

# Handsome Ranch:

## Handsome Ranch, part II

*Part two of the Handsome Ranch adventure pilot*

### **Background:**

During the first part of this episode we should have firmly established where our group player characters stand in the pecking order around the ranch. Unless they've been exceptionally unlucky or foolish they should at least hold the middle ground over Group One. If they've been at all lucky or made any attempt to impress Mr. Handsome, they will have probably edged Group Three out of the running for the coveted hunting spot. They may even have taken over their patrols for the week as well.

If the PC's are stuck on the ranch spreading manure and cleaning outhouses, they're going to miss a lot of the action in this half of the episode...until it's suddenly dumped right into their laps, of course.

If Group Three is still running patrols for the week and has won the hunting job then they won't have much to worry about for the moment. Some of their group will have become quite anxious at how close things came to unraveling on them, though. The idea that they will be able to sell a few horses to the horse rustlers without getting caught won't look as doable as it once was. They'll begin pushing Greg to wrap up their arrangements with the horse thieves and put an end to the whole matter before serious trouble comes their way.

If Group Three has failed to secure the hunting job or has had their patrol duties for the week revoked (or both) it won't fail to occur to any of them that Group Two is very likely to discover what's going on. How much of a pain in the backside Group Two has proven to be will determine what they decide to do about all this.

At the very least Greg will move quickly to break off dealings with the horse thieves and get them off Handsome's land before they're discovered. This will lead he and his group coming into some conflict with the horse thieves themselves, who aren't so agreeable.

### **Synopsis:**

This adventure is comprised of only three acts, being a short and more action packed half of the pilot episode. Where we would normally have our Opening Scene we will simply go over the first half of the episode with our players in order to pick up where we left off.

In Act I the player characters are either consigned to manure management or get to range off the ranch a bit hunting or patrolling (or both).

If they're stuck on the ranch they'll miss out on all the initial excitement and will be stuck mostly dealing with the fallout from it all. We'll give them something interesting to do in the meantime however. Mr. Handsome (or Mrs. Belford, depending on whether or not Mr. Handsome is present at this time) wants the pot in the south outhouse changed out, which proves a bit more difficult than you might expect.

Otherwise we have other options, depending on their duties, that will lead up to a confrontation with either the horse rustlers, Group Three or both. At the very least they'll be on hand to witness Maia return to the ranch in a panic and discover at last what's going on with Group Three and the horse rustlers.

*Bear in mind that if the pc's have been tapped for patrol and Group Three has been removed from that duty, because Mr. Handsome has become aware of trespassers on his land that Group Three had failed to detect, he'll be gone to town for the rest of this episode to fetch some hired gunmen.*

In Act II we begin with a quick dash out the rustler's camp to rescue the other four members of Group Three. If the pc's have managed to truly push Greg to it, he and his group will have actually joined forces with the rustlers. More likely though, they're held captive while Rance Maynard heads back to the Marus ranch to round up some bad guys to assault the Handsome Ranch. The pc's then have to either rescue them or assault the camp and discover them gone.

Following this is the actual assault on the ranch by a large group of Marus' hired gunmen. If the pc's have so far utterly failed to get off the ranch at all, they'll at least be on hand when this goes down. Now we discover the enemies of Handsome Ranch aren't merely a small group of daring horse rustlers but that someone out there, able to field large groups of gunmen, actually has it out for Mr. Handsome.

In Act III we wrap things up by resolving the battle, dealing with any prisoners and figuring out what to do about Group Three. The pc's

learn all they're going to about the conspiracy by Damien Marus to ruin Mr. Handsome, which largely amounts to the fact that he's out to do so but with no idea why.

After these matters are addressed the pc's find out why that one truck was abandoned during the attack and get to root around in Grampy Handsome's old hidey-hole. Here we foreshadow the coming episode and Mr. Handsome is heartbroken to discover his dear old dad wasn't exactly the faithful husband he remembers him to be.

Depending on how things have gone with Maia up to this point, the pc's may have an opportunity to wrestle with her again as well.

# Act I, Scene I:

## Option 1: Waste Management

Now we get to torture our players a bit for performing so very badly that they not only failed to get the hunting job but actually got themselves demoted as well.

If Group Two has managed to get themselves bumped down to scut-work then Group One will be quite overjoyed to take over their duties with the southern three barns and all the horse hackin'. Our player characters now get to learn the joys of hog handling and manure patrol. Well, eventually anyway. Right now Mr. Handsome has a little job for them that'll break them into their new duties properly. It seems the pot in the south outhouse needs changing out.

Contrary to popular belief, only the poorest or least hygienic frontier folk simply dig a hole in the ground and plop a seat on top of it when constructing a proper outhouse. If they aren't wealthy or fancified enough to insist on indoor plumbing, most will at least put a proper receptacle of some sort at the bottom of that hole. In many cases a simple septic system may even be put into place down there that usually doesn't require a lot of maintenance. Most rely on the tried and true method of the outhouse pot, though. In our case, the welded off half of an old iron barrel dropped down into the hole. And, in our case, that old iron barrel has rusted out and needs to be replaced. This will make life difficult for our player characters for the moment. As their goal here is getting that old barrel out and replacing it with a new one before dinner is served they're going to have to prove themselves a bit more resourceful than they have so far.

The difficulty here lies in the fact that the rusted out half-a-barrel is at the bottom of a five-foot wide, ten-foot deep hole in the ground. Covered by a solid wooden outhouse. Topped off with a wooden foundation complete with "potty". Did we mention that the barrel is rusted out? And that it's currently...erm...full?

Getting the outhouse structure itself off the

foundation isn't all that hard. It's built with this eventuality in mind and any character with a dice or two of craft skill should be able to manage it without damaging it terribly. Otherwise, the player character may have some minor repair work to do afterward.

Once the structure has been detached and moved to the side, cracking the floor of the outhouse loose and moving it aside is no more (or less) difficult. Which leaves our pc's confronted with a narrow hole in the ground and all the horrors therein.

Getting the old barrel out of there is the real trick. Filled to capacity as it is, the whole thing weighs in at over 220 pounds. Though there are a couple of handy rings welded onto the lip by whatever thoughtful person put it down there to begin with, this is a bit of a tease. Our player characters are sure to fetch some rope and rig up a quick pulley system to haul it out. If they haven't dropped down into the hole to inspect the barrel up close and personal however, they won't know those rusted old rings will snap right off the moment any actual weight is put on them.

In the end the trick is, as you may have guessed, emptying that old rusty barrel first. Which will prove quite nasty. How the pc's determine to do this before dinner time without spreading human waste all over the ranch grounds is entirely up to them. Spilling the waste around in the hole is not an option Mr. Handsome will approve of either. The whole purpose of the barrel is let the solid waste sit a while before being exposed to the open ground. There's the artesian well right next door to think of after all. Likewise any significant damage to the old barrel that causes it to collapse while still inside the hole isn't good news either. No matter how you cut it, the team will have to dip, pump or bucket that waste out of the bucket, up out of the hole and transport it off to the woods before they can replace the barrel with a new one.

*The real joy for the GM here comes from all the rolls he'll be calling for, hoping for a nice botch somewhere. Ah, the joys of botching in relation to waste management.*

As long as the pc's finish up with the outhouse before supper, jump ahead to Act I, Scene II: "Maia Bolts" immediately after.

# Act I, Scene I: Option 2: Gone Huntin'

If the players have managed to secure the hunting job they get to turn over their duties today to Group One (who are quite happy to take them). Today they get to fetch rifles, mount up and go hunting instead. As the goal here is simply to fetch a nice, solid hunk of meat for the house girls, it doesn't matter much what they bring back. Since the girls will insist whoever went hunting do all the dressing then they won't care if it's a whole deer or a dozen rabbits. They'll be happy with anything that isn't boring old chicken loaf from the town market.

*The pc's may well decide to go fishing rather than hunting, which will suit the girls just fine as well. If they think of that, feel free to let them. The girls won't accept that every day (or again for a while even) but fresh fish is something they haven't served in a while, so they're all for it.*

Hunting is an all-day affair but easily resolved. There are two methods of going about it, either one being acceptable. The hunters can either stake out a nice spot where something gamey is likely to wander by to be shot or they can go looking for specific tracks and follow something to it's lair.

**Finding a good spot to hunker down and wait for something plump to shoot at (Average Alertness + Survival/Hunting, Survival/Nature or Survival/Tracking)**

Alternatively, if the pc's figure they know the area around the ranch well enough that they should already know a good spot to hunt:

**Knowing a good spot to hunker down and wait for something plump to shoot at (Hard Recall check, Intelligence + Willpower)**

Once a nice spot is picked out it only remains to hunker down all quiet like and wait for something to wander by. Eventually it does (what does is entirely up to the GM) and the

pc's all get a shot at it.

The trick to hunting in this manner, especially when dealing with the more robust wildlife, is dropping it before it runs away. One might think this is a simple matter but anyone who's been deer hunting before knows that if you don't drop that beast with the first shot...it's gone. *Long gone.* And you get the pleasure of running around the woods trying to find a wounded, dying animal for the next hour or two. Even Bambi can take a high-caliber slug to the neck and still get in a nice three-mile sprint before dropping dead. The good Lord made them wilderland critters pretty darned tough.

The trick then is to spend a turn or two aiming (while remaining stealthy enough to avoid notice) and maximizing damage with a called shot to the head, neck or other vital-spot.

If your pc's set about to just open fire at the first sight of a target, go ahead and let them. There's nothing to say they *have* to bring home any meat today, after all. And they probably won't. If they manage to go unnoticed by the animal long enough to open fire wildly then they get a "surprise round" of single shots on their target. After that we roll initiative and you can bet the critter will spend all their actions sprinting away from all the gunfire.

For convenience sake here's a trio of animal stats to pick from for the GM:

## Boar

Agl d4, Str d10, Vit d12 Alr d10, Int d2, Will d8  
Init d4+d10, LP 20  
Gore skill d10 (Attack: Gore d2W)

## Wild cattle

Agl d4, Str d8, Vit d10 Alr d8, Int d2, Will d4  
Init d4+d8, LP 12  
Unarmed skill d6

## Deer

Agl d10, Str d8, Vit d10 Alr d8, Int d2, Will d6  
Init d10+d8, LP 16  
Unarmed skill d6

*If you're the particularly nasty sort of GM, I'd recommend the boar. Those critters are ornery enough that they might well sprint **toward** the pc's rather than **away** if they fail to drop it right off.*

If the pc's opt to go looking for something in particular then they'll have to be especially skilled trackers or hunters to pull that off. This will involve actually find the tracks they're looking for, then following them to wherever the critter is at the moment. Even then they have to spot it without being spotted in return and move into firing position without spooking it. After that resolve the actual shooting as above.

**Finding a specific set of tracks to follow  
(Hard Alertness + Survival/Hunting or Survival/Tracking)**

**Following tracks to the critter in question  
(Hard Alertness + Survival/Tracking)**

*Resolve sneaking up on any critter with an opposed Agility + Covert/Stealth check versus the critter's Alertness + Perception/Hearing or Sight skill, giving bonuses for maintaining distance and penalties if they try to get a nice, easy, close range shot.*

All of this should take most of the day and supper will be just an hour or two away by the time the pc's have made their kill. You might consider rewarding any relevant Extraordinary Successes by providing them a target sooner than that, though.

After bagging their critter there remains dressing it for the house girls. I wouldn't waste time resolving this with a roll and simply let it go as a done deal. If you feel it necessary that they impress the house girls, go ahead a call for a nice Average Agility + Survival/Hunting check or even Craft/Leatherworking.

*Act I, Scene II then follows after the pc's have made their kill for the day (or failed to) and have either dressed the animal or are heading back to the ranch to do so.*

## **Act I, Scene II: Maia Bolts**

If the pc's have managed to supplant Group Three on patrol this week *without* securing the hunting job then they won't be scheduled to leave the ranch until late that night and only two or three of them will be allowed to go at all. Group Three will then be doing the hunting

today but they won't return with anything to show for their hunting trip. In fact, they won't return at all. They spent the day meeting with the horse thieves, trying to convince them the deal is off and finding out firsthand that the horse rustlers aren't the reasonable sort. During the course of the negotiations, Group Three comes under the guns of the horse rustlers and are taken hostage. The rustlers have decided to shore up their numbers a bit and then launch a full-scale attack on the ranch that evening, so they'll they won't bother to shoot them right off but rather just tie them up for now.

What Group Three did not know, of course, is that these rustlers are actually in the employ of Damian Marus, our Big Bad Guy, who's goal was never making a profit horse rustling but rather to knock Handsome Ranch off the map completely.

*As an alternative here, if the pc's have managed to tick off Group Three enough they might actually be amenable to recruitment by the horse thieves. Rather than being taken hostage, the pc's might well face them later as new additions to the gang.*

Regardless, Maia manages to get away unnoticed, having been left behind to handle the horses, and she skedaddles back to the ranch.

Our pc's goal during this scene is to spot Maia sneaking back to the bunkhouse, catch her packing her bags and get the whole story out of probably the most paranoid and uncooperative kid on the whole ranch.

When Maia returns it will be some time after dinner. The pc's will have already fed the horses in all three barns and are in the southern pen hacking the work horses. If they were stuck on scut-work today then they will have (hopefully) finished up with their waste management duties and moved on to spreading manure in the field south of the bunkhouse.

If they're returning from hunting then they spot Maia arriving at the bunkhouse just as they dismount and start dressing and/or delivering their kill to the house girls.

Whichever way they have a clear line of sight to Maia sneaking in on horseback (as much as one can sneak about on a horse) from the south and heading into the bunkhouse.

A Hard Alertness + Perception check of some sort will reveal that Maia is behaving pretty oddly and seems downright frightened. Even if they fail the check, the players should at least be aware that they've missed something important concerning Maia's unexpected return to the ranch and be fairly curious about it.

If they don't move on over to the bunkhouse to question her and decide to go on about their chores instead then Mrs. Belford will have noticed Maia's return and she'll head that way. Regardless, Maia will bolt as soon as anyone approaches her, hop on her horse with nothing but one bag of clothes in hand and dashing off for the main gate at a full sprint.

If the pc's don't immediately take off after her then, again, Mrs. Belford notices all the action from wherever she is and hollers for the pc's to go after her and find out what's got her so spooked.

*If the pc's are returning from hunting then Group Three won't have had any excuse to have left the ranch but they will have done so anyway, without informing anyone. Mrs. Belford will be on hand informing the player characters of this and preparing to instruct them to track down Group Three when Maia suddenly shows up.*

Here we get a good old-fashioned chase scene. Since our pc's have to grab some horses, saddle up and dash after Maia once she's already up and gone, they won't be able to start the chase at anything better than "Distant" range (see BSG rulebook, p. 88 for chase rules of you are using that system). Unless they're very lucky they will likely lose her right away.

*If the pc's are returning from hunting then their horses will likely be on hand, already saddled and ready to ride. In that case, let them start this chase with Maia jumping back on her own horse after dismounting to open the gate. This puts everyone on an even footing at roughly "Far" or "Close" chase range, as you prefer.*

Regardless, if the pc's lose sight of Maia during the first chase they might get another shot. Since Maia is spooked and sprinting away from the ranch, she'll run her horse ragged pretty quickly and have to spend a few

minutes allow it to rest before taking off again. If the pc's keep up the search and track her down, they have the opportunity to find her and engage another chase scene at "Far" range (or even "Close" range, if they're the stealthy sort).

This should be all the leeway your pc's need to catch up to Maia. If they fail, then she's gone and that's that. The next bit of excitement will come for them when the horse rustlers attack the ranch in force or when they track the rest of Group Three to the rustler camp.

If they manage to get within "Caught" range of Maia they still have to actually get her to stop somehow. Knocking her off her horse, grabbing her horse's reins or even an Extraordinary Success on an Influence check can do the trick. If the pc's are especially aggressive or violent about it, it will only make getting any useful info out of Maia all the more difficult, though.

Being the paranoid and generally disagreeable sort to begin with, Maia isn't at all interested in confessing to working with horse thieves. Her story, if she bothers to give one at all, is that she's just decided to quit the ranch and it ain't nobodies business beyond that. This interaction will prove a nice challenge to whatever charismatic, high-Influence character the player characters can front.

Barring that, this is the only shot our pc's get at finding out about Group Three's dealings with the horse rustlers just now. If Maia gets away or the pc's can't get anything out of her then their next bit of excitement comes when a horde of bandits descends on Handsome Ranch without warning or we move on to Act II, Scene I.

## **Act II, Scene I: Ridin' to the Rescue**

Assuming the pc's have manage to get Maia to spill the beans concerning Group Three's dealings with the horse rustler's then they should now be aware of what's been going on:

### **What the heck *has* Group Three been up to?**

Greg met and dealt with Rance Maynard in town several weeks back, when he and Vincent went along with Jack Dingo to fetch grain. He and Rance agreed that Group Three would use their two-week stint on patrol to hide the horse rustler's presence on the Mr. Handsome's land as well as provide opportunities for the rustlers to lay hands to a few horses. In return Greg and his group of ranch hands would get a cut of the profits. Horse thievin' being a fairly profitable endeavor.

The first time was pretty easy. Greg just had Vincent let a few horses out of their stalls one night while he and Maia were on patrol. They then wandered back close enough to the ranch to lasso a couple, led them out to the rustlers, turned them over and then went about their patrol like normal. The following morning Group Three was able to recover all but two horses (the one's they sold to the rustlers) and that was that. As far as anyone knows, some horses got loose and most of them were recovered.

The barn burning likewise allowed the opportunity to nab two more and hopefully implicate their rivals at the same time. However, by then Greg and the others were getting antsy about getting caught. Which led to their sneaking off to end the deal with horse thieves. Which in turn led to their capture. (Or recruitment, as the case may be.) Maia is convinced they were kidnapped either way, not having been in on the negotiations. She's now only concerned with escaping before the whole mess blows up and everyone realizes she was involved in horse rustling.

Interrogating Maia isn't going to prove an easy task. As previously indicated, she's more than a tad paranoid. If the pc's were overly aggressive or even flat out violent in catching her before she got away, she won't be in a talkative mood at all. Beyond cursing them and their whole family line back to Earth-That-Was, anyways.

On the other hand, Maia is pretty scared at the moment. Already paranoid and feeling completely alone in all her troubles at the moment, the right approach could put her in a talkative mood right off. A character who approaches catching her and stopping her

flight from Handsome Ranch in a truly non-threatening manner may be able to convince her they're not necessarily out to get her. At the very least Maia may hope to avoid future prosecution by spilling the beans now.

Otherwise, if they haven't discovered what's going on with Greg and horse rustlers we ride right on over to Act II, Scene II and the Battle of Handsome Ranch. Following that we might have a chance to go back and rescue Greg and the other knuckleheads. Or not.

Once the pc's presumably were able to get the whole background story here and realize Greg, Vincent, Kurt and Eileen have (again, presumably) been kidnapped, the obvious next bit of action is riding out to rescue them. If they don't come up with this on their own or suggest it to either of the adults on the ranch, then that's what they'll be ordered to do regardless. Mr. Handsome expects his ranch hands, those old enough to wipe their own behinds anyway, to serve as security for the ranch as well as laborers. It's their job to ride out and bring back their own. As well as putting down trespassing, kidnapping, horse rustling no-accounts that dare threaten the Handsome Ranch.

Of course, Mr. Handsome will wave the local law but no one on the rim waits around for the feds or even the town sheriff to get off their butts faster than necessary to document the carnage. Frontier justice is the only justice you don't have to wait a whole week for out on the rim.

What the player characters will be facing at the horse rustler camp will depend on a couple of things:

If they failed to catch Maia and get her to spill her guts the only opportunity they'll have to assault the camp will be following the battle in Act II, Scene II. Even in that case there won't be any reason to if Greg and his bunch joined the rustlers and helped attack the ranch. Otherwise they'll still be there, tied up in the tent, with only a handful of bandits outside eating beans around the fire. (Situation A)

If they did get the low-down from Maia but either waited or were delayed until late that evening then the same situation will apply. Greg and the others will have either joined up and rode off with the main group of bandits to

attack the ranch or they'll be there still, waiting for someone to get around to shooting them (Situation A).

In this case the pc's will have missed the outbound group of bandits who are now attacking the ranch while they're here rescuing Group Three. They'll arrive back at the ranch while the attack is in full swing, hopefully with Greg and the other members of Group Three riding along beside them, ready to fight.

If they found out about the kidnapping early and responded quickly, they'll arrive while Rance Maynard is away at the Marus ranch gathering more men for the attack. In this case the pc's will face a larger group of bandits than otherwise, since they're just waiting around for Rance to return. (Situation B)

Situation A: Greg, Eileen, Kurt and Vincent are all tied to the central post in tent B. Three horse rustlers are busy eating beans and chatting loudly around the campfire. Two are sleeping, one each in tents A and D.

Situation B: Greg, Eileen, Kurt and Vincent are all tied to the central post in tent B. Five horse rustlers are busy eating beans and chatting loudly around the campfire and two are smoking near the makeshift horse corral.

How the pc's handle the rescue here is entirely up to them but the GM should at least be aware of the tactical situation. In either situation the player characters will probably face the possibility of a deadly fight here. Sneaking into the camp is certainly possible but sneaking back out with all four of the hostages without being spotted will be quite a bit more difficult. On the other hand, sneaking into position, taking aim with rifles and bushwhackin' most or all of the bad guys is doable too.

There are plenty of options for a good team that catches the bad guys unawares. If your player characters can rescue Group Three without taking any significant injury, that would be for the better. They still have a battle to fight back at the ranch. Getting hurt badly here would be bad news.

The Horse Rustlers for this scene are more or less just cannon fodder for our players. Here they get to wet their whistle, so to speak, after

little or no real combat during the first half of this two-part episode. Their more challenging combat, with more of an impact on the storyline, comes in the next Act. For now, here are the stats I recommend for these guys:

### The Horse Rustlers

Agl	d8	Str	d8	Vit	d8
Ale	d6	Int	d6	Wil	d6
Init	d8+d6				
LP	14				

Traits: Greedy d4, Friends in Strange Places (criminal connections) d4.

**Skills:** Athletics d6, Discipline d4, Guns d6 (Pistol d8, Rifles d8), Animal Handling d4, Perception d4.

## **Act II, Scene II: The Battle of Handsome Ranch**

Sometime that evening Rance Maynard gathers his forces and sends them off to attack Handsome Ranch. The goal of this entire affair is simply to damage the property, crippling Mr. Handsome economically for the immediate future, and to terrorize his ranch hands.

The raider band consists of three range trucks with four armed men each in the back. All four men are armed with rifles and two molotov cocktails each. Their intent is to barrel right through the main gate of the ranch and assault the main house and all six barns, then retreat. In all likelihood, however, they've underestimated Mr. Handsome's band of orphan ranch hands.

### **Where is everyone?**

If Mr. Handsome has become aware that there are horse rustlers on his lands somewhere, he'll be off in town with Jack Dingo to hire some gunmen to run them off. In this case Mrs. Belford will be in charge of the ranch. Either way any adults on the ranch will be in the main house when the attack



commences and they'll be able to lay hand to a rifle in just a turn or two.

Depending on the time of day and what they're duties are, the pc's could be anywhere. If they're on scut-work and the attack occurs before supper, they'll be working the hog pens. During supper, of course, they'll be in the main house and after supper, in the bunkhouse. Likewise Group One will either be working the barns, in the main house eating supper or in the bunkhouse.

If the pc's haven't been busted down to scut-work then their placement prior to supper will be in one of the barns mucking out stalls. If they're returning from rescuing (or attempting to rescue) Group Three, they begin the scene at the north gate, coming in to report to whichever adult is in the main house.

The player characters shouldn't be armed unless they're returning from the horse rustler camp. In the bunkhouse they have their weapons at hand at least, however, as this is where they're typically stored.

*Bear in mind that Greg, Eileen, Kurt and Vincent may either be with the pc's, unarmed, or taking position as one of the groups of four in the back of a truck, depending on whether they were kidnapped or whether they joined the horse rustlers.*

### The raiders

Rance Maynard's team of raiders consists of three range trucks with one driver each and four men in the back. All are wearing burlap hoods with crude eyeholes to hide their identity (which of course won't stop them from being identified posthumously.)

*This number may include the Greg, Kurt, Vincent and Eileen as the four raiders in back of one of the trucks if they've joined Maynard. Otherwise the four may well dash for the bunkhouse to retrieve their own weapons to fight back against the raiders.*

Again, I recommend the standard horse rustler stats for all these guys, just for simplicity's sake:

Agl	d8	Str	d8	Vit	d8
Ale	d6	Int	d6	Wil	d6
Init	d8+d6				
LP	14				

**Traits:** Greedy d4, Friends in Strange Places (criminal connections) d4.

**Skills:** Athletics d6, Discipline d4, Guns d6 (Pistol d8, Rifles d8), Animal Handling d4, Perception d4.

*(Give the truck driver Driving d4 rather than animal handling, naturally.)*

All (except the drivers) are armed with two Molotov cocktails and standard rifles. You will probably want to give them pistols as well, since that's typically standard, but they likely won't have call to use them. The drivers should at least have pistols.

Remember, however, that those burlap hoods they're all wearing will bring a -1 Skill step penalty to shooting, throwing and just about everything else.

If you want a further handicap, then drop another -1 Skill step penalty for shooting and throwing from the back of a moving vehicle. That's actually much more realistic but won't make the raiders very effective in the battle.

### Range truck stats:

Agi d4, Str d6, Vit d4

Ale 0, Int 0, Wil d4;

LP 10

Init d4

Speed: 2

Armor: 1W

*The men in back of the three trucks are granted Light Cover but not the 1W armor rating of the truck. The driver gets the 1W armor protection and Medium Cover, though.*

*We will also assume the truck moves at a steady rate of 20' per turn when moving amongst the buildings and 60' per turn driving up the road (or down it when the group flees). This allows the driver decent control driving round and about all those buildings and obstacles, not to mention giving his passengers a fairly steady footing to shoot and throw from.*

### Molotov cocktails:

Each of four men in the back of each truck have two Molotov cocktails each. These are simple alcohol bombs so we treat them as weak incendiary grenades:

**2d4W damage, blast increment 5'.**

So, anyone within five feet of a bursting

Molotov cocktail suffers 2d4W damage and anyone from five feet to ten feet takes 1d4W. Ten feet is the maximum burst.

*Remember that burn damage is particularly nasty and heals at half the normal rate. Remind you players of this as well. You might consider ruling that since alcohol doesn't burn especially hot then the pc's can spend a full turn extinguishing themselves to avoid any damage. Unless you're just a nasty kind of GM like me.*

Throwing the bottle of burning alcohol is another matter. If you're using BSG rules, as I am, it's an Average difficulty throw to hit a target area within 100' feet. Beyond that range the thrower must also make a Strength + Athletics/Throwing check to determine the maximum distance of that throw before they roll to hit the target area (*see p.91, Throwing*). Marus's assault team will keep their targets within 100' or so for this reason. They'll also be targeting buildings rather than people unless your players give them a really, really good reason, so they'll have Easy targets. In fact, I'd make hitting a building with a Molotov cocktail automatic, even from the back of a moving truck.

Once all the incendiaries are expended the whole team retreats. During this time all riders wield rifles to take potshots at anyone still poking their head out. Especially anyone shooting at them. If they've come under significant fire already they may well decide to stick around and shoot a few people in the hopes of avoiding being shot in the butt on the way out.

### **The assault**

The plan of assault isn't really thought out all that well and is largely disorganized. The raiders really aren't expecting any significant resistance. At most they figure Mr. Handsome might appear on the front porch with a rifle but that's about it. The idea that a bunch of misfits and orphans might shoot back at them doesn't seem much of a threat to them...until it actually happens, of course.

The first truck in the line bursts through the main gate and proceeds directly to the main house. The riders in the back toss one Molotov each at the bunkhouse as they pass by, and their second and last alcohol bomb at

the main house once they arrive. The driver then spends a turn turning around to head back down the gravel road, then joins up with the other two trucks wherever they are. The second and third trucks both ram through the southernmost gate into the barn area, then circle about tossing alcohol bombs at the barns (and maybe one at the garage and chicken coop as well). Once everyone in the back of the trucks have tossed their two Molotovs and shouldered rifles, they start taking potshots at windows and such. They never originally intend to shoot any ranch hands specifically but rather just fire off randomly and terrorize everyone. If they've come under fire by this time (and it's a good bet they have), then they return fire, of course. Once the firebombs stop flying the truck drivers make for the main gate again to flee the ranch, their work done, so the men in back likely won't have too many turns to shoot at people before they're gone. Unless, of course, the pc's were smart and targeted the truck drivers first.

## **Important Note!**

*Somewhere during the assault you must be sure one of the trucks loses control and crashes into the storage shed. It doesn't matter from what angle this occurs so long as they barrel through the wall and into the building a bit. The floor then collapses a little under the weight of the impact and the truck is trapped. This forces the driver and the men in the back to abandon the vehicle and try to catch a ride out on one of the other trucks. Which is sure to provide all manner of fun for the pc's.*

*Most importantly it reveals, after the fact, that there's another level beneath the storage shed that no one was aware of. This comes into play in Act III, Scene II (unless the pc's decide to investigate it before then for some odd reason.)*

### **Home field advantage.**

Though the men are fairly well skilled with the weapons they're using and are mounted on vehicles the advantage definitely lies with the pc's in this conflict.

First of all, the men are initially focused on damaging specific buildings and their route leaves them open to prolonged fire for quite a while. This also ties up their hands fiddling

with Molotov cocktails rather than shooting and any attempt to put aside a firebomb and wield a weapon will take a turn or two. Second, the pc's are familiar with the layout of the ranch and are on foot, which gives them access to everywhere the trucks can't get to. Which is just about everywhere. Third, the ranch provides all manner of cover for shooters who aren't on the move. The pc's can take up position just about anywhere they like to fire on the intruders and practically have their choice of Light, Medium or Heavy Cover.

By the time the whole group has tossed the last of their alcohol bombs, they'll likely already be regretting their mode of attack and may not even be able to get back out alive. The scene ends with the last of Marus's men escaping out the main gate (assuming any do and that the pc's don't just mount up and go after them.)

## **Act III, Scene I: Who Were Those Masked Men?**

First, let's deal with the fires that were inevitably set during the assault. We're going to cheat a little bit and say that since alcohol doesn't really burn all that hotly the fires are easy to extinguish. Furthermore, the raiders aren't all that smart and just tossed their bombs at whatever flat surface was handy rather than aiming for windows or long arming for the rooftops.

If the pc's stopped shooting and addressed any firebombs that went off near them immediately, they should be able to extinguish the fire in one turn just by tossing dirt on it. If they're allowed to burn for a while and actually ignite the wood surface, this might take a turn or three more.

If you've decided not to have Group One running around firing, giving you more dice to roll and more npc's to control, there's no reason they can't decide to leave the gunplay up to the player characters. This is a handy way out of the potential mess for the GM as you can have Group One running about extinguishing fires during all the commotion. The pc's may not have to address that problem at all.

Second, we'll deal with potential prisoners. Any wounded men can be interrogated easily enough. If the interrogations are successful, they will admit to being hired by Rance Maynard, Damien Marus's head honcho, to assault the ranch. If the pc's aren't aware that Group Three has been captured, they may learn this as well. And, of course, if Greg and the others are part of the attack they'll be identified immediately once their masks are removed.

**However...** Damien Marus and Rance Maynard are both well known in criminal circles as fairly ruthless men. This is hardly the first time they've engaged in orchestrating criminal, and especially *violently* criminal, enterprises. None of the men are willing to spill the beans and risk being found dead of apparent suicide in their jail cell. Getting anything from these men will be a formidable task, at least. Not to mention a bunch of young punks aren't likely to scare them much unless those punks are especially intimidating.

In the end it doesn't matter too terribly if the pc's get this information out of the men. Discovering they have an enemy in Damien Marus and/or Rance Maynard won't help them much right now and won't hurt the story either. Mr. Handsome will be able to figure out who's behind all this on his own anyway, so the pc's will discover this soon enough. Marus will ensure none of the men who squealed see the inside of a courtroom anyway, so it won't aid them in seeking some legal recourse against him. Besides, Marus has both the sheriff and local magistrate in his pocket.

### **Handling prisoners**

Mr. Handsome (or Mrs. Belford if he's in town at the moment) will order any wounded men disarmed, treated medically and tied up. He (or she) will then send Jack Dingo to town to fetch the sheriff and have the men arrested. If Mr. Handsome is already in town with Jack, then Mrs. Belford will go herself, leaving the player characters in charge of the prisoners until she returns.

### **Group Three**

Following the assault any members of Group Three who are on hand, even Greg, will finally realize just how horribly bad an idea it was ever getting involved with the horse rustlers.

Very likely some of the ranch hands are wounded or even dead. At the very least it's obvious this could easily have been the result of the raid.

If they've already joined the raiders and have been captured, they're likewise suddenly disillusioned with the whole mess. Riding against Handsome Ranch and shooting up the place seemed like a great idea initially but witnessing the horror of it first hand has changed their minds.

Either way they're willing to tell the whole tale and drop Rance Maynard's name here. If they were captured as raiders during the raid, they haven't any hope of avoiding prosecution for their crimes and aren't exactly contrite...but they're willing to confess it all nonetheless. If they weren't involved in the raid they'll confess everything, angling to be forgiven and allowed to redeem themselves. If they're granted this opportunity they'll quickly become very loyal to Mr. Handsome and nearly fanatical about protecting the ranch and justifying his trust.

## **Act III, Scene II: Grampy Handsome's Hidey Hole**

Now, unless one of your pc's took up position in the storage shed to fire on the raiders, they likely aren't aware there's now a hole in the ground under there. If they don't take a look at the truck or for some other reason amble over in that direction you always have the option of deciding one of Group One's more curious members poked around a bit and simply fell in. His or her cries for help are perhaps a bit heavy handed for a GM but sure to get the pc's over there poking around in the hole nevertheless.

Even a casual glance at the 10' by 10' space underneath will show it to be an old bomb shelter. Following the Unification War this isn't all that unusual a find on these old properties. Interesting perhaps but not very surprising. This one in particular was one that Grandpappy Handsome's (Karl Handsome's father) had constructed. But since the ranch

never suffered any direct attack during the war and not so much as a proper tornado, it was never used and Karl is completely unaware of it.

Following the war, rather than simply filling the concrete bunker in or letting it go to waste, Grandpappy Handsome kept the hatch covered with old boxes and such. He used the little hidey hole to stash a few items he didn't want the wife to know about as well as a respectable amount of cash. Mr. Handsome may trust the local bank to keep his money safe but his Grampy sure didn't.

Later, as he grew older and more crotchety, he covered the hatch over completely with earth and largely left it be. When he died unexpectedly, no one was aware the place even existed or that he'd stash any money there at all.

Getting down into the bunker isn't all that hard. It was covered with only a few inches of packed earth and stands less than seven feet deep. Once the truck is shoved or pulled out of the way there only remains jumping right down into it. The contents aren't that notable either. An old cot that's long since rotted to bits, a footlocker that's rusted shut and a small shelf that holds nothing more than an old pickle jar. A couple of stacks of old magazines are thankfully rotted and worm-eaten enough that the impressionable youth who are poking around down there won't realize what they once depicted.

Of course the pickle jar is filled nearly to the rim with almost 800 credits in platinum coins, which will prove quite tempting to any Greedy pc's among your group. And you can bet every young hand on the ranch will be on hand to witness the pc's steal it if they decide to do so. That money obviously belongs to Mr. Handsome.

The footlocker is the point of interest here, though. In it, should the pc's crack the old rusted lock, they find a lot of meaningless knick-knacks, more rotted stacks of dubious magazines and an old leather-bound journal.

### **Grampy's Journal**

This old journal doesn't contain a whole lot of information, being something of a passing fancy for old Grampy. He kept up the journal on the advice of his mistress (who Mr. Handsome will be quite surprised and very discouraged to learn about) but soon tired of

it, stopping after only a couple of months. It now serves as little more than a handy container for a few love letters said mistress wrote him many years ago. During those two months that he kept up the journal, he makes several references to deeds he'd left in the care of Mrs. Winifred Hardacre, his mistress. Though exactly what those deeds are supposed to entitle him to aren't mentioned, Mr. Handsome will be well aware that his father was supposed to have owned some land on another moon. Unfortunately he's never been able to find so much as a mention of it in the ranch's ledgers and legal papers. He merely remembers off-hand remarks his father made.

The pc's discovering this old hidey hole and uncovering the journals will be both a source of serious interest and very real heart-break for Mr. Handsome. Nevertheless, the knowledge that this Mrs. Hardacre person is in possession of land deeds that are properly his will spur him into action. Especially considering it's now become apparent he has powerful enemies, he's well motivated to increase his own power base.

Whether he already went to town earlier to hire gunmen or whether he's gone now to fetch the sheriff, he'll return later that night to discover all that the pc's have found. Once the legalities involving the gunfight at the ranch have been resolved with the local sheriff and everyone has been properly tended to (including sending Jack Dingo back to town again with more wounded for the local doctor), he'll settle down with the journals to go over them. He won't have a problem with the pc's being curious and tagging along for that, if they wish.

The only opportunity for action here will involve Maia again. If she's on hand to hear all these details or discover these things from handling the journal herself, she'll see the opportunity to possibly get herself out of some trouble (and away from all the people conspiring against her). Assuming the pc's haven't won her over, she will have largely been forgotten in all the mess. Group Three will, at worst, be seen as collaborating with the horse rustlers. Her flight from the rustlers, on the other hand, has put the fact that she was in on it from the beginning out of the mind of Mr. Handsome

and most everyone else. She'll attempt to sneak off late that very night to make contact with Rance Maynard or Damien Marus in order to sell them the information. There's a woman somewhere on this moon named Winifred Hardacre who holds deeds to land rightly belonging to Mr. Handsome. It will be up to the pc's to spot her sneaking off and stop her from getting away. If they fail in this then Damien Marus will be aware of the deeds and will prove a serious irritation to our pc's in the next episode as he tries to prevent their recovery.

# Non-Player Characters

## The Adults

### **Karl Randolph Handsome**

Owner and operator

Agl	d8	Str	d6	Vit	d8
Ale	d8	Int	d8	Wil	d10
Init	d8+d8				
LP	18				

Traits: Advanced Education d6, Faith d4, Good Natured d4, Political Pull d2, Renowned d2, Illness d12.

Karl Handsome is dying and he knows it. But since there isn't a thing in the 'verse he can do about that it's made him pretty mindful of doing what good he can with the time he has left. To that end he started taking in orphans and poor kids nearly six years ago who otherwise wouldn't get either an education nor a reliable roof over their heads. His only concerns at present are simply keeping the ranch running, helping as many kids as he can before he dies and trying to figure out who to leave all his property to when he finally kicks the bucket.

### **Mrs. Addie-may Belford**

Adult animal handler/trainer

Agl	d8	Str	d6	Vit	d6
Ale	d8	Int	d6	Wil	d8
Init	d8+d6				
LP	14				

Traits: Talented d6 (Animal Training, Riding) Lustful d6

Skills: Animal Handling d6 (Animal Training d10, Veterinary d6), Influence d6 (Teaching d10, Seduction d8).

Addie-may is a rather unassuming individual who keeps mostly to herself and takes her works seriously. While she cares well enough for the kids she trains she probably cares more for the horses. As such, she's generally fair with the ranch hands and treats them well, but when they fail in their duties she can leave a young hand quaking in his boots and messing his trousers. Since her husband passed on some few

years ago, she's taken advantage of Mr. Handsome's generosity to secure a place to stay and steady work. She's also taken advantages of rumors about the two to help cover up a secret dalliance with the local preacher.

### **Jack Dingo**

Truck driver

Agl	d6	Str	d6	Vit	d8
Ale	d8	Int	d6	Wil	d8
Init	d6+d8				
LP	16				

Traits: Overconfident D4, Cool Under Fire D2, Advanced Education D2.

Planetary Vehicles d6, Mechanical Engineering d6 (Repair d10, Maintenance d8), Technical Engineering d6

Jack was one of the first young hands Handsome took on. Since taking him up on his offer of employment, Jack has watched the regular hands go their way and slowly be replaced with others like himself by the attrition of the years since then. As such he's been granted something of a top-dog position by virtue of seniority but rarely exercises his influence with Mr. Handsome. Jack is largely content with his private room in the house and his duties on the ranch. As the oldest hand on the ranch and an experienced driver he's mostly found operating the trucks and mules on the ranch, though he's known to chip in with the back-breaking work when needed.

## Group Three

### **Greg Katzenburger**

Leader of Group Three

Agl	d10	Str	d6	Vit	d6
Ale	d6	Int	d4	Wil	d6
Init	d10+d6				
LP	12				

Traits: So Say We All D4, Glory Hound D4

Animal handling d4, Athletics d6 (Dodge d8), Craft d2, Discipline d6 (Leadership d8), Knowledge d4, Survival d6 (Trapping d8), Guns d6 (Pistols d10, Rifles d10), Mechanical Engineer d2, Pilot d2, Planetary vehicles d4, Unarmed combat d6

Karl's your basic self-involved jerk. While he

has a bit of natural talent as a leader, his exercise leaves something to be desired. Presently he's lead his team of ranch hands into a fairly foolish agreement with a small band of horse thieves, which he still believes he can get away with.

#### Kurt Clifford

Animal Wrangler/Intimidator

Agl	d6	Str	d6	Vit	d6
Ale	d6	Int	d8	Wil	d10
Init	d6+d6				
LP	16				

Traits: Formidable Presence D4, Lazy D4

Animal handling d6 (Animal Care d8, Animal Training d8, Riding d8, Veterinary d8), Athletics d6 (Dodge d8), Craft d2, Discipline d6 (Intimidation d10, Morale d8), Knowledge d2, Survival d2, Guns d6, Mechanical Engineering d2, Pilot d2, Planetary vehicles d2, Unarmed combat d6 (Brawling d8, Wrestling d8)

Karl is big, scary and lazy as the day is long. The only reason anything ever gets done around Karl is either because he made someone else do it for him or Greg talked him into it. Fortunately he's fairly skilled with the animals on the ranch or Greg wouldn't bother with him. He's also fairly skilled at keeping the other kids in line with Greg's leadership.

#### Vincent Butcher

Worker/Muscle

Agl	d8	Str	d10	Vit	d6
Ale	d4	Int	d4	Wil	d6
Init	d8+d4				
LP	12				

Traits: Anger Issues D2, Brawler D2

Animal handling d6 (Animal Care d8), Athletics d6 (Dodge d10, Lasso d8), Craft d6 (Carpentry d8), Discipline d2, Knowledge d2, Mechanical Engineering d6, Survival d2, Guns d6 (Rifles d8), Pilot d2, Planetary vehicles d2, Unarmed combat d6 (Brawling d10)

Vincent just likes working on the ranch. If he has any complaints it's that he doesn't get to beat people up nearly enough. That's pretty much his favorite thing to do and any opportunity to do so without serious

repercussions will be seized upon. Thankfully, Greg is thoughtful enough to provide someone now and again who requires an attitude adjustment. So far then Vincent remains loyal to him.

#### Eileen Travis

Tracker/Scrapper

Agl	d8	Str	d8	Vit	d6
Ale	d8	Int	d6	Wil	d4
Init	d8+d8				
LP	10				

Traits: Anger Issues D4, Greedy D4

Animal handling d6, Athletics d6 (Dodge d8), Craft d4, Discipline d4, Knowledge d6, Survival d2, Guns d6, Medical Expertise d6, Pilot d2, Perception d6 (Tracking d10), Planetary vehicles d2, Unarmed combat d6 (Brawling d8)

Much like Vincent, Eileen just likes to fight. Arguing, screaming insults, fisticuffs or a good old fashioned cat-fight...it's all the same to her. The only thing she likes better is getting paid, which is the only thing keeping her loyal to Greg these days.

#### Maia Lin

Animal Wrangler/Shooter

Agl	d10	Str	d6	Vit	d8
Ale	d6	Int	d6	Wil	d4
Init	d10+d6				
LP	10				

Traits: Paranoid D4, Athlete D4

Animal handling d6 (Animal Care d8, Animal Training d8, Riding d8), Athletics d6 (Dodge d8), Craft d2, Discipline d2, Knowledge d2, Survival d4, Guns d6 (Pistols d8, Rifles d10), Pilot d2, Perception d6, Planetary vehicles d4, Technical Engineering d4, Unarmed combat d4

Maia doesn't care much for the direction Greg has led them but since she doesn't care much for anyone else on the team or what they're doing, it hardly matters. She mainly concerns herself with making sure no one turns on her and stabs her in the back, something she's certain everyone intends to do.