

Murder will out, 'tis sure, nor ever fails,  
And chiefly when God's honor vengeance needs.  
The blood cries out upon your cursed deeds.  
Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*

# MURDER WILL OUT

Sample file

An adventure for Hunter: the Vigil  
using the Storytelling Adventure System

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| STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM |   |                  |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------|
| SCENES<br>8                   | MENTAL<br>PHYSICAL<br>SOCIAL<br>●●●●○<br>●●●●○<br>●○○○○ | XP LEVEL<br>0-24 |



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# Introduction

**Murder Will Out** is a **Hunter: The Vigil** story of murder, madness and corruption. It pits the players' hunters against implacable killers of every stripe, and leads them into the grisly secret that links them all. What at first seems a case of an insane but isolated killer expands to put the players' characters at the mercy of an enemy that lives off violence itself, and can only be defeated by an act that could make the hunters killers on a par with the mass murderers they oppose.

This kit is written as a standalone adventure. It presumes that the players' characters are hunters who are established in the Vigil, understanding that there are other hunter cells out there who can cooperate or conflict in their hunt for supernatural horrors. It should work fine as a chapter in most ongoing chronicles, since it forms a self-contained struggle with a particular villain. This story makes use of slashers – compulsive killers, often with supernatural qualities – as antagonists. Storytellers may find the sourcebook **Slashers** useful, but it is not essential. **Murder Will Out** can be run with just the **World of Darkness** and **Hunter: The Vigil** core books.

## Treatment

The story begins when the hunter cell links up with a contact in the police (or, if the Storyteller has access to the **Slasher** sourcebook, the FBI's VASCU unit). This hunter-friendly contact has been following the case of the Calculator, a serial murderer whose killings reflect a mathematical obsession. Frustrated that the police are unable to end the Calculator's killings, he joins up with the cell to intercept his next murder (predicted by a breakthrough in the mathematical code of the killings) and kill the Calculator. The cell is too late to catch the Calculator – he has fled, leaving his victim severely wounded – but clues from the victim's apartment and from the victim herself lead them to a penthouse apartment where the Calculator lives under an assumed identity.

Evidence from the penthouse points to a meeting between killers and their common patron. The meeting is a trap, and another slasher – Sally Duquesne – is waiting there to ambush the hunters. This is the first evidence that the slashers in the city are targeting the hunter cell. Duquesne carries a brochure for the Green Fields Retirement Home, pointing towards the third slasher, Donald Aitcheson.

## ABOUT THE STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you've chosen a fine place to start. To keep this story kit lean and focused, we haven't included a lot of the core premises and Storyteller suggestions that are at the heart of the SAS. Whether you're a new Storyteller or an old hand, be sure to read the *free* SAS Guide, found at the SAS website:

[www.white-wolf.com/sas](http://www.white-wolf.com/sas)

Here are some of the features available in **Murder Will Out**:

- **Interactive links.** Clicking on anything in green will take you directly to the section referenced, or to an appropriate character sheet or prop. It can also take you to an external website that could be useful.
- **Scenes.** Clicking on a scene name in the scene flowchart or the page number in the scene card will take you to the full write-up of the scene.
- **Bookmarks.** This PDF is fully bookmarked, so you can jump to major sections at any time when the file is open.

The second attack is a psychological one and comes by letter, as each hunter and their contact receives a letter written to turn them against their cellmates. Donald Aitcheson is an invalid who kills through a supernatural ability to know just what buttons to press to turn the target's closest family member or friend against her. He writes letters to a target's closest associate, informing him that the target has done him some terrible wrong, sufficient to turn him to murder. Confronting Aitcheson gives the hunter cell the final link – all the killers were committing their crimes within an area that made sure the bodies were taken to the West Bridge Hospital.

An interlude takes place while the hunters are checking out the hospital. Devon Flaherty, a retired hunter, contacts them and tells them about an operation his old cell mounted against a supernatural creature who inhabited the hospital some years ago. It was living on





the violent trauma brought in with the assault victims and bodies of murder victims brought into the hospital. Flaherty's cell destroyed the creature, but perhaps it is still there, inhabiting the hospital and using the three killers to bring it more murder victims from which to draw sustenance.

Flaherty's information and the leads from Aitcheson should lead the hunters to the West Bridge hospital, where the story's climax occurs. The demon (indeed inhabiting the hospital) along with the Calculator (waiting there to defend his master) combine to cut the hunters off from one another and kill them one by one. Should the hunters survive this and deal with the Calculator, they also have to deal with the demon itself. The only way to do this is to destroy the fabric of the hospital it inhabits. This is simple enough to do, since they can set fire to the place. They are, however, responsible for the safety of everyone inside, and failing to ensure the place is fully evacuated will result in innocent deaths and should take a severe toll on their minds. Should they fail to destroy the hospital, the demon gains enough sustenance from the murder victims already killed by its pet slashers to built itself a physical form again, whereupon it will terrorize the city once more and provide the antagonist for a future story.

## Theme: Murder Most Foul

Murder is more than just a mundane crime. Murder is powerful, changing the world in the way that only the elimination of a human being can. The trauma and violence of murder ripples beyond the immediate family and acquaintances of the slain, and this power is sought and fed upon by the story's villain. Further, the hunters will, likely as not, kill people (probably the slashers themselves) during the course of the story. Even when dealing with an irredeemable villain, killing someone changes the killer, and very rarely for the better. **Hunter** addresses this through its Morality rules, but the players should also take into account the effects that committing murder can have on their characters. Do they see killing a slasher as a victory or as a necessary evil? Do they beat themselves up for not having a different solution? Do they have doubts that they are really that different from the killers they are pursuing? Or do they take a savage joy in meting out justice?

## Mood: Mystery and Survival

For much of its length, **Murder Will Out** is an investigation story where the hunters chase clues from one killer to the next. The story also has an element of sustained threat hanging over the hunters: All three of the slashers involved in the story actively hunt them at some point. While parts of the story resemble a detective novel, others resemble a slasher movie, where the goal suddenly becomes survival. Murder is not just something that gets dealt out during the story – the hunters can be the victims, too.

## A Chapter in your Chronicle

**Murder Will Out** is self-contained and can fit into most **Hunter: the Vigil** chronicles easily. It should be set in a city, since it involves multiple serial murderers and a large hospital. It can help lead to the next stage in a chronicle since it involves an alliance with a contact in the police force, who could then put the hunter cell onto leads from other police investigations into corruption in government, other slashers or supernatural events quietly filed away as “unsolved.” The nature of the villain – a demonic spirit with the need to feed on violent trauma – could also send the cell trying to discover where the spirit came from and whether there are any more preying on humanity. If you have a chance to run stories before this one, you can seed references to the Calculator's killings prior to the game start. Further, you can even have an established Storyteller character in your chronicle be one of his victims, giving the hunters more of an emotional investment in the first scene.

This story can also serve as an introductory scenario, although in this case the players will need to create hunters who already have knowledge of the Vigil and the existence of other hunters in the same city. In either case, the repercussions of the story can easily be felt in subsequent stories – the West Bridge Hospital has probably been burnt down or demolished, the hunters could be wanted by the police for committing this act, and the hunters themselves could have gained new personal scars which remind them of just how far they were willing to go to pursue the Vigil.



# Background and Set-Up

## Background

Twelve years ago, Devon Flaherty led a hunter cell called the Clarion Street Sentinels. The cell tracked a demon to the West Street Hospital. This demon lived off negative emotions, particularly the trauma of violence. Its true name, though the cell never learned it, was Askarana-Khul. The cell cornered it in the hospital basement and killed it. Only Askarana-Khul's physical form was destroyed, however, and the demon lived on in a much-weakened form that possessed the fabric of the hospital building itself.

Fast-forward a few years. Askarana-Khul wants a physical body again. To create one, it needs a whole lot of violently killed corpses. It reaches out to three particularly violent inhabitants of the city – the Calculator, Sally Duquesne, and Donald Aitcheson. The demon promises them powerful boons to aid in their killing, on the condition that they take pains to ensure their victims are found in the area served by the West Bridge Hospital. Askarana-Khul gives the Calculator the knowledge to build a guardian – the Seventh Execution -- to kill any investigators who closed in on him. The demon gives Sally Duquesne the location of a knife steeped in so much blood it thirsts for more and kills more effectively than any mundane blade. And to Aitcheson it gave the names of everyone that fit the criteria to become one of his victims. And so the bodies flow into West Bridge's morgue, slain by three seemingly unconnected killers, and Askarana-Khul becomes almost strong enough to build a new body.

Franklin Kim, a police detective (or, at the Storyteller's option, an agent in the FBI's Vanguard Serial Crime Unit), is working on the string of murders committed by the Calculator. He has seen enough strange crap in his career to know the Calculator isn't just another killer. He believes the only way to stop him is to kill him, and enlists the help of the players' hunter cell to do just that. Kim believes he has cracked the pattern of the Calculator's killings, and the story begins as he and the hunter cell head to the site of the next expected killing – the apartment of Sandra Meyer.

## Set-Up

The story should fit hunter cells from all tiers. **Murder Will Out** assumes the hunters' cell has been contacted by Franklin Kim to assist

in hunting and presumably killing the serial murderer known as the Calculator. The story begins with the hunters and Kim driving towards the apartment of the Calculator's next victim, and should require only a few words of exposition, explaining who Kim is and why he's working with the cell.

The scenes presented here assume the hunters are first tier cells, but second and third tier organizations can be accommodated. Second-tier cells are usually based in a particular city and need little extra incentive to stop someone like the Calculator. Both second- and third-tier cells might be spurred into action by the potential supernatural involvement in the Calculator's killings. He appears to be highly intelligent, and perhaps he is creating a magical or numerological pattern. The cell's superiors might hook them up with Detective Kim and put them on the killer's trail, or the cell might take it upon themselves to hunt the bad guy in time-honored hunter fashion. Other alternatives include:

- **Ashwood Abbey** has a new quarry, a supremely intelligent serial murderer known as the Calculator. Kim has been convinced, through bribery or coercion, to be a sort of safari guide as the Abbey cell goes on the trail of the killer.
- The **Null Mysteriis** have acquired information from the city's police force about a killer on the verge of uncovering a mathematical secret that could explain countless "supernatural" phenomena. Kim is a member of the Null Mysteriis, seeking to find rational explanations for some of the weird things he has seen in his career. The hunters' objective is to kill or capture the Calculator and steal his discovery.
- The **Aegis Kai Doru** would very much like to possess the Seventh Execution (p. 5), said to be created with knowledge passed on to mortals by a demonic force. Through esoteric means (a séance here, Kabbalistic numerology there), they have discovered the Execution is in the possession of a killer known in the press as the Calculator.
- **Task Force: VALKYRIE** has authorized the deployment of a cell in the city to link up with a friendly, Franklin Kim, and terminate the Calculator with extreme prejudice before the panic in the press turns into panic on the streets. Lock and load, soldier.
- The **Lucifuge** has ascertained that the Calculator is a potential scion of Lucifer. The cell is assigned to find him and recruit him – or kill him, if necessary.

# The Cast

## Detective Franklin Kim, Cop Who Saw Too Much



**Quotes:** *"The only thing I know after the shit I've seen is that the world is gonna throw a lot more at me."*

*"Hi. I'm Detective Kim, and I'd just like to ask you a few questions."*

*"I'm not going to read you your rights. I'm not going to get you a lawyer. I am going to shoot you in the stomach and watch you bleed until you tell me what I want to know."*

**Virtue:** Justice. Kim joined the force to see the bad guys pay.

**Vice:** Wrath. When he flies off the handle, Kim doesn't forget he carries a gun.

**Background:** Franklin Kim doesn't look the kind of guy to have seen it all – compared to all the real vets on the force he's a fresh-faced kid, yet to be turned cynical by all the crap he's going to see on the streets. But he *has* seen it. He was on the taskforce set up to catch the Blacktop Killer, a serial murderer who left his disemboweled victims on the highway out of town like road kill. He never found the killer, but he did sit in on the autopsies where the bite marks and claw wounds were measured, and he knew then there were worse things out there than crazy guys. There were monsters, too. Kim is now investigating the Calculator's string of murders, and he has just cracked the pattern of house numbers and grid references that points him towards the Calculator's next victim.

Franklin Kim is well aware of a danger inherent to his line of work – becoming just as bad as the monsters he hunts. This is a fate he is willing to accept. The Blacktop Killer's rampage convinced him that men like him have to sacrifice everything, perhaps even their own humanity, to stop monsters from preying on the rest of us. Perhaps in killing the Calculator, he will become no better than the Calculator himself. So be it – there will always be a fellow cop or vigilante to take Kim down in turn, and until then he hopes he can take a hell of a lot of bad guys with him.

## THE VASCU OPTION

Storytellers who have access to the Slasher sourcebook can make Franklin Kim an agent of the FBI's Vanguard Serial Crimes Unit (Slasher, pp. 56-73). Kim stays much the same in this case, since he's in the mould of a Fed anyway. Kim isn't one of the useful failures who find their way into VASCU – he would have got into the FBI regardless. The Calculator's intelligence got VASCU involved in tracking him down. The story proceeds much the same whether Kim is a cop or a VASCU agent.

**Description:** Franklin Kim is a Korean-American in his thirties, with an approachable, expressive face and a disarming smile. He's a plain-clothes detective, and unless he's holding his badge or his gun, he looks like he works in a bank.

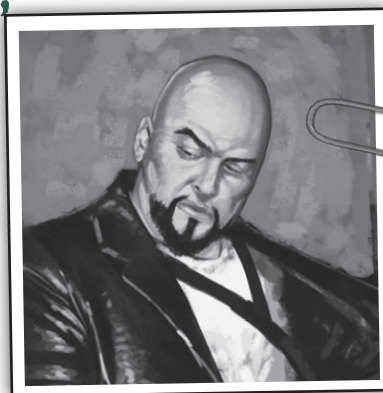
**Storytelling Hints:** Kim is a cop, so he speaks precisely and with authority and he's pretty good at seeing through bullshit. He's one of the good guys, but he's got a darkness underneath. That can come through when it comes to dealing with the monsters he knows are out there. He has no sympathy with anyone who suggests killing the Calculator isn't the right thing to do. He is still torn up about failing to catch the Blacktop Killer, and will threaten and use violence against anyone he suspects of being or harboring the killer (this will be used against the hunters during the course of the story). When he is angry, Kim becomes cold-blooded and threatening.

## The Calculator, Math-Obsessed Killer

**Quotes:** *"Do not be ashamed. I could not expect you to understand."*

*"I cannot let you go. The equation must be balanced."*

*"Only in death will you have meaning."*





**Virtue:** Fortitude. The Calculator will never give up. Ever.

**Vice:** Greed. The desire to possess secrets of the universe leads him to kill.

**Background:** The Calculator is obsessed with solving an insanely complex mathematical problem. He believes that solving it will provide him with the ultimate unified theory that explains everything – time, the universe, the meaning of life, God. The only way he can solve this problem is by murdering people selected according to a mathematical pattern, and using the results of the death such as patterns of blood spatter and the position of the body as factors in the solution. He will not stop until he is imprisoned or killed.

The Calculator is highly intelligent and has yet to be caught in spite of several previous slayings. He has murdered a software engineer named Matthew Coyle and is using his identity and apartment – since Coyle was wealthy, having helped create some very successful products, this gives the Calculator considerable resources – and he will continue using this identity until he is stopped.

### THE CALCULATOR'S TALLY

- David Reynolds, 28, Caucasian male killed eight months ago. Killed by gunshot wounds to the chest and head in his garage while he worked on his car.
- Agnes Fowler, 59, Caucasian female killed seven months ago. Shot in the head while on her doorstep, apparently answering the door to a caller.
- Amy Garcia, 32, Hispanic female killed four months ago. Killed by an intruder who broke into her apartment. Survived an initial gunshot to the neck, and was subsequently stabbed to death while struggling with her attacker.
- Washington Small, 43, African-American male, and Deborah Small, 41, African-American female killed three months ago. Married couple killed by an intruder who broke into their house. Both killed by multiple gunshot wounds.
- Colleen Maas, 19, Caucasian female killed one month ago. Killed by an intruder who broke into her apartment. Killed by a gunshot wound to the head.

**Description:** The Calculator is an African-American man of indeterminate age with a large build. Further details are difficult to discern because he wears a black leather mask that covers his entire head with holes for his eyes and mouth. The mask is otherwise unadorned. The Calculator wears tailored suits and carries a hunting knife and automatic handgun.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Calculator's most remarkable feature is his voice. It is deep and sonorous, almost hypnotic. His tone of voice does not change regardless of the situation, always sounding calm, reasonable and creepy. The Calculator believes that no one else can understand the universal truth he is seeking. He will not try to explain it to attackers or victims, just reassure them that he is right and that their deaths are part of the pattern that ties the universe together. He's so convinced of his superiority that he does not get angry with those who threaten him or disagree. He simply writes them off as another one of the ignorant masses before stabbing them or shooting them in the head.

The Calculator's crimes are known through the press, which gave him his nickname (his real name is unknown and is not revealed in the story). He has killed seven people so far, including Matthew Coyle. The police have suppressed most of the details, but the press and public know that he scrawls mathematical formulae on the walls of his crime scenes, and that he tends to kill with a gunshot to the victim's head.

## The Seventh Execution, Demonic Killing Machine

**Quote:** *[Metallic claws skittering across the ceiling]*

**Virtue:** Fortitude. The Execution will fulfill its orders to the last.

**Vice:** Lust. The Execution likes killing people.

**Background/Description:** Askarana-Khul's gift to the Calculator is the Seventh Execution, a creature assembled from the heads of executed men on a metal frame resembling a steel spider. The heads are not from the Calculator's victims; they are from executed Chinese criminals, bought over the Internet using Coyle's money. The heads are in early stages of decay and have recognizably Asian features.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Seventh Execution is not intelligent and does not speak. It is programmed to kill anyone who enters the Matthew Coyle's apartment other than the Calculator himself.