

Revised Guildbook:
SPOOKS

A Free Gaming Resource
for Wraith: The Oblivion and

The Wraith Project

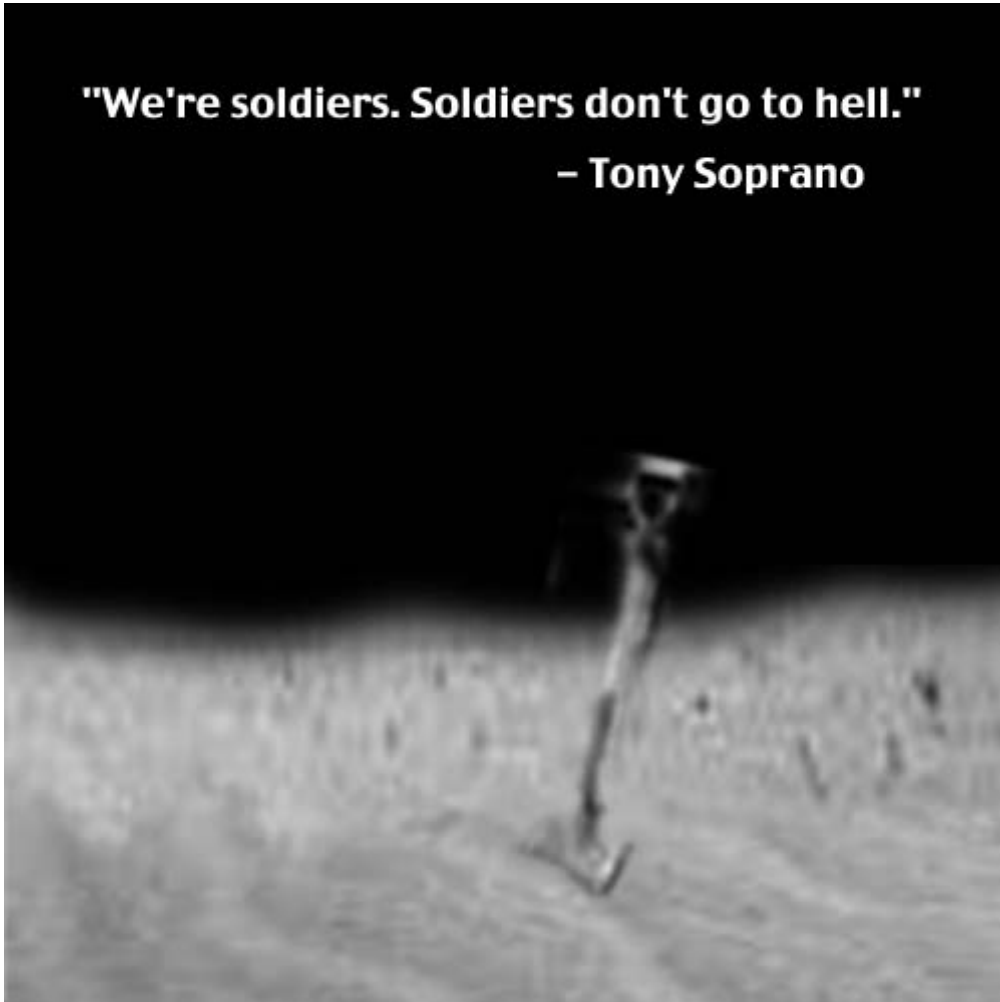
Credits

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**"We're soldiers. Soldiers don't go to hell."
– Tony Soprano**



I. Our Shady Past

If you were to talk to the Haunters' guild (though I don't know why anyone would want to), you'd get their side of things. They'll tell you that we were once a part of their Guild, and that's true. The Spooks were originally a faction of their "organization"; a branch that dealt mostly with the protection of haunts and fetters.

They'll also tell you that we are an ill-tempered and occasionally violent group, and that is also true. However, there seem to be a number of misconceptions regarding our separation, and I should tell you that the fault in that lies with you. You should not have gone to them searching for truths, because, as you have probably noticed, they are all insane. Not that we are much better, mind you but at least you can get a straight answer from us.

I'll try to enlighten you...

The Dark Ages

Originally, there were eight guilds, instead of the current tally of sixteen, on account of the guilds being a lot bigger back in the day. See, there wasn't a Dictum back then, so messing with the Quick was a lot more common. You didn't need a lot of different organizations, because there were fewer categories to split things into.

Each guild that was around in the Dark Ages would later become two; you had the Artificers (where the Alchemists come from), the Solicitors (who birthed the Sandmen or was it the other way around?), The Oracles (and their Monitors), The Haunters (and us), The Guardians (or Proctors, if you like some of them would leave and later become Puppeteers), the Chanteurs (which, oddly enough, included the Usurers), the Pardoners (and possibly the Mnemoi, I can't really remember), and the Harbingers (which may have included the Masquers).

Anyway, things were pretty sweet back then. We had haunts and fetters all over the place, and the feudal system lent itself to entire zones of land becoming attuned to whoever wanted them. It was there for the taking, and even though humanity knew we were there, it didn't matter. You either scared the bejesus out of them, or forced them into worshiping you as a "demon"; something the Haunters did a lot.

Trouble started when some of those wraiths started to believe the lie; they fashioned their corpi into demonic shapes, and paraded around like they were denizens of hell, or something and the sad thing is, sometime during this period, these wackos tried initiating disciples.

The guild was a mess, and some of us were pretty pissed about it, because we were suffering land losses. The Guardians (who, ironically, had members of their own guild among our ranks, possessing mortals for their own gains) and Pardoners were hunting us, and the Harbingers and Artificers wouldn't even do business with us anymore. The once-useful Haunters had been reduced to a handful of demon-cults and it was pretty messed up for awhile; it looked like we were finished.

It was then that Oblivion opened its gaping maw, and started to eat. Hundreds, if not more, of our members were spectralized, and many were sucked into the Void right off the bat. For those of us who remained, Oblivion decided to take us in a much slower way it planted a seed of madness that would eat us from the inside out. Some of us were given paranoia, some despair, and some, most notably, a sense of unbridled outrage against those who screwed it up in the first place.

So, those of us who were pissed enough at having lost so much of what we had gained decided to leave. We abandoned the loopiest of the guild, leaving them scrambling in the dirt, and formed our own guild; one which would devote itself to a little more organization, and a genuine effort to fight off the ever-present madness that coursed through us like acid.

Thus, the Spooks' Guild was formed.

The Breaking

The Spooks' first order of business was a widespread recovery of the ground we lost. In a relentless crusade, we drove humanity away from what we needed, and (save for a little overkill) I'd say we did pretty good.

We rebuilt our lost haunts, and because we were good at it, we were contracted to protect the fetters and haunts of other guilds, and even the Artificers, who had forged many of our ex-members, sought our services in the creation of relics, having suffered a separation themselves. It was, once again, the land of milk and honey.

Of course, that all changed with the *Dictum Mortuum*; a proclamation which, to say the least, pissed us off (we were actually hoping that Charon's Proclamation of Reason would banish the Haunters as heretics, thus screwing them from two sides, but that didn't happen). Not only were our holdings jeopardized, but the Artificers were pretty damn quick to turn on us when push came to shove, and we were back to being forged again when we refused to obey.

The breaking of the guilds didn't faze us very much, though. We never really fashioned ourselves as a group that played well with others, and it was financially unfeasible to try ruling over the other guilds, so we let Stygia do its thing. If they wanted to run the Necropoli, and they were paying us to do things that we were originally slated to do anyway, then so be it. We'd still operate as a guild, even if we didn't have any political sway.

Even if we couldn't advertise our services to the general population, everybody knew who we were, and we never made a point of being discreet. We did what we did, and if we referred to ourselves as a club instead of a guild, well, so what? Besides, most people were too intimidated by us to question our activity anyway, and we played that card whenever we could.

Roaring 20's, Screaming Maelstroms

The great thing about messing with the Skinlands a lot is that you learn things about humanity's progress. Man, that was one hell of a decade. We set up shop in Necropolis Chicago, where most of the excitement happened to be at the time, and we learned all sorts of things about how to improve our business. Got a problem? Sure, we'll fix it for you, and we won't even charge you for it. But when we need a favor, you'd better show up, because if we have to remind you of your debt to us

And then, there was the relic collection business. I get excited just thinking about it. An entire decade full of modern convenience, right there for the taking, and enough violence that we didn't even need to make relics half the time; they just fell right in our lap (as did the biggest storehouse of relic bullets you can think of thank you St. Valentine).

Granted, it was always nice to have a little Embodiment in your pocket, in case you wanted to get a sip of the forbidden sauce (another great idea; ban something, and its monetary worth skyrockets), or go dance the Charleston, or something. It was a good re-

lief from the turmoil of the M4, and the juice we raked in from that great time served us well during the Depression, and the souls we collected in that decade and a half would be trained as warriors during WWII.

The Modern Nights

In the twenty years following the M5, gangster activity in the Skinlands was flourishing as it always had, and would undergo a few changes in the decades to follow.

The mob of the past gave way to mass laundering rackets in Vegas. We have learned to use these ideas to "clean" our Pathos and Oboli, and Artemus (or Don Vanderwal) is working to prevent the Monitors from "tagging" a client's fetters so it seems that those things we hold dear can be laundered as well. From the biker gangs, we have learned loyalty and ruthlessness, and from the Yakuza, we have learned discipline.

The Guild has come far from its roots among the Haunters but we are not without flaws. Our reputation for senseless violence is not entirely without merit; some of our fledgling brothers and sisters, typically the casualties of gang warfare, can't help but get a little overzealous. Most of them were barely adults at the time of their deaths, and a stone's throw from Shadow-eaten. We accept them in the hopes that they can learn the ways of our Code, and be made to shed their racial and territorial hatreds in favor of order and profit.



II. Our Happy Family

Contrary to popular belief, the Spooks do have a hierarchy, as any among them will tell you. Their ranks are as follows: Grunt, Wiseguy, Paisan, Uncle, and Boss. Above the bosses sits the leader of the guild, Artemus Vanderwal, otherwise called the Don, or "Commendatori".

The mafia families of the Spooks rival those of the Monitors, because what they lack in legacy, they more than make up for in terms of their numbers; A disturbing advantage of the World of Darkness (as far as the Spooks are concerned) is that most deaths are unjustifiable, and it is common for the Psyche to project its unwillingness to die as pure, white Wrath: the very food and drink of the Spooks' Guild.

The Guild itself is divided into a number of Departments (mentioned later), each of which spans the entirety of a single Necropolis. A union chapter within a given Department is called a Local, and a circle of Spooks comprised of each Local is called a Crew.

The Code

All of us exist by the Code. Less a decree of conduct than an unwritten agreement, the Code is a glue that holds us together. It has never been written down or discussed, but we all know the basic tenets of it, and anyone who breaks this code is Obliviated, pure and simple. I guess it's kind of hard to keep to a set of rules that you can't really study, but most of our members are quick to pick up on how it works, because they know what happens if they don't.

Fundamentally, there are three rules under which all things fall, and once you know them, you're in like a dirty shirt.

Loyalty

This encompasses the idea that if one Spook is in a bad situation, then it falls on the rest of his crew to fix that situation. If they don't then they betray us all. Everything that you have is also property of the guild, when needed so that means you have the right to seek out whatever fortune you like, but when it comes time to lend whatever goods and services you have to the greater good, you better not hesitate, and for the love of the Don, don't ever be late paying your dues.

Honor

The name of our game is favors. If you do a job, it's better to make it a freebie, and call on payment later, when needed. It makes you look like a hero, and the poor schmuck is in your pocket until you need something done. Money we got. Fetters, too and Pathos is everywhere. Allies, on the other hand; there can never be too many of those. This rule also includes you, though. Pay what you owe or rather, don't owe.

Control

Outrage isn't just an Art — it's a kind of condition that makes us unpredictably dangerous. To use it, you gotta get pissed, and it's easy to lose sight of the target in favor of wanton destruction unless you know what you're doing. If you're going to be in the guild, you have to train, and training means using your head to control your body.

System: The Live-Action translation of this is that each Spook starts play with 2 permanent Angst instead of 1. However, once per evening, a Spook may spend a temporary Angst to refresh his physical traits. This can only be used with Physical traits.)

Factions

The Spooks' guild has never been one for rites or rituals. We don't see the point in a lot of huff-and-puff, or poetic symbolism but we do have a certain façade of professionalism that needs to be upheld, so we refer to each of the factions of our guild as departments within a city.

The Department of Sanitation

Members of this branch are called "Cleaners", and their job entails the removal of waste. Back in the day, whenever a Necropolis was founded, it was our job to perform a basic "sweep and clear"; render an area suitable for a Citadel, haunt or other such hidey-hole, and if some poor shlepp got in the way, well, so much the worse for him.

Recently (within the last century or so) the Cleaners have also raked in a pretty good chunk of business taking care of wraiths who need to be "erased". This creates a bit of friction between our guild and the Masquers, who hold the general contract for assassinations, but they usually let it go, because it creates

plausible deniability.

These guys are very professional about what they do, and they're detached from it, in a way. For them, it's not about guilt it's just business. When you meet one, don't expect him to talk much, and he won't make a point of looking you in the eye when he's talking to you, either.

The Department of Recruitment

This branch is given the task of seeking out potential members of the guild, and then ensuring that they've been properly trained. Whenever a wraith "gets made", he first learns how to focus all of his inner force into a fist of outer force, and launch it across the Shroud (this usually involves haunting a house in the Skins, and severely traumatizing whoever lives there, for about a week or so).

During this time, the young Spook is taught about the "family", and what his job might be, and how important it is that he appreciate everything that's being done for him. Initiators usually stress that they don't have to be doing this, because the "Boss" doesn't think the fledgling is worth fussing over, but the Initiator sees something that the boss doesn't. The new Spook believes that he is already indebted to his teacher and his extended "family", and will usually do what he can to prove himself.

If he passes the tests, he is taken to the local boss, to "get made" (at which point the Initiator is responsible for him until the two are equal in rank). If he fails, he is destroyed (since he has most likely become a spectre). Should the Initiator fail to destroy the spectre, both are destroyed.

The Department of Adjustment

Sharks are the goons of the guild. These guys are muscle, pure and simple. Whenever there's a war, the Sharks are the infantry. They structure themselves in the form of a biker gang, and are the most in number, which is why we have such an unfortunate stereotype surrounding our guild, but we need these guys. Without them, using favors as currency wouldn't work out very well, so if we need to put up with a lot of beefcake posturing, then we will.

A Shark's job isn't to kill people (though he does), or to destroy anything (though he does). His duty is to ensure that everybody in the guild is behaving themselves and knows how the pecking order works, and to ensure that wraiths from other guilds are keeping

good on their debts. If they don't pay, things get really ugly, really fast.

Usually, the penalty for getting cocky in the guild is a bit of temporary "re-corporation". These guys generally have a bit of Moliate up one sleeve or another, and will happily make an overambitious wraith walk around for a week with his head on upside down. People who don't pay their debts usually find their fetters damaged, their artifacts repossessed, or their city influences gone altogether.

The Department of Antiquity

Vultures, as they are called, are collectors of relics, bounty hunters, and scavengers. Their job is to pick an unclaimed area clean, so that if some other guild gets to it first, there's nothing of value there. They also hold the role of scouting out entire zones of a Necropolis, and are called Vultures because they usually learn enough Argos that they can be airborne most of the time.

Historically, the Vultures were the aerial squads during wartime, and are quick to pick fights with the Harbingers' guild over that fact. However, in terms of conflict, the Harbingers don't really care what the Vultures do, as long as they steer clear of the useful stuff in the Tempest.

Allies

The Spooks are hardly a cuddly bunch, and most would rather avoid us than try to make nice. We do, however, have a few guilds that we get along with most of the time, because they have their uses, and they don't make a point of pissing us off.

- The Harbingers have always made good business partners. They give us access to reliable transportation, and they have a clean enough reputation that they aren't afraid to get their hands dirty, if they need to.
- Oracles are nice to have around, for obvious reasons; half (if not more) of our income stems from knowing how fights will end, which barghest to bet on in a race, and where the roulette wheel is going to stop.
- The Sandmen have a way of calming us down when things get too heated. Other than that, they're just good listeners, and when you're doing dirty work, it's nice to have good conversation.

Cautious Companions

- The Masquers have never sat well with us, and while we compliment each other very well in a fight (which makes for good sparring partners as well), we are wary of them, because of that whole "mimicry" thing they do. Wouldn't be good to have spies among us. Not at all.
- Everybody knows how useful the Pardoners are, and no one doubts their motives but I gotta ask. How come everybody's so quick to trust a guild that literally walks around with dirty hands?
- The Puppeteers. Never a dull moment with these guys. We have more fun pulling boo jobs with this bunch than we ever did with the Haunters, because they're only in it to enjoy themselves. Now if we could just get a straight answer out of them once in a while

Enemies

We've made our share of enemies over the years, and there are some guilds that we just won't dance with.

- We consider the Haunters the sole reason for their insanity, and we blame them for the sullied name of our own guild. We don't work with them as a rule, but some of the newer members are starting to fraternize, and both our guildmasters are getting along pretty good. Maybe a treaty is in the works. God, I hope not.
- The Monitors hate us without a doubt, and the feeling is more than mutual. We are in the midst of a very long dance with them, and when the final song plays, we will see how it all ends.
- The Proctors hate the Puppeteers (given that they were once one guild as well), and so they dislike us by association. They usually make a point of getting in the way when we're on a boo job, and we usually end up fistfighting but the thing to do is to get Embody and Outrage working against each other, with some poor breather caught in the crossfire. I think I'll call it "ping-pong paranoia".

Loose Cannons

Occasionally one of our members will manage to leave the fold without getting whacked, and we generally have a strict rule on that, unless there are extenuating circumstances. However, if someone does

manage to sneak out under the radar, we try to send the Cleaners after them as soon as we can. If we don't have them within a week, we let it go, because by then, they've usually either gone spectral, in which case we'll get to them eventually, or they go down into the Labyrinth, and come out Doomslayers, in which case they are left alone.

When entire gangs within the guild fight against each other, it's usually the younger crowd, over something stupid like rap music or gang colors, or something. For these guys, it's not about money. It's about face. We really wouldn't have a problem with that (because it furthers the reputation we have as savages), but a lot of money goes down the tubes and territory gets lost. Our cleaners are kept fairly busy making sure we don't have anyone go renegade on us.

Heretics

The mob has always had a healthy respect for the church, so a lot of that mentality carried over in the turn of the 20th century, primarily of the Roman Catholic streak. Some of our members will attend confessional, in an attempt to redeem themselves for the damage they do. In recent years, some of the "priests" have developed a religious tilt to Outrage, and have made incredible progress in redefining the Arcanos as a personal philosophy. Of course, some of them have split off into cults of their own, viewing the arts as a way to Transcend, but whether or not such a brutish craft can pave the way to peace is a matter of debate.



III. Smackdown

New Outrage Arts

These arts were developed by some of our more humanitarian members, in an effort to evolve it in a more compassionate direction. The guild as a whole doesn't really support them, mainly because they tend to be more cinematic than useful. It seems that the recent special-effects craze above has trickled down here, and many of the youths who practice it are skilled in some of the other flashy Arcanoi, like Argos and Phantasm.

Author's Note: For those of you who have seen any of my work, you will know that I am not a fan of the Storyteller System, or of tabletop roleplay in general. The rules presented here are suitable for **Mind's Eye Theatre**, because as I am not as familiar with this rules system, I shall not attempt to try. If you want tabletop rules for this, make 'em up.

0 Halt

This art allows a wraith to stop a projectile in mid-air, and absorb its motive force. Unlike other Outrage arts, the object does not slow down first, nor does it lose any kinetic energy it may have had. The wraith performs a Mental challenge, and should he succeed, he halts the object in flight, which comes to a dead stop. However, the Storyteller decides how much damage the object would have done had it struck a target, and the wraith may spend 1 Pathos for each damage he wishes to soak.

00 Hyperacceleration

This art was developed in an effort to circumvent having to spend Corpus to pass through solid objects, but it also works in the Skinlands. With a Mental test, the wraith may cause any physical object within his line of sight to go so fast that it becomes insubstantial for a number of turns equal to the Pathos invested. The target must be a physical object (not a sentient being), and it must be moving at faster than a run.

000 Damage Transfer

With this deadly art, a wraith may absorb any physical damage done to him (must be damage from a

physical source), and then transfer that damage to someone else. Each success on an extended Mental challenge absorbs 1 non-aggravated damage (aggravated cannot be absorbed in this way), and the number of Pathos spent on the art determines the amount of turns he has before he MUST release the damage to another wraith, through physical contact (at a rate of one damage per turn). If he fails, he takes any remaining damage in a single turn, and cannot defend himself against it.

0000 Shockwave

This power works in much the same way as Damage Transfer, but instead of moving the damage to a different target, the wraith focuses the damage into the ground. One damage per success may be so grounded, whereupon the wraith may move the damage to an area within his line of sight. Each Pathos invested in the art is three steps the damage may be moved, and its effect is immediate. The wraith suffers 1 Angst for each point of damage done to any wraiths in the area beyond Wounded.

00000 Soul Wrap

This final art allows a wraith to wrap a living target in a bubble of Shroud, and unfold them on the other side. The target of this art is treated as though they are in a Caul; their perceptions are distorted and unnerving, but have no lasting psychological effect, because the art has a 1-turn duration. The wraith performs a Physical challenge vs. the current Shroud rating, and there is no additional Pathos cost past the first. The wraith suffers 1 Angst if the intended target was not in direct physical danger the moment before this art was invoked.

A Final Note on Outrage

Spooks have the worst time with their Arcanos, because using Outrage to its fullest leads to the outright obliviation of things; their Shadows gain Angst much faster than other wraiths. Those who manifest Outrage right away are full of just that; a seething resentment of having lost their lives, and an inferno of wrath that Oblivion sees almost immediately. For Spooks, the first Catharsis is the hardest, and it doesn't get much easier from there.