

# TRI TAC SPOTLIGHT

SPRING 2020, VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1  
SOCIAL DISTANCING DONE RIGHT!

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Roach Motel was first published in 1984 in the Bureau 13 gaming module, [Hellsnight](#).

It was updated for the d20 rule system 2008 by John Reiher. This new version still retains much of the original's intent and encounters, and adds new information and background for GMs and players to use in other games.

**24 NEW YORK CITY REGIONAL TEAMS SPOTLIGHT:  
THE HELL'S KITCHEN CHEFS BY JOHN REIHER**

New York City, the Big Apple, the city that never sleeps, one of the oldest cities in the USA. It has three regional Bureau 13 teams who do their very best to keep the city safe from old and new supernatural threats.

The oldest of the three teams is the Hell's Kitchen Chefs, local experts on the supernatural that live in and around New York City. Because of the high population density and age of the settlement, there is always something going on in the Big Apple.

**28 RETURN OF VIRUS 9640 BY SALLY DILKMAN**

The dangers of Virus 9640 were first documented in 1992, in the second edition [Bureau 13](#) core rulebook. This scenario, Return of Virus 9640 expands on Richard Tucholka's original concept and carries it forward into the 21st century.

**38 KANSAS CITY REGIONAL TEAMS SPOTLIGHT:  
KANSAS CITY QUE BY SALLY DILKMAN**

Kansas City, straddling two states, Kansas and Missouri, is home to Kansas City Warehouse Inc., the regional Bureau 13 information hub for the mid-American states as well as the Bureau's primary research and supply depot. It is also the base of operations for Kansas City Que, the regional team responsible for the entire city and its surrounding suburbs.

**42 SPOTLIGHT ON TECHNOLOGY:  
AUGMENTED REALITY GEAR BY JOHN REIHER**

The latest bit of kit from the Bureau's R&D department is Augmented Reality (AR) eyewear and associated gear. The Bureau version of AR gear is far more advanced than what is currently on the market.



## PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

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With this issue, the Spotlight is on **Bureau 13: Stalking the Night Fantastic**, Richard Tucholka's ground-breaking and award-winning contribution to the fantasy-horror role playing genre.

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And as always, we dedicate this newsletter to Richard Tucholka, a man who shared his vision of other worlds with our world. We will miss him forever. Without his devotion to his ideas, this derivative work would never have been possible.

## FBI RAID ON TRI TAC GAMES, AS TOLD BY RICHARD TUCHOLKA

OK, there has been rumor floating around about an FBI raid on Tri Tac Games. Let's set it straight. Yes, the raid happened. No kidding.

Apparently some fool at GENCON 1994 thought double-sized Plastic ID badges on flaming orange and bright pink paper were a threat to national security. These badges were given to players of Bureau 13 as promotional material. Here's the true story.

At 10 a.m. Tuesday morning, August 23rd, 1994, a special tactical team from the FBI gained swift and overwhelming entry into the corporate offices of Tri Tac Games in Pontiac, Michigan, to the great surprise of the entire staff which was still sipping coffee.

Rich Tucholka, owner and president of Tri Tac, was duly informed of his rights as the squad of federal agents neatly and politely searched the offices of Tri Tac, claiming to be looking for "phony FBI identification badges" and "illicit government operation manuals".

Tri Tac Games publishes an award-winning Role-Playing Game called Bureau 13, detailing the adventures of a secret government agency which uses magic and Harrier Jump Jets to defend America from supernatural criminals and monsters.

After painstakingly searching everything, from the yet-to-be released CD-ROM computer game version of Bureau 13, through the paperback copies of the cult-hit novels from Ace Books in New York, absolutely nothing incriminating or illegal was discovered: an incident close to the precedent-setting invasion of Steve Jackson Games a few years ago by the US Secret Service which resulted in a major lawsuit, rightfully won by the innocent game company.

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Shoutout to Dave Johnson of  
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and three generations of Jones'  
at Thunderhead Games

Dedication:  
Toffiella Thundertwinkle

### RESOURCE ATTRIBUTION:

Three wonderful public domain art repositories, [pixabay.com](http://pixabay.com), [pexels.com](http://pexels.com) and [unsplash.com](http://unsplash.com)

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In the words of our founder, Richard Tucholka, if anything we've written in this issue of Spotlight offends you, feel free to buy as many copies as you choose and burn them.

# SPOTLIGHT ON BUREAU 13, PAST AND PRESENT

BY MEL NATCHER

**Bureau 13: *Stalking the Night Fantastic*** is the brainchild of the late Richard Tucholka (February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1953 - April 17th, 2017), a prolific writer and games designer who has been called "one of the unsung heroes of Role Playing" and "Michigan's Gaming Guru". **Knights of the Dinner Table** (KotDT) voted him "one of the top 20 RPG game designers, one of the good guys, and lucky to rub your dice on".

**Stalking the Night Fantastic** (as it was originally known) was first released by Tri Tac Games in 1983. By 1985, the **Bureau** had become popular enough for Take-Two Interactive to develop it into a graphic adventure game, and in 1990 novelist Nick Pollotta ["Illegal Aliens"] was licensed to begin a series of novels based on the Agents. But it was the 1992 corebook, debuted at Gencon in 1991, that won *the Gamers Choice Award* for best Fantasy Game. This is the edition that released with the Phil Foglio cover.

For the next thirty-odd years, various modules and supplements have been published expanding the world available to players. In 2008, Richard Tucholka and his team (which by this time included Mel Natcher), released the **Bureau 13: *d20 Modern*** edition, bringing it into the world of d20 players for the first time. **Bureau 13: *EXTREME*** was the final Bureau 13 book that Richard completed. He and his band of dedicated volunteers had begun work on **Bureau 13: *Brass and Steam*** when his health began to fail.

## WHAT IS THE BUREAU?

**Bureau 13** is a fictional top-secret government agency which investigates and deals with supernatural and unearthly incursions. The Bureau's motto is "Protecting America from Everything". **Bureau 13** (the 13th Bureau of the Justice Department) was founded in 1862 by Abraham Lincoln to deal with supernatural and paranormal threats to the Union (and suppress any public knowledge of them). The original Agents were an assorted crew of military personnel, Pinkerton detectives, civilian consultants, freed slaves, paroled criminals, and even Confederate prisoners of war.

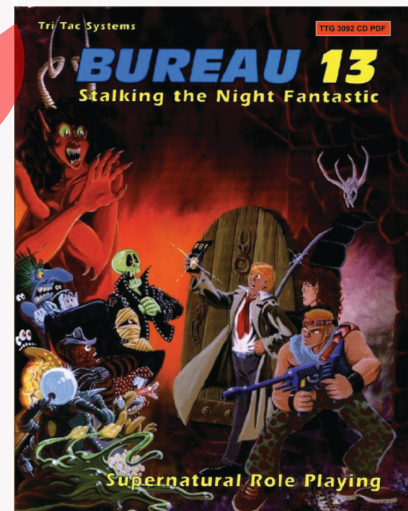
For the next century, the operatives of the Bureau went quietly about their business, secretly ferreting out and eliminating destructive aspects of the supernatural. Foreign branches of the organization were established in Europe, Africa and Asia.

On 7 July 1977, an overwhelmingly effective sneak attack razed Bureau 13 headquarters, shattering the organization's traditional infrastructure, which took years to re-form. Hundreds of Agents were massacred during the attack; the survivors reformed their agency as the cell-based covert network still in existence today.

Since the Massacre of '77, **Bureau 13** has come into it's own as a modern, tech-savvy force, with Agents trained to take on corrupted technomages, hell-infested hardware and alien interlopers as well as more traditional venial evils and supernatural incursions. The mandate of Bureau teams remains the same: disposal of high level evil while reinforcing the secrecy that will keep an unknowing public from the edge of insanity.



[Stalking the Night Fantastic 1983](#)



[Gamers Choice Award Winner](#)



[d20 Modern Adaptation 2008](#)

## WHAT MAKES BUREAU 13 UNIQUE?

Richard Tucholka's particular vision and the combination of genres. **Bureau 13** gaming sessions have always had a weird, humorous or satirical bent to them, even when the focus is on the horror. Plus, Richard was a bellwether, originating many tropes that are well known today, but were groundbreaking for their time.

- While some supernatural entities that the Bureau encounters are evil, others are not. In many instances, Agents have had to decide if the paranormal has established an ecological niche and is actually of benefit. And the best solution is always the one with the least collateral damage.
- Richard had a fondness for "average Joes". Bureau 13 player characters are traditionally ordinary civilians that were recruited from backgrounds as diverse as short order cook to best-selling sci-fi writer. Their sole common denominator is that they each had a paranormal or supernatural encounter that changed their lives, granting them a look behind the veil of secrecy the Bureau fights to maintain.

## SO WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

That depends on Tri Tac's fans. We intend to remain faithful to Richard Tucholka's legacy. Beyond that, we'll work it out together.

Modern **Bureau 13** Agents investigate the strange or unusual, analyze the evidence to see if there is a supernatural or paranormal cause, and assess whether the cause is hostile or dangerous. But above all, they struggle to keep the public unaware that the supernatural and paranormal exists.

The Bureau will not legally aid Agents in any direct way that will jeopardize their secrecy or operations. Information is sent to Agents on a limited basis. After the Massacre of '77, the offices of Bureau 13 have gone underground, with as tight security as can be imagined. Now hidden somewhere just outside Washington D.C., the agency again contacts and sends Agents across the Americas to deal with the supernatural.

**Rules for teams are simple and direct. Each Agent knows there are five basic rules to be followed at all times.**

- ▶ **RULE 1: Don't get caught.**
- ▶ **RULE 2: Don't leave evidence.**
- ▶ **RULE 3: Use violence only when necessary.**
- ▶ **RULE 4: Cover your tracks.**
- ▶ **RULE 5: Create rational explanations for the bizarre or fantastic.**

## SPOTLIGHT ON CONTRIBUTORS

This issue's contributors are Sally Vilkmán, John Reiher and Mel Natcher, all members of the **Tri Tac Core Team**.

**John Reiher** has been a long time fan and collaborator with Tri Tac Games. One of the first play testers for FTL:2448 and Fringeworthy, he has been a part of the company since its beginnings. He was part of the design team for Bureau 13 and Fringeworthy for the d20 OGL System. He is also an independent game designer in his own right, with several one page RPGs, Fiasco playsets, and Fate Accelerated card games.

**Sally Vilkmán** is a private person who was happy to contribute, but does not want a shoutout.

**Mel Natcher** joined Richard Tucholka's Tri Tac crew in 2009. In the beginning, Mel's contributions were primarily in the areas of art and graphic design, but her role expanded when she took over Tri Tac's website and later accepted the duties of general manager upon Richard Tucholka retirement. Mel is a published poet and writer of non-fiction, but is better known under her pen name of "Wasahbe Greene" in the gaming industry.

# SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR TRI TAC GAMES' SPOTLIGHT NEWSLETTER

**Spotlight on Tri Tac Games** is a newsletter that focuses on one or more of the many Tri Tac Games RPGs. It typically has two or more adventures, some new gear for the game, background information on people or places within the RPG setting. Articles and the like should be written for Teens 13 and above in age. No adult situations or current political situations are allowed. Each issue of the newsletter will focus on one of Tri Tac Games' products: [Bureau 13: Stalking the Night Fantastic](#), [Incursion](#), [Fringeworthy](#), [Hardwired Hinterland](#), [FTL: 2448](#), and others. The next game we'll be focusing on will be announced in the current newsletter and online.

## SUBMISSIONS AND COMPENSATION:

Submissions to the newsletter must be in one of the following formats: .doc, .docx, .rtf, .txt, or .gdoc and should be emailed to [rpg@tritacgames.com](mailto:rpg@tritacgames.com). If a submission is accepted for publication, the author will receive a four issue PDF subscription to **Spotlight** and recognition on the contributors page. At this point, everyone at Tri Tac Games is a volunteer working to expand the legacy of Richard Tucholka.

## WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

We are looking for the following content:

**Scenarios:** A scenario set in the focus RPG's setting. Between 6,000 and 12,000 words. If at all possible, please "sandbox" the scenario so that the players and the GM can improvise different ways to encounter things.

**Spotlight on Technology:** A short article that highlights a particular in game technology for the focus RPG setting, that can be used by both the players or the GM. Between 1,700 and 2,400 words. The technology will be evaluated for game balance and adjustments will be suggested to the writer.

**Spotlight on a NPC Team:** A short background piece about a NPC or group of NPCs in the focus RPG setting, that the player characters can interact with or use as a resource. Between 1,700 and 2,400 words. The NPC(s) will be evaluated for game balance and adjustments will be suggested to the writer.

**Spotlight on a Location:** A short article about a locale in the focus RPG setting that can be used as a jumping off point for future adventures or where resources can be procured by the PCs. Between 1,700 and 2,400 words. The locale will be evaluated for game balance and adjustments will be suggested to the writer.

**Spotlight on a NPC:** A short article on a NPC in the focus RPG setting that could be an ally or a foe to the PCs. Statistics will use the Tri Tac Games EZ systemless rating system. Between 1,700 and 2,400 words. The NPC will be evaluated for game balance and adjustments will be suggested to the writer.

**Short Story:** A short piece of fiction set in the focus RPG setting. For this type of submission we want a short, 300 word summary of the story before we agree to include it in the newsletter. Between 6,000 and 12,000 words. Make sure it is suitable for an audience 13 years old or older.

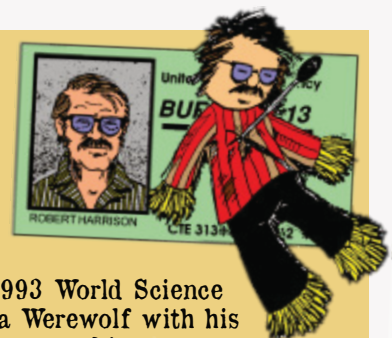
At 42 years of age Robert Harrison is a well known Science fiction writer. Not quite in the ranks of Heinlein, Lacky or Watt-Evans he is recognized for his 'Pookon of Mars' novels and a gross of good short stories.

With a bachelors degree in English Literature and Anthropology from Brown University in Rhode Island, Harrison is a full time writer who tinkers with old cars, brews his own beer, and travels to Science Fiction Conventions for fun, profit and a free dinner. He is a great crowd pleaser and the Sci-Fi fans really like him.

But Harrison has another side. His involvement with a Bureau 13 team at the 1993 World Science Fiction Convention in Detroit saved a number of lives as he crushed the skull of a Werewolf with his silver plated Hugo Award for best short story. While the fans thought it was a great skit, Harrison knew otherwise...

To his amazement, the supernatural was real, and a Government Agency called Bureau 13 was out to liquidate its more malignant aspects. In Harrison, the Bureau saw an extreme asset, a person who could adapt to the strange, a writer, and a good person.

- Richard Tucholka, Bureau 13: Stalking the Night Fantastic, d20 Edition



## WHAT COMES NEXT: FRINGEWORTHY

In our next issue, we turn the spotlight onto [Fringeworthy](#) and its million-million worlds! We're looking for alternate world settings, notable NPCs, adventures, and new gear for use in a Fringeworthy scenario or game. Adventures should be geared towards PCs in the Novice to Experienced range and can introduce new Fringe cultures and settings. Alternate world settings do not have to be fully fleshed out, just enough so that a GM can take the setting and expand it in the directions that they want.

Notable NPCs should have sufficient background to allow a GM to adapt them to the RPG rule system that they are using. We don't expect fully statted out characters, more along the line of what they are good at, what they are bad at, their backgrounds, and any potential plot hooks involving them.

New gear will be reviewed and checked for play balance, so keep that in mind: Would you give this to your players?

Submissions should be sent to [rpq@tritacgames.com](mailto:rpq@tritacgames.com) by May 20, 2020.

**SPOTLIGHT**

**TOP SECRET**

**EYES ONLY**

**BUREAU 13**  
STALKING THE NIGHT FANTASTIC

Paranormal Adventures & New Ideas for Those Stalking the Night Fantastic

**HAUNTS**  
A Tri Tac Games Classic Re-Release  
A GHOSTLY BUREAU 13 SOURCEBOOK

**HELLSNIGHT**  
A Tri Tac Games Classic Re-Release  
A BUREAU 13 SOURCEBOOK

**LOST FILES**  
A Tri Tac Games Classic Re-Release  
PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS, BOOKS ...AND A LOT MORE

**BUREAU 13**  
STALKING THE NIGHT FANTASTIC

1991 Bureau 13 Training Manual  
Early Paranormal Field Guides  
Bureau Guide to Greater Spirits  
International Reports  
Incident Reports  
Confidential FAXES  
Maps & Equipment

Lost Files I & II  
Haunts  
Hellsnight

**ADVENTURES**  
SUPERNATURAL ROLE PLAYING ADVENTURE MODULES

[Haunts](#)      [Hellsnight](#)      [Lost Files](#)      [Adventures](#)

This issue of **Tri Tac Spotlight** was inspired by the earliest published **Bureau 13** adventures, as preserved in the first sourcebooks, [Haunts](#) and [Hellsnight](#), the first supplement (splatbook), [Lost Files](#), and the [1992 Bureau 13 Corebook](#).

Each of the support books is sold as a stand-alone product at [tritacgames.com](http://tritacgames.com) and [DriveThruRPG.com](http://DriveThruRPG.com); all three can also be found bundled in [Bureau 13: Stalking the Night Fantastic Adventures](#).