

A Gunfighter's Primer

a six slinger's guide to



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o you say you want to be a gunslinger, kid? Well, I ain't about to tell ya that it's a bed o' roses, but 'tain't all that bad either. There's a few things you gotta know afore you decide to be a professional killer.

What's that? You don't like to think of it that way, huh? Well, tarnation, what do think you're goin' ta be doin'? Sellin' pastries for the Ladies Auxiliary? A gun can do one thing really well, an' that's kill people. If you don't intend to do that, you shouldn't ever even pick one up.

An make no mistake about it; once you start, there ain't no stoppin'. On the one side, you've got young punks always lookin' to make a name for themselves by gunnin' you down, and on the other side, respectable folk – gentlemen and ladies, don't like hired guns much. So socially, yer on your own for rest of yer life.

But the lifestyle does have its up side. The money, for one. Respect is another. Now I know I just got done tellin' you that respectable folk won't give you the time o' day, but they ain't who I'm talkin' about. I mean the average men and women out west. The ones who actually do all the work. These people will fear and respect you, and will sometimes even revere you.

Oh really now! You think you're pretty fast on the draw, huh? Fast as this?

Want to see it again?

But seriously, kid, bein' fast on the draw, and having a good aimin' eye ain't all there is to it. Of course, a lot of gunfighters think so. They tend to get killed in their first month. Now you listen to me; I'm forty years old and that makes me older than most gunfighters will ever be. You don't get to be as old as me by bein' stupid.

Here's a few things what might help you survive an extra day or two.

tricks o' the trade

Any gunslinger worth his holster will know these little tricks of the gunslingin' trade.

the gunfightin' stance

Proper stance is important to a gunslinger. There's just no point in showing your opponent more of yourself than necessary. To this end, a gunfighter using one gun should always stand sideways with his gun hand towards his opponent. This makes him a slightly smaller target. If a gunfighter using this

stance is hit in the off arm or leg, treat it as a miss.

Note that a character cannot fan his pistol in this position. If, for some reason, a fighter wishes to use this stance, but protect his gun hand and leg, then he must point his weapon across his body. This forces him to use the "Shootin' From the Hip" rule on page 93 of the rule book without the increase in Speed.

It is also possible that a duelist may wish to use two guns while in this position. To do so, he must fire one weapon normally, and draw the other across his body using the "Shootin' From the Hip" rule as above.

using the sun

Not all gunfights take place at high noon, and for those that don't, it is vitally important to know where the sun is. Since most gunfights take place in towns, there is a decent chance that the sun will be behind some buildings. If this is the case, the fight should continue as normal. The Marshall can determine this by looking at his map of the town and figuring out where then sun is at that time of day. If the sun is going to be near the horizon and visible (say, between dawn and ten AM or three PM and dusk), then it can play a part in the duel.

A smart gunfighter will always try to put the sun at his back. A gunfighter who has the sun in his eyes will suffer a minus 1 penalty to all of his actions requiring sight unless he has some sort of shading for his eyes (most cowboy hats fit this bill).

Not to be discounted is the psychological effect of facing an opponent who is silhouetted against the sun. The heat from the sun makes you sweat a little more, your enemy looks like a shadow, and you have to squint to make him out. Any Test of Wills attempts except Bluff receive a +2 bonus when performed by a fighter who has the sun at his back.

Chances are, a gunfighter's enemy will know about this as well, so he may want the sun at his back, too. When there is a conflict of this sort, resolve it using the Test of Wills rules.

modifyin' yer piece

A gunslinger's pistol should be more than just a weapon; it should become an extension of his own arm. Some tinhorns are content to just take their guns off the shelf at the nearby

general store and use them as is. If you want to know who they are, just take a look at the names on the graves on Boot Hill. This is not to say that all gunslingers modify their guns, just the ones who take it seriously. In other words, the ones who survive.

slickenin' it up

Take a look at yer average pistol. See that sight there on the edge of the barrel? Pretty, ain't it? Pretty useless is more like it. If you've got time to aim your gun, then your probably fixin' to plant a bullet in somebody's back anyhow, so this won't matter to you. But if speed is important to you, file that doohickey off and you'll have a pistol that'll slide free easy as pie. Filing off the sight takes a Tinkerin' roll of 3. This gives the character a +2 to Quickdraw, but he may no longer take the "Drawing a Bead" bonus to hit.

hair triggers

Something else you might want to try is tightening the tension on the trigger. This can only be done with a Tinkerin' roll of 7 or better. If this is successful, then any action involving the new trigger is considered to be played as an Action Card that is one suit higher than the one you have. If the Tinkerin' roll fails, however, you've got yourself a pile of gun parts. If you went bust, then the parts themselves have been

ruined.

If the card you play is a spade, then it is read as a club of the next highest number. The downside to this is that the pistol now gains a Reliability number. The Reliability begins at 14 and goes up by 2 for each raise to the Tinkerin' roll, with a maximum of 19.

The Reliability for a pistol with a Hair-Trigger is rolled every time the gun is drawn or dropped as well as whenever it's fired. If the Reliability is failed, the gun goes off early. An early shot can have several effects: first, if the gun was bein' drawn, then there is a 1 in 6 chance that the gunfighter just shot his own foot! Second, he loses his highest unused action card. And last, if the gun was just bein' fired, the shot is made with a -4 penalty.

Hair-Triggers take a bit of gettin' used to, so the first week of using one, a character should have a -2 penalty to any Shootin' rolls.

lettin' down yer guard

Another thing some gunslingers find annoyin' is that pesky trigger guard. It just tends to get in the way when your trigger finger's itchin' to put a hole in somebody that dearly deserves it. Well, that guard is there for a reason, but you can remove it if you really want to. Doin' so requires a Tinkerin' roll of 3. The effect of this is that the gunfighter has a +1 to his Quickdraw roll. Yes, this does mean that a 'slinger with a quickdraw holster, the sight filed off, and the trigger guard removed is guaranteed to be successful at quickdraw attempts, but you still need to roll; you can always go bust. The downside of this is that the gun's Reliability drops by three.

Thus, it is possible for a gun with both the trigger guard removed and a Hair Trigger to have a reliability of 11 – guaranteeing that it will fire prematurely half of the time. But maybe that little bit of speed is worth it, huh?

gussyin' up yer gun

Some Gunfighters like to pretty up their piece. Now you may think that only a circus clown would bother to dress up his iron, but there is a lot to be said for the psychological effect of facing a man with a scary-looking gun.

The most common way is to decorate the handle or the barrel with intricate carvings of rustic scenes or famous battles or what have you. Or you could just carve a notch in for every hombre ya dirt-napped.

Some folks like to paint purty pictures on their barrel, and it looks just too sweet. The problem with this is that it has to be touched up every week or so; more if you've been using it.

Now what are the effects of all this purtyness you ask? Well, anytime a Gunslinger with a visible, adorned pistol attempts a Test of Wills against someone, he makes the roll as normal. If the roll is a success, he adds +2 to the total. If the roll fails, however, then his opponent has a +2 to their next Test of Wills against the Gunslinger. This way, if the character is confident, his pretty gun can make him a little more intimidating; but if he falters, then his gussied-up piece makes him look a tad bit ridiculous.

dirty tricks

Sometimes a cowpoke just won't have much faith in his own abilities as a shootist, and will decide to employ other methods to insure his victory.

The oldest of these is "Look out behind you!" Now any jackass that falls for that deserves to get shot. Tricks like this are Bluffs, and should use that aptitude.



here's dirt in yer eye

Another trick is the old "sand in the eyes" gag. To do this, a fighter must be within Fightin' range of his opponent. The fighter kneels down for a moment and scoops up some sand from the ground and throws it into his foe's eyes. This is resolved with a Fightin' Brawlin' roll. With at least a success, the sand has gotten into the poor sap's eyes. This lasts for a number of full rounds equal to the number of successes and raises. A feller with sand in his eyes is going to have a -6 penalty to do anything requiring sight (like shootin').

blinded by the light

Impairin' your enemy's vision is also the result of this trick, which requires the assistance of a friend who doesn't mind helpin' you cheat. The gunslinger's friend should be on the street with the spectators or hidden somewhere nearby. What they need to do is have a mirror or badge or any highly polished piece of metal and reflect the sun into the other duelist's eyes. To do this, they need to roll a Deftness test with a TN of half of the gunfighter's Quickness trait. All that is required is a success. If the attempt is successful, the blinded gunslinger suffers a -4 penalty to his next action. After that, he is assumed to have moved his head enough to be away from the glare.

Of course, all the mirror totin' yahoo needs to do is aim the light again to have it follow him. The second and followin' actions that a gunslinger has light reflected in his eyes only carry a penalty of -2.

This little bit of nastiness is not without it's risks. For the first action the light is aimed at the duelist's eyes, bystanders have a TN of 12 to notice it and another TN of 12 to find the source. Each action after, the TN drops by 2. Thus, a fella who's been aiming a pocketwatch at somebody for 4 actions will be discovered on a Scrutinize total of 6.

Of course, the fella what's bein' blinded has a real good chance of spottin' the cheater; and he's holdin' a gun. The initial round a fighter is blinded, he cannot spot the culprit, but if the glare continues after that, he can automatically pick them out even from a crowd. The mirror wielder better hope his friend out there on the street can give him something else to think about.

Now, we can only hope that members of your posse will come up with even more and nastier tricks to pull on their opponents. That's just fine. Just remember, though; for ever trick you pull, the Marshall will have about a dozen more ready.

new aptitude: trick shot

rifle, pistol, bow, knife

This aptitude represents time spent in the pursuit of the legendary "impossible shot." It must be taken with one of the concentrations listed, and you cannot have a higher level in Trick Shot than you do in Shootin' or Throwin' with the same concentration.

To use this skill, the player must first announce what it is she wishes to do. Then she rolls his aptitude dice against a TN of 5. This roll is affected by things such as range, movement and other factors. She draws a card from a separate deck for each success and raise. If any of the cards drawn match or exceed the card or cards required for the shot, then it is a success.

This is not a normal combat skill, and should not be used to make called shots to the eye, for instance. The concentra-

trick shots

card required/shot difficulty

Five/Piece O' Cake: detotnatin' a stick o' dynamite*

Six/Durn Good: shootin' a gun out of someone's hand

Seven/Cute: unbucklin' a saddle or gunbelt

Eight/Entertainin': snapping a rope or chain*

Nine/Impressive: knocking a coin out of the air

Ten/Show Offish: keepin' a tin can in the air by the force of your shot

Jack/Fancy: ricochet off hard surface into target

Queen/Tricky: classic mirror shot

King/Just Plain Rude: unbuttoning somebody's shirt without hurtin' 'em

Ace/Phenomenal: snippin' the fuse on a stick o' dynamite.

Pair/Incredible: knockin' a knife out of the air**

Pair of fives/Unbelievable: knockin' an arrow out of the air**

3 of a kind/Impossible: shootin' a bullet out of the air */**

3 fives/Freakin' Impossible!: deflectin' a bullet - can only be done with a knife**

* can only be damaged by a bullet

** The feat listed can only be attempted if the character has an action card of the same value as the acting character; or if he can interrupt by playing a card from up his sleeve and makin' a Quickness roll of 5.

Jokers are used as wild cards, but if one is drawn something bad happens. What, exactly is left up to the Marshall, but usually, this would mean that the gun explodes, or the shot goes as planned but the bullet keeps on travelling and hits an innocent bystander, or something else equally nasty.

tion necessary to make Trick Shots is of an entirely different type from that used in a battle. Some Trick Shots may have combat effects, but they are the exception, and can only be done under special circumstances. In order to use this aptitude in combat, the shooter must first make an onerous (TN 7) Cognition roll, just to gather up the wherewithal to try it. In addition to that, anyone trying to hit the shooter, using Fightin' or Shootin' or anything else, gets a +3 to their roll.

If a player wishes to perform a Trick Shot without this aptitude, they must take a blanket -10 penalty to their Shootin' or Throwin' roll. Note, however, that any shot that requires two or more cards is simply impossible to make without this Aptitude.

Well, that's about all I've got to teach you, kid. Hope you found your education to be useful. What's that? Me? Why... of all the no-good, belly-crawlin', dung-eatin' ingrates! Here I am teachin' you the noble art of the gunslinger, an' you have the audacity to call me out! Well, okay, you young pup...

Bang!

Whew! Thanks, Bill! Ye' see, kid, that was one trick I didn't teach you. Always have a friend with a Winchester hidin' nearby. 

