

ZombieTown

A Run and Gun Town-Saving Zombie GURPS Adventure

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Synopsis: A group of friends, while on vacation in the mountains, becomes aware of a zombie outbreak when one of their number is bitten and infected. Over the course of the next day, they must arm themselves, find the source of the outbreak, get to the government lab where the problem began, cure one of their number from infection, and save the town.

Scene 1:

For the introduction, choose a player who will start off the adventure with a zombie infection. Direct the introduction to this player.

Introduction: *You're on a June vacation in Colorado with three of your buddies, having a great time hiking, rafting, and painting the town red in the evenings. The day you're scheduled to leave town, after a spending the day exploring the town's abandoned silver mine followed by a late night's carousing, the first of you staggers out of bed just before noon and, after a satisfying trip to the bathroom, out to the ice machine to refill the ice bucket. On your way back, you encounters Jack, a nice enough, though rather nerdy, fellow guest at the hotel.*

"Morning, Jack," you mutter, still in a bit of a fog.

"MMMMMMMMMrrghhhh," Jack responds.

"Woah, hard night for you too?"

"MMMMRRRRRRrrrrrrRRRGHHH!" Jack replies with emphasis. Then, to your considerable surprise, he grabs your arm and bites it.

"HEY! KNOCK IT OFF!" you yell, and shake Jack off. He lunges for you again, but you, decidedly freaked out by Jack's behavior, run for your room and slam the door shut. You lock it for good measure.

"HOLY CRAP!" you yell as Jack pounds on your door. "HE BIT ME!"

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Your friends, after a moment to shake off their sleepiness, quickly surround you and examine the bite, which is now oozing blood.

Notes: The adventure starts in the hotel room with Jack, the first zombie they encounter, pounding on the door. The party at this point has only the items that one would typically take along for a vacation: clothes, a first aid kit, and two walking sticks (which can be pressed into service as weapons). There is also a map of the town that the hotel has provided (give a printout of this to the players), and any other setting-appropriate sundries the GM may decide on.

The player who got out of bed first, though he doesn't necessarily know it yet, has just been infected by Jack, and will, over the course of the module, need to either be cured of his infection or turn zombie himself. He will lose 1 HP for each 30 minutes of play, until he reaches 0 HP, at which point he will still be conscious, but won't have the strength to do anything other than stumble along.

The first challenge is to get safely from the hotel room to the party's Jeep. (There are other cars in the lot, but the Jeep is the only one to which they have keys.) If Jack isn't dealt with in a few minutes, he'll attract the attention of another zombie, making it that much harder to get to the vehicle unmolested. This will continue until there are a number of zombies gathered equivalent to the party size. The usual combat rules apply here as they make their way to the Jeep, though since these zombies are newly turned, they have less formidable stats than zombies found later in the game. Once combat is joined, more zombies will continue to be attracted until the players get to the Jeep and escape or are overwhelmed. Fortunately, the zombies are slow and can be outrun by most players with ease.

Scene 2:

Read: *As you squeal out of the parking lot, you see Mary, another hotel guest you'd met during your stay, lying dead in the parking lot. Her vacant eyes stare at the sky, and her arm looks like it has been...chewed by something.*

The crowd of...well, let's call them zombies...shambles along after you, but you quickly leave them in the dust as you pull out on to Main Street. You see a few more corpses along the road.

Notes: Any time the party is driving, individual zombies will occasionally lurch out and try to grab them. This should both keep the party on the move and give them a chance to run over, whack with the walking sticks, or otherwise abuse the unfortunate undead. Looting the corpses will yield some money, but nothing else of use.

Scene 3:

Read: *You pull into the Val-Mart parking lot. There are more corpses scattered around, and a disheveled old man holding open the door, waving at you. Several zombies, who had been feasting on the bodies nearby, look up at your approach.*

“Hey, you kids,” the old man shouts as you pull up near the door. “There’s something weird going on out there. You’d better get in here quick!”

Notes: This is Randall, a Val-Mart greeter. He was (and always is) among the first to the store that morning, but locked the front doors when he saw a zombie attack and eat an early customer in the parking lot. He’s been watching with increasing horror as more zombies and victims have accumulated in the parking lot, and has been doing his best to help anybody he sees.

This is the party’s opportunity to arm themselves. Searching this Val-Mart’s departments will yield .45 Auto Pistols, 9mm Auto Pistols, 10G Double Shotguns, 12G pump shotguns, Chainsaws, Composite Bows, and anything else the GM might deem appropriate. (Hockey sticks, football pads, etc. are other possibilities for improvised weaponry and armor. Clever players might also invent a flamethrower or another improvised weapon from parts there.)

The guns are locked away in a glass cabinet with a combination lock on it. Randall knows the combination, and will only open it if the party can pay or persuade him that he should in order to fight off the zombie hoard. Alternately, they can smash the cabinet open or pick the lock, though Randall will attempt to stop them.

You can introduce any other items that might plausibly be in a Val-Mart as well that might spice things up for your characters: electronics kits, megaphones, go-karts, ultralights, etc.

Scene 4:

Read: *As you make your way to the door of the Val-Mart, an enormous, 300lb zombie lurches from the office door and blocks your way to the exit. He still wears the trademark Val-Mart blue vest, and as he lurches toward you, you make out a name tag with the words “Rodney” and “Manager” inscribed on it.*

Note: The encounter with Rodney is the party’s first chance to use their newfound weapons. Though he’s a comparatively formidable opponent, the newly-armed group should now have no trouble dispatching him. Once they finish the battle, searching the body will yield a key on a Mack Truck keychain. The parking lot contains the vehicle, which the party can use if they prefer it to the jeep or need a backup vehicle for some other reason.

From this point on, the zombies are the normal, full-strength variety.

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Scene Daisy's Cafe:

Read: *You pull up outside Daisy's cafe, a ramshackle, tin-roofed building with a fading sign and a dirt parking lot, which has a few zombies ambling around. The doors are shut tight, but you hear voices coming from within as soon as you turn off the engines.*

After a moment, the door to the cafe swings wide. Someone has apparently decided you're not a zombie. You walk into the cafe to discover a television playing a news program above the counter, a few customers clumped at the counter, and a large, sharp-eyed woman at the counter with a name tag that says "Daisy" on it.

"Welcome, strangers. Judging by the wild looks in your eyes, you've seen the zombies. Bruce here was attacked by one, but was able to fight it off and get away. We're keeping the doors locked and waiting for the army to come take care of things. In the meantime, we've got plenty of coffee, and I make the best pancakes in town. What can I get for you?"

Note: There are a handful of patrons in Daisy's, presided over by Daisy herself, a sharp-tongued, no-nonsense woman whose exterior belies her deeply rooted kindness and care for the residents of the town. She's a fount of knowledge, and will happily discuss where to get weapons, the town's various other residents, and anything else the players are interested in. Most importantly, she will volunteer information about the secret government lab and its location up north of town, out Bonanza road. Neither Daisy, nor any of the cafe's other patrons, is keen to leave the safety of the cafe.

Scene 5 (postpone this until they get out of the car if not in the open-top jeep or if they remembered seatbelts):

Read: *As you race down the street, suddenly [randomly determined character] is yanked from the jeep. You look back to see him struggling as he is pulled back the way you came. Incredibly, a zombie has grabbed him with a grotesquely elongated tongue, and is now dragging him towards it.*

Note: Being yanked from the jeep should cause the victim to drop whatever he's carrying. In addition, compute damage from being yanked out and from the fall: $(HP \times MPH) / 200$. Both of these are negated if not yanked from the moving vehicle.

In order to regain his feet, the player must make a successful check against agility (at -3, unless he has combat reflexes) to regain his feet, and then another successful check against strength to break the zombie's hold. Failing the strength check will cause him to be yanked from his feet again. The more direct solution, of course, is to have his friends kill the zombie in question. The zombie is at the roadside, and will reel the player in at the rate of about 2 yards per second, taking about 5 combat rounds to get the player close enough to start pummeling him.

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Once the player is reeled in, he's fairly immobilized by the tongue while the zombie attacks him unless he makes a strength check to break away.

Scene 6 (Lab Entrance):

Read: *You come upon a huge field, edged with a rusty chain-link fence topped with razor wire and "No Trespassing" signs. There is a sturdy-looking steel gate blocking the entrance, and while you can see a few cars scattered around and a ramshackle old cabin, you don't see any evidence of a secret government base of any kind.*

Note: This is the entrance to the Xenobiology Research Facility, a secret government site created to investigate the corpses of some of the dead aliens that were found on the UFO that's stored in Area 51. The cars are those of employees of the lab. When any portion of the party enters the cabin and closes the door, the entry room will be revealed to be an elevator, and will begin its descent. After 100 feet, it will stop, revealing a heavy steel door, a video camera, and a speaker grille. The lab's sole security guard, Barney, will ask them who they are and what they want. As it turns out, the lab has an antidote for the epidemic that will need to be put into the town's water supply, and if Barney is convinced that the group can help, he will open the steel door and admit them to the rest of the lab.

Scene 7 (Lab, Main Hall):

Read: *A wide, fluorescent-lit hallway stretches in front of you. It could be any hallway in any office building except for two things: it's wide enough to drive a truck through, and the doors that punctuate the walls are made of reinforced steel. The three huge doors to the west are surmounted with signs that read "Containment A", "Containment B", and "Containment C". A similarly huge door in the north wall is labeled "Lab", and there's a smaller, unmarked door in the east wall.*

Scene 8 (Lab, Main Floor):

Read: *You gaze across the largest laboratory any of you have ever seen. Rows of workbenches clutter this huge octagonal room, heavily laden with bunsen burners, monitors, oscilloscopes, computers, and a vast array of equipment you don't even begin to recognize. A wild-haired man in a lab coat, looking every bit the mad scientist, scuttles toward you.*

"Oh, thank heaven you've come!" he exclaims. "We've heard about the outbreak in the town. This is terrible! I don't know how the virus escaped from the lab, but we've got to do something about it!"

Note: This is Doctor Eggleston, a the head scientist of the XRF. He has been in charge since the program was initiated 10 years ago, and will, with minimal prompting, go on to explain that the center has been investigating the unique characteristics of the aliens' biology. While the earlier discoveries have been generally beneficial, resulting in useful

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therapies for Multiple Sclerosis and Epilepsy, the latest splicing of alien and human genetic material has resulted in a virus that breaks down the brain's higher functions and rewrites the victim's DNA, creating some grotesque changes to the body and leaving only the desire for flesh and for water. The Z strain virus is unstable, and can only be transmitted in a liquid, such as a drink or in the saliva of a zombie's infected bite. (It was distributed through the water supply, which the group wasn't affected by, as they weren't drinking the city's water the night before, when they were out partying.)

If the players mention that one is infected, he will immediately approach the victim with a loaded hypodermic. If the players permit him, he will inject and cure the victim of his infection. (The victim will begin to regain lost hitpoints at the 1 per 20 minutes rate.) The players will also find this hypo clearly labeled if they search the lab after Eggleston is killed.

After a few minutes, Eggleston will begin to explain what is needed:

Read: *"So, you see, the only way the whole city could have become infected is for the water supply to have been contaminated with the virus. I can't think of how that could possibly have happened, but to stop the spread, we'll need to introduce the antidote the same way."*

Suddenly, the door in the east wall opens, and a young man steps out. "Dr. Eggleston!" he says pleasantly. "You didn't tell me we had guests!"

"Oh, meet my assistant, Dr. Pandoor. Dr. Pandoor, these young people have been vacationing in Bonanza, and miraculously have found their way to us! I was just telling them that we need to deliver the antidote to the city's water supply to stop the spread of the Z strain."

"Well, this is a surprise!" says Pandoor, "and certainly changes our plans." He taps a button on a nearby console, and an alarm starts to blare. Then, to your considerable surprise, he pulls a small handgun from his lab coat pocket and shoots Eggleston squarely in the chest. A computer voice says over the speakers "Warning: 15 seconds until containment emancipation."

Note: Pandoor, as it turns out, believes that humanity's higher brain functions have brought us nothing but misery and heartache. When the Z strain was discovered, he saw it as the perfect opportunity to bring all of that to an end, and stole a sample of the virus from the lab and introduced it into Bonanza's water supply, with the idea that the victims there would eventually spread the virus through the whole world.

He will explain this at gunpoint, or it can be gleaned from his journal, which can be found in his other lab coat pocket or by hacking a computer if someone has the appropriate skills. In either case, this will also yield a map to the water supply junction through which he introduced the virus. Having the conviction of a fanatic, he will fight to the death.

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The button he pushed released the zombies from Containment B and Containment C if a computer isn't hacked to disable the countdown within 15 seconds. (A was still empty.)

Scene 9:

Read: *As you reenter the hallway, now luridly illuminated by alarm lights, you see a grisly sight: the doors to Containment B and Containment C stand open, and parts that you would guess add up to a half dozen zombies (if you could put them back together) litter the floor. Barney stands at the far end of the corridor, surrounded by another 6 zombies, who are quickly getting the best of him.*

The containment rooms are a charnel house, with a trough for fresh water, and an assortment of body parts scattered around the floor. You can't tell which are from zombies, and which were their food.

Scene 10:

Read: *A desk lines the west wall of this room, with a bank of monitors across it, as well as a microphone and speaker that can apparently be used to communicate to any of these rooms. There's another door across the room. (If players visit here before the lab:) A man -- apparently the security guard who let you in -- sits at the desk. His nametag says "Barney".*

Note: Barney is the only security currently at the lab, as life here is usually very uneventful. He does, however, have a key for the armory, and will open it for the players if he's convinced they're ready to help the cause. Further, once the zombies are released, he will be willing to join the players (if he survives the zombie onslaught). He also knows where the water treatment facility (south of town on Bonanza Rd.) is that can be used to introduce the antidote.

Scene 11:

Read: *A beautiful sight greets you: a modest, but well-stocked armory with racks of weaponry, ready for the taking.*

Note: Available here: Assault Rifle, 7.62mm, Auto Pistol (9mm), Hand Grenade (High Tech Library), Flashlight (Heavy), Ballistic Vests, Ballistic Helmets, Large Knives.

Scene 12:

Read: *As you crest a hill, you see what is obviously the water treatment facility. Large intake pipes enter the reservoir lake behind a small building, and pipes exit the other side bringing clean water to the town. Unfortunately, you don't see any place to introduce the antidote from outside the building. Even more unfortunately, there are*

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hundreds of zombies milling about between you and the door to the facility, evidently drawn by the easy availability of water here.

Note: The challenge here is to figure out some good way to deal with masses of zombies. Attempts to take them on in melee or with firearms will quickly result in the group getting overwhelmed. Fortunately, because the zombies are slow, the group should be able to retreat as needed to keep themselves safe unless they're particularly foolhardy.

Possibilities include: splitting up the team to have a decoy lure the crowd of zombies away, using grenades to clear a path to the door, or putting a rag into a vehicle's gas tank and aiming it for the crowd of zombies. Creativity should be rewarded.

In addition, the first player to approach within 20 feet of the building will be beset by a tongue zombie, like that in Scene 5, perched on the roof of the building. Players will have to fight it off while, quite possibly, the rest of the crowd of zombies is attracted by the struggle.

Once in the building, players will have to get through the remaining staff, which have succumbed to the Z strain as well. There are 4 standard-issue zombies, as well as one Rodney-class to give them a final bit of challenge before they can put the antidote into the water supply.

Scene 13:

Read: *You screw off the cap on the access port, pour the antidote into the water treatment system, and breathe a sigh of relief. Your work is done.*

Dr. Eggleston was right: the infected start to recover within a few hours, and the town is back to normal within a few days, give or take a few corpses and bullet holes. Shortly after the recovery is complete, two men wearing dark suits and sunglasses pay you all a visit. The taller of the two speaks:

"Gentlemen, I'm Mr. Smith. We understand that you have the belief that the government may have been involved in the events of the past week. You need to understand that belief is entirely in error. What happened in Bonanza was not some kind of 'Zombie' invasion, but was merely a mass hallucination, brought on by clouds of smoke from an experimental strain of marijuana from a nearby growing facility that caught fire. The deaths came about when the town citizens turned on each other."

"Fortunately, thanks to the DEA's quick work, we've been able to shut down the facility and make Bonanza safe again. But we're concerned: if people begin talking of zombies and government labs and alien viruses, Colorado -- even the whole country -- could erupt into panic, and we can't have that, can we?" he asks, looking meaningfully into each of your eyes, one after the other.

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“So, I’m sure you understand the situation, and that we can count on your cooperation. If not, we’ll know about it, and I’m sure you wouldn’t want us to have to come back to talk about this again, would you?” With a last significant look, he and his silent partner stride from the room.

Of course, you immediately head back to the lab, but when you reach the field, the fence is gone, as are the cars. You pile into the cabin, but the floor resolutely remains immobile, and pulling back a floorboard reveals nothing but dirt beneath. You ask around town, but nobody who is still alive seems to know much, and Daisy has suddenly gone on vacation “somewhere in Europe”, leaving behind only a sign on the door of the cafe that says “Gone Fishin’.”

As you head back to your daily lives, you reflect on what you’ve seen and how improbable it seems. But knowing what you now do, you suspect that you may not have seen the last of Mr. Smith.