CASE FILE __________

POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF NEW YORK
SUPERNATURAL VICTIMS UNIT

TRIAL & TERROR:
Supernatural Victims Unit
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The blue tarps that stretched from rooftop to rooftop in Little Transylvania couldn’t hold back the dawn for much longer. “Get this corpse bagged up, now! I don’t want to send the coroner another pile of ashes.” The press is going to have a field day with this one. What’s it going to be now? Another centuries old blood feud? Another jilted Renfield? Another Buffy-style copycat killer? Whatever it is, it’s going to be another long day.

Welcome to Trial & Terror: Supernatural Victims Unit, the Imagination Sweatshop’s “Game in a Jiffy” for JiffyCon and Free RPG Day. This game was created entirely, from conception to publication, during the week prior to the June 21st, 2008, JiffyCon. We’d love to hear your thoughts on it. If you have any questions about how to play, or any comments on how the game worked when you played it with your friends, please let us know.

We can be found at: www.imaginationsweatshop.com.

How to Play

To play Trial & Terror: SVU you’ll need some writing materials, a handful of 6-sided dice (at least three, but probably not much more than six or seven), and a couple of friends. Let’s take a moment and just talk about what this little game is about and how you’re supposed to play it.

A game of Trial & Terror: SVU should play out like an episode of the popular television crime drama Law & Order. The game will begin with a couple of cops investigating a heinous crime on the streets of New York City and will follow this investigation all the way through to the end of the trial. Only the New York of Trial & Terror: SVU is a bit different than the New York of Law & Order. Vampires, ghosts, lycanthropes, ghouls, and monsters of all shades and stages of undeath inhabit, work, and play in the city—and the world at large—just like regular folks. And we’re all struggling to get along.

The cops and lawyers of Trial & Terror: SVU specialize in the apprehension and prosecution of paranormal criminals. As well as dealing with supernatural victims of crimes. Many of them may in fact be monsters themselves—a zombie beat cop who just made detective or a prosecutor who channels an elder god of justice.

This game is designed for three players. Two of you will play the police and prosecutors, each adopting the role of one detective and one assistant district attorney. These two players will be known as the Law. The third player will be taking on the role of . . . well, the role of New York City. The city itself and its inhabitants—the criminals, the victims, the innocent, the bystanders, the press, the defense attorneys, and all the resources available to the justice system. We’ll call this player NYC.

During the game the Law will be running around interacting with all of NYC’s characters, trying to solve a crime either committed by or perpetrated on one of the city’s more supernatural citizens. There is a structure to all this that we’ll be discussing later, but generally speaking, the players cut from scene to scene playing out these interactions and occasionally rolling to see what they can accomplish. For the first half of the game, the Law will be playing the detectives doing the initial investigation and bringing in the suspects. For the second half, the Law will be playing the prosecuting attorneys bringing the suspects to trial and hopefully convicting the right one.
**What Are You Trying to Do?**

The goal of the Law is justice. As the Law, you should be trying to find those guilty of the crime and convict them of that crime. The game itself will help you determine if you manage to convict someone of the crime, but it says nothing about the suspect’s actual guilt or innocence. This matter is left entirely up to the sort of story you tell.

The goal of NYC is to maintain the plausibility of the story and to simply enjoy playing all the other characters. NYC will not necessarily oppose the Law, though some of NYC’s characters will certainly be in opposition to the Law. Instead, NYC’s goal is provide an interesting backdrop in which the Law’s characters can play out their struggle for the truth.

**An Overview**

A game of *Trial & Terror: SVU* can be broken up into eight different phases. Some phases will have time limits, others won’t. Some have specific rules that don’t apply to the others. And some are just there for the fun of it. These phases are:

- **Making Characters**—First, the Law players should work together to make up their detective and prosecuting teams. This shouldn’t take much more than 20 minutes.
- **Making the Promo**—After the characters are made, NYC will set the stage with a brief promo of the upcoming episode. During the promo, the Law will get a chance to showcase their characters with a few sound bites. This should take about 5 minutes.
- **Break for 5 to 10 Minutes**—So NYC can get it together.
- **The Investigation**—This begins with NYC describing the crime scene as the detectives first come upon it. For no more than one hour, play out how the cops investigate the crime and help bring a case to the assistant district attorneys.
- **Meal & Arrest**—Following the investigation half of the game, the detectives will meet over food somewhere and discuss their case so far. After the meal, they cut to the arrest scene where they bring in their suspect, read them their rights, and go over the charges and possible sentencing.
- **The Trial**—For no more than one hour, play out the assistant district attorneys’ attempt at bringing the criminal to justice.
- **Closing Arguments, Jury Deliberation, & Sentencing**—The assistant district attorneys present their final argument, as does the defense attorney. NYC makes a secret roll to determine the verdict and waits until the anticipations is thick enough to cut with a meat cleaver before announcing the sentencing.
- **Coda**—The players should share a quick scene following the trial in which they make pithy remarks or sound vaguely remorseful.
Plausibility and Consent

The imagination is a delicate creature and when you’ve got three people all trying to imagine the same world, you need make sure you don’t step on any toes. Throughout this game, plausibility and consent will come up over and over. These are just reminders that you’re not the only player at the table.

Whenever something needs to be plausible, such as a suspect’s motive or a theory of how the crime went down, it simply means that all three players have to agree that they can imagine a case in which it is reasonably possible. Sure we have ghosts and things-we-were-never-meant-to-know running bodegas and interning on Wall Street, but that doesn’t mean they won’t act sensibly. When you want to introduce something that has to be plausible, ask your fellow players if they agree with it before proceeding.

Plausible doesn’t mean it has to be true, though. So when someone asks you if you agree with something’s plausibility, don’t fret about it too much. If it seems relatively reasonable and introducing this element won’t break you out of the story, be a sport and go with it.

In effect, when something needs plausibility, it needs the consent of the other players to be introduced into the story. There are other things that might require consent from another player. For example, if the Law wants to set a scene with a character they don’t have in custody, they need NYC’s consent to place that character in the scene.

Just like with plausibility, if someone asks you for consent to introduce something to the game, try to be open-minded. Unless whatever’s being introduced will truly ruin the experience for you, go with it and see where it takes you.

Lastly, crime shows, whether they’re supernatural or not, will deal with some particularly sensitive subjects from time to time. When this happens, just be sure to be sensitive to your fellow players. Don’t force a story on someone about a topic they don’t want to deal with in a game. And if someone introduces something into the story that makes you really uncomfortable, stop the clock and kindly let them know.

Making Characters

Only the Law need make characters for the game. While NYC will be chock-full of characters, the Law’s characters are the protagonists, and the only ones with effects built into the rules.

The Law starts the game by making their characters. There are four roles for the Law players to divide up between themselves: the Rookie Detective, the Veteran Detective, the Junior Assistant District Attorney, and the Senior Assistant District Attorney. Each Law
player must create a detective and an ADA and neither Law player can play both the Veteran Detective and the Senior ADA. So discuss among yourselves and decide who’ll play what.

**The Benefit of Experience**

The Veteran Detective and the Senior ADA have seen things that their junior counterparts have not. To reflect this, their players have the power to introduce facts about the supernatural world into the story. This shouldn’t happen more than once per scene, and only a handful of times during each game.

The facts introduced by the Veteran Detective should focus on how the supernatural world works, or how the supernatural world interacts with the criminal element.

“Don’t sweat it, kid. The boys down in the lab can match the ectoplasmic residue left behind after a possession case like this to the ectoplasm of the possessor—just like DNA.”

While the facts the Senior ADA creates should focus on the legal ramifications of the supernatural presence.

“Hiring a killer is one thing, sir. But the illegal summoning and binding of a sentient demon to do your dirty work is going to add another 50 years to your sentence.”

Once you’ve made up your mind, take a piece of paper and divide it in half. One half will be your cop and the other your prosecutor.

**The Detectives**

On the detective half of your sheet of paper, you’ll have the detective’s name, the promo quote for the detective, and two or three traits that make your detective worthy of the job.

Before setting pen to paper, however, you should talk to your partner. What kind of cops do the two of you plan on playing? What’s their relationship? How long have they worked together? How does the veteran treat the rookie and vice versa? What do they each rely on the other to do?

**The Promo Quote**

Once you’ve got a handle on who’s playing what, now it’s time to turn your eyes to the details. Let’s start with the promo quote. Just before you start the episode, the group will be making a promo. This is a little preview, a hint of things to come. Every character will have a sound bite in this promo that should both reflect the character and let the other players know a little bit about the sort of action you expect to see.

The quote should be evocative and somewhat memorable, but it shouldn’t be too specific. During the episode, when you get a chance to use your quote again, you’ll be able to automatically succeed at something. Such an advantage could change the course of an investigation. So you might want to leave a little room to be flexible in its application. If you’d like, toss in a few ellipses here and there to keep things loose.

If you’re stuck on quote ideas, try a random one from Appendix 2: Random Character Creation.

**The Traits**

Traits are the things that make your detectives good at their jobs. They can be particular skills, supernatural powers, knacks, behaviors, or specialized training. Though traits tend to be abilities and personality quirks, they can be nearly anything about the character on which the show might focus. Later, when you use a trait in a scene, you will be trying to get
something that will be of use in the investigation and it is your trait that will determine the way that is done. Unlike the promo quote, your traits will probably be used more than once, though they may not always be successful.

Each detective will have two or three traits. The number of traits is up to you, but once you’ve decided on what the traits will be, you’ll only have 9 points to divide among them (with no more than 5 points in any given trait). The more points you have in a trait, the more likely the trait is going to help you. Detectives with three traits will have an interesting breadth of experience and ability, but perhaps not as much straightforward effectiveness as officers with only two traits.

When creating a trait, keep it simple and open to interpretation but also, like your promo quote, you want it to be evocative. If you’re having trouble coming up with one, you can try a random one from Appendix 2.

Once you’ve got a promo quote and a few traits (and of course a name) for your detective, it’s time to move on to the other half of your sheet of paper.

The Promo

The Promo is a chance for NYC to hint at the case to come and the Law players to introduce their characters before play begins, all in the guise of a “commercial” for the evening’s events.

When everyone is ready, NYC begins narrating the promo in a dramatic voice. Some examples of good lines to include in the promo are below. Watch a couple commercials for procedural crime shows to get a good idea of how the promo should sound.

At appropriate times, NYC indicates one of the other players to read one of the characters’ promo quotes. The standard order to introducing characters is usually: Veteran Detective, Rookie Detective, Senior ADA, Junior ADA. You may, of course, mix this up if you wish.

Before reading a promo quote, the Law player who has the spotlight should give a brief physical description of the character and may describe the action surrounding the quote. Be entertaining, but it’s best to keep this scene setting vague enough to be able to use it in the episode proper when you need it.

Promo lines you can use!

“…a story ripped straight from the headlines…”

“…a case that hits close to home for one cop…”

“…a suspect with nothing to lose…”

“…but will they make the arrest in time?”

“…and when the trial begins, all bets are off…”

“…a make-or-break case for one district attorney…”
“...and you won’t believe who’s found guilty...”

“...a surprise that will leave you breathless...”

**The Break**

After the promo is made, NYC will want a little time to collect their thoughts and make a few notes on what the other players did with their quotes.

The job in front of the NYC may seem daunting, but it really isn’t. When you start the first scene in a few minutes, you should have a firm idea of what the crime is, and a handful of possible suspects. It is not necessary at this time to know exactly who did it. In fact, it might be dangerous to set that ahead of time. Just make up a few folks with the means, motive and opportunity. Swiftly jot these characters down and figure out how they all relate to one another.

It should become more evident during the investigation phase who actually did it. Planning that ahead of time may leave you with stymied Law players. Instead, take this time to review what the other players put in the promo and consider ways you might be able to bring those scenes about. For example, if one quote seemed to hint at gunplay, you’ll want make a suspect prone to such violence.

The important thing is not to sweat it. Your job throughout this game will primarily be to react to the Law.

When you’re ready to start the rest of the game, you can read this:

"Within the organizations of criminal justice, all people, be they living or undead, are represented by two separate yet equally vital groups: the detectives who investigate supernatural offenses, and the district attorneys who prosecute the offenders. These are their macabre tales."

**Story Templates**

NYC players looking to make things easier on themselves can use the following templates to guide how they’ll handle their portion of the game:

• Start off with a crime scene and enough leads to keep the mystery up in the air, but not much else. Follow the Law’s lead and see where they take the investigation. For the most part, let the Law’s theory for how the crime went down hold as true or quite close to true.

• Start off with a crime scene and most of the leads pointing to a clear suspect, but shield that suspect with powerful obstacles. Perhaps they are pillars of the community or enjoy diplomatic immunity or are informants for the Feds. Something that will create trouble for the Law as they pursue them.

• Start off with a crime scene and several leads, like the first way; but after they’ve closed in on suspect (and probably at some point during the trial phase) hit them with a twist. Someone framed someone else. Someone’s admitting to the crime in order to protect someone else. Someone was possessed. And so forth. The key to this one is to play it loose. Once again, follow the Law’s lead after the twist and let their new theory for the truth at least appear to be true.
Making the Case

The next few sections of this book and the bulk of the game will belong to the investigation and the trial phases. During these phases, the Law will be jumping from scene to scene trying to build their case for justice. These phases are specifically:

- The Investigation
- Meal & Arrest
- The Trial
- Closing Arguments, Jury Deliberation, & Sentencing

Each of these phases have rules that govern how they work and what happens during them, but they all share a set of common rules that we’ll discuss here.

Scenes

The phases are made up of scenes. These are how the Law’s characters get from place to place, and time to time. A scene is a distinct setting—a specific place and time, such as the suspect’s office during work hours or in judge’s quarters during recess—where a group of characters are present. All scenes must have at least one Law character in it.

Anyone can call for any scene they feel would follow naturally. But, with the exception of a few specific scenes, most scenes will be called for by those playing the Law. When the Law sets a scene with NYC characters they don’t currently have in custody, they must have consent from NYC to include the characters. Normally, NYC shouldn’t deny them these scenes. This rule exists to prevent the Law from shortcutting an investigation by setting scene where they’ve already caught their main suspect. But, even in extreme cases, it may be best for the story just to go ahead and let the Law shape the sort of scene they want.

No scene can have a Law player playing both his or her detective and ADA characters at once. Although, it is perfectly acceptable to have one Law player playing a detective and the other an ADA in the same scene. Which is
to say that each Law player can only be playing one character at a time in any given scene. Note also that it’s okay to have a scene with only one Law character in it, such when the characters split up.

Players may cut from any scene whenever they want, provided that all the players with characters in the scene consent. Between scenes, players are allowed to discuss things. Indeed they may need to do so in order to suss out what the next scene will be. But you’ll want to keep that sort of communication short. Time is a precious commodity in this game. Cut often and cut without mercy. Do not linger in a scene if there is no immediate reason. It’s better to move on to the next part of the story than to make sure you’ve covered all the angles in particular scene.

**Rolling with the Action**

During the scenes, the Law players act out and describe what their characters are doing, and NYC describes and acts out all the rest. Sometimes this means the NYC characters will cooperate with the Law characters, sometimes it means they will be indifferent, and sometimes it means they will do everything they can to foil the Law. It depends solely on that character’s motives and personality.

When the Law and NYC characters don’t exactly get along is when the magic happens. Any time things are not going the way the Law players would like them to be going, they can use their traits to get their way. If a Law player figures out a way to use one of their character’s traits to their advantage in a scene, they may call for a roll.

To roll, tell everyone what trait you’re using and how it applies to the situation. Let everyone know what you’re specifically trying to accomplish with the trait. If everyone finds that plausible, pick up three 6-sided dice and roll them. If any one of the three dice is equal to or less than the value of your trait, you get what you wanted. Yay you!

If all of the dice are higher than your trait’s value, NYC may make you suffer a setback of sorts, which also must be plausible. This setback cannot drastically change the nature of your character without your consent, and it shouldn’t stop the investigation cold. But it may change the nature of the investigation.

*Detective Murray Washington is rolling his trait 30 Years in the Force, which has a value of 4. His player rolls a 1, 5, and 6 on three 6-sided dice. Since one of the dice is below 4, the detective succeeds at whatever he wanted to do.*

If you rolled for your detective and you succeeded, you can also invest in your ADA’s traits. For every die in the roll that was equal to or less than your trait’s value, you may reduce that trait by 1 and add 1 to one of your ADA’s traits that does not already have a value of 5. When you do this, you need to explain how your detective’s actions in the story might aid the ADAs and their case. You don’t have to be too specific and the connection can be tenuous, but it should be plausible. This is the only way for your ADA’s traits to get points, so make sure you invest as often as you can.

If you rolled for your ADA and you succeeded, you can invest in the Conviction Pool. For every die in the roll that was equal to or less than your trait’s value, you may reduce that trait by 1 and add 1 to the Conviction Pool. The Conviction Pool is what is used at the end of the game to determine if you’ve managed to put the criminal away and for how long. So once again, make sure you invest as often as you can. When you do this, you need to explain how your ADA’s actions might help build a stronger case or convince more of the jury of the defendant’s guilt. Once again, this only needs to be remotely plausible. And don’t sweat it if you switch defendants mid-trial. Your jury karma will roll over to the new defendant.
When rolling during the Trial and Closing Arguments phases, if all of the dice you roll are greater than the value of the trait, then NYC gets a Reasonable Doubt Die which will be used at the end of the game to aid the defendant during the Jury Deliberation. When this happens, NYC should explain how the actions taken in the story that led up to the roll and the fallout hurt the prosecutors’ case.

Detective Lisa Fiorelli has a possible accomplice to the crime in the interrogation room and wants him to cough up the name and whereabouts of his murderous pal. She has a trait called Bad Cop, which has a value of 3. Using stern techniques—shouting, threatening, and generally being mean—she hopes to get the information out of the criminal. Her player rolls a 2, 2, and 5 on three 6-sided. Since two of the dice are below 3, Detective Fiorelli breaks down the accomplice’s defenses and gets him to spill his guts. Her player may also invest 2 points from the Bad Cop trait into one or more ADA traits.

During a research scene, DA Valerie Trimarco wants to roll her Smart trait to find a precedent in the law books that she will bring up later in the court room to support her case. Her Smart trait is currently 4 and she rolls the dice and gets three 4s. Since she has rolled less than or equal to 4 on all three dice, she may now invest as many as 3 points from her Smart trait into the Conviction Pool. She decides to invest all 3. The Conviction Pool is now 3 points higher, and Valerie’s Smart trait is 1.

Detective R. J. Colt is chasing a murder suspect through the crowded streets of Zombie Town. Despite his several shouts of “Freeze!,” the bad guy continues to run. The detective feels that he has no choice but to draw his sidearm and take the scum down with a few nonlethal shots. Luckily, he has a trait Crack Shot at a value of 2. His player rolls a 3, 4, and 6. Bad luck. Since none of the dice are below 2, Detective Colt doesn’t shoot his suspect. NYC introduces that a couple of his bullets have struck some shambling passersby, who will no doubt be at the precinct later to file formal complaints.

During closing arguments, DA Vladimir Smith decides to use his Vampiric Charisma to deliver a dramatic speech that will further convince the jury to convict the suspect. His Vampiric Charisma trait is down to 1. He rolls the dice and gets 2, 3 and 6. Rather than adding a point to the Conviction Pool, NYC now gets an additional Reasonable Doubt Die to be rolled at Jury Deliberation and explains to the player that Vladimir’s Vampiric Charisma has backfired, frightening the jury and making them less likely to side with the prosecution.

Billy has 4 apples and Jill has 3. Billy gives half of his apples to Jill. Now Jill has 5 (her 3 plus the 2 Billy gave her).

**Defaulting**

If you don’t have an appropriate trait, but you still wish to make a roll—perhaps to convince an uncooperative witness to do a line up or to tackle a fleeing suspect—you may default to your Detective or ADA trait of 2. No points from this trait may be invested into either the ADA or the Conviction Pool, but sometimes you need this just to get yourself out of a jam.
The Promo Quote

If you used a promo quote just before making this roll, you automatically succeed. Make the roll as normal, and now you may invest 1 additional point from the trait, just as if you rolled an additional die that came up as a 1.

Rolling Review

- Determine the trait you are using. This trait should make sense for the roll. If not, you might have to default instead.

- Explain the results you want to get from the roll.
  - Detectives: If you aren’t defaulting, the stakes of this roll should somehow aid the ADAs in their case.
  - ADAs: If you aren’t defaulting, the stakes of this roll should somehow help bring the jury over to your side.

- The Law rolls three 6-sided dice.

- If one of the 6-sided dice equals the value in your trait, you have succeeded and you get the results you wanted. Otherwise NYC has the option to create a setback.
  - Detectives: For every die that equals your trait or less, you may invest a point from this trait into any of your ADA’s traits.
  - ADAs: For every die that equals your trait or less, you may invest a point from this trait into the Conviction Pool.
  - NYC: If this failure happened during the Trial or Closing Arguments phases, you gain a Reasonable Doubt Die and you should explain how the incident hurt the prosecutors’ case.

What Are the Odds?

We had our forensic accountants do a little number crunching for you:

- A trait of 5 has over a 99.5% chance of succeeding and over a 57% chance of investing three points in one roll.
- A trait of 4 has over a 96% chance of succeeding and almost a 30% chance of investing three points in one roll.
- A trait of 3 has an 87.5% chance of succeeding and a 12.5% chance of investing all its points in one roll.
- A trait of 2 has over a 70% chance of succeeding, but only a 3.7% of investing both its points in one roll.
- A trait of 1 has over a 42% chance of succeeding and investing that single point.

Trial Precedent: Bohl v. Newman

You may make as many rolls in a scene as you can plausibly fit. And you are under no obligation to make any rolls at all.

Driving for Conviction

As the detectives make rolls, they pass points from their traits down to the ADAs’ traits. And as the ADAs make rolls, they pass points from their traits down to the Conviction Pool. The Conviction Pool will be used at the end of the trial to determine whether or not the defendant was found guilty and how severe the sentencing was. You’ve already learned a bit about that; but let’s go over it a little more in detail, because it is the main focus of the game, and therefore rather important.

The points always follow this path:
Detective Traits → ADA Traits → Conviction Pool

Detective Lucas Buck has 4 points in his Dark, Dreamy Looks trait. He and his partner were going to go down to city hall to check on some real estate records. Normally, this wouldn’t be a problem. The Law can set a scene at city hall where they are looking through the records and NYC would be obliged to give them the results of their search. But Detective Buck’s player wants to burn off some of those 4 points. So he says that there’s a huge backlog for requesting records and he must charm a young clerk into putting them at the front of the queue. Everyone agrees that this is plausible and the dice are rolled—possibly with the benefit of moving the points down the line.

Because rolling is the only way to move points, the Law will want to roll and they will probably want to roll often. To help them out, Law players are allowed to create conflict where there might not have been conflict before. They can pick a trait and find a way to make that trait important to scene in which it wasn’t previously prominent.

To shift a point down the line (either into an ADA’s trait or into the Conviction Pool) you must succeed on a roll against a trait with points in it. For every die that shows a number equal to or less than the value of the trait being used, you can shift one point from that trait one down to the next step in the line.

Only points from detective traits can be added to ADA traits. You can only add points to your own ADA. You may divide the points up however you like among your ADA’s traits, but you can’t raise any single ADA trait to a value higher than 5.

Only points from ADA traits can be added to the Conviction Pool. Both Law players share the same Conviction Pool and there is no limit to how many points you can add to the pool. Though, with each player only starting off with 9 points, you’ll never have a Conviction Pool with more than 18 points.
Cold Trail

When investigating a crime you’re going to need a plausible theory for how it occurred which should include one or more suspects. Moreover, these suspects are going to need a motive for committing the crime, the means to pull it off, and the opportunity to do it. If you’re ever at a loss of what to do next in the story, you can always ask yourself which pieces of the puzzle don’t fit yet and start a scene looking into one of them.

When it comes to making an arrest, your subject should have plausible means, motive, and opportunity. Or at least two out of the three. Hell, let’s be honest, even one would be nice. Your ADAs have made more out of less, but for each of these you have at the time of the arrest, you will gain a bonus (see the Meal in the Investigation).

Hot Pursuit

Sometimes things can get heated. A perp jumps out an apartment window, shots are fired, tall fences in dark alleys are leapt over in a single bounds. And when there’s action, there’s an opportunity for investing points.

Altercations with suspects usually have two sides: the Law and the NYC characters trying to elude them. Law players can try to extend these scenes to get as many points out of them as they can. When handling a chase, there are a few rules to keep in mind.

- The Law must succeed at a roll in order to catch a fleeing suspect.
- A fleeing suspect cannot get away unless the Law has failed two rolls in a row.
- There is no need to justify points the Law invests during these rolls. Just run with it.

The Law may decide which characters are making what rolls when as long as the traits they are using are plausible. And don’t forget, even without any trait points left, Law characters can always default to 2.

The Investigation

The Investigation should be dominated by the detectives. The Law will have exactly one hour of real time to shift as many points from their detectives into their ADAs. They do this by playing out scenes in which they track down leads, find clues, talk to witnesses, spend time in the crime lab, and so forth.

It all begins with the Crime Scene—a scene set by NYC in which the detectives first come upon the evidence of a crime. NYC should take this opportunity to set the stage of the story and relish a bit in the details. Mood lighting, stormy weather, odd hours of the night, a chalk outline in playground, a shattered display case at the Egyptian exhibit. The detectives arrive on the scene and usually there are a few uniformed cops there ahead of them, eager to relate what they’ve learned so far and hand the case over.

Once you’ve started the first scene check your clock, set your timer. The Law has one hour. Go!

Seriously, go!

All right, if you want some ideas, here are some scenes you can use to get you started. For each scene we've included an example of a roll you might make during that scene and why that roll would contribute points to your ADA character.

Crime Scene

After NYC has set the stage by describing the crime scene to the law, the detectives can go to work looking for clues.

Example Roll: A player might roll their Werewolf Senses trait. A success could
support the prosecution's case because the detective has used their werewolf senses to sniff out some clues.

Searching for Evidence
Similar to searching a crime scene, the detectives might search the victim's apartment, the victim's friend's car, a graveyard that the suspect has been known to haunt, or any other relevant location looking for clues and evidence.

Example Roll: A player might roll their Night Owl trait. A success could support the prosecution's case because the detective has stayed up all night searching for clues.

Crime Lab
The detectives go to the crime lab to learn information gained from an autopsy, a DNA test, a ballistics analysis, etc. The crime lab scene is somewhat special in that the detectives aren't investigating so much as they are reaping the benefits of someone else's investigation. NYC should give them some information to help them along their way, but since the Law is always looking for excuses to roll dice, they might want to make a roll while they are there.

Example Roll: A player might roll their Doesn't Miss a Thing trait. A success could support the prosecution's case because the detective has noticed an additional clue that the crime lab has missed.

Meeting Contacts
The detectives meet up with informants who may have info relevant to the case.

Example Roll: A player might roll their Charming trait. A success could support the prosecution's case because the detective charms their contact into divulging helpful information.

Questioning
Over the course of their investigation, the detectives will probably learn names of people who may have info about the case. These people might not be as friendly as contacts (above) so getting info from them may be more difficult or even dangerous.

Example Roll: A player might roll their Bad Cop trait. A success could support the prosecution's case because the detective has intimidated someone into giving them info.
Chase
Sometimes eyewitnesses don't want to be questioned and suspects don't want to be apprehended, so the detectives need to give chase! See the Hot Pursuit section for more info about chases.

Rumble/firefight
Sometimes rather than running from the cops, a perp (or a witness or a disgruntled contact or even a random stranger) will put up a fight! If the person or people are fighting in order to avoid being caught, this is essentially a chase and you should use the Hot Pursuit rules. Otherwise, you can treat this like any other scene.
Example Roll: A player might roll their Glutton for Punishment trait. A success could support the prosecution's case because the detective is taking a beating from someone and, in the process, that someone slips up and reveals a clue.

Playstorming
The detectives get together to create a roleplaying game by starting out with a vague idea and letting that idea evolve and grow by playing the game.
Example Roll: A player might roll their character's Snacking trait. A success could support the prosecution's case because the detective eats lots of salty snacks while playstorming, this increasing playstorming efficiency.

The Meal
During the Investigation, the Law has a special scene in which both their characters share a meal. This can take place anywhere and at anytime. In a diner, sharing some donuts in an unmarked car on stake-out, walking in the park while enjoying some hotdogs, sipping hot chocolate while taking a horse buggy ride through a moonlit Central Park, what have you. Stop the clock and savor this enchanting moment.

When you call for your meal scene, you’re done with the Investigation and ready to make an arrest. While chewing away, the detectives should discuss the case as they see it so far, narrowing down the suspects, and finally deciding which suspect or suspects to bring in for the ADAs to prosecute. By having this discussion, the Law will be able to gain bonus dice in the next scene (which will automatically be the Arrest scene).

There are three bonus dice available, one for a plausible theory of each of the following:

- The suspect’s motive for committing the crime.
- Whether or not the suspect had the means to commit the crime.
- And whether or not the suspect had the opportunity to commit the crime (which would probably mean discrediting an alibi).

These dice are only available during the Arrest phase, which will occur immediately after the Meal. The Law may divide them up however they wish and use them on any roll during that scene. When a bonus die is used, roll it along with the three dice you would normally roll. It works just like a regular die in respects to determining whether or not you’ve succeeded and how many points you can invest in your ADA’s traits. But once you’ve used it, you cannot use that bonus die again.

Remember, plausible does not mean the theories have to be true. The detectives could have the wrong person altogether, but as long as it is possible that their theories are true, they should gain the bonus dice.
Time’s Up!

If the Law has not made an arrest by the time the hour is up, cut immediately to the interior of the chief’s office. Both detectives should be there, as well as the chief and anyone else NYC wants in.

“I don’t want to hear any more excuses! I’ve got the commissioner breathing down my neck, the mayor calling me at home! I need an arrest and I need it last week!”

You get the picture. NYC should take a moment and chew the detectives out. Then everyone should hash out who they’re going to arrest in the next scene.

The Arrest

Whether you’ve run out of time or you’ve had your Meal scene or you just plain think you’re ready to move on, you will always end the Investigation with the Arrest.

Set a scene with your primary suspect. This is a case where the NYC cannot deny you access to a character, although that doesn’t mean the character you’re about to arrest will go quietly.

The Arrest scene plays out like any other, even though it’s off the clock, and you can use it as an opportunity to get those last few trait points down to your ADAs before the Trial begins.

Once you have the suspect in custody, the detectives must read them their rights, go over the charges before them and make a point of emphasizing the maximum penalty these charges hold. All of those details are up to you. Go wild.

The Trial

Set that clock again, it’s time for the ADAs to shine. This is much like the Investigation, but focused on the ADAs and the trial itself. The Law has one hour to build a case, and move as many points as they can into the Conviction Pool.

Be careful! Every time you fail during the trial, NYC will gain a Reasonable Doubt Die for the defendant. Too many of those and you’ll end up sabotaging your own case.
The following are some scenes that the Law or NYC may set during the trial. These are just examples and by no means a complete list. Feel free to get creative when setting scenes during the trial. For each scene we've included an example of a roll you could make during that scene and why that roll could contribute points to the Conviction Pool.

**Grand Jury**
The DAs go before the judge and make their case for why the suspect should be tried in a court of law.
*Example Roll:* A player might roll their character's Passionate about My Cases trait. A success could contribute to the Conviction Pool because the DA presents their case with such passion and conviction that the defense attorney is intimidated, thus hampering his performance and giving the DAs an advantage before the trial even begins!

**Jury Selection**
The DAs and defense attorneys work together to select a group of unbiased jurors from panels of citizens.
*Example Roll:* A player might roll their character's Sex Appeal trait. A success could contribute to the Conviction Pool because at least one member of the jury finds the DA attractive and will be more inclined to vote in their favor when the time comes.

**Opening Statements**
The attorneys start the trial by presenting their case to the jury in the form of a speech.
*Example Roll:* A player might roll their character's Lycanthropy trait. A success could contribute to the Conviction Pool because, during the speech, the DA knows just the right moment to change into a werewolf for dramatic effect, making his speech that much more moving and convincing to the jury.

**Witness Examination**
The DAs question their witnesses and the witnesses of the defense. They can also introduce evidence during these scenes.
*Example Roll:* A player might roll their character's Steely Gaze trait. A success could contribute to the Conviction Pool because the DA's Steely Gaze has unsettled a witness for the defense, causing them to slip up and say something that supports the prosecution's case.

**Research**
The DAs hit the law books to look for precedents that will support their case.
*Example Roll:* A player might roll their character's Midnight Oil trait. A success could contribute to the Conviction Pool because the DA stays up late to find an obscure ruling in a law history book that they can bring up in court the next day to support their case.

**Judge's Chambers**
The DAs meet with the judge and defense attorney (and possibly others) in the privacy of
the judge's chambers to discuss the case off the record.

Example Roll: A player might roll their character's Politics trait. A success could contribute to the Conviction Pool because the DA convinces the judge that a conviction in this case could help the judge's career, thus causing the judge to rule in favor of the prosecution when it comes to sustaining objections, allowing evidence, and the like during the trial.

DA Investigation
The DAs hit the streets to learn more about the facts surrounding the case, perhaps collecting witnesses or evidence in the process.

Example Roll: A player might roll their character's Underworld Contacts trait. A success could contribute to the Conviction Pool because they manage to meet up with a contact who knows something incriminating about the suspect which will later be brought up in court.

Closing Statements
The attorneys sum up their cases to the jury before deliberation.

Example Roll: A player might roll their character's Monster Psychology trait. A success could contribute to the Conviction Pool because the closing statement contains a convincing psychological explanation of why the suspect would have been motivated to commit this crime.

Reasonable Doubt
The Reasonable Doubt Die is the defendant’s version of the Conviction Pool and really their only defense against it. So it’s worth going over how they are acquired one more time. Anytime the Law fails a roll during the Trial or Closing Arguments phases, NYC gains a Reasonable Doubt Die, which is, of course a 6-sider.

It doesn’t matter whether the Law is rolling for an ADA or a detective, if the roll occurs during those two phases, it is susceptible to a Reasonable Doubt Die.

Closing Arguments, Jury Deliberation, and Sentencing

With the trial hour completed, the Law must make its closing arguments. The ADAs summarize their case for the court, paying close attention to present plausible theories for the suspect's motive, means, and opportunity. This is also a final chance for the Law to make a few rolls and transfer any remaining points into the Conviction Pool. After the Law is finished, NYC may present the defense's closing arguments, if dramatically appropriate.

NYC then moves onto Jury Deliberation. Mechanically, this is represented by NYC rolling, in secret, three 6-sided dice plus any Reasonable Doubt Dice gained during the trial. Record the three highest dice rolled and compare them to the Conviction Pool to determine the severity of the sentencing as described below.

- If the Conviction Pool is less than the highest die rolled (or the three highest dice are all 6s), then the suspect is declared not guilty.
- If the Conviction Pool is less than the total of the highest and the lowest dice rolled, then the suspect is declared guilty, but given only a slap on the wrist.
- If the Conviction Pool is greater than, or equal to, the total of the highest and the lowest dice rolled but lower than the total of all three dice, then the suspect is declared guilty and given a fair sentence.
- If the Conviction Pool is greater than, or equal to, the total of all three dice, then the suspect is declared guilty and given the maximum sentence. And usually a stern dressing down by a particularly self-important judge.
Assistant District Attorneys Ramirez and Maguire have presented a very solid case against their ghoulish defendant, Horace T. Pennywise, and have racked up a Conviction Pool of 13 points. However, they made a few missteps along the way, and NYC has gained 2 Reasonable Doubt Dice. At the end of the trial, NYC rolls five 6-sided dice for a result of 1, 3, 4, 4, and 6. The three highest dice are 4, 4, and 6, for a total of 14. Mean old Mr. Pennywise is found guilty of murdering, dismembering, and snacking on several Girl Scouts. On the charge of Murder 1, he is given five life sentences, to be served concurrently. On the charge of Nonconsensual Cannibalism, he is given only 100 years and the possibility of parole in 50. Not the maximum sentence, but definitely not a slap on the wrist. The ADAs are pleased they put the ghoul away but they know that they could have done better.

You've already determined the maximum possible sentence for the crime or crimes committed during the Arrest phase, so NYC should have no problem deciding how to apply the results of the Jury Deliberation roll. Keep the Law in suspense for a few moments, however, and then announce the verdict and subsequent sentencing. Give your words here a healthy dollop of gravitas. This is a solemn court of law, after all.

**The Coda**

Once the suspect has been sentenced, it's time for the Law to reflect on the job they've done. The Coda is a purely role-playing scene wherein the players may exult in their triumphs, wallow in their failure, or simply ponder their humanity (or lack of it). The first Law player to come up with an appropriate capper for the episode should set this scene, which should play out like any other scene. Except that there won't be any rolling.

**Epilogue**

Keep safe and good hunting.
Appendix 1: Sample Cases

- There is a beheading at the Little Miss Corpse Pageant.
- A bigfoot game designer is killed by a stray bullet shot through his apartment window.
- A convicted killer is strangled in his cell by an invisible hand.
- A deadly gas main explosion is linked to a poltergeist extremist group.
- A ghost suddenly confesses to a murder he obviously didn't commit.
- A ghost takes the law into his own hands to avenge his own murder.
- A homeless mummy is found dead in a subway car that has been spray-painted with hieroglyphics.
- A man appears to have been trampled to death by a horse in the middle of a crowded restaurant.
- A mummy falls to his death from the top of a skyscraper. Suicide? Or murder?
- A popular banshee musician dies of an apparent drug overdose.
- A serial killer targets phony fortune tellers.
- A sewage backup in a high-rise building is caused by the corpse of a gill-man.
- A struggling comedian seems to have been killed by his own ventriloquist dummy.
- A supposedly reformed ghoul cannibal is found dead in a freezer alongside several other frozen (and nibbled on) corpses.
- A vampire is staked by one of his servants. Was it self-defense?
• A werewolf is the victim of a fatal hate crime.
• A young boy is killed when there is a vampire/werewolf turf war.
• An arsonist burns down an apartment with a family of zombies trapped within.
• An elderly woman stumbles upon the murdered corpse of a demon in her sitting room.
• Anti-vampiric terrorist attack blows the roof off of a mausoleum in Little Transylvania in broad daylight.
• The ashes of a vampire prostitute found in the trunk of Police Commissioner Van Helsing's car.
• The body of a giant bipedal lizard found in central park... covering the entire park.
• Children are devoured by the monster found at end of this book.
• Clowns!
• Desiccated body parts are discovered across the city in unusual locations.
• Domestic dispute at the Frankenstein residence turns deadly.
• Eddy Krueger key to solving Eddy Krueger copycat case.
• Multiple slayings at Metropolitan Opera House force the season to end early.
• Someone stumbles upon the corpse of an invisible man.
• The main suspect in a vampiric killing has diplomatic immunity.
• The mayoral candidate seems to be involved in the illegal creation and subsequent death of a Promethean (Frankenstein’s monster).
• The murder of an employee at Jekyll & Son coincides with a hostile takeover by Hyde industries.
• The son of a mummy real estate tycoon is murdered.
• The stench of sulphur nearly overpowers the site of a prostitute’s death.
• Werewolf movie star is killed when a prop gun is loaded with silver bullets.
• Dr. Herbert East is discovered face-down in a pool of viscous fluid.

Appendix 2: Random Character Creation

Not feeling very creative? Want to whip up characters in less than 5 minutes? Then randomly generate your characters using these handy charts.

Promo Quotes

Roll 2d6 (preferably of two different colors). Read one die as the tens place and the other as the ones place. Do this twice. Assign one quote to your Detective and one to your ADA.

11 "... because frankly, I don't trust humans."
12 "... because I know how monsters think, damn it!"
13 "Gimme the keys, I'm driving!"
14 "I don't take no crap from nobody!"
15 "I may look like a child, but I am older than you will ever be."
16 "I need another drink."
21 "I swore an oath to protect this city from scum like you."
22 "If ya ask me, we should have never given zombies the right to vote!"
23 "If you remember the case of New York vs Nosferatu in 1976..."
24 "In all my 150 years on the force, I've never seen anything like this."
25 "It always works out in the end."
26 "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, your decision on this case may change our city forever."
31 "Run!!!!!"
32 "The chief isn't gonna like this."
33 "Things were different back in Transylvania."
34 "This isn't about the law, it's about justice."
35 "You can curse all the gods in the heavens...but when you step on my Constitution..."
36 "Let's take this dirtbag down."
41 "This is how we do things where I come from."
42 "This has gone far enough."
"My city, my rules."
"Leave it to me, chief."
"I didn't sign on for this kind of spooky shit."
"I'm too old for this crap."
"Let me tell you a little story…"
"Your honor, permission to treat this witness as hostile."
"I may be dead, but I'm not stupid."  "I'm sure we can come to an…amicable…agreement."
"I don't care if your father is Vlad the Impaler, you do as I say…"
"I know a guy who might be able to help."
"You ain't in the Academy any more, kiddo."
"To me, you're nothing but garbage."
"Tell it to the judge."
"To enforce the law, sometimes you need to break the law."
"You think this is a game? Well it's not!!"
"Your honor, in the words of my father, who I know is a good friend of yours..."

**Traits**

Roll 2d6 (preferably of two different colors). Read one die as the tens place and the other as the ones place. Do this 1d3+3 times. Assign the traits to your Detective and ADA as appropriate. You’ll have to assign the points yourselves, tough guy.

11 1,000 Years of Experience
12 Always Smiling
13 Encyclopedic Legal Knowledge
14 Friends with the Judge
15 Ghostly Servant
16 Good Cop
21 Inhuman Strength
22 Intimidating Middle Initial
23 Knows City Like Back of Hand
24 Never Smiles
25 Political Savvy
26 Punchy
31 Razor-Sharp Claws
32 Religious
33 Sex Appeal
34 Snakes For Hair
35 Stunt Driver
36 Unorthodox
41 Wheeling and Dealing
42 Steely Gaze
43 Crack Shot
44 Unrelenting
45 Fresh Faced
46 Underworld Contacts
51 Werewolf Senses
52 Bad Cop
53 Commanding Tone
54 Rhetoric
55 Glutton for Punishment
56 Read Body Language
61 By the Book
62 Unnerving Presence
63 Streetwise
64 Detective's Instinct
65 Friend in the Crime Lab
66 Wife and Kids
What is Playstorming?

Playstorming is our favorite way to make games at ISS. It works like this: One of us is too lazy to come up with a whole idea for a game so we play with whatever little we’ve got. We think about what we want the game to do and develop rules as we play.

Our Playstormosophy:

- *From chaos, order is born.* The playstormers should be ready to drop everything and immediately implement any changes that appeal to them. There should be no attachment to the flow of the game. Stop, change, evolve, enjoy.

- *Each playstormer is responsible for their own fun.* The game-bearer need not worry about entertaining the rest of us. Each of us will suggest the rules and modifications that we feel will make the experience more enjoyable for our own selves.

- *To be a game-bearer is to be alone.* The game-bearer decides which rules, if any at all, will ultimately be used. When putting together the final game, they are under no obligation to accept any of the suggestions previously playstormed. It is a terrible responsibility that they alone must bear.

- *The new world after the storm.* While the game-bearer is under no obligation to accept any suggestions, playstorming works best when everyone involved has an open mind. You may walk out of playstorming with a totally different game than the one you walked in with. That new game may be even more awesomer and beyond.

What is the Imagination Sweatshop?

High above the Earth in a half-finished space station purchased illegally from the Chinese government, the Imagination Sweatshop is committed to bringing you the finest games our unskilled laborers are forced to produce. We strive to celebrate the sheer joy of design by constantly playstorming our products, in an easy-to-manage 16 hour workday. We then document the process online, so that you can join us on this creative rocketship to the future. The future is games!
Within the organizations of criminal justice, all people, be they living or undead, are represented by two separate yet equally vital groups: the detectives who investigate supernatural offenses, and the district attorneys who prosecute the offenders. These are their macabre tales.