

GH**OST**BUSTERS

Lasers and Feelings by John Harper. This adaptation by Andrew Shields. Draft 5.9.16

ROLLING. The situation always changes after a roll.

When there is an element of risk, roll 1d6 to see if your character succeeds.

- +1d6 if you are an expert. (Primary role most times, secondary role if it makes sense.)
- +1d6 if you have the proper tools at hand.
- +1d6 if you have help. (The one helping rolls, and with at least one success, grants +1d to you.)

RESULTS:

- **BODY.** Roll under your number to succeed at physical tasks.
 - *Muscle, reflexes, grace, coordination, attractiveness, mobility, speed, toughness.*
- **MIND.** Roll over your number to succeed at intellectual tasks.
 - *Wit, education, insight, perception, memory, imagination, discipline, charm.*
- **SPIRIT.** Roll your number exactly to blend mind and body for outstanding results! Get a success and an extra insight or benefit.

SUCCESSSES	INJURIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 0 successes: Something goes wrong, the situation gets worse.• 1 success: You manage the job, with a cost or complication.• 2 successes: Good job.• 3 or more successes: Critical success! Get an extra advantage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1. Roughed up. -1d on all rolls.• 2. Badly hurt. -2 dice on all rolls.• 3. Incapacitated. No rolls.• 4. Death.

Characters heal 1 injury per day with at least 12 hours of rest and no strenuous activity. Here is the damage to expect from various weapons and attacks.

- Hand to hand and thrown rocks do no automatic damage.
- Hand weapons and throwing weapons do 1 injury.
- Firearms do 2 injury.
- **Adjustments.** Armor reduces injury by 1 unless the attack rolls a SPIRIT result. Critical is +1 injury.

The GM generally assumes that characters succeed at what they're good at, and the NPCs do too. Rolls only come up when there is an element of risk or meaningful competition. Rolls can be opposed, canceling out the other side's successes. In general, the GM describes what is going to happen, and the PCs roll to alter the outcome, or to implement their plan instead.

How do I know what to roll? That's up to the group to decide, and the GM has the final word.

- One character could fight with strength and speed and roll Body. Another could use Tai Chi, discipline, and insight, and use Mind. One character could flirt with the secretary using Body from being so attractive, another could use wit and quips to roll Mind.
- Science tasks tend to focus on Mind. Climbing and swimming tend to focus on Body.

Remember: rolling the dice is just a way to add chance to see if an action succeeds or not. Don't let ambiguity get in the way of the story. Frame the situation, pick Body or Mind, add up the dice, and see what happens next.

GH**ST**BUSTER CHARACTER

Character Name: _____	NUMBER (2 TO 5)
Style: _____	
Primary Role: _____	
Secondary Role: _____	
Experience: (/) _____	BODY > SPIRIT <MIND

NOTES:

May include equipment, relationships, missions and outcomes, description of appearance, rank in the organization, family members, greatest hopes, darkest fears, retirement plans, criminal record, political aspirations, longtime enemies, motivation for joining, character sketch, astrological sign, etc.

CHARACTER GENERATION HELP

You can choose a Style, Primary Role, and Secondary Role. Sometimes randomizing the results can be fast, and lead to unexpected fun in trying something new. Feel free to make up more styles and roles if none of these fit your idea.

STYLE (2D6)	ROLES (2D6) <i>Roll once for primary, again for secondary.</i>
2. Cautious.	2. Leader. (Organize the team, formally or informally.)
3. Bloodstained.	3. Theoretical Science. (Understand how ghosts and gear work.)
4. Hot Shot.	4. Tech and Gear. (Build and maintain equipment to specs.)
5. Intrepid.	5. Diplomat. (Talk to people.)
6. Savvy.	6. Finance and Management. (Keep the business solvent.)
7. Sexy.	7. On Point. (Direct missions.)
8. Rebel.	8. Enforcer. (Protect the team.)
9. Regulation.	9. Driver. (Get the team there and back.)
10. Curious.	10. Occultist. (Research alternative medicine and physics.)
11. Spooky.	11. Gofer. (Run errands for and support the team.)
12. Jester.	12. Research. (Find out information.)

If the results don't seem to mesh, you can of course roll or choose other results. However, it can be fun to think about how results that don't seem to make sense might actually happen anyway, showing off how your own odd little organization emerged in this unexpected configuration.

MOTIVATION (2D6)

If you want, you can make up a reason your character got into busting ghosts in the first place. You can invent your own reason, choose one of these, or randomize.

2. **Hero.** You like saving people, and a little admiration doesn't hurt.
3. **Thrill Seeker.** Defeating the undead is a rush, adding color and breath and life to living.
4. **Revenge.** A close family member was destroyed by a ghost somehow. Make them all pay.
5. **It's a Job.** A friend of a friend got you into this, and it pays the bills. You're good at it. It'll do.
6. **Fortune and Glory.** From the outside, this looks like glamorous work. You can use it to get famous.
7. **Freak Magnet.** Your whole life weird things have happened around you. At least here that's normal.
8. **Another's Dream.** You got into this to be close to someone you loved. How is that working out?
9. **SCIENCE!!!** This is the cutting edge of scientific theory and equipment; get paid to study first hand.
10. **Eschatology.** What happens when you die? How do ghosts interact with religions?
11. **Nepotism.** You have an influential relative who put you in this role for one reason or another.
12. **Business Plan.** Seemed a good investment, with access to government regulation and franchises.

FRANCHISE

Your team is a Ghostbusters franchise. You give 10% of your income to license the name and logo, and to access proprietary technology. Each franchise has its own little quirks.

Choose, invent, or randomize two advantages and two disadvantages. Here are some suggestions.

ADVANTAGES (1D6)

1. **Key Location.** Your base is on a ley line nexus, or Hellmouth, or whatever. Steady business.
2. **Cutting Edge Gear.** Access to the best toys. Alternate casters, lighter gear, better traps, other tech.
3. **Local Backing.** Important people support you. Maybe politicians, businessmen, or the public.
4. **Dependable.** Reputation for getting it done. A broad base of satisfied customers willing to speak up.
5. **Heroes.** Once saved the city from dire danger. People remember the fear, and those who ended it.
6. **Transport.** Totally custom vehicles. One primary, and possibly one or more backup. Boats, planes, etc.

DISADVANTAGES (1D6)

1. **Ratty Gear.** Budget cuts and hard use have rendered your equipment unreliable.
2. **Civic Probation.** Damaged the city, barely hanging on to a home base who is suspicious of them.
3. **Franchise Probation.** Why? Leaking tech plans, embarrassing scandal, or money trouble.
4. **Attrition.** Several key team members have been lost to work related danger, firings, or health issues.
5. **Slow Business.** Money is tight, expenses rising, and it's tough to keep the gear up and people fed.
6. **Crusade.** Competitors, religious types, politicians, safety inspectors, or parent groups have targeted you and want to shut you down.

BASICS

As a group, figure out some of the basics.

- **Choose a city.** It can be real or fictional.
- **Describe your headquarters.** Consider your advantages and disadvantages for context.
- **Any logo adjustments?** These can really set your franchise operation apart.
- **Org chart.** Who is in charge? Do you have a "Director" and "Agents" or is it more or less complex?
- **Other staff.** Do you have a staff assistant? Driver? Accountant? If you want to hire NPCs to round out your organization, this may be the time.
- **Vehicles.** How does your team get around?

What kind of gear adjustments make sense? Let your group get creative, but here are possibilities. For cheap or shoddy gear, ignore 1 success when you use it. For better gear, it can be made lighter and more accurate. Maybe the throwers have a setting to destroy the ghost instead of containing it. Maybe the containment unit has a "ethermarine" vehicle to allow scientists to enter the dimension and study captive ghosts. Maybe there is a lure to draw them in, or a squealer grenade to repel them. Maybe sensors are more compact and accurate, down to sunglasses or iphones. Maybe there is a remote control robot with all the gear equipped. Maybe there are poncho suits designed to repel ectoplasm. Use your imagination, and ideas from cartoons and comics, and have fun with it.

TECHNOLOGY AND GEAR

What are ghosts? The world has a tidal system of background life energy that is always in motion. Especially strong emotions or wills can create an impression in that background energy, and as energy concentrates in the pattern, it can distill down to become ectoplasm. At that point, if the pattern is strong enough, it can use the energy of the ectoplasm to affect the normal, visible world. The pattern can appear in the visible light spectrum, and use telekinesis to move things.

How does containment work? The ectoplasmic pattern of a ghost has a powerful negative energy signature. The proton pack is a backpack nuclear reactor that uses a miniature cyclotron to concentrate protons through a positron collider, creating a positronic ionized stream of proton energy. This energy is difficult to aim through the neutron wand (also known as the proton gun or particle thrower), but it homes in on ectoplasmic energy, and can twist around it to form a ghost cage. Once the ghost is contained, a trap is placed under it. The trap contains a concentrated dose of negative energy, and when opened, it drains the ambient positive energy of the environment into it; this current is enough to pull in a ghost, if it is placed near enough. When the trap is connected to the containment unit, the ghost is ejected into the unit, and concentrated negative energy is replaced in the trap to recharge it. The containment unit itself uses dimensional harmonics to create a bounded energy cage that holds the ghosts inside, because pushing through the dimensional boundaries would drain all energy from their patterns and destroy them.

How are ghosts detected? Psychokinetic Energy is the residue of concentrated ectoplasm elements left behind as ghosts move against the tidal background energy. This can be crudely detected by a hand-held wand, or seen more clearly through goggles adapted and powered to pick up concentrations of energy outside the visible spectrum.

Are ghosts the only supernatural creatures? The Ghostbusters franchise was initially formed to combat ghosts. However, there are other sub-structures in the tidal background energy that can concentrate in other energy patterns. Whether these patterns have always been active and form the folklore of the world, or whether they became real as human imagination focused on their patterns, is unknown. There also seems to be a rising tide in the background energy of the world, leading to more supernatural occurrences than have ever been recorded in human history (which is why entire franchises of Ghostbusters can be supported as a new and expensive industry.)

How do Ghostbusters set rates for their services? Jargon varies, but in general, threats are classified and the rates are a multiplier based on the threat. Various franchises may tack on many service fees, or discount their services, as their circumstances and morals allow. *Basic fee: double the class rating, x \$500. Adjust with contextual fees up to ½ the base total. So, a class 2 would be 4 x \$500 for \$2,000. That could be adjusted down to \$1,000 for a deal, or cranked up to \$3,000 for many, many reasons.*

- Class 1: nuisance, echo, basic pest.
- Class 2: interactive threat capable of inconveniencing the body and jarring the psyche.
- Class 3: deadly threat capable of ending a life.
- Class 4: deadly threat capable of damaging a city.
- Class 5: dimensional threat capable of threatening humanity and the earth.

FURTHER GAME MASTER GUIDANCE

With so few rules written down, most of the rhythm and style of the game is supposed to be in your head. Here is some guidance to make it easier for you to run the game for players and their characters.

Fighting. This game is not focused on highly strategic and tactical combat. When characters roll, think about whether it is a pivotal action or a general outcome roll. For example, a character aiming the positronic stream at a ghost to capture it would be a pivotal action. The other characters battling the ghostly infantry around the general are looking for the general outcome. Only use a lot of detail and focus on blow-by-blow outcomes for pivotal actions. Here are some tricks to use.

- **Assign Successes.** Tell the player how many injuries the character will sustain, then let combat successes be spent to either knock down foes OR reduce incoming damage, or both. (A SPIRIT result should both knock down a foe AND reduce incoming damage.)
 - In general, no injury if they've got an advantage, one in a fair fight, two if outnumbered, three if they are in serious trouble.
- **Speed.** Combat wants to be fast, a few rolls for the whole thing. Let it be fast. Don't look to protect the NPCs or go out of your way to knock the PCs down. You can always have another fight later. The combat is not at the center of this game's design.
- **Style.** There are no combat stats. Everyone gets 1d, and they have to negotiate for the rest.
 - **Tools.** They get +1d for tools normally, but in a fight only give them the +1d if they have better tools than their opponents. If they have knives and their foes are unarmed, they get +1d. If everyone has hand weapons, then you are not penalized, but you get no further advantage from your hand weapons. A positronic wand lets you fight a ghost, it doesn't give you the advantage against it. However, an upgraded thrower might.
 - **Expertise.** Wring as much color from this into your game as you can. Keep application focused, not a broad brush for getting a bonus die all the time. Reward the characters when the players play to their strengths.
 - **Help.** Focus a fight in a couple characters if you can, with other characters helping. You can decide all characters in a fight take 1 injury, with the point person taking 2. Or if they attack from safety or outnumber the foe, maybe assistants don't take any damage. Anyway, if they succeed in a roll, they give +1d to the lead character, so the lead character has more successes to cope with damage and inflict it.
- **Damaging Enemies.** Lesser foes can be dispatched with a success each, tougher foes two successes, dangerous foes three successes. Supernatural threats can take 1 success per category, plus or minus half. When enough successes are scored against them, they are knocked down or they break and flee, you won the fight. If players want more domineering success than that, they must get a critical success and probably a SPIRIT result too just to assure killing blows and no escapes.

REMEMBER the most interesting monsters are going to need something besides raw violence to put them down. Something anchors them to the world, their life force is hidden somewhere, they are only vulnerable to a certain attack (but it is devastating to them) and so on. Masterful attacks with a sword against a werewolf can drive it back and limit its damage, but not count towards successes needed to kill it unless silver gets involved.

GM Dice. Don't roll any dice at all. Lay out the threat, and allow characters to blunt or divert or destroy the threat. Here are some ways to keep the game dangerous while doing that.

- **Assumed damage.** Tell the player that the character will take a certain amount of damage for getting in the way or being caught or whatever. Then let successes on the roll reduce that damage, and further successes reduce the threat somehow.
- **Limited time.** Decide that the mind control attempt can be sustained for 3 rounds. The target throws off the attempt with 3 successes (in one round or one a round for three rounds or whatever) but is mind controlled if failing the roll before getting enough successes.
- **Limit opportunity.** A failure on a social roll may end the conversation. Trying to repair something, the failure means now it can't be repaired. Failure in a climbing roll may mean it is not possible to get up the cliff.

Default Ghost Capture. One person uses Body or Mind to try and capture the ghost, needing 1 success per its category to pin it in place. Others can roll to see if they can contribute 1d to the effort. Ghostbusters are specialized in this, so they get 1d6, +1d6 for being an expert. (Not 1d6 for gear, as the gear makes it possible.) Others may roll to help. Then when enough successes are scored, someone must set the trap (this doesn't require a roll) and the next round the ghost goes into the trap.

Cool Traits for Monsters. Sometimes it helps to have some neat mechanical tricks for monsters to use.

- **Feeds on Fear.** Every 1 rolled while confronting the creature gives it a free dodge or an extra point of damage to inflict.
- **Tough.** Ignores the first success rolled from each attack. This may be from agility, toughness, quasi-corporeal nature, or whatever source.
- **Regenerates.** Every round it removes one success scored against it.
- **Venom.** If an attack does damage, then the victim hallucinates (pass a Mind test or pass out.) Or, every SPIRIT rolled also inflicts a point of damage until the venom has inflicted two and goes inert.

The main point is to frame the scene so the players understand the stakes and make informed decisions about what they do. Surprise consequences should be reserved for fighting poorly understood monsters or dealing with the supernatural, not in the normal course of events.

EXPERIENCE

If you want to have characters benefit from experience, here's a simple method. Every session a character survives, grant 1 experience. This becomes a pool. A player can spend 1 experience to change a rolled die to a 1 or a 6. Up to all experience can be spent each session. The pool of experience refreshes every session.

For slower advancement, the GM can award 1 experience per overall story, or per significant threat, or set milestones to achieve to gain an experience point. However they are awarded, the mechanical function of experience points is the same.