

# The Bodyguards

by Clay Dowling

This adventure is written with the system and templates from *GURPS Action* in mind. I have attempted to scale this adventure for the 250 point characters from *GURPS Action 1: Heroes*. There is nothing system specific in the adventure, and it can be easily adapted to any number of other systems.

## The Client

Randolf Jacobson is the head of Jacobson Genetics, a research firm on the cutting edge of germ-line therapies. He is presenting a paper on his research to correct the genetic factors which cause [Tay-Sachs](#) disease in the developing embryo at a conference in Detroit, Michigan. His laboratory research using embryonic stem cells has been extremely successful, and based on the strength of this paper he is expected to raise enough funding for the first round of clinical trials. The presentation is intended to reach the affluent members of the Detroit Jewish community, and hopefully draw out a group of wealthy sponsors.

Dr. Jacobson is a small man, only 5'6", fifty five years old with a head of thick gray hair. He is warm and friendly to everyone he meets. He seems like the kind of person who gets invited out to the quieter cocktail parties, not the sort to inspire death threats. He is a widower, and has two adult children, both of whom are students at the University of Michigan. He makes a point of keeping his children out of the spotlight, and they have not been mentioned in the death threats so far.

## The Job

Embryonic stem cell research is not without its critics, and Dr. Jacobson has received several death threats. While most of them are clearly the work of the terminally bewildered, some are credible. On the advice of his attorney, he has decided to hire a small security detail to protect him on the way to the conference, while he is there, and on the way back.

The one credible death threat has come from a group called Children of the Ashes. They appear to be a new group, because the FBI and the Michigan State Police don't have any concrete information about them. Based on the tone of their note, they don't particularly care for embryonic stem cell research though, and they clearly have a distaste for Dr. Jacobson.

## Children of the Ashes

This is a home-grown terrorist group. They have a dozen members, twice that many financial backers, and about half a dozen who are willing and able to engage in field work. They have an initial BAD<sup>1</sup> of -2. They have burned a Planned Parenthood clinic, but otherwise they haven't had any field action.

The founder of Children of the Ashes is Nadia Rocheforte, a former Right to Life activist who was frustrated with the group's non-violent approach to the problem. Rather than attempt to change a gigantic movement, she started for own movement for direct action. She has recruited skilled fund raisers

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<sup>1</sup> BASIC ABSTRACT DIFFICULTY, *GURPS Action 2: Exploits*, p 4. BAD represents a group's general ability to be on the ball about security and actions against other groups. In any direct or indirect confrontations with the group outside of combat, apply BAD to the roll if you are not directly confronting a stated character. For specifics please consult *Exploits*.

from religious organizations who understand discretion. Her field operatives have been carefully selected from former military who have right-wing religious leanings but clean records. None of them come with a special forces background. Mrs. Rocheforte is known to the police, but there has never been any evidence that could link her to a crime. The biggest charge they can level at her is that of "community organizer," which is more likely to recommend her for public office than hard time.

## Intelligence Intercepts

If the player characters attempt to intercept communication from Mrs. Rocheforte, they will be able to gain the following information. If the PCs do not think to tap her phone or hack her computer, the GM should very strongly suggest it with a clue-by-four, since gathering intelligence about possible threats is a basic security task. Apply BAD to any hacking attempts, or social engineering.

Intelligence intercepts should be interspersed with assembling gear and any training or background research that is necessary. *Don't* just give all of these to the players as an information dump, but don't feel obliged to prolong the scenes, either. Each piece of information should require one action from the PCs to reveal it, such as a phone tap, computer hacking or a virus.

1. Children of the Ashes is aware of the planned route from Grand Rapids to the hotel. Since there are two equally valid routes (I-94 and I-96), this would tend to indicate that there is a leak. Do not reveal this piece of information until the route has been chosen.
2. If the route is changed, the Children will be aware of this as well, so long as it doesn't change en-route. If this intercept is invoked, it should be received via the same mechanism as #1.
3. The Children plan to hit Jacobson's motorcade at the exit where they leave the highway and take to the surface streets.
4. The cell phones of three members of the Children, aside from Mrs. Rocheforte.

## The Mole

The PCs should be able to figure out from intercept #1, and possibly #2, that either their organization, or more likely Jacobson's, has a mole. In fact the departmental receptionist, Sylvia Rowe, has reservations about embryonic stem cell research, and she is leaking information to Nadia. She does not know that Nadia has violent intentions, and if she did she would end her association and come clean to Jacobson. Her objection to the research comes from her pro-life leanings, and getting somebody killed or injured would obviously be at odds with her beliefs.

The PCs have two options for dealing with Sylvia. They can shut her out of the operation, which would mean working without a receptionist for a week. Alternately, they can feed her false information, especially about their route or security precautions that they are taking. The second is definitely the better use for her, and if your players don't think of it they should be prodded. Don't be heartbroken if they choose to ignore this resource: this kind of misinformation campaign is non-trivial and they may not feel that they are up to the task.

## Travel

No matter which route the PCs take to the conference, the Children of the Ashes will work it out via the simple expedient of tailing them out of Grand Rapids and phoning ahead to their team on the ground. The tail will follow as far as the M-52 interchange, after which their route to Detroit is pretty

well determined. A chase motorcycle will pick up their trail at U.S. 23, based on description and route information called ahead by the first pursuit vehicle.

At any point after U.S. 23, as soon as the motorcade leaves the highway they will be attacked once the vehicle is stopped.

The first round will come from the chase motorcycle. The rider will toss a crude percussion bomb under the main vehicle (choose randomly which one if there are two vehicles of equal size) and zip off before it explodes. The bomb will make a hell of a noise and cause stunning. If you are playing with a system that does not have stun rules, assume 1d6 seconds before anybody can act unless they have a combat-reflexes type advantage. If there is anybody outside the protection of a vehicle, such as on a motorcycle, you should roll for damage. The bomb is no more than black powder packed into a cardboard toilet paper tube with a fuse. It won't produce any shrapnel, but there could be burns, and it stands a good chance of knocking anybody standing or riding over.

There is a pair of operatives on a motorcycle waiting near where the highway exits to surface streets. Once the percussion bomb has gone off they will roll up and the passenger will empty a semi-automatic pistol into the car. It isn't meant to be a terribly effective attack, but an unlucky occupant may be hit by a bullet. The team will then speed off. Unless the PCs themselves have a motorcycle, they will not have any real chance to catch them. If you would like the excitement though, please consider the chase rules from *GURPS Action 2: Exploits*.

At this point, the available intelligence indicates that the planned attack has been made, and the threat should be past. Paranoid players will know better.

## The Conference

The conference is attended by academics and industry researchers. They are for the most part both friendly and non-threatening. PCs who do not suffer from a sense of paranoia will not see any threats among the attendees.

There is a very real threat among the staff of the hotel. In the last month the six field work members of Children of the Ashes have managed to infiltrate the hotel staff, either as full time staff members or part timers looking to pick up some extra cash. Because hotels tend to have high turnover, they don't ask a huge number of questions about their employees, other than the social security number doesn't bounce back with problems and they show up to work on time and reasonably sober. That means that ferreting out the infiltrators will be difficult unless they are tracked down via their cell phones.

How the attack comes will depend on the level of paranoia from the PCs. If the room is left unguarded long enough for housekeeping to come in, an infiltrator in housekeeping will plant a simple bomb on the underside of the bedside table which will be enough to destroy the room. Sufficient paranoid searching will find the bomb in time to defuse it (or at least to get Jacobson clear).

If the Children can't get him in his hotel room, they will try to knife him in a crowd. Hotel staff are circulating throughout the event, and it would be nothing for one of them to walk up to Jacobson and slip a knife between his ribs, then move on. There will be only one attempt at knifing. The PCs should be given the opportunity to catch it, but adjust their roll to account for their behavior so far. If they aren't demonstrating sufficient paranoia, if they think that attack as they left the highway was the end of it, asses penalties. Likewise, if they think the attempt was a ruse, and that the Children have infiltrated the hotel staff, give them a bonus. I don't recommend giving a large bonus, because protecting somebody is supposed to be hard.

## What's Next?

Where to go next with the adventure is up to you. If Jacobson is killed, the PCs may feel obligated to avenge him, since they took his money. The police definitely will get involved if Jacobson is killed or injured. The PCs may want to assist the police. If they developed any information in the intelligence gathering phase, they can help the police investigation by handing it over. Any other material evidence, like photos of the members, would be a big bonus.

If the characters have a protection firm, they would do well to milk the publicity of helping the police, to help cover for the fact that their client was killed or injured. They could also use the generated publicity from a foiled attack to help launch their firm. That makes a good basis for a campaign.

## NPCs

### *Fredrick Jacobson*

#### **Fredrick Jacobson (207 points)**

Age 53; Human

ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 16 [120]; HT 10 [0].

Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 16 [0]; Per 16 [0]; FP 10 [0].

Basic Speed 5 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Block 0; Dodge 8; Parry 0.

#### **Social Background**

TL: 8 [0].

CF:

Languages:

#### **Advantages**

Rank (Academic) 3 [15].

#### **Disadvantages**

Quirks: Congenial; Obsession (Taye-Sachs) [-2].

#### **Skills**

Administration-16 (IQ+0) [2]; Bioengineering/TL8 (Genetic Engineering)-22 (IQ+6) [28]; Biology/TL8 (Earthlike)-16 (IQ+0) [8]; Expert Skill (Biochemist)-15 (IQ-1) [2]; First Aid/TL8 (Human)-20 (IQ+4) [8]; Mathematics/TL8 (Applied)-14 (IQ-2) [1]; Mathematics/TL8 (Statistics)-17 (IQ+1) [8]; Naturalist (Earth)-14 (IQ-2) [1]; Physician/TL8 (Human)-18 (IQ+2) [12]; Writing-17 (IQ+1) [4].

### *Nadia Rocheforte*

#### **Nadia Rocheforte (130 points)**

Human

ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 10 [0].  
 Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 10 [0].  
 Basic Speed 5 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0]; Block 0; Dodge 8; Parry 0.

### Social Background

TL: 8 [0].  
 CF: Western (Native) [0].  
 Languages: English (Native) [0]; Spanish (Native/None) [0].

### Advantages

Charisma 1 [5]; Contact (Street) (Effective Skill 15) (9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [2]; Favor (Patron) 2 (Favor; 9 or less) [3]; Patrons (Magdalene Group) (9 or less) [25]; Status 1 [5].  
 Perks: Honest Face; Penetrating Voice [2].

### Disadvantages

Overconfidence (12 or less) [-5]; Secret (Corrupt) (Serious Embarrassment) [-5]; Sense of Duty (Clients) (Small Group) [-5].  
 Quirks: Duty (Legal Ethics) [-1].

### Skills

Detect Lies-10 (Per-2) [1]; Diplomacy-11 (IQ-1) [2]; Fast-Talk-14 (IQ+2) [8]; Forensics/TL8-12 (IQ+0) [4]; Law (Criminal)-13 (IQ+1) [8]; Propaganda/TL8-13 (IQ+1) [4]; Psychology (Human)-10 (IQ-2) [1]; Public Speaking-16 (IQ+4) [12]; Research/TL8-11 (IQ-1) [1]; Savoir-Faire (High Society)-15 (IQ+3) [8]; Streetwise-12 (IQ+0) [2]; Tactics-14 (IQ+2) [12]; Writing-11 (IQ-1) [1].

## *Children of the Ashes*

### Muscle (104 points)

Human

ST 11 [10]; DX 13 [60]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 11 [10].  
 Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 11 [0].  
 Basic Speed 6 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Block 0; Dodge 10; Parry 10 (Karate).

### Social Background

TL: 8 [0].  
 CF: Western (Native) [0].  
 Languages: English (Native) [0].

### Advantages

Combat Reflexes [15]; Status 1 [5].

### Disadvantages

Code of Honor (Protect the innocent) [-10]; Fanaticism (Children of the Ashes) [-15]; Overconfidence (12 or less) [-5]; Sense of Duty (Comrades) [-5].

**Skills**

Driving/TL8 (Automobile)-13 (DX+0) [2]; Explosives/TL8 (Demolition)-10 (IQ-1) [1]; First Aid/TL8 (Human)-11 (IQ+0) [1]; Guns/TL8 (Pistol)-16 (DX+3) [8]; Karate-13 (DX+0) [4]; Knife-14 (DX+1) [2]; Urban Survival-10 (Per-1) [1].