

Hex Games presents a QAGS production of a Qik Pak adventure

TERROR AT CAMP WAKA'NAKA



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QIK

Q

PAK

What Is QAGS?

QAGS (pronounced "kwags") is the Quick-Ass Game System, sold separately. QAGS emphasizes fun and ease of play over math. All stats and mechanics in this book refer to QAGS, but can be easily converted to other systems.

How Do I Use This Book?

This Qik Pak is a role-playing adventure and, as such, is written exclusively for the gamemaster. It includes a scenario, PCs, NPCs, plot twists, and a variety of locations, but it will not run itself. Remember that the greatest asset a GM has is the ability to improvise. As always, feel free to change or ignore anything written here to suit your game. To learn more about using horror in your role-playing games, check out *Spooky QAGS*, coming in October 2001.

"Here in the beautiful Wakanagohelia River Valley lies Waka'Naka, which means 'House of the Silent Trees' in the language of the Nakamura Indians who first populated these lush green hills. From the heights high above [Camp Waka'Naka], you can see all of the Wak Valley, the town of Riverside, and the forests that first drew settlers to this region."

-Ken Slepyan,
Historian and Author of
The Waka'Naka Experience

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THE BEGINNING...

The fire crackled delightfully as the campers gathered around it on their last night at Waka'Naka. It was late, but no one wanted to end the night. One of the older campers turned to the camp director and asked, "Will you finally tell us the story?"

The director looked uncomfortable and shook his head no.

"C'mon," continued the insistent youth. "Tell us about the Thudder."

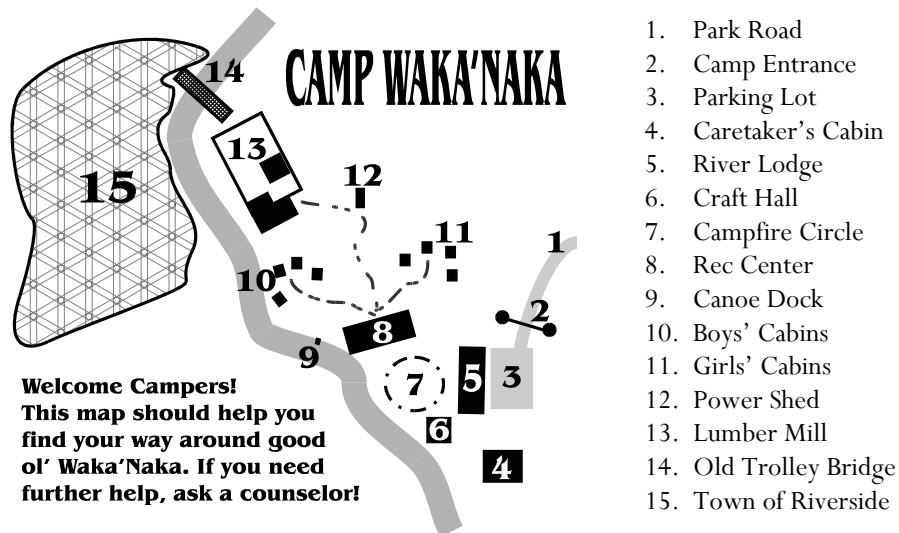
Several others joined in the cajoling, and finally the director relented. He took a deep breath and began to speak.

"Eleven years ago, a psychopath walked the hills and streets of Riverside. He was a killing machine. His calling cards were bodies horribly beaten with a sledgehammer. Eight were found in all: one at the Riverside Chronicle offices, two at the Riverside Library, two in the Naka Industries Administrative offices, and three in or around Camp Waka'Naka. The newspapers called him 'The Thudder,' and the police and FBI tracked him for a year. Then he was caught.

"A jury of his peers found Thomas Shanks, the Thudder, not guilty by reason of mental defect. The court decided that he should be institutionalized. And so he was placed in a hospital where for six years he was cared for and rehabilitated. Finally, he was released.

"And then he killed again. This time, all three murders took place near the Naka Industries Lumber Mill. Once more, terror swept the town of Riverside. The struggling lumber mill closed, its employees scared off by the prospects of death at the hand of a madman. The FBI returned, and again the Thudder was captured. They placed him in a maximum security hospital, where he stayed for several years. Eventually people forgot about the horror of the Thudder. Thomas Shanks was just another patient, so no one noticed when they transferred him to a low security asylum near his old killing grounds. Very soon after, the Thudder escaped again. He headed back to the Wakanagohelia valley.

"At the same time a group of counselors was headed up the park turnpike to get Camp Waka'Naka ready for another summer. They had no idea what they were getting into..."



GOING TO CAMP



Welcome to Camp Waka'Naka. If you have ever wanted to be in a B-Movie slasher flick, then you've come to the right place. This adventure is all about experiencing those campy old horror films without actually getting your throat cut. We provide you with the sets, character ideas, and a villain. It is up to you to make all of this come to life as an exciting experience for your players. You, the Game Master (or GM), are the movie director. Focus on the big picture and the development of the plot. Your players will follow your lead.

Be aware, however, that we do not provide you with a plot, because creating it is the whole fun of the game. *Terror at Camp Waka'Naka* will probably never turn out the same way twice. In these pages we provide the building blocks of an adventure for you and your group. For example, we have divided the likely course of the story into Acts. Each Act contains suggestions, locations, and characters for that part of the story, but feel free to use them wherever they seem appropriate. Remember, you don't create the story alone: your players will be involved in shaping the way things go. All of you will work together to create a great story called *Terror at Camp Waka'Naka*.

The players are actors performing on a stage which you create. That may sound overwhelming, but we have created much of it for you already. Read through this entire book in detail and you will have a good feel for the places your players might go and the people they will meet. You just need to use your imagination and our tips to determine what happens when the players improvise, sometimes creating new characters and settings. Like a director, you will need to make many choices. First, what kind of mood do you want for your game? *Terror at Camp Waka'Naka* is modeled on the campy B-Movie tradition. Encourage your players to adopt the mood by having non-player characters (NPCs) act in appropriate ways. If you use B-Movie conventions early on, the players will recognize them and follow your lead. When NPCs walk in the woods alone at night, or ignore a mysteriously opened window, the PCs will too.

It is also possible to run a serious adventure with this book. Develop a different mood by slowly building the tension and keeping the players in the dark for much of the game. Running a truly scary game is difficult. If you need some help, you should check out *Spooky QAGS*, a whole book devoted to running horror games. However you choose to run *Terror at Camp Waka'Naka*, remember the most important rule: have fun.

The Cast

All of the player characters (PCs) in *Waka'Naka* are camp counselors arriving several days early to prepare the camp for the season. Generally, all of them will be

college students who attended the camp as kids or who need a summer job. We encourage players to develop their own characters, but we provide some classic archetypes to help them build appropriate PCs (see Character Archetypes, below). As the GM, you need to make sure that all of the characters will mesh together and fit with the setting. A Wall Street stockbroker just doesn't work in *Terror at Camp Waka'Naka*. Talk with each player about his or her character concept to make sure it fits the game.

You are responsible for all of the characters not portrayed by the players. These non-player characters (NPCs) provide the PCs with additional information, make the story more vivid, and serve as useful cannon fodder for the Thudder. It is important to establish these characters as unique individuals with personalities, so that their gruesome deaths have more impact.

One character in particular deserves special attention: the Thudder. As the villain, the Thudder is the heart of the game; it is important to know his basic motivations and goals. The Thudder is nuts. Just escaped from an asylum, he is trying to prove himself innocent of an accident that happened fifteen years ago. He wants to recreate the accident with a "jury" watching. To this end, he will try to kidnap the counselors to play parts in this twisted scene.

One of the problems inherent in horror games is that a lot of people die. For the characters to be scared, their lives should be threatened. Of course, killing off PCs leads to bored players with nothing to do. Luckily, the Thudder is trying to kidnap people rather than just kill them, allowing you to dispatch PCs, only to have them return a little later in the game. That does leave those players with nothing to do in the mean time, though, so consider a couple of the following possibilities. Let the player of the missing character take on the role of one of the NPCs (though most of them will be dispatched before the PCs). He or she can even play the Thudder. If you have the luxury of a second GM, he or she solves your problem by keeping the captured PCs occupied trying to escape from the lumber mill. If several player characters are captured, it is probably time to bring the players back together and move to the climax.

It is your job as GM to maintain the mood of the game. Make sure you and your players are in agreement on the type of game you want to play. Reward players who stay in character and who perform appropriately. You can subtly discourage players who are not staying in character by having the Thudder kidnap them or knock them unconscious for awhile.

THE STUPID RULE

One horror movie convention is the sheer stupidity of the leading characters. They walk down dark hallways looking for people who have disappeared. They get into cars with strange men. To encourage this kind of thinking in your players, hand out a Yum Yum whenever a character does something appropriately stupid.

Character Archetypes

Terror At Camp Waka'Naka works best when there is a cross-section of character types. If everyone wants to play the captain of the football team, the game can get a little boring. To solve this problem, we suggest presenting the players with the following list of character archetypes and asking each to choose one as the basis for his or her character. The list speeds the creation process and results in a wider array of character types in the group. Don't insist that only one character from each archetype be created, but do encourage it. More ambitious players can certainly mix and match the archetypes to create more complex characters.

Big Man On Campus

Some people just seem to be in charge. Whether he is captain of the football team or president of the student government, everyone follows the BMOC. He is a charismatic leader who is at the top of the social ladder. The BMOC is often wealthy and good-looking. Variations can include a jerk who treats people like scum or a genuinely nice guy who is well-loved. The BMOC does not have to be male.

Gimmicks: Babe Magnet, Fearless, Tough, Born Leader

Weaknesses: Egomaniac, Code of Honor (sportsmanship), Coward

The Academic

Every school has at least one person who is focused solely on the "A." Being valedictorian isn't a goal for him, it is a holy mission. The Academic studies way more than is healthy, and often supplements academic success with participation in every extra-curricular activity known to man. Be aware that Academics are not always particularly smart; they just study really hard. This kind of tenacity tends to provide them with a rigid worldview about what is right and wrong. Every academic comes equipped with a grindstone attached to his or her nose.

Gimmicks: Well-Read, Esoteric Hobby, Intuition

Weaknesses: Absent-Minded, Big Dork, Near-Sighted

The Rebel

Rebelling is a part of being young, but some people take it to extremes. Rebels usually embrace some strange lifestyle (Goth, biker, drugs, gangster rap, 4-H) to an unhealthy degree. The rebel wants to be different at all costs, and nothing makes her happier than being looked down upon by authority. Rebels usually try to dress differently, act differently, and even smell different than everyone around them. Very rarely, this need to be different is an honest emotion that pulls them along a different path. Usually, it is a desperate plea for attention.

Gimmicks: Tough, Pickpocket, Poet, Friend of Animals

Weaknesses: Addiction, Bad Reputation, Overwhelming Angst

The Expert

Often referred to as a ___ geek (band geek, computer geek, yearbook geek), the Expert is a person who has devoted his life to some arcane activity. These intensely focused souls thrive on being the best at some specific activity. Often this is a response to social failure; you very rarely find dating geeks. They respond to social rejection by forming their own tiny society based around some activity for which others care little. The Expert constantly talks about his specific interest, but can occasionally prove useful when his skills are needed.

Gimmicks: Hacker, Musical Genius, Amateur Detective

Weaknesses: Big Dork, Has Enemy (Bully), Tunnel Vision

Prom Queen

At the top of every social ladder is a Prom Queen. She defines styles and trends for the social scene. The PQ is all about appearance; nothing is more important than the right clothes and the right friends, even when measured against happiness and safety. This can lead to the Appearance Is Everything Weakness, where the PQ will actually risk life and limb to maintain her appearance. PQs are often rich and backstabbing by nature. The PQ often dates the BMOC because having the “right” date is also part of appearance. It goes without saying that a PQ can be male.

Gimmicks: Babe, Wealth, Gossip

Weaknesses: Bad Self-image, Alcoholic, Appearance Is Everything

The Comic

The Comic deals with life by turning it into a joke. Everything is funny and no one is safe. Different Comics have different motivations: many use humor to lash out at the cruel world; others are trying to get attention; and some are simply humorous by nature. Comics have just as many ways of expressing themselves. Most commonly, Comics insult people, but there are also those who perform mostly physical humor, rely on wordplays, or see the funny side of every situation. The social status of a Comic is generally related to the quality of his or her jokes.

Gimmicks: Dumb Luck, Sleight of Hand, Meta-Awareness (Knows he’s in a movie)

Weaknesses: Big Mouth, Overconfidence, Curiosity

Average Joe

Some people just don't stand out. They do the same things as everyone else, eat the same food, listen to the same music. The Average Joe follows the crowd; actually, the Average Joe IS the crowd. Of course, who knows to what heights an Average Joe might be pushed by extreme circumstances? (Say, encountering a psychopath in the woods.)

Gimmicks: Knows Engines, Sense of Direction, Everyone’s Buddy

Weaknesses: Allergic to Poison Ivy, Bad Luck, Coward

The Outcast

Due to looks, hygiene, poverty, attitude, or other reasons some people are utterly rejected by society. They become loners who avoid all social contact. The Outcast may hunger to be around people, but doesn't interact with them well. The Outcast does not even fit into a smaller social circle like the Expert.

Gimmicks: Hide in Plain Sight, Born Woodsman, Observant

Weaknesses: Smells, Stutters, Depression

The Thudder

from A Psychological Profile of the Thudder by Dr. Paul P. Shulnikov, Ph.D., Riverside Jesuit College

In real life the Thudder is Thomas Shanks, although there is some record of his going by Tom instead of Thomas earlier in his life. Shanks' father, Fred Shanks, was killed in a mill accident when Thomas was six. After that, Shanks was raised by his increasingly withdrawn and asocial mother. Although Thomas showed a strong proficiency for language arts and debate, he was trapped in his immediate environment. Soon after his high school graduation he found himself working at Naka Industries.

From all accounts Shanks' work was satisfactory, although he was a loner and never "connected" with his teammates. According to his supervisors, he was eminently reliable. Nevertheless, the surviving members of the unloading crew working the morning of the accident report that it was Shanks' deliberate failure to follow established procedure that cost Alberto Galleni his life. The inquest testimony from both of the surviving crew members indicated that Shanks failed to give the



signal that he and Galleni were beginning the arduous task of knocking out the chock-blocks which, along with the heavy timber chains, held the felled trees in place on the railroad car. Witnesses, however, reported that it was actually the chain gang that released the chains too soon. In any event, the logs fell and Alberto Galleni was crushed beneath them. Outside witnesses reported to police that Shanks seemed to move in slow motion, clearly affected by Galleni's high-pitched screaming. When Shanks had reached Galleni's side, he used his own sledgehammer to kill Alberto by striking him repeatedly on the head.

There are a variety of explanations for this action. The first is that Shanks, seeing the pain that Alberto was experiencing and knowing that he would not survive, put him out of his misery as one would do for a horse with a broken leg. The theory put forth by the other members of the unloading crew is

much more complex and involves Shanks deliberately planning and staging the accident in order to eliminate Galleni, who did not approve of his daughter's romantic involvement with Shanks. My own theory takes into account the sightings and encounters with Shanks since his disappearance the day of the accident.

The accounts of those outside of the unloading crew make it obvious that the accident was not staged and that, in fact, the fault lay with the chain gang. From my observations of Shanks immediately after the accident and from his subsequent activities as the Thudder, I submit to you that he has suffered a disassociative breakdown that makes his behavior appear random to those who don't know him. The disassociative breakdown continues to this day, bleeding aspects of Thomas Shanks' Jekyll and Hyde personalities together. That is to say, to Thomas, his actions and reactions are perfectly logical, reasonable, and justified. To those observing from the outside, he appears as a creature of reflex, reacting in a mechanical, automaton-like fashion to outside stimuli. Shanks' obsession is proving his innocence in the death of Alberto Galleni, but he is crippled by the screaming that he hears in his nightmares. Shanks appears calm and reasonable to most people he encounters, but when he hears screaming, he relives his dreams and his past. This flashback causes him to lash out with violence, desperately trying to silence the screaming. Further, Shanks will go to any lengths to prove his innocence in the original accident. If this requires outrageous acts or

Understanding Thomas "The Thudder" Shanks is key to running *Terror At Camp Waka'Naka*. At the beginning of the game, the Thudder has escaped from Oak Dale Asylum, killed a driver, and stolen his car, letting him return to the lumber mill much more quickly than anyone expected. The Thudder will use the lumber mill as a hideout and begin grabbing hostages to serve in a "trial." This trial involves recreating the accident at the mill with a "jury" observing and "proving" that Alberto Galleni's death was not the Thudder's fault. Of course doing this requires having someone reprise Galleni's role, meaning that he or she will die.

The Thudder is not interested in killing anyone; he just wants to prove himself innocent. He only becomes homicidal when someone screams. That reminds him of Galleni's death, and drives him into a berserker state which will not subside until the screaming does. Of course his attack usually causes more screams, but that's life.

Name: Thomas "The Thudder" Shanks

Who Would Play Him In The Movie?: Matt Kish

Tag Line: "Just stop screaming!"

Body: 16 **Brain:** 12 **Nerve:** 8 **Hit Points:** 18 **Yum Yums:** 4

Job: Psychopath (13)

Gimmicks: Unkillable (13) Roll whenever all HPs are gone. If the roll succeeds then the Thudder regains 5 HPs after a minute.

Weakness: Screaming (16) Whenever someone screams within the Thudder's hearing, roll his Weakness. If the Weakness succeeds, then the Thudder becomes a wild berserker trying to smash the screamer into silence.

ACT ONE: Introduction

It is important to set the mood for your game, right at the start. To this end, we suggest beginning your game by reading “The Beginning. . .” (see page 1) to the players. Depending on how you read the story, you can evoke entirely different feelings. Overact the entire piece to develop the B-movie feel, or use a low, whispering voice to begin building real terror. This framing story leads directly into the opening of the game where your players can immediately pick up the action.

Terror at Camp Waka'Naka begins with the characters arriving at the camp to open it for the summer. Preferably, all of the characters should arrive in a van together, minimizing the number of escape vehicles. Your immediate goal should be to have the players familiarize themselves with the camp and each others' characters. A simple way to accomplish this is for the Assistant Camp Director to announce a list of responsibilities and ask for volunteers or assign each task. This will let each player speak a bit and provide an over-

view of the major camp facilities.

You might also want to have the Assistant Camp Director make a little speech about the camp and the PCs' jobs.

Additional introductory scenes can include having the counselors move into cabins, and a campfire or meal in the evening. These events will finish the process of character exposition and make everyone comfortable with the cast. During this time, you might also want to introduce any other non-player characters (such as the caretaker and the cook). Act One should be very loose, with the players driving most of the activity. If things get too loose, use the Assistant Camp Director to rein in the characters.

Act One should probably last only the first day. It will be up to you to end it, because the players will continue improvising as long as you let them. Too much of this and you might end up with extended and excessive sub-plots that need to be

SAMPLE LIST OF TASKS

1. Campfire Circle- Mow circle and check campfire hearth gas line.
2. Docks- Get canoes out of storage from the Craft Hall and set up Life Guard stand.
3. Craft Hall- Inventory craft supplies and set up all work tables. Clear trail behind hall to caretaker's cabin.
4. River Lodge- Clean offices and administrative staff rooms.
5. River Lodge- Assist cook in cafeteria preparation and kitchen cleaning.
6. Rec Center- Swab down gym floor. Get out pool table and ping-pong equipment. Inventory equipment storage closet. Clear trail behind center to power shed.
7. Boys' Cabins- Clean bath house and clear trail from cabins to Rec Center.
8. Girls' Cabins- Clean bath house and clear trail from cabins to Rec Center.
9. Power Shed- Check all fuses and breakers. Clear trail to camping sites and old mill. Post warning signs on trail to mill.
10. Woods- Work with caretaker to clear all other trails and mow playing field. Repaint camp sign on state park road.

resolved. In a multi-session game of *Waka'Naka* this is a good thing, but in a one-shot session you need to keep sub-plots to a minimum. Once players seem comfortable with their characters, sweep over the rest of the day's events with some quick exposition.

Sets-

The players will be introduced to the entire camp during this Act. You may want to show them the camp map. Except for the buildings around the campfire circle, the camp is covered in heavy forest. The various parts of the camp are connected by overgrown trails which have not been used since the previous summer. The only road



leads from the parking lot next to the River Lodge out the camp gate and through a state park. The town of Riverside is close by, but it is hard to reach because of the swiftly flowing river.

Campfire Circle- This open green space is the heart of the camp. A circular stone hearth dominates the center and is the focus for nightly campfires during the camp season. One side of the circle is bordered by the river, with a small dock and canoe racks, while camp buildings surround the other sides.

River Lodge- The administrative offices and the cafeteria are in this large two-story stone building. The front porch overlooks the campfire circle and functions as the social center of the camp. The cafeteria takes up the first floor; the administrative offices are on the second. Most of the camp staff stay in rooms on the second floor.

Craft Hall- This large log cabin is one open space filled with work tables and craft supplies. It is the oldest building at the camp. Underneath the Craft Hall is a storage cellar that holds all manner of strange items from the camp's past: old canoes, furniture, tools, and records have lain here for years. Younger campers are often sent down here to be scared by hiding pranksters in the gloomy space.

Rec Center- The Rec Center sits opposite the other two buildings on the campfire circle. It has a large gym on the main floor and a small basement containing an old pool table, a ping-pong table, and a storage closet holding games and sports equipment.

Cabins- Behind the Rec Center sit two groups of cabins, one for the boys and one for the girls. Each simple wood cabin holds 10-15 campers and a counselor. Each group of cabins is arrayed in the woods around a common bathhouse. Trails lead from here back to the Campfire Circle.

Power Shed- Between the two sets of cabins is a trail leading to the old lumber mill. When the mill was running, this trail saw many groups of campers headed to and from the mill. Today, the trail only continues to exist because of the power lines that run along it providing the camp's power. The edge of the camp is marked by a small metal shed that houses the circuit breakers and switches for all of the camp's power. Finding this building in the middle of a storm is one of the worst parts of being a Waka'Naka counselor.

Caretaker's Cabin- In the woods behind the Craft Hall is a rickety wooden cabin. The caretaker lives here year round, making sure that the camp survives the winter. Campers are discouraged from getting close to the cabin, so as not to bother the caretaker. Some say it's for the campers' protection.

Characters-

Assistant Camp Director

Jimmy Martin is in charge of the counselors as they prepare the camp. He is the camp director's nephew, which is his only qualification for the job. Though he is the same age as the other counselors, Jimmy's attitude and his abuse of his position will quickly alienate him from them. He is likely to be the first target of any practical joke or of the Thudder's mallet. Jimmy is very useful for controlling the players and uniting their characters in a common dislike.

Name: Jimmy Martin

Who Would Play Him In The Movie?: John Asher

Tag Line: "Pay attention, people."

Body: 10 **Brain:** 12 **Nerve:** 7 **Hit Points:** 10 **Yum Yums:** 2

Job: Assistant Camp Director (15)

Gimmicks: Sucking Up (16)

Weakness: Coward (16)

Caretaker

Old Man McGee doesn't like any of the counselors, but that's because he doesn't like anyone, period. He's been taking care of the camp for thirty years and worked at the mill before that. McGee is your classic crotchety backwoods geezer who is always out doing strange things in the middle of the night and grumbling about the good old days. McGee is especially useful for giving the players information about the Thudder.

Name: John McGee

Who Would Play Him In The Movie?: Denver Pyle

Tag Line: "I remember, 'bout twenty years ago, when. . ."

Body: 9 **Brain:** 13 **Nerve:** 14 **Hit Points:** 10 **Yum Yums:** 3

Job: Camp Caretaker (16)

Gimmicks: Lifetime of Experience (14)

Weakness: Heart Condition (14)

Camp Cook

Martha Lynn Harrison arrives at the camp with the counselors, but she wants no part of them. Martha Lynn took this job because she doesn't know what to do since her husband died. She wants to keep to herself and do her job. Martha Lynn has never been in the woods before and is a little scared of them. She has a tendency to scare easily and scream a lot. Martha Lynn's primary usefulness is as early fodder for the Thudder.



Name: Martha Lynn Harrison

Who Would Play Her In The Movie?: Martha Lynn Harrison

Tag Line: "AAAAIIIGGHHH!!"

Body: 14 **Brain:** 11 **Nerve:** 8 **Hit Points:** 11 **Yum Yums:** 2

Job: Camp Cook (12)

Gimmicks: Scream (14)

Weakness: Scares Easily (14)

ACT TWO: Building the Tension

While the first act presented the settings and characters, Act Two introduces the plot. Players spot the first signs of the Thudder; characters start disappearing; and someone will discover a dead body or two. This act is the heart of the action as the players start asking questions and finding answers. It is up to you to excite the players' curiosity and prepare clues for their characters to find.

Act Two should at first seem to be a continuation of Act One. The characters go about their chores and get the camp ready. The second act begins when you drop the first clue about the terror to come. Some GMs may choose subtlety. Jimmy Martin might warn players to stay away from the mill or Old Man McGee could mention a past disappearance. The more obvious approach is to have a park ranger stop by and mention the escaped mental patient. Other clues should then follow: one of the characters may see a stranger shambling through the forest in the distance; at night, the hammering of a sledgehammer could ring through the trees; a PC may discover the Thudder's escape car in the woods. The important thing is to start throwing these clues in among the normal activities of the camp. Summarize the boring chores of camp and include tidbits to intrigue the players (see the Possible Clue list for some ideas). Slowly increase the seriousness of the clues to draw the players into investigating the events.

There are several possible sources of information for the characters. Old Man McGee has been around for a long time and knows a lot about the history of the mill. He also knows that some kids were kidnapped a few years ago and one of them died, but McGee is a reclusive old coot and will probably not want to talk to the kids. Some whiskey or a

LIST OF POSSIBLE CLUES

1. An NPC warns the characters away from the mill.
 2. Lights are seen at night in the mill.
 3. The players find an abandoned car in the woods near the mill.
 4. Old Man McGee tells the players about a past disappearance.
 5. A park ranger mentions that a mental patient recently escaped near the park.
 6. An NPC disappears without a trace.
 7. A character discovers a tree that has been pounded to pieces.
 8. Fresh boot prints are found outside one of the cabins.
 9. A missing NPC's shoe is found on the trail to the mill.
 10. Blood spatters are found in the woods
 11. Characters stumble upon a fresh grave in the woods.
 12. A dead body is discovered beaten to a pulp.
- (We recommend starting with the more subtle clues at the top of the list and working towards the mallet shots to the face at the bottom.)

good cigar might change that, though. Ranger Johnson is an even better source of information: he knows everything about the Thudder. If you want to keep your players in the dark, keep Johnson away from their characters.

Two other possible sources of information are the mill and the town of Riverside. Going to Riverside requires crossing the river (either by canoe or using the trolley bridge at the mill), but the PCs can find some useful information at the library or the newspaper morgue. If the PCs head over to the mill, there are two possibilities. Early in the game, they will find nothing there. After people start disappearing it is possible to find dead bodies or live captives at the mill. The best course of action at this point is probably to head right on into Act Three. You may still have a host of exciting scenes planned for the PCs; just throw 'em aside and jump into

your exciting climax instead. Above all, avoid heavy-handed means of keeping the characters ignorant if they visit the mill. It will only make everyone unhappy and inevitably lead to arguments. ("We should have found the cook. She was still alive!" "Well the Thudder suspended her from the ceiling with dental floss right behind the light fixture. You guys never said you looked there!") Just let things happen.

As the players start to investigate (or especially if they don't), turn up the pressure by having the Thudder knock off characters. We recommend starting with NPCs like Martha Lynn and Jimmy Martin. They were made to be kidnapped. If you want more blood, remember that the Thudder goes nuts when people scream. Martha Lynn is very likely to scream and thus become human pizza. Feel free to send the Thudder after PCs too, but it's probably best to have those attempts fail. Players generally have little fun once their character is dead or kidnapped. (Check back in the Cast section for some ideas on dealing with this problem.)

Some great places to encounter the Thudder include the Power Shed, the Craft Hall basement, the bathhouse, and of course the woods. The Power Shed is a particularly

great place because it is easy to lure the players there under appropriate conditions. If the lights go out in the midst of a raging storm, someone has to walk down the trail to the shed in the dark and rain. It is the perfect place for an attack. The Thudder may lie in wait for an unsuspecting counselor in the basement of the Craft Hall, or you can use a cat or other animal to generate a false alarm just as the movies do. The shower is a classic location for a horror movie encounter, so feel free to use the bath house—but beware. When the idea of a woman in the shower is presented to certain gamers, the result can be creepier than any horror movie. Finally, the woods always serve as the perfect place to run into the Thudder. The woods are dark, hard to run in, and really big. It's hard to escape the Thudder when the woods just keep going and going. These encounters can help set the mood of your game. Creepy music and sudden yells can put people on edge. Orchestrating a Scooby-Doo chase scene will generate a different mood all together. These encounters will go a long way toward building your story.

If the players never get off their butts and investigate (preferably heading to the mill at some point), you have several options. The most difficult is to capture or kill ALL the PCs. This can take quite awhile and gets old very quickly for the first targets. A better option is to lead the players there with an NPC: Ranger Johnson, Old Man McGee, or even the Thudder can lead the players to the mill. Johnson or McGee can discover the Thudder and go to the players for help (probably after being horribly injured). We heartily endorse a splattering, sudden end to the NPC guide. The Thudder might be very slow in dragging his latest victim to the mill, allowing the PCs to follow him or his trail. However you get the PCs to investigate the mill, once they are there you are ready for Act Three.

Sets-



The Woods— Around Waka'Naka are woods, thick with underbrush. Only on the trails (once they have been cleared) is it easy to move through the woods. Deep in the woods near the mill, the PCs can find a car. This is the vehicle that the Thudder stole after escaping the Oak Dale Asylum. The Thudder and Ranger Johnson both seem to possess a knack for moving through the woods easily. You can be sure that the woods are full of small creatures that make suspicious noises.

Riverside- The town of Riverside is dying quickly thanks to the closing of the mill. Townfolk all remember the heyday of the lumber industry. They are not interested in Camp Waka'Naka. Getting across the swiftly-flowing river is hard enough that the



Camp is isolated from the town. No one uses the rickety old trolley bridge any more, and the river has too much white water for boating. If the players do make it to the town, they will find the townspeople clannish and reserved. They will not want to talk about the Thudder or the mill accident that spawned him. At best, they might go on for awhile about the glory days of the mill. The town library and newspaper morgue both contain articles about the Thudder's origin and his later kidnappings. The newspaper is now closed, so finding the morgue will be a bit difficult. Whenever you feel the players have discovered all they can in the town (or if they are just spinning their wheels), urge them back to camp through the common

advice of the townfolk. "You best not try and cross the river at night. It's tricky 'nuff in the daylight, and deadly at night."

Oak Dale Asylum- Your players may want to visit the Asylum from which the Thudder escaped. It is far out of the way and won't provide much useful information. Oak Dale is a quiet, rural mental hospital built to house around two hundred patients. High security was never a serious concern, so it looks more like a country club than a hospital (except for the straitjackets). If the players visit Oak Dale, they will find out virtually nothing. Remember, these places have medical ethics and rules. It would take a heroic effort (like slipping the desk clerk a twenty) to get information from here. Feel free to use the psychological profile of Shanks (p. 6-7) if the players make such efforts.

Characters-

Oak Dale Desk Clerk

Gary McCommas had aspirations of football glory in high school. The sad tale of his senior-year knee injury and the subsequent downhill path of his life is a riveting story of human tragedy. . . and of absolutely no importance to this game. McCommas' only function is to stonewall the PCs at the asylum and to pass over the Thudder's mental evaluation if bribed. Otherwise he is just another schmuck in a low-paying dead-end job. If the PCs don't eventually leave Oak Hill, Gary's riveting story should be extemporized in great detail to encourage player movement in the right direction.

Name: Gary McCommas

Who Would Play Him In The Movie?: Abraham Benrubi

Tag Line: "I don't know nothing."

Body: 17 **Brain:** 6 **Nerve:** 11 **Hit Points:** 17 **Yum Yums:** 1

Job: Asylum Desk Clerk (9)

Gimmicks: Intimidation (11)

Weakness: Coward (11)

Town Constable

Constable Hill is the law in Riverside. Luckily, the town needs very little law-enforcement. Hill spends most of his days asleep and won't want to be bothered by a group of kids. If they insist that the Thudder is around, he will assure the PCs that Oak Dale is way too far for the Thudder to be in the area already. Further, he will be certain that the state police will catch the maniac before he ever gets close to the area. Constable Hill will not be moved from his ennui without at least a human head as evidence.

Name: Samson T. Hill

Who Would Play Him In The Movie?: Charles Cyphers

Tag Line: "There's nothing to worry about, folks. Oak Dale is miles from here."

Body: 13 **Brain:** 9 **Nerve:** 11 **Hit Points:** 13 **Yum Yums:** 1

Job: Town Constable (10)

Gimmicks: Intimidation (11)

Weakness: Complacency (11)

Newspaper Editor

Former editor of the Riverside Gazette, Mr. Flaherty is now content to tend his orchids. Not surprisingly, the newspaper morgue is in his basement. Flaherty will remember the Thudder kidnappings and the mill accident with a bit of prompting and few compliments for his orchids.

Name: Edward Flaherty

Who Would Play Him In The Movie?: Wilford Brimley

Tag Line: "Feel free to look at the archives in the basement, I'll be in the garden."

Body: 10 **Brain:** 14 **Nerve:** 12 **Hit Points:** 10 **Yum Yums:** 1

Job: Retired Newspaper Editor (16)

Gimmicks: Green Thumb (14)

Weakness: Forgetful (14)

Park Ranger

Ranger Mike Johnson knows the true horror of the Thudder. The first time the Thudder began kidnapping victims, it was a rookie Ranger Johnson who tracked him to the mill and saved the day. Johnson testified at the commitment hearing and is determined to make sure the Thudder never terrorizes the forest again. Ranger Johnson is the first to hear of the Thudder's escape and will quickly warn Camp Waka'Naka, but the asylum is several days' hike from the camp and the mill. Johnson will not be worried for awhile, and does not suspect that the Thudder has already arrived. Ranger Johnson is a useful authority figure who can provide information and warnings. Johnson can also serve as a last-minute savior if the PCs are in trouble. (Of course we at Hex prefer the classic *The Shining* technique of killing Johnson with a brutal sledgehammer to the head just as he arrives to save the day, but that's your choice.)

Name: Mike Johnson

Who Would Play Him In The Movie?: Tommy Lee Jones

Tag Line: "Be careful in the woods, kids."

Body: 13 **Brain:** 12 **Nerve:** 15 **Hit Points:** 13 **Yum Yums:** 2

Job: Park Ranger (11)

Gimmicks: Fearless (13)

Weakness: Vendetta (13) against the Thudder

ACT THREE: The Climax

At Hex, we believe strongly in the originality of the GM. We cherish the unexpected plot twists caused by the players' ideas. We applaud improvisation and spontaneity from everyone in a game. We know every game is unique, but your game is going to climax at the lumber mill. There is just no way around that conclusion. You have a psychopath who is stalking a bunch of counselors, kidnapping them, and dragging them back to the lumber mill. You hope the remaining counselors will try and track the psychopath down. It all just has to end at the lumber mill, preferably in the middle of a thunderstorm.

Now that you have accepted these facts, we can discuss the possibilities in the lumber mill. There are four main courses of action for the PCs. First is the all-out attack, second the stealth approach, third the attempt to get help, and finally the cowardly attempt to escape. Most likely your players will choose some combination of these.



The first course of action is the very manly all-out attack. If you have players who are used to playing hack-and-slash games, then this may be a likely response. Considering there is only one Thudder and he is just a person (a really deranged person, but still just a guy), an all-out attack by several PCs seems a viable option. The Thudder does have a few real resources that make this fight more interesting. First, he has had time to prepare the mill. An abandoned lumber mill can be a very dangerous place (check out the list of suggested booby traps). Second, the Thudder knows the mill better than anyone. He is at home here and so will know shortcuts, dangerous locations, and how best to use the location in a fight. Also remember that the Thudder is NUTS. Losing a hand or sacrificing an eye to accomplish his objectives is totally in character. Your PCs will not have the same disregard for danger (or they shouldn't if they are acting in character). Finally, the Thudder has hostages. At least one hostage will have been picked to play the role of Alberto Galleni, and so the Thudder will tie the poor schmuck up in front of a large pile of logs to recreate the accident. Aggressive PCs may cause the Thudder to set this accident off early. All of the other

hostages will be set up as a jury to watch the accident. They will also be set up for some terrible death, in the event they provide the wrong verdict (i.e. Thomas Shanks was guilty).

So what happens in an all-out attack? Well, the Thudder doesn't want to kill people. He just wants to prove his innocence. He'll swing his mallet and lead people into death traps, but only so that he can get back to his log pile. The PCs will serve as a perfect part of the jury for the Thudder. Their arrival will encourage him to initiate his little trial (which basically means reenacting the death of Alberto, too bad for the Alberto stand-in). Fighting the Thudder will most likely turn into trying to stop the Thudder from releasing the log pile (which he can do by pulling a nearby rope). If the Thudder succeeds in releasing the log, he will then finish off the Alberto stand-in just as he did years ago. If the PCs have not stopped him by this point, the Thudder will demand a verdict from the jury as to his innocence in the accident. An innocent verdict will cause the Thudder to become content and lose all need to act. A guilty verdict will spur him to kill the jury. The players should probably try to save the remaining hostages, but if they let things get this far, they are probably hopeless.

An all-out attack should probably be discouraged initially because it is not a normal response from a bunch of terrorized counselors. Gamers are used to playing characters with a lot of combat experience, so it is natural for them to rush off to a fight. The average camp counselor would not do this, and you should try and gently remind the players of this. Now, if you do a great job of terrorizing the PCs and driving them over the edge, then striking back may be a natural course of action. In that scenario an all-out attack makes sense. Use your best judgment and help the players keep their characters on track and, well, in character.

SUGGESTED BOOBY TRAPS

1. Swinging log: These are attached to the chain hoists all over the mill. Once triggered (manually or by tripwire), the log swings down; it can knock out a whole group of people at once.
2. Log fall: Stacks of logs are all around the mill floor. They offer a great cover for anyone attempting to hide. Age has made them unsteady, and the logs might fall at any time. The Thudder may also have rigged a pile or two. The logs on the trolley are definitely rigged for the "trial."
3. Buzz saw: It's a lumber mill, how can there not be buzz saws? Most likely these are machines that are turned on, but with no power. If the Thudder flips the main power switch, hand saws and table units will spring to life all around the players. The unsuspecting could easily get sliced.
4. Electrical wires: Many cables around the mill are decaying or gnawed by the forest creatures. These only pose a threat when the mill power is active. An unsuspecting player may suddenly discover a live current if the power is turned on.
5. Dead weight: Heavy equipment has been suspended from the chain hoists in many places. Triplines can release these weights to come crashing down on the poor PCs.

A more reasoned response to the Thudder would be some investigative work. Sneaking into the mill and figuring out what is going on makes more sense than an all-out attack. Encourage such actions and give the characters every assistance in sneaking into the mill. Sneaking around also provides the PCs with the perfect opportunity to overhear the Thudder telling his story to the hostages. You can cut back and forth between the players trying to stay unnoticed and the Thudder declaiming his innocence, the unfairness of his trial, and his terrible lot in life since. Stealth will be a bit difficult as the lumber mill is mostly one big open space. Make the players work for it. A bad plan should probably have bad results, but a brilliant one should be rewarded (even if it short-circuits some of your brilliant plans).



Oh, didn't we mention that the players will probably come up with some kind of plan? You don't think they just want to sneak around the mill, do you? (Okay maybe you have a group of Wonderduds that do end up just sneaking around with no plan, but that is what the booby trap list is for; you can force the action.) If the plan is taking too long (or you have the Wonderduds), feel free to move things along by having the Thudder commence his "trial." This gives the players a deadline, unless they really don't like whoever is playing Alberto. To raise the tension with your sneaky players, try telling them to be quiet every couple of minutes and roll the dice. You can encourage them to believe that the Thudder is about to catch them. Act relieved after rolling the dice. Note that nothing says these rolls actually have to be Brain checks by the Thudder unless you really want them to be.

In the end, the stealth approach will probably come down to one of the other courses of action (an attack or a try for help). The PCs might also try to free the hostages without the Thudder noticing; if they do then you should probably start rolling those Brain checks for real, or just wait for a really cinematic moment for the Thudder to discover the attempt. Letting the players escape with the hostages without any confrontation would be bad theater, but you may feel obligated to do it out of a sense of fairness. We in no way encourage this feeling. Fairness often results in bad stories that are boring to participate in. Adversity is generally more interesting (or else we would all be playing *Fiddler's Green: The Pleasant Afternoon Stroll*). If you insist on allowing everyone to escape, at least have the decency to let the Thudder discover the loss quickly and race after the escapees.

A very reasonable reaction to the Thudder would be to go for help. Unfortunately, the PCs are in the middle of a state park, with help over sixty miles away. Sure there is a

town across the river, but it is a big river and there is a storm raging. (You did remember to throw in the storm, right?) Crossing the river should be very difficult at best. If the players try to get help too early (i.e. without a LOT of proof) then they will suffer the fate of all horror movie stars: total disbelief. When there is more proof (like a bloody mallet or big bruises and cracked ribs from being hit) then it should be harder to get to Riverside. PCs can commit suicide if they wish by trying to cross the river in a canoe during the storm, but you should discourage it. Swimming is an even faster death. Once the storm hits, the only way across the river is on the trolley bridge. Of course, it is right next to the lumber mill which makes it a dangerous route.

Don't discount the value of an attempt to get help. A stealthy approach to the mill followed by a desperate dash for the trolley bridge can be a great climax to a game. Remember, this bridge is not meant for foot traffic. It has an open floor with a pair of rails running across it and high-tension cables above. Trying to navigate the bridge in the storm can be dangerous in and of itself. If there is a lunatic giving chase to boot, then the crossing is even more dangerous. The Thudder will chase escapees, of course; he needs his captive audience, and doesn't want any interference to spoil his long-awaited vindication.

Getting help is not an impossible task, just very difficult. Remember, help means a higher body count. Bringing in Constable Hill or Ranger Johnson can lead to a moment of false hope. Such NPC assistance should be cut down by the Thudder or a booby trap. The game is all about interaction. If a character played by you defeats a character played by you, then what is the point of the players? You might as well be masturbating.

There is a final course of action to consider. The players might try to run like dogs. If they try to cross the river, the stage is set for a trolley bridge confrontation or a harrowing scene in the river. Players who run in the opposite direction should be tracked down by the Thudder. Escaping out of the park would be a boring ending, so remember the truth about horror movies: villains can teleport if necessary to the plot. The



Thudder can stop a car just by appearing on the road and throwing his mallet. A chase through the woods could also make a great climactic scene. Don't let pansy players get away; in fact, running is one good excuse to kill yourself a player or two.

Whatever action or combination of actions the players choose, the goal should be a confrontation with the Thudder. Whether it occurs while the PCs are standing on the mill floor, crawling across the trolley bridge, or running through the forest, the game should come down to that in the end. Only one party will be left standing. We suggest the players, but it is up to you. As the dust clears from this struggle, it will be time to wrap up the story.

Sets-

The Lumber Mill- The mill is a large open building about the size of a football field. Scattered across the place are rotting stacks of logs, chain hoists, and large machines. The machines should all be considered dangerous, with gears or spinning blades. Above all of this run walkways around the perimeter of the building, with several crossways above the floor. The chain hoists are easily accessible from these walkways. The end of the mill closest to the river has large sliding doors that open to the trolley bridge. At the same end is a loading dock for the trolleys. This is the stage for the Thudder's trial. A trolley piled high with wood is parked next to the dock. Across the floor next to the wall sits the "jury," tied to its benches. Behind the jury is a big switch that controls mill power. On the opposite end of the mill are the offices. These rooms look out on the mill floor and are filled with the remnants of office equipment left behind in the closing of the mill.

Trolley Bridge- If you don't have a boat, then the only way to get to Riverside from the camp is over the trolley bridge. This bridge is made for electric trolleys to run across. In the years since the mill closed, it has not been kept up well and many of the wooden crossbeams have rotted. The wood is also particularly slick when wet. The mill side of the bridge is within twenty feet of the mill, and tracks run into the building. The Riverside end of the bridge rests about 800 yards from the town limits. The tracks run to a train station at the edge of town.

ACT FOUR: The Aftermath



You didn't think you could just end the story with the climax did you? You need a dénouement (which is French for "wrap-up"). The authorities should arrive in great numbers. Injured characters will receive medical attention. The Thudder will be carted off to a higher security asylum or scraped off of the mill floor (depending on how the players treated him). Most importantly, the players will sit down and hash out everything that they had not already figured out. Surviving NPCs like Mr. Flaherty, Constable Hill, or Old Man McGee can help fill in missing information.

If the players already know everything, then you could wrap up with the classic shot of the characters limping out of the mill as ambulances blare and rangers wrap them in blankets. You might not even wait for that. The game could wrap up

with the players making a final few comments, staring at the corpse of the Thudder. Generally, the players will want a little more wrap-up than that, however.

A great final scene for the game can be the arrival of the campers right after the climactic confrontation. The camp director can get off the bus with all of the young campers just in time to see the surviving counselors limp back to camp. We call it irony; feel free to use it.

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