

G U R P S<sup>®</sup>

# COPS



By LISA J. STEELE

**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**



# The Thin Blue Line

*"Just the facts, ma'am . . ."*

*"Dead or alive, you're coming with me . . ."*

*"Do you feel lucky, punk? . . ."*

*"Federal Agent, put down your weapons . . ."*

*"You have the right to remain silent . . ."*

Every day, thousands of men and women put their lives on the line to protect our lives and property. This is real heroism and real adventure. Every day. **GURPS Cops** brings you into the station house, the patrol cars, the crime scenes, and the crime labs. Serial killers, gangsters, drug lords, and ordinary criminals are waiting for you to try to stop their deeds: The public needs you.

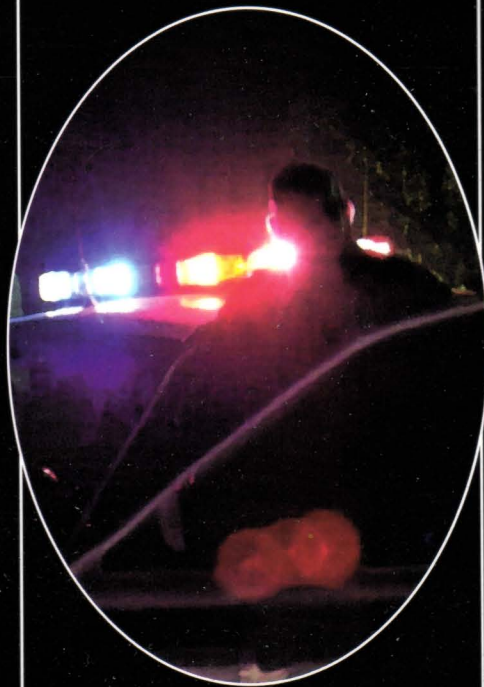
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- Creating campaigns for patrol officers, detectives, federal agents, SWAT teams, and bomb squads . . . in the style of the latest Hollywood action flicks, or with gritty realism drawn from the latest headlines.
- A template-based character generation system for quickly creating police officers, federal agents, their allies, and their adversaries.
- Descriptions and game stats for police equipment, including pepper spray, tear gas, and other less-than-lethal weapons.
- Detailed explanations of how to set up crime adventures, from muggings to locked-room murders, and how players can solve them. Use for developing campaigns in any setting.
- Suggestions for handling criminal trials, corrections, jailbreaks, and ex-convict characters.

*So straighten your uniform, rookie.  
Check your loads and check your six.  
It's a dangerous world out there . . .*



**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**  
www.sjgames.com



**GURPS Basic Set**, Third Edition Revised and **GURPS Compendium I** are required to use this supplement in a **GURPS** campaign. The material in **GURPS Cops** can be used with any roleplaying system.

## THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMEN:

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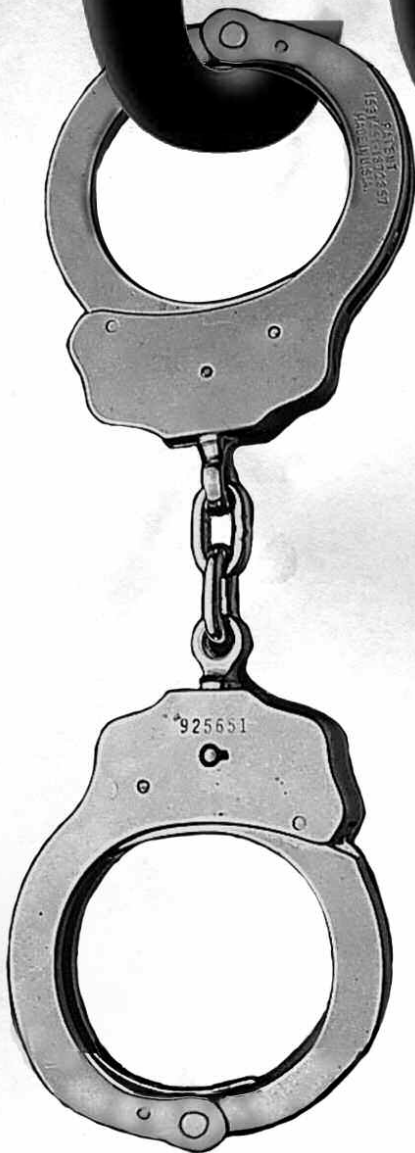
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# About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

*Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid/](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid/)). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *INWO*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

*New supplements and adventures.* *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. A current catalog is available for an SASE. Or check out our website (below).

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*GURPSnet.* This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, e-mail [majordomo@io.com](mailto:majordomo@io.com) with “subscribe GURPSnet-L” in the body, or point your web browser to [gurpsnet.sjgames.com](http://gurpsnet.sjgames.com).

The *GURPS Cops* web page can be found at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/cops/](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/cops/).

## Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised*, e.g., p. B144 refers to page 144 of the *GURPS Basic Set*. Page references that begin with BIO refer to *BioTech*, CI to *Compendium I*, CII to *Compendium II*, OW to *Old West, Second Edition*, SO to *Special Ops, Second Edition*, STM to *Steampunk*, SU to *Supers, Second Edition*, T:FT to *Traveller: Far Trader*, and VE to *Vehicles, Second Edition*. The abbreviation for this book is “CP.” See *GURPS Compendium I*, p. 181, for a full list of abbreviations, or visit [www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html) for an up-to-date list.





# Introduction



It's midnight on the streets of River City. A youth sidles nervously past you on the sidewalk, going in the opposite direction. Looks like a gang-banger, with leather jacket and all, but he doesn't seem to be up to anything. You step around the corner. An elderly woman with a cane leans against the dirty brick wall of the next building. Her face is pale, her breath coming in gasps. Clutching at her chest, she starts yelling about her stolen purse. The kid that went past – you spin around.

"Stop! Police officer!"

There he goes, jackrabbiting into the night . . .  
What do you do?

Welcome to **GURPS Cops**, rookie. Let's see if you can make it in the station house. It's not the movies. It's not television. It isn't like the television news, either. It's still *the Job*, whether you're in London in 1829, Paris in 1943, Chicago in 1968, or up on Marsopolis in 2050. Uniform changes, equipment changes, the laws change. But here at the dirty end of the muzzle, it all comes down to a cop, a crook, and a dark, unlighted alley.

Cop movies and television programs stress excitement, ignoring the dirty reality of police work. Officers flout the law themselves, illegally searching and seizing contraband, threatening and beating suspects, hiding and manipulating evidence – all to fit an interesting story into two hours of action-packed drama.

That's one way to play **Cops**. The formula is familiar enough: Take two mismatched partners. Stir with a horrendous crime. Mix in a charismatic villain, diabolical henchmen, and corrupt politicians. Top off with bumbling rules-bound superiors. Don't forget to add the love interest! Stir. A few gunfights, chases, and explosions later . . . you've got an adventure.

But **Cops** adventures don't have to play to the cinematic beat. They can be very realistic. A cop discovers a crime scene

and radios in. The scene soon becomes a chaotic swirl of officers, evidence technicians, victims, witnesses, curious bystanders, and nosy reporters. Detectives question the victim and witnesses, decide what information is reliable, and broadcast a description of the suspects. The adventure is in the chase. It becomes a poker game between cop and informant, a ballet of hope and fear in the interrogation room, a quest for reliable witnesses willing to testify in court. In the background is the demanding press of other cases piling up, paperwork to be filed, bills to pay, and a family waiting at home. If the investigators move quickly, they may catch the perpetrators with vital evidence in hand. If not, the case winds up as another cold, unsolved file.

**GURPS Cops** is a genre book: a collection of history, settings, skills, equipment, characters, and campaign suggestions. It concentrates on modern American police, laws, and equipment because, thanks to Hollywood, 20th-century American police procedure is the best known all over the world. American and foreign suspects in Europe, Asia, Africa, and elsewhere often demand their *Miranda* rights – and are surprised to find that laws are *different* outside the United States.

Be careful out there, rookie. It's a dangerous world.

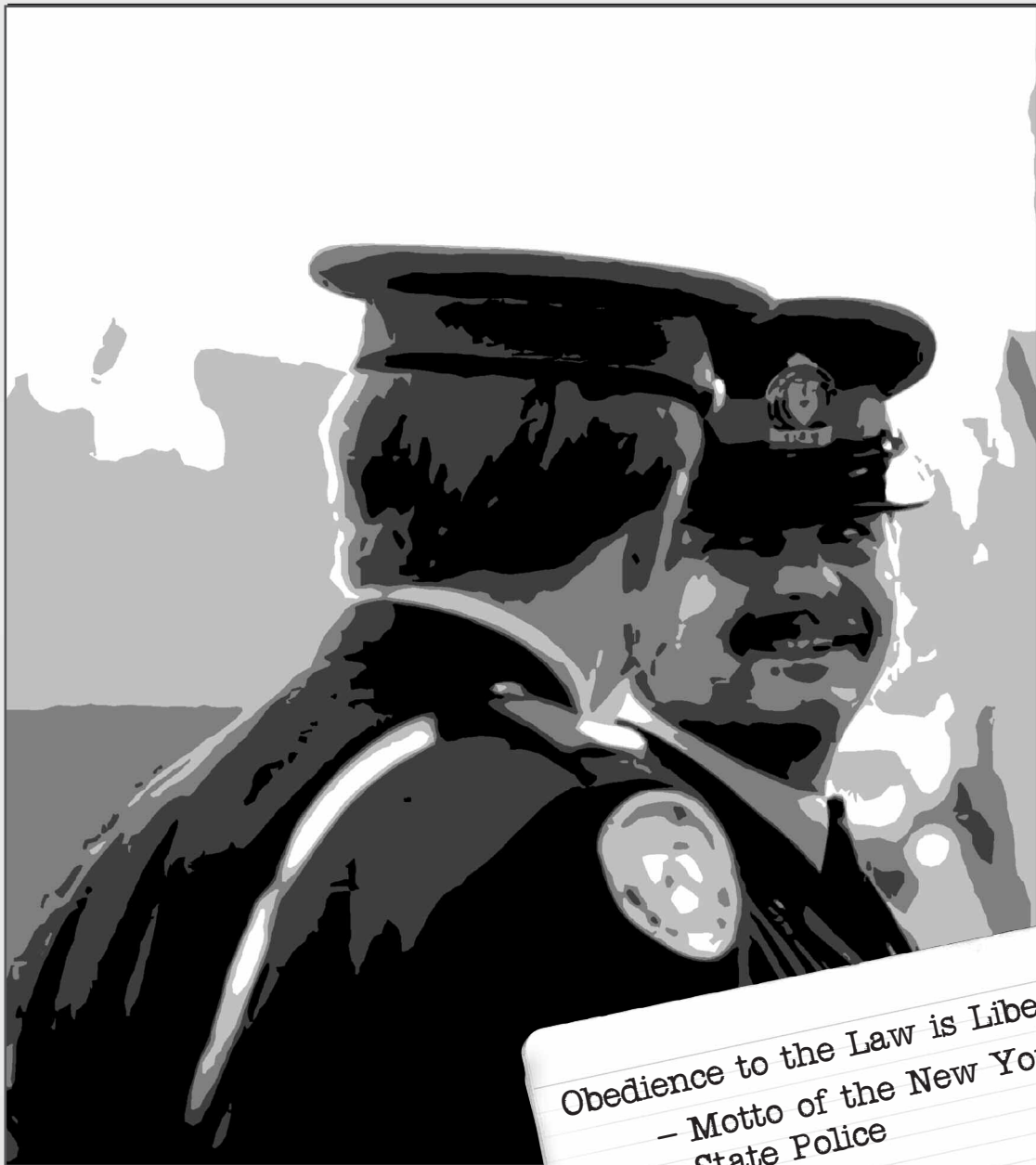
## About the Author

Lisa J. Steele is a criminal defense attorney and author based in Massachusetts. She represents clients accused of crimes ranging from minor traffic offenses to capital murder. Ms. Steele is the author of several legal articles about criminal defense, and two White Rose Publishing sourcebooks: *Fief* and *Medieval France*. Her personal interests range from science fiction to economics to medieval history to firearms.



Chapter 1:

# Welcome to the Job



Obedience to the Law is Liberty  
- Motto of the New York  
State Police



# Police Duties

What do police do? You've seen the images on the news. A police cruiser speeds down the road, lights flashing and siren wailing; a group of officers huddles in a stairway with weapons drawn, preparing to break down a door; officers struggle to get a drunken suspect into the back of the paddy wagon. These are only a few visible bits of a huge responsibility – to enforce order. Sir Robert Peel (p. 8), the father of policing, maintained that the test of good police work is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it.

## Patrol

A car bolts through a red light in front of your cruiser, tears the front end off a school bus, and speeds off down the highway. You put on the blues and chase him down. You can't let that maniac go. When you step out of the cruiser, you'd best have called the license plate into dispatch and have a hand on your pistol. The driver could be a harried lawyer late for court, who panicked and ran. He could be a pistol-toting felon fleeing a convenience store robbery. One way to find out – go up to the driver's window and look.

Police patrol has been the cop's basic job ever since watchmen walked through medieval cities to deter burglars. Modern patrol officers wear uniforms to deter criminals, reassure the public, and identify themselves to those in need. Patrol officers are frequently armed, because you never know what you're going to meet on the street. Officers patrol on foot, bicycles, horses, and motorcycles. They can use automobiles or 30' mechas. It depends on the budget, the tech level, how much area they need to cover, and how nimble their transport needs to be. In the modern United States, police officers start as uniformed cops on a beat; many officers spend their entire careers there.

## Crime Detection

It's early morning and you're on your beat. You notice a parked car sitting in a usually vacant lot. The driver looks asleep, but the window's shattered around a small hole. Another dark hole gapes where the driver's temple *used* to be. A shiny brass cartridge casing sits in plain sight on the pavement below the car window. No one else is in sight. You call dispatch for backup. Here come more officers, crime scene technicians, and detectives to take over the case. You ask around the neighborhood, learn about a little beef the victim was having, and get a name. The detectives invite the suspect down to the station.

Now you're the detective. Sitting in a tiny gray room across from the suspect, you glance through your folder. The victim's wallet was in his pocket. You have his name and rap sheet in the folder, and your suspect's name and rap sheet, too. The lab reports and autopsy reports will take a while. Right now, the only thing you've got on this guy is the word of a 10-year-old boy who says he saw your suspect shoot the victim after a loud argument. And his mother doesn't want him to testify.

Can you convince this guy to talk? Can you keep him from demanding a lawyer? Can you bluff and intimidate him into

confessing? Can you get a signed statement? Interview him right, and a murderer goes to prison. Do it wrong, and he walks.

Crime detection is an integral part of police work at all levels. Most crimes are easy to solve. The victim and assailant know each other, or the assailant is already well known to police from previous encounters. In many cases, victim and suspect are both right there when the police arrive. Patrol cops have to run from call to call. They don't have the luxury of time to work on a case. When they can't handle it, they give it to the specialists.

Detectives work on those tough crimes that take time, persistence, and experience to solve. They gather evidence, take statements, and interrogate suspects. They interview witnesses and search for corroborating evidence. They investigate continuing crimes and crime organizations: gangs, drug rings, contraband smuggling, and gambling operations. They conduct surveillance and undercover operations.



## Public Order

It's a hot summer day and your hair is soaked with sweat under your helmet. An angry crowd stands a few feet away from the police line, chanting slogans and waving protest signs. Some call you names, and others shout threats at that building behind you. Maybe you agree with the protesters. Maybe you don't. It doesn't matter. Your job is to stand still, not react to provocative acts, and keep the peace . . . until and unless violence breaks out or you get the order to disperse the crowd. You have your baton, your riot shield, and your OC spray. Somewhere back behind you are the water cannon and the SWAT team with tear gas.

Police keep the peace. Uniformed officers prevent legal demonstrations from turning into riots, and suppress riots when they happen. Police officers provide traffic control and crowd control for public events, parades, demonstrations, and festivals.

Police deal with terrorist incidents, mass disasters, and hostage takers. Bomb squads and SWAT teams search buildings before dignitaries visit or after a bomb threat. They also handle incidents like barking dogs, loud music, cars blocking driveways, and other frictions within families and neighborhoods. Officers are increasingly involved in family problems like abuse, neglect, and runaway children.



## Public Safety

Snowflakes find their way between your hat and collar as you crunch through the brush. Your search and rescue dog strains at his harness, and pulls you deeper into the woods. An elderly man wandered away from his home this afternoon. Now the temperature is dropping fast, and snow is obscuring what faint traces he might have left behind. Your job is to find him before he dies of exposure.

Police protect the public. When children or elderly people go missing, the police help find them. Police are the first responders when someone on the street has a seizure, starts acting strangely, or becomes drunk and disorderly. They handle addicts, alcoholics, the mentally ill, and the homeless. Uniformed officers respond to dozens of public welfare calls like these every week. Most are routine. But the cop never knows what's behind a silent door.



## Police and the People

Sir Robert Peel held that police work depends on the public's willingness to cooperate and obey laws without an officer at the citizen's elbow. Police require the public's acceptance, respect, and favor. They win public trust by working hard at being fair, impartial, and incorruptible. To Sir Robert, police are the public, and the public is the police.

In totalitarian nations, police use a different method: they depend on fear and force. Police ally with the strongest political groups and use force to coerce subservience, if not obedience. Such police may be part of the military, or unofficial paramilitary groups that intimidate or kill inquisitive reporters, political rivals, union organizers, and other potential threats to the regime.

## A Short History of Policing

Modern police forces were created in the 19th century, but police, or at least watchmen, have been around since the first cities and the first rulers. Monarchs appointed men to keep order and protect the crown's property. Cities created town watches to patrol, look for fires, and try to deter burglars and muggers. Cities, guilds, and village councils appointed officials to enforce boundaries, check weights and measures, monitor ingredients in foods and other goods, and collect taxes.

These early police served their patrons; they did not investigate crimes. If someone robbed or attacked a citizen, the victim or his family brought charges in the ruler's court. If someone attacked the ruler, his family, or his property, his guard or officers would pursue the criminal and punish him, or bring him before the ruler or the ruler's proxy for punishment.

Detectives were unknown. If a criminal was caught in the act, in possession of poached venison or stolen goods, or simply *known* to be a thief, he was punished. Rulers used spies and informers to prevent public uprisings and coups, not to solve crimes.

## Peelers – The First Modern Police

Uniformed police forces appeared nearly simultaneously in London and Paris in 1829. The old guard and watch system was not adequate to keep the peace in large cities created by the Industrial Revolution. A mobile and anonymous urban population, combined with cheap distilled liquor and portable wealth, resulted in waves of thefts, riots, and murder that terrified the British and French aristocracy. Existing guards and patrols were combined into municipal police forces. The public nicknamed the new U.K. officers *Bobbies* or *peelers*, after Sir Robert Peel, the creator of the force.

U.K. police strove for an impersonal image of a force controlled by regulation and procedure. The new police were paid regular salaries; their predecessors had relied on fees and rewards. The new police were given distinctive uniforms. They wore the uniform at all times, at first, so that the public would not feel spied upon. The new police had a formal command structure based on that of the military. Each officer was armed with a wooden truncheon hidden in the tail of his coat. He carried a wooden rattle or whistle to summon other officers to his aid.

The tools of a 19th-century patrol officer were patience and persistence. He walked his beat on foot and lived in a barracks or section house. If he were attacked, no one would notice his disappearance until his replacement arrived at the beat hours later. Sixty years after the *Bobbies* first started to patrol, a call-box system was created to let officers signal their stations and vice-versa. Later in the century, police stations were linked by telegraph, which let officers post descriptions of a criminal or crime to a wide area. Rural officers patrolled by horse and were isolated from aid.



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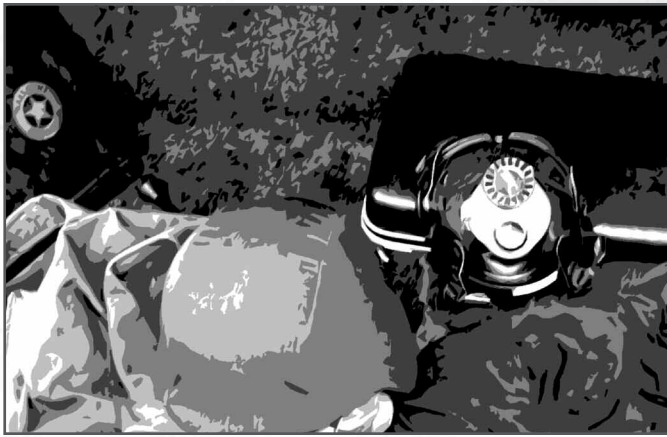
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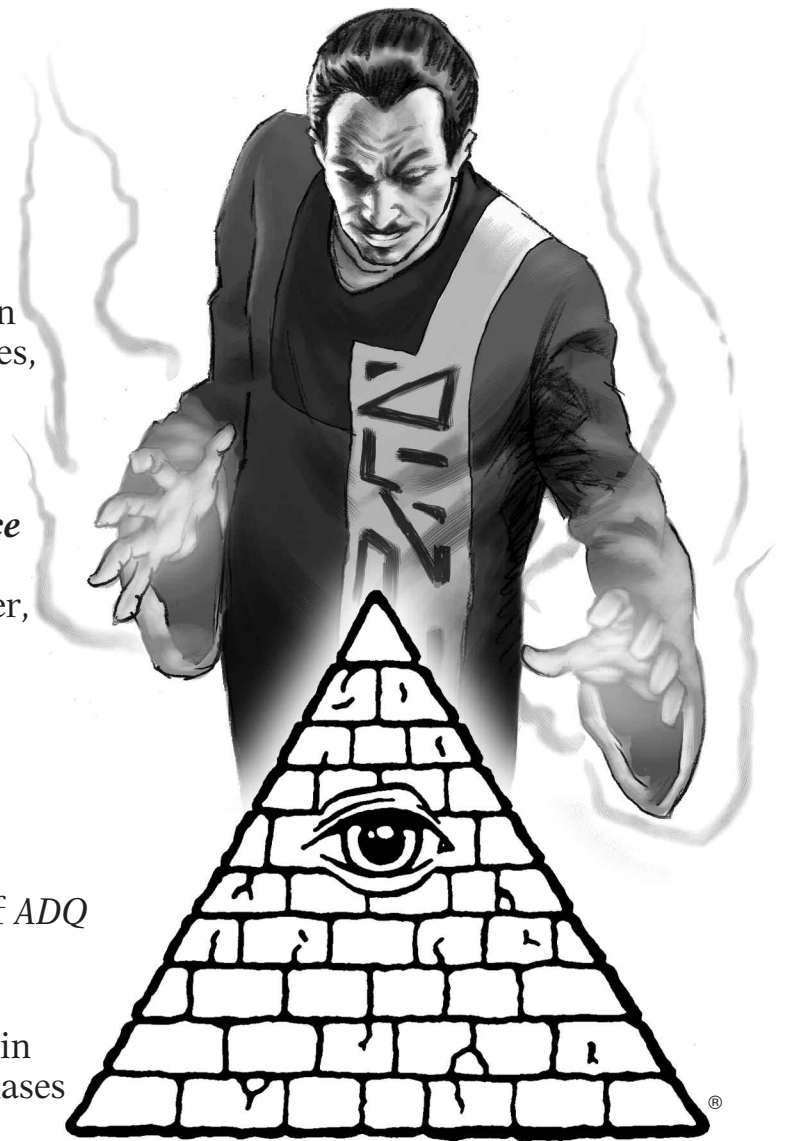


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