

GURPS® Horror/Autoduel®

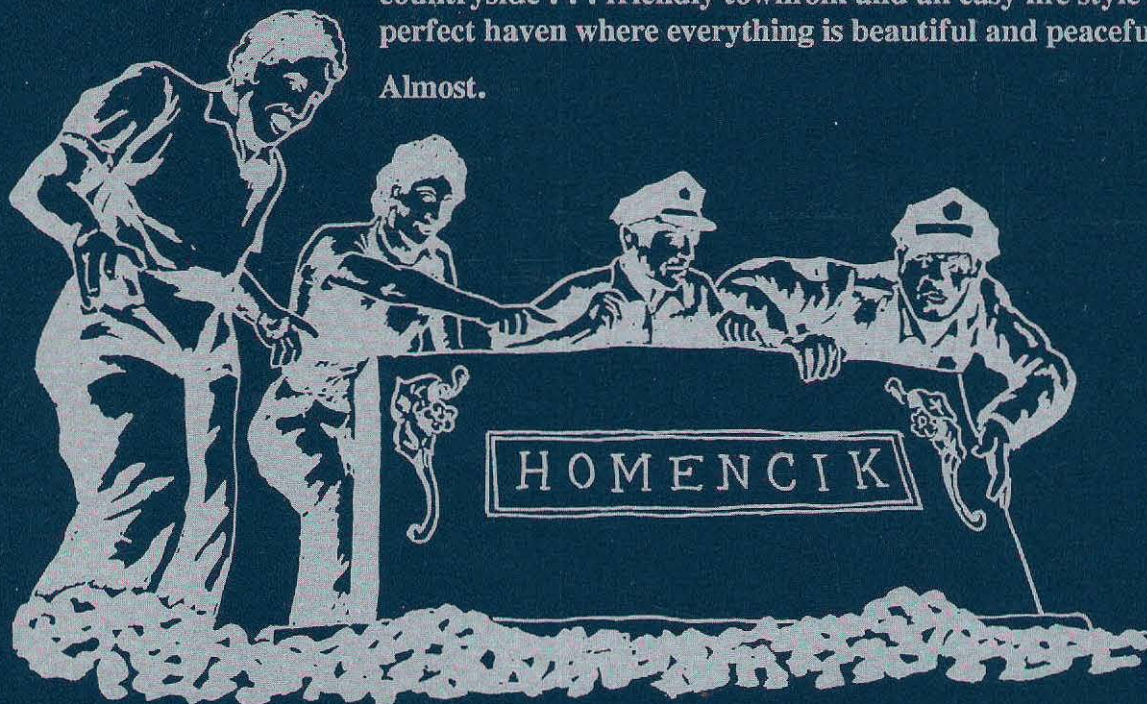
**ZOMBIE TOWN
U.S.A.**

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

You Can't Keep a Dead Man Down

Black Lake, California, the idyllic small town you've always dreamed of . . . clean air, sparkling water and a scenic countryside . . . friendly townfolk and an easy life style . . . a perfect haven where everything is beautiful and peaceful!

Almost.



There's the mayor who doesn't remember hiring the investigators, the phones that give a constant busy signal, the sudden storm that drowns three brothers, the mysterious van that cruises the streets of Black Lake.

And then the dead begin to walk . . .

As the investigators unfold the strange events shrouding Black Lake, they are drawn deeper and deeper into a complex web of horror, uncovering a sinister plot that is paralyzing the whole town. Only *they* can foil the plot that threatens to turn Black Lake into *Zombietown U.S.A.*

The 64 pages of *Zombietown U.S.A.* feature:

- a modern-day *GURPS Horror* adventure, as well as
- all the information needed to adapt the adventure for *GURPS Autoduel America*;
- a complete town for adventuring in either the present day or 2038, including
- detailed descriptions and stats for *dozens* of NPCs and establishments; plus
- subplots and adventure seeds to provide months of deadly small-town adventuring.

Written by Barry Link.

Cover and interior art by David Welling.



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GURPS Horror/Autoduel

ZOMBIETOWN U.S.A.

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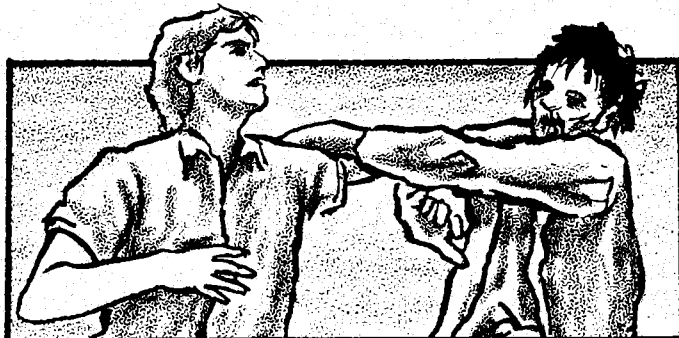
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INTRODUCTION

This is a *GURPS Horror* adventure that can be played either in the present day or in the 21st-century world of *GURPS Autoduel*. Those with both sets of rules and a desire to spring something different on their players are encouraged to go for the *Autoduel* version. It'll get those duellists out of their cars!

The adventure is intended for three to five player characters of about 100 points each. Useful skills include all the spy and social skills, combat skills (including Demolitions), and high-tech scientific skills, as well as physical skills like Acrobatics and Climbing. *Autoduel* PC vehicles should be about \$15,000 each with a maximum of four vehicles for the whole party. Dependable ranged weapons are also advised.

This adventure has a lot of detail; it includes many maps and floor plans as well as lots of non-player characters. You should be very familiar with the setting, the townfolk and the genre options *before* you begin to play. To facilitate this, Chapter 1 is a guide to the town of Black Lake. Chapter 2 briefs you on running the adventure using *GURPS Autoduel*.

You should also decide which NPCs will play the important roles — the rivals, the love-interests, the allies, those who exist only to deliver that crucial bit of information, and so on. A complete index to NPCs is in the sidebar.

Black Lake, as described, has enough oddball characters to do justice to a world-class funny farm. The type of characters you choose as “stars” will affect the tone of the adventure, and the extent to which your unique group of players will enjoy themselves.

In addition, Black Lake is intended to be used more than once. There is a lot more mystery and evil in this small town than your players can handle in the adventure detailed here. New scenario and adventure ideas will suggest themselves, but for further adventure ideas see the GM Notes on p. 64.

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THE GUIDEBOOK

As with most small towns, the hub of Black Lake is Main Street. The majority of businesses are within two blocks either side of it, and it's the primary road in and out of town. Listed here are the businesses, organizations and characters that the PCs will encounter during their stay in Black Lake. Not all of them will be used in the direct plot, however, they can be useful as red herrings, alternative plots or to provide some color.

Life in a Small Town

The PCs will discover several things about small towns.

First, this is not Manhattan. The pace of daily life will be slow and laid back, following the rhythms of nature more than those of the clock. (A traffic jam in Black Lake usually means that Doc Basset's car broke down on Main Street.)

Second, the people will be friendly to visitors — this is small-town America, after all. They'll also be politely curious about the place where the characters come from. They will be unimpressed, however, with flashiness, rudeness or unconventional styles of behavior and dress. And no small-town dweller will tolerate a city visitor's snobbish criticism of that town. PCs must be careful — things like driving their autos down the main street at high speed will extremely annoy the residents and cause them to be deeply suspicious of the PCs' moral character.

Third, everyone knows everyone in a small town. The gossip networks in Black Lake rival the best intelligence-gathering capabilities of the FBI and the CIA. Any social faux pas (or any kindly act) performed by a character will affect that character's reaction rolls with the townsfolk. The gossip found in the cafes and bars is also a good way for the GM to pass information to the players about recent events or town politics. In conclusion, if the PCs behave themselves, refrain from being snobs and beware of the power of gossip, they can expect little trouble in Black Lake — for a while, that is.

Autoduel: The same applies in the future, with the addition that any obvious outlaw types will not live to see dawn unless they leave the town's limits before nightfall.

Norman Barstow, Motel Manager

Age 29; Short black hair, small brown eyes, 6' 1", 160 lbs.

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 13, HT 10.

Basic Speed 5.5; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

Advantage: Night Vision.

Disadvantages: Major Delusion (Mother is alive and well and living in the basement); Sense of Duty (to Mother); Split Personality.

Skills: Merchant-13; Disguise-14; Professional Skill (Taxidermy)-15; Knife-13.

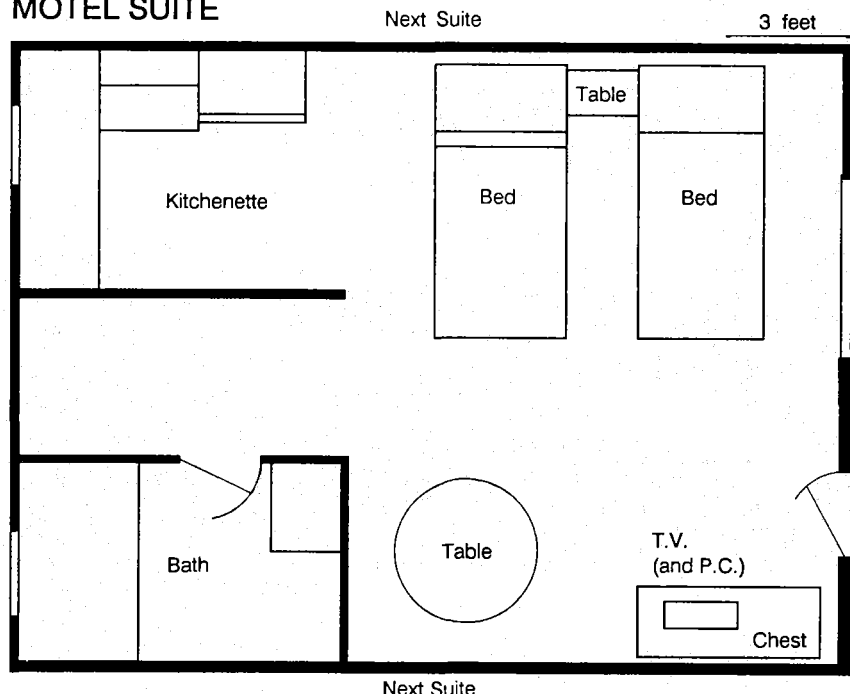
Where to Stay in Black Lake

Dent's Best Motel

Dent's is the best because it's singular — the only motel in town and the only one Dent owns. This one-story building houses six suites plus an office and living quarters for the manager. On the porch in front of the manager's office is a rocking chair, a sleeping dog named Snoozy and a Coke machine. Each suite is like a small cabin featuring two double beds, a kitchenette, phone, television (with satellite movies) and bath. Exterior walls are DR 4, HT 20; interior walls, DR 2, HT 10; and interior doors, DR 1, HT 8. The decor suggests 1955, but the rooms are comfortable and clean. Suites are \$30 a night, parking included. A floor plan of a typical room is illustrated.

Autoduel: The motel is the same structure as above, and the rooms are laid out exactly the same. During the Food Riot years, a stone wall was erected around the motel perimeter and the walls of the motel themselves were reinforced with fire-retardant material. Currently, the exterior walls are DR 10, HT 20; interior walls, DR 5, HT 12; and interior doors, DR 2, HT 10. The outer wall is DR 8, HT 20 and has one main cast-iron gate (DR 5, HT 10). Entrance to the motel compound is obtained by inserting a magnetic-striped card into a feeder at car level just outside the gate. Each guest is issued a card with their room key. The motel is DR 10, HT 35. The doors on each suite are DR 5, HT 14. Each room now includes a personal computer. Snoozy V currently occupies the porch.

MOTEL SUITE

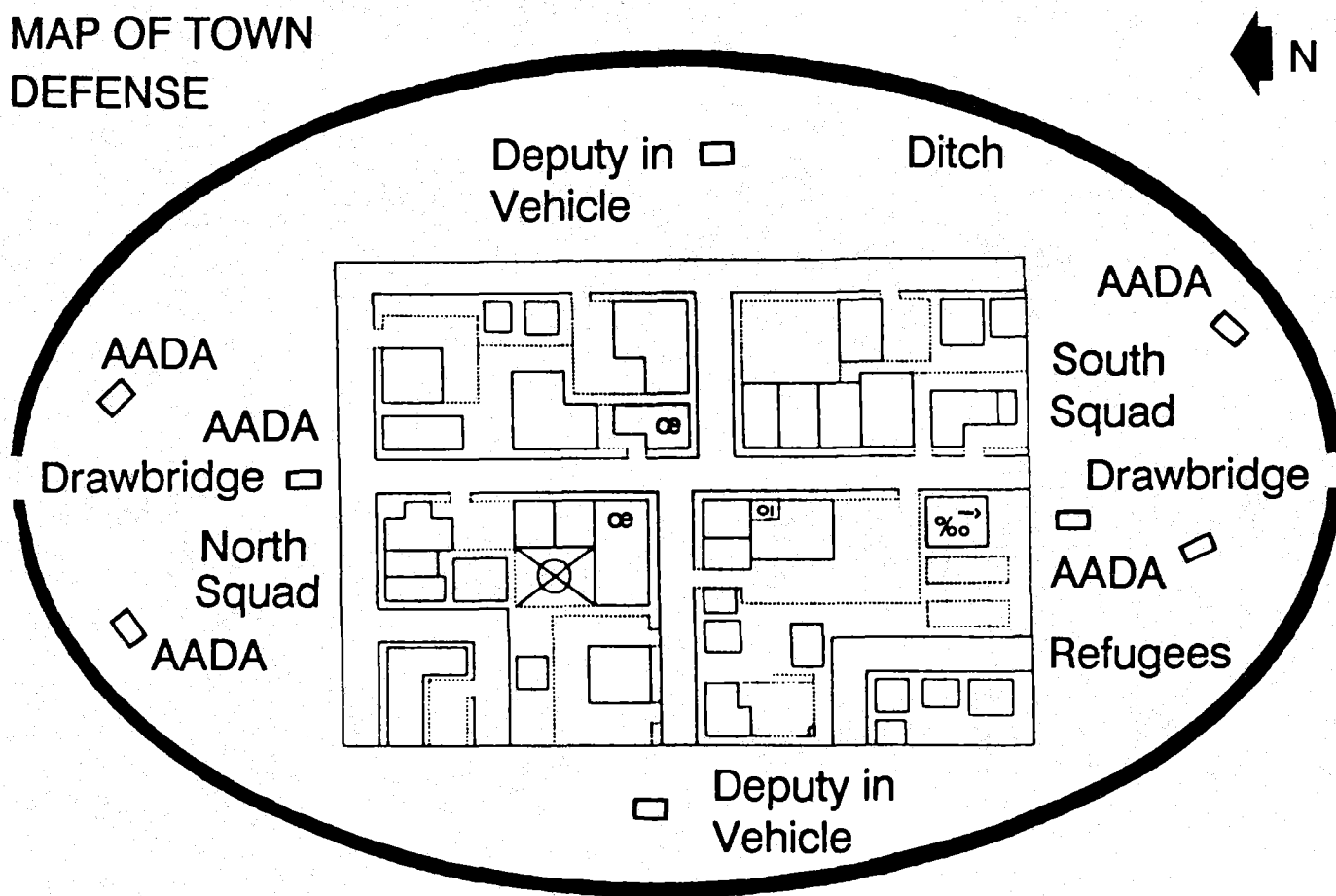


2 ADDING AUTODUEL

Black Lake Town Defense

In 2038, any town that wants to remain a town has a defensive system or plan of some sort. Black Lake's version is the Black Lake Defensive Co-operative. The Defense Co-op, known informally as "The Lakers," has absolute authority in the town during emergencies. It is also responsible for the upkeep of the town's defenses between emergencies. Its funding comes from Town Council coffers (about 80% of the current Council budget), and from individual and business donations.

MAP OF TOWN DEFENSE



%o Tank Gun
 ↑ Machine Gun
 o Air Raid Siren
 œ Recoilless Rifle

Physical Defenses

The town is surrounded by a ditch 4' deep and 10' wide. The inner lip of the ditch is about 3' higher than the outside lip; in theory, this is designed to make jumping the ditch harder for vehicles approaching from the outside. Any vehicle trying to cross the ditch must be going at least 30 mph and must make a Driving Skill roll to make the jump (-5 for an approach from the outside edge, -4 for an approach from the inside). A further Driving-4 roll is called for upon landing on either side of the ditch.

Mines are placed in a five-yard belt on either side of the ditch. These mines are rather old and unreliable, so there is a 1 in 3 chance that any square yard of

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ZOMBIETOWN U.S.A.

The adventure begins with a special-delivery letter addressed to one or all of the characters. The letter is from Fuzzy Dent, the mayor of Black Lake, California. The PCs probably have never heard of either Dent or Black Lake. The letter is brief, and simply states that "something odd" is going on in the town, and that Dent would like the party to look around. He promises to pay them well. The letter is dated a few days before the current game day. Included with the letter is a check for \$500 made out to one of the characters, or to the company or organization that the players own or work for. A small note attached to the check indicates that it will be cancelled if not cashed within five days.

If the PCs wish, they can call directory assistance for his number. However, all calls are met by a busy signal. A check with the operator indicates that the problem is on Dent's end of the connection.

Autoduel: The letter and money were sent electronically.

Black Where?

A successful roll against Research +2 reveals that Black Lake is a small town of about 1,000 people in northern California, situated on the southern approaches of the Salmon Mountains. Its principal industries are logging, tourism and retirement. The town once boasted a gold mine, but the gold played out many years ago. Area Knowledge (California)-3 or Occult-3 uncovers some stories about a Nessie-like monster (named Blackie) in the lake, but serious occultists and most of the locals discount the stories as fairy tales. Otherwise, Black Lake is an insignificant place, especially for horror-hunters.

Autoduel: Black Lake has changed little from the above description. It is now designated a fortress town due to an efficient militia and good defenses. A History-4 roll also brings to mind the town's background. Black Lake survived the Food Riots, thanks to a collectivist attitude on the part of the townspeople, the presence of local farms and the hijacking of several U.S. Army trucks filled with rations. In this period, the town suffered only one major biker assault, which was bloodily repulsed (more by accident than by tactical acumen).

During the brief secession of northern California, Black Lake was used as a secret National Guard staging area prior to the Sacramento Declaration. There was no fighting in Black Lake itself, but National Guard and militia elements did fight a major (and losing) battle with the 101st Airborne near the turn-off to Black Lake on Route 299. Retreating Guardsmen reportedly buried some of their heavy weapons near Black Lake, and the AADA believes that such weapons may be responsible for Black Lake's current defensive prowess.

How To Get There

If the PCs live anywhere along the West Coast, they can drive to Black Lake directly. Black Lake lies ten miles north and approximately twenty miles west of Redding along Route 299. The turn-off, simply named Black Lake Road, is a paved two-lane road in fairly good condition.

They can also take a bus to Redding or Eureka. A bus route runs between these two points every Monday and Friday. It stops at the Junction Cafe at noon and leaves at 1 p.m. A one-way fare is \$25 per passenger. There is a shuttle to Black Lake that leaves at 12:30 p.m. The one-way fare is \$3.00.

The investigators can also fly to the airport at Redding, and from there either

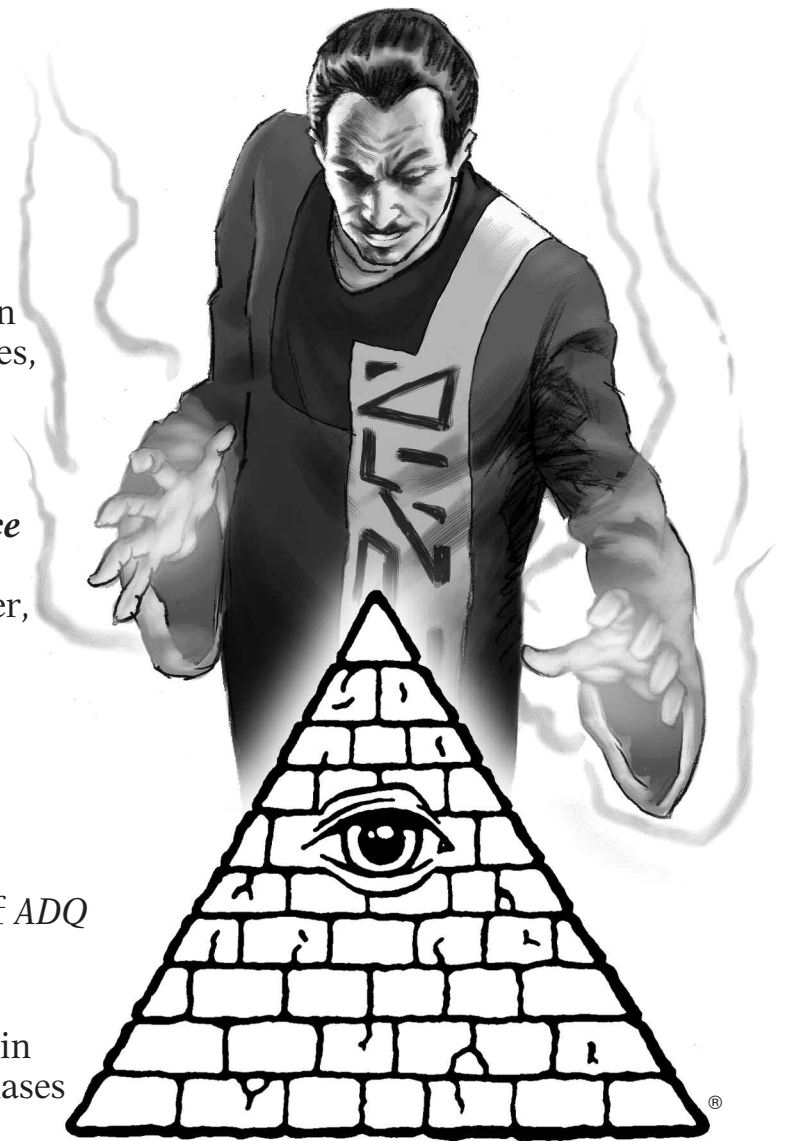
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