on *Hexcommunicated*, a novel by Rafael Chandler, this is an alternative setting for *Spite*, a role-playing game by the same author. *Spite* is available as a free PDF at www.rafaelchandler.com.

Henceforth, I will assume that the reader is familiar with the original Disciple 12 system.

In the world of Hex, players take on the roles of enhanced agents with powers similar to those traditionally attributed to the creatures of the night: vampires, werewolves, Frankenstein's monster.

They work for Hermetic Extropy Division, a US secret agency created after a Lovecraftian terrorist attack on Providence, which ushered in the first day of the year 2000.

Although the Division's proclaimed goal is to fight the Al-Hazred terrorist network, its agents are also used to evoke shock and awe in whoever is deemed to be America's enemy on a given day.

More often than not, the line between fighting terrorists and becoming them becomes a blurry one...

1. The Beginning

On Y2K, a terrorist attack like nothing else in human history hit Providence. Grainy video footage showed victims being dragged by giant tentacles into the dark water of the harbor and glistening creatures upending cars and devouring people headfirst.

The government locked the city down. The survivors were quarantined.

A group called Al-Hazred took credit for the attack but that's pretty much all the general public knows about it. Any details have remained classified ever since.

After the attack, the White House and the Pentagon launched the ECO program. Enhanced Combat Operatives were simply smart-drugged super soldiers with artificial muscle fibers, reinforced bone and heightened senses.

Almost all of them went insane.

The doctors explained that turning people into superheroes completely obliterated any sense of empathy or compassion, resulting in violent berserkers whose endorphin levels spiked higher with each new atrocity. The ECO program was cancelled.

However, two of the people involved in the program discovered something interesting.

Bluette Krieger, an intel analyst at Langley, and Dr. Clotario Muñoz, a madman as well as a genius, noticed that the subjects with a history of mental illnesses or disorders were better-equipped to cope with the ECO modifications.

They also recommended "synchronizing psych profiles to mythical archetypes to ensure that the patient acclimates to the surgery more thoroughly."

The idea of surgically transforming new super soldiers into vampires, werewolves and other monsters was born. The Pentagon said they were going to pass.

A few weeks later, another attack hit Cape Town, South Africa. A hundred thousand dead. Choppy news videos: monsters in the streets, consuming human flesh.

The Pentagon reconsidered.

Krieger and Muñoz got the clearance they sought, and the massive budget they requested. Choosing Raleigh because of its proximity to the Triangle Research Incubator, Krieger assembled a cadre of brilliant scientists, later dubbed the Renfields; meanwhile, Muñoz started final work on designs for the FAE (Force Amplified Entity) augmentations.

Two years later, the first Hex operatives were deployed in Turkmenistan. Since then, the designs have been improved and now the second generation of agents is leaving the Division's labs.

You're one of them.

2. Characters

To create a FAE, you mainly follow the character generation rules from Spite. However, there are a few differences:

1. Scrap the Persona rules;
2. Distribute 10 points between your Attributes;
3. All characters specialize in the Discipline of Combat, although their Strength score can be 4, 5 or 6;
4. All characters start with one of the following powers: Multiple Targets, Evasion or Pyrrhic Strike.

As in Spite, it is possible to add new powers as your character evolves. Contrary to Spite, activating a power costs 1 point of Ichor.

Another difference is that the Multiple Targets power works slightly differently here: a FAE character who activates it may attack a number of opponents equal to her Combat score without splitting dice, i. e. using her full dice pool. This power cannot be applied against other FAEs.

While fighting ECOs, a FAE uses half her dice pool if she attacks more than one opponent, no matter what their total number is (of course she is still limited by her Combat score). This rule should be applied to fighting a group of any more-than-human, less-than-FAE antagonists.

5. Strength 6 is required for all Frankenstitch characters;
6. Instead of Drive, choose a mental disorder like for example depression, sadism, paranoia, a martyr complex or excessive rebelliousness;
7. A character has initially only one Contact;
8. Instead of Fury, a FAE has Ichor (works identically plus may be used to “feed” another FAE, thus effectively transferring Ichor points from one character to another);
9. All characters get any Gear, Weapons and Armor the GM deems appropriate plus an Isopod: a ruggedized military smartphone;
10. There is no Magic and therefore no Spells but Augmentations, which depend on what kind of a FAE the character is;
11. All Stunts from Spite can be used by Hex characters with the exception of Rasputin, Flesh Wound and Socket Wrench.

Let's talk for a moment about disorders. For some reason they help agents stay sane, relatively.

In terms of the gameplay, acting accordingly to the chosen disorder gives a character one extra die that can be used for any roll in the current gaming session and one additional Experience Point. No more dice and no more XPs can be gathered in this way during one session.

The GM may also decide that a character has to behave in a particular way because of their disorder – it might be avoided only with a successful Soul check against Difficulty 11.

While their special augmentations are not active, all second-generation FAE operatives look like ordinary humans despite the fact that they are fitted with a few million dollars' worth of state-of-the-art cybernetics and synthetic musculature giving them strength, speed and reflexes far beyond those of any normal person.

All FAE ops can sense others of their kind, have jacked-up metabolism making them always hungry and super-human reflexes (a Vampule adds +6 to their Initiative, a Fearwolf +4, a Frankenstitch +2, a Hellemental +1).

The following types are available to players:

- * Vampoule: A fast-moving vampire
- * Fearwolf: Metal-clawed werewolf
- * Hellemental: Pyrokinetic
- * Frankentitch: A muscular construct

Vampoule

Extending inch-long ceramic-coated fangs. Connected to a couple of detachable ampoules in the area between the upper lip and the nose.

The ampoules may contain different substances, for example a truth serum, a poison, a paralyzing or a soporific agent.

The fangs may also be used as a weapon to rip somebody's throat open, but aren't very practical – they allow to add 1 point of damage but during the attack you have to subtract one die from your die pool.

Nictitating blood-red membranes allow to see in infrared (the purple-orange spectrum) and can emit supraliminal light at a brainwave frequency between 1 and 3 hertz, which makes it possible for a FAE to hypnotize an ordinary human.

In this state, the target will answer any questions and will follow simple commands. A test of Soul vs. Soul is required if a command puts at risk the target or people close to them.

After getting out of hypnosis, the target is disoriented and does not remember anything from that interval. The membranes do not glow in the dark.

Frankenstitch

Giant strength – due to a complete rearrangement and augmentation of their musculature, a Frankenstitch can perform amazing feats, like for example tossing a car or lifting a Humvee single-handedly.

While in the act, their muscles expand so much that their upper body may even double in size.

The bonus a Frankenstitch gets from the Discipline of Combat is +3 instead of +1. However, a surgical procedure must be performed regularly every few weeks or this bonus gradually decreases to the standard +1.

Body armor – whenever shot or stabbed, a Frankenstitch produces thick grey fluid that oozes from his pores; a colloidal shear-thickening liquid that provides instant body armor (damage 8, a new armor may be produced only after the previous one has been completely destroyed).

Hellemental

The weakest of the combat operatives, the Hellemental typically wears armor of some kind, and is accompanied in the field by one of the other FAE operatives.

Hellementals are pyrokinetics that can unleash torrents of flame whenever they choose. In effect a Hellemental can perform Penance (Spite page 106) or Abnegation (page 83) at will. This is useful when it's necessary to wipe a crime scene completely clear without leaving any trace of accelerant or explosive for the authorities to find during their investigation.

Most Hellementals are pyromaniacs, naturally, and once they've started the fire, it's quite difficult to get them to leave.

Fearwolf

Black-lensed membranes allow the Fearwolf to see in the ultraviolet spectrum. Heightened senses of smell, hearing and sight are thousand times more powerful than those of an ordinary human.

Each Fearwolf automatically receives 8 points in Hunting.

Bristles – dark animal fur, which a Fearwolf can grow from their arms, neck, and face. It emits a fear-inducing chemical compound, Phobos, which causes gut-wrenching hallucinations experienced within a radius of 5 meters by every human who fails a Soul check against Difficulty 14.

As it is the case with a Vampoule's membranes, FAEs are immune to the effect of Phobos.

Inch-long, sickle-curved teeth snapping out over the human teeth, during which process a Fearwolf's mouth juts forward into a lupine snout. Inflict a damage bonus of 1.

Telescoping, two-inch, black-enameled osmium talons. Inflict a damage bonus of 2.

3. Headquarters

The Ellsberg Building crouches against a line of gray brick buildings in downtown Raleigh. Just another six-story federal office in a fast-growing state capitol.

A chain-link fence curls around the parking lot, rusting signs mutter warnings about parking permits and hours of operation, and a crumbling stone pedestal declares AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH BUREAU. No mention of Hermetic Extropy, counter-terrorism, or synthetic monsters.

A booth with a guard and a striped yellow-and-black barricade may be quite typical for any federal building, but twenty-inch heavy-gauge tire killers punching out of the ground definitely aren't. Not to mention a grenade launcher in the booth, snipers behind tinted windows, and riot-gearred guards doing constant perimeter sweeps.

At the door, there are biometric scans flashing your retinas. Then, the door opens but you still have to slap a hand-scanner and wait in a halogen-lit corridor for cameras to run your facial features through the eSemblance database.

An identification failure at any point causes activation of the incineration protocols.

Through a steel door you get into the core of the Hex operation: a vast circular room of cluttered white desks, translucent monitors, smartboards displaying global hotspots, and rumpled analysts swiping data across shimmering screens. In the center, there's a glass-walled conference room. Those inside often refer to the outside activity as the Intel Aquarium.

The director's office is occupied by Bluetta Krieger -- a woman known for her stoicism, reliability and total commitment to Hex Division. Despite her apparent dispassion, she truly looks after the Division's operatives as long as they are ready to give their best. She answers directly to Joint Chiefs.

The labs and surgical rooms are located underground. It is the domain of Dr. Muñoz and his Renfields, but Director Krieger keeps a careful eye on what happens in the "basement". The security is even tighter than upstairs and operatives usually don't get any further than the outer surgical room, in which Frankenstitches get their regular makeover. Apart from its agents, the most powerful tool used by the Division is a computer network called the Hexnet.

It consists of the surveillance network Argus-100, the eSemblance database, and various security systems. Due to the use of advanced satellites, the Division can identify, track down, and spy on any person within a few minutes. The eSemblance facial recognition software is also installed on operatives' Isopods. One final thing. Is it possible to leave the Division? Theoretically, yes...

Hexcommunication. A fate worse than death. One last trip to the surgical wing, then the Reinfields strip away the synthetic muscle tissue, disconnect your neural web-work, pull your fangs, and yank your nictitating membranes. By the time they're finished, you're just another human: pink and slow and vulnerable. What's worse, your body is so damaged by the surgery that you essentially become an invalid who struggles to pick up a pencil or tie your own shoes.

4. Other Players

Al-Hazred

Nobody heard much of this terrorist organization until they took credit for the Y2K attack on Providence. A speedy investigation followed, which revealed separate cells but no command center.

US intelligence agencies discovered evidence of Al-Hazred sites in Iran. After Iran's refusal to cooperate in the investigation, a full-scale invasion was launched by the US with contingents from the UK, Australia and Poland and auxiliary units from 36 other countries.

Simultaneously, the first generation of FAE operatives was deployed during a special forces strike at the government buildings in Tehran.

Operation Lex Talionis resulted in the coalition's quick victory, but did not bring any definitive evidence for Iran's involvement with Al-Hazred.

What's worse, peacekeeping in the now highly destabilized region turned out to be next to impossible, bringing new casualties on a daily basis.

In the meantime, the terrorist network grew more active. Led by cultists who purportedly worship entities older than the Earth itself, their agenda remains obscure, provided there is one apart from spreading chaos and destruction.

CIA

They perceive Hex Division as a potentially dangerous freak show and would love to assume control over it.

To the displeasure of Director Krieger, the CIA has managed to start their own program at the Ellsberg Building, with technology stolen from the Chinese and under the supervision of Dr. Muñoz.

The program resulted in the creation of a few Soultergeists.

MI-X

Although they got bogged down in Lex Talionis, the British profited from their alliance with Americans in one way: they were granted access to a lot of FAE schematics and technology.

As a result, MI-X was established, where they have a Psychanthrope, a Nosferodent, two Mindsights, and a Scarevoyant: their own FAE based on the Fearwolf program.

That would be a huge success unless there is some truth to the rumor that this operative has recently become paranoid and gone rogue.

Paranormal Ministry

China's Paranormal Ministry creates monsters, the Ministry of Intelligence deploys them. They have been very successful not only at stealing schematics and twisting the FAE technology to suit their purposes, but also at keeping their work under wraps.

Still, there are some very few people in the West who know that the Ministry has at its disposal a couple of very powerful Soulturgeists, have been tinkering with Ghostmortems, and developed a Skelekinetic -- originally an MI-X program scrapped by the British due to ethical issues.

Paranormal Intelligence Agency

A Russian agency known for having successfully completed the Upyr program and having at least one operative with abilities reflecting those of a Vampoule.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

While the US forces were locked up in the Middle East, North Korea saw an opening and they took it. Stricken with a devastating famine, they rolled tanks in and seized South Korea.

The USA didn't intervene -- too much money and blood was being lost due to an insurgency that had just started in Iran, China threatened a global war in case of American involvement on the Korean Peninsula, and Russia's position remained ambiguous.

The strongest opposition to the aggression came from Oceanian countries spearheaded by Australia. They provided military assistance to South Korea but too late and not big enough. Finally, an armistice was declared, but technically Australia still remains in a state of war with Korea.

When it comes to the FAE technology, the DPRK are still years from hex-level operations, but they watch China, hoping that their only ally will share some of its secrets. However, China has given no indication that it will do so anytime soon.

5. Force Amplified Entities

Pessimystic

Precognition took gathering intelligence to a different level. Those headquarters-based psychics with hard-wired brains are capable of experiencing drug-induced visions of unpleasant events, which get recorded on hard drive through a cortical interface.

There's one big problem -- it has been proven that a Pessimystic's vision always comes true no matter what.

A case in point: the recording of the future assassination of Prime Minister Dorward being known, even the best MI-X operatives couldn't prevent it from happening. No wonder that literally every Pessimystic suffers from depression.

When it comes to any other FAE abilities, like being endowed with Ichor and resistance to Phobos or hypnosis,

Pessimystics have none and should be treated as ordinary humans.

Nosferodent

Bulky and top-heavy, those yellow-eyed shock troops have been grafted with extra muscle and bone that created a network of distended veins crisscrossing their hairless skin.

A Nosferodent's mouth, crammed full of triple-row shark teeth, juts forward like a snout giving its owner the resemblance of a cross between a Nosferatu and a sewer rat, hence the name.

Unfortunately, the quite crude augmentation process fries the mind of the subject leaving not much room for anything else than a simple hunt-kill-eat routine, thus seriously limiting their operational usefulness.

All Hex Nosferodents have already been decommissioned.

Strength: 5 (Combat 6)

Sense: 1

Soul: 1

Skills: Hunting 6

Life: 11

Ichor: 8

Weapons:

Osmium talons (damage +2)

Shark teeth (damage +2)

Scarevoyant

An offshoot of the Fearwolf program, this FAE does not emit Phobos but uses black-lensed membranes to project horrific images directly into your mind or to make you relive traumatic experiences.

The very special thing about this technology is the fact that it affects FAEs too -- in order to resist, a Soul check against difficulty 14 must be made (Bullseye can't be used).

Ordinary humans fail automatically. Obviously, it gives a Scarevoyant a big edge during interrogations.

The membranes can also be used to see in ultraviolet.

Strength: 4 (Combat 5)

Sense: 3

Soul: 3

Skills: Intimidation 6

Life: 12

Ichor: 12

Weapons:

regular firearms and/or hand weapons

Soultergeist

Telekinetic operatives developed first by the Chinese, then by the CIA. They're able to fall asleep at will and to control small objects made of metal while sleeping (supposedly, the Paranormal Ministry has Soultergeists who can lift cars).

They only need to be near the location at which their powers are to be applied and it doesn't matter if there is a wall or any other material barrier between them and the place.

They remain fully aware of the spatial arrangement and of anyone's presence there.

For a telekinetic attack, roll their Soul instead of Strength. Soultergeists don't have Ichor but are immune to the effects of Phobos and hypnosis.

Strength: 2

Sense: 2

Soul: 6

Skills: Crime 4

Life: 5

Weapons:

regular firearms and/or hand weapons

Ghostmortem

On the death of a Soultergeists during training, Dr. Muñoz proposed a theory. He said it was likely that when the body died, the soul kept floating around like a spirit, a disembodied consciousness.

A sort of contact is rumored to have been made but the man who made it allegedly killed himself.

Anyway, it might be just a dark legend whispered among the CIA personnel at the Ellsberg Building.

ECO (Enhanced Combat Operative)

Some ECOs didn't go insane or suicidal. Grouped in small strike teams, they are still deployed by the CIA and the Pentagon.

ECOs don't have Ichor but are immune to the effects of Phobos and hypnosis.

They also benefit from a +1 initiative bonus.

Strength: 4 (Combat 5)

Sense: 2

Soul: 2

Skills: Military 4

Life: 8

Weapons:

regular firearms and/or hand weapons

Handroid

A Paranormal Ministry invention: low-grade artificial intelligence made out of executed convicts' hands.

Those miniature drones are used to bypass sentries and carry out simple tasks, or swarm over unsuspecting victims.

They are human hands, augmented by cybernetics, cauterized shut at the wrist. From metallic fingertips click out five small triangular blades.

Strength: 1 multiplied by X (X equals the number of drones attacking one target)

Life: 2

Weapons:

blades (damage +1)

Al-Hazred Terrorist

Not much is known about AH operatives. They are all chalk-white in complexion, and they are devoted to their cause, though little is known about it at the current time. Intelligence agencies around the globe have concluded that AH has no interest in religion, and is something akin to a modern-day Thule Society.

Most AH terrorists are ordinary humans, but after the fall of Providence, it was discovered that some of them possess body modifications similar to those of FAE operatives. However, eyewitness reports also suggest that Al-Hazred agents can transform their bodies into hideous shapes, becoming nightmarish and tentacled horrors at will.