

**GURPS**<sup>®</sup>

Fourth Edition

# TRANSHUMAN SPACE

## PERSONNEL FILES 4<sup>™</sup> MARTINGALE SECURITY<sup>™</sup>



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Stock #37-6705

Version 1.0 – August 2009



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## About *Transhuman Space*

The *Transhuman Space* series presents a unique hard-science and high-biotech universe for roleplaying. Set in the Solar System in the year 2100, it is a setting rich in adventure, mystery, and exploration of the possibilities of existence. The core book in the line is *Transhuman Space*, written by the series creator, David Pulver.

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# INTRODUCTION

Each *Transhuman Space: Personnel Files* supplement offers a campaign set in the world of *Transhuman Space*, complete with background, brief scenario suggestions, and notes for the GM. The material also includes a set of characters suitable to act as PCs in this same campaign. These characters are detailed using *GURPS Fourth Edition*, with templates and other details drawn from *Transhuman Space: Changing Times* and *Transhuman Space: Shell-Tech. Personnel Files 4 – Martingale Security* offers a look at a recently formed body-guard company and its core members.

It's sometimes said that *Transhuman Space* provides a wonderfully detailed world, but it's hard to decide on and define an actual campaign to run there. The *Personnel Files* line is intended to provide an answer to this, and to demonstrate what PCs for the setting might look like. These characters can also be used as NPCs – as antagonists, allies, patrons, or background color.

*These, in the day when heaven was falling,  
The hour when earth's foundations fled,  
Followed their mercenary calling  
And took their wages and are dead.*

– A.E. Housman, “Epitaph on  
an Army of Mercenaries”

## About the Author

Phil Masters is the author of *Transhuman Space: Changing Times*, *Transhuman Space: Shell-Tech*, *Transhuman Space: Personnel Files 1-3*, and a chapter in *Transhuman Space: High Frontier*. He has also worked on countless other *GURPS* products, such as the *Who's Who* books and *Banestorm*, and on products for other companies. He lives and works in the UK, and he doesn't have a bodyguard.



# PROFESSIONAL PROTECTION

The characters detailed in this supplement form a professional bodyguard team – a natural setup for action-oriented plots in the world of *Transhuman Space*. Often, in this setting, combat work is assigned to highly specialized cybershells, or sometimes bioroids, especially in Fifth Wave areas; the scope for complex, more or less human characters to engage in old-fashioned soldiering, shoot-outs, and suchlike action can seem limited. Nevertheless, certain tasks call for something other than raw firepower and heavy armor, even if combat is part of the job – and bodyguard work is one of those areas.

Someone engaged in normal, if high-profile, activity in civilian society probably doesn't want to be surrounded by heavily armed death machines. Even if legal difficulties can be overcome – and RATS or UCAV units tend to be highly restricted

– it looks aggressive and paranoid. Politicians want to be able to shake hands with other people, to move through crowds or drive down the road while giving an impression of friendliness and accessibility. Celebrities need to seem somewhat approachable to their fans, and they often build valuable public images on the idea that they're still regular folks. They also like to hit the nightspots without scaring other customers. Ordinary people with stalkers usually want to be able to carry on living their normal lives while the problem is cleared up. Heavy-duty combat systems get in the way of all that – and alert, computer-aided, V-tag-reading Fifth Wave citizens can often spot even quite subtle automated security. Thus, in 2100, the bodyguard business calls more than ever for discretion and the human touch.

## COMPANY BACKGROUND

The group described here makes up the entire workforce of Martingale Security, a small commercial bodyguard team based in the United States in the *Transhuman Space* setting. It can be treated as an example of how to make such an entity the basis for a campaign. Bigger companies are involved in the business, but basing a series of adventures around a small independent team gives the PCs a greater feeling of control over their work decisions, avoiding a sense of heavy-handed management from higher levels. Martingale has outside investors and the usual corporate need to turn a profit, but within that constraint, it's up to the PCs how they do their job. The team does have a leader – that's really inevitable with a group of professional combatants – but the members are all trusted to make tactical decisions as necessary. They are permitted to query instructions from the team leader in non-urgent situations, and even to debate policy. In the extreme case, they can be sacked, but they aren't subject to military discipline. Furthermore, Martingale's particular "command structure" has some secret wrinkles, hidden in the character descriptions.

The company was established a couple of years ago, as an independent start-up. The people who are putting up the money have chosen to remain in the background, concealed behind indirect ownership arrangements. However, the set-up is, as far as anyone can tell, legal. Those who have looked into it, from inside or outside of the company, have failed to find anything ethically dubious going on, and the team members have never yet been asked to break any laws. Presumably, the

backers regard this as an interesting sideline or speculative investment, and they simply value their privacy. Nonetheless, some of the team is still keeping an eye out for evidence of hidden agendas.

From the team members' point of view, the company functions like a partnership of quasi-independent professionals that just happens to have some useful funding. However, Martingale isn't rated as a Patron in the character descriptions. The aid the company provides is strictly that given by a good businesslike employer, and it won't extend beyond the job at hand. Martingale will furnish equipment (including weapons) and legal assistance, but only as needed to get a job done. The company requires efficient accounting in return. Equally, work for the company isn't rated here as a Duty (except for the company's AI, which is legally property), although it can be moderately dangerous at times. It's essentially a job, which team members can quit any time if they wish, and they're supposed to minimize risks whenever possible. The only stipulation the owners place on team composition is that it must include Charlie Mallinson (see pp. 19-20). Additionally, a high-end AI, OVERSIGHT (pp. 17-18), handles most of the admin work and day-to-day communications for the company.

Martingale is based in Dallas, Texas, and all the team members have residences in that city. This is as convenient as anywhere else, in the web-linked world of *Transhuman Space*, and GMs who prefer to choose another American city for any reason are welcome to move the base.

Most jobs involve a flight out of the international airport to wherever the action is, although there's also a fair amount of work going in the city's own business district and elsewhere in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The company has a lease on a modest suite of offices in the business district, mostly to hold OVERSIGHT's computers and for conference rooms to allow for clients who prefer to meet the team in person. The company also rents a secure storage unit further out of the city center, where the team can stow their larger cybershells and some of their sidearms between missions; getting into this involves multiple codes and forms of identification, though all team members have access. The storage units are managed and watched by an experienced, competent LAI; OVERSIGHT is automatically notified of both legitimate access to the store and any kind of attempted intrusion or suspicion activity.

Martingale advertises discretely through various websites and communal networks, and it aims to build a solid "word of mouth" reputation. Team members may be reminded of this objective if they seem likely to endanger the company's good name. Initial approaches with offers of work usually come in through the Web. Contractual negotiations are mostly handled by semi-independent agents (human and AI) hired by the company owners. Team members who bring in profitable work through their own efforts could receive a modest bonus.

The company currently employs just the one team. If it chooses to expand in the future, it will probably create complete new teams of much the same size, although members of the initial team may be given temporary training and assessment duties with the new group.

Martingale Security is *not* a military, or even paramilitary, organization. It's a civilian company providing plain-clothes civilian bodyguards. While other "security" companies in 2100 are more like mercenary forces (and may have more military-grade hardware, including RATS and similar), Martingale pitches for work at the subtler end of the market. As a side effect,

## Work Hours

Note that, in general, Fifth Wave citizens in 2100 work relatively short hours – often around 20 per week. A bodyguard team really can't function that way: They have to cover their clients for large parts of each day and be available at short notice the rest of the time. Hence, companies like Martingale offer a different work pattern, with "high intensity" schedules while on assignment, and long periods of relaxed "downtime" in between. (This isn't necessarily time off; it can mean training, refresher courses, or basic consultancy tasks performed over the Web from home.) Obviously, this routine will suit some people more than others. Additionally, bodyguards might not have close relationships, because their schedules often lead to friction and stress. Still, the relatively short total working hours are another reason not to count the job as a significant Duty.

its employees aren't asked to confront many of the ethical problems associated with military-mercenary work. They do have to be prepared to shoot people if absolutely necessary, but the corporate line is that they're in the business of preserving life, not taking it. They're officially more than willing to cooperate with the police. They avoid contracts that would take them to areas where local law enforcement is *very* corrupt or untrustworthy, though they don't often turn down paying work that is within their capacity. If they're offered a job that they decide requires more firepower than they can muster, they know some paramilitary bodies to whom they can direct the customer with a clear conscience; such outfits will return the favor if offered work requiring subtlety. Likewise, the company has no interest in any kind of espionage work and limited capabilities for counterespionage or countersurveillance. However, it might team up with other specialists if a customer seemed to need such support.

# RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN

A bodyguard campaign *can* be run on a simple, episodic, "mission" basis. Each week, the team gets a new assignment and a briefing, goes out, and does the job. Most times, this means that the threatening force shows its hand, the team stops the attack (or at least tries to), the threat is eliminated (or the mission fails), and everyone gets paid and goes home. In cases where someone needs protection from a whole slew of possible threats for months or years, such services have to come from larger companies or organizations. These entities can rotate multiple teams of bodyguards through the assignment as some take holidays or change job, collect intelligence on possible attackers, and organize a whole protective structure around the client. That's not the kind of assignment which a small independent team like Martingale Security will be offered or accept. Rather, the company is in the short-term protection business, which suits the "adventure game" model very well.

The short-term structure offers possibilities for variation from mission to mission. Sometimes, no real threat exists – perhaps the whole thing is a misunderstanding that needs to be cleared up, or the client is paranoid and needs to somehow be convinced of reality. Sometimes, the team doesn't get the whole story because the client is confused, manipulative, or being manipulated by someone close. Perhaps the "threat" is coming from someone with a legitimate complaint against the client, but who won't resort to physical violence. The team then has to disentangle the lies or misunderstandings and find a way to resolve the situation so that it squares with their ethics, consciences, and contracts. At still other times, the assignment is legitimate and routine, but the client's life involves other complications in which the bodyguards become entangled. They might find themselves guest stars in a soap opera, political saga, or business drama; they somehow become involved despite their best attempts to preserve cool detachment.

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