

Warning! This issue contains
an article of a mature nature!

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS



Signs & Portents

11

THE SEX PRESIDENTS

*Seriously adult adventure for
Macho Women With Guns!*

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

*Gary Gygax looks back on a
lifetime in Roleplaying*

A GREEN UNPLEASANT LAND

*Distinctly English background
for OGL Horror*



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Worlds, Hyborian Names,
Sovereign Magic Spells,
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and lots, lots more!*

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This month's cover art showcases the work of Socar Myles, and will shortly be gracing the box of our new *Bloodlines* game.

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Editorial

Hi all,

This month I have mostly been playing with toy soldiers.

Yes, indeed, with *Mighty Armies* having made its arrival on the scene, I am able to reveal my darkest secret. Worse than my Napoleonic re-enacting; worse than my penchant for ethnically obscure roleplaying characters; worse even than my daily struggle with the *Weight Watchers* diet. Yes, I am a wargamer.

Even before roleplaying there was wargaming. In many ways the two hobbies are as the sides of that ever-popular coin. Yet for many gamers, the choice seems to be having to pick one or the other. For me this has always seemed more than a bit odd. Many roleplayers do indeed look at wargaming as simply playing with toy soldiers, while in return many wargamers look down their noses at roleplayers, often because these heretics casually reject the use of miniatures to represent themselves.

At Mongoose, however, we have as many wargamers as roleplayers, so it made sense that sooner or later we would expand out into the tabletop gaming market. *Mighty Armies* is but the first foray. Coming up behind is *Gangs of Mega-City One*, featuring all your Judge Dredd favourites, and looming in the darkness of 2005 is *Starship Troopers* no less! Pretty heady stuff, if I say so myself.

It would be churlish of me to mention that I won the staff *Mighty Armies* playtesting competition, so I won't. Instead I shall merely point out that everybody at Mongoose Hall is very pleased the way the game has developed. The great thing about *Mighty Armies* as an introductory fantasy game is that it really does everything it says on the tin. Within each box you get just all that you need to get playing (except an opponent – there was no room in the box for one of those, although we are working on it). The figures paint up beautifully, allowing even inexperienced painters to achieve attractive results without driving them to distraction.

Inside this issue you will also find new magic spells to enhance your spellcasters as well as the details of new blister packs of troops available to support the Barbarians and Orcs. Check out the model of the Barbarian War Mammoth and you'll see what I mean.

If all this wasn't enough, we just happen to have the first article in a series by none other than the venerable Gary Gygax himself in which he talks about the experiences which brought *Dungeons and Dragons* into being. This is definitely one not to miss.

At the opposite end of the spectrum we have our first supplementary piece for *Macho Women With Guns*. You may well have caught the guidance notice on the cover along with various hints throughout the magazine highlighting the nature of the scenario. In case you missed it: THIS IS VERY RUDE. If you are offended by the whole *Macho Women* concept, then you may want to look away now, but if you are one of the game's many fans who have been howling for a decent adventure, then this is it. Sarwat Chadda has really captured the essence of the game, and if you like MWWG, then I'm sure you won't be disappointed.

Right, enough from me. If you want me I'll be with the *Sex Presidents*...

Ian



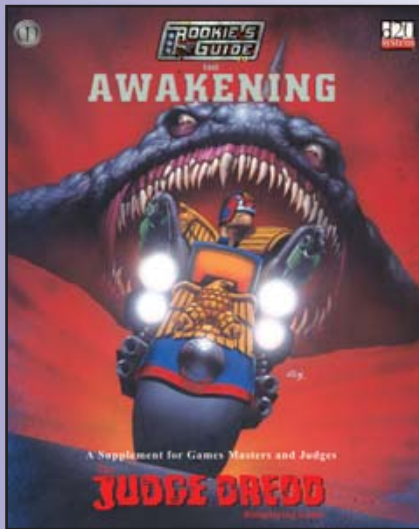
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EYE ON MONGOOSE

New Releases This Month



In the year 2113, 11 years before the start of the adventure, Mega-City One struggled to rebuild itself after the horrors of Necropolis. With so many killed in so short a period of time, hauntings and other strange psychic phenomena were widespread and Psi Division found itself worked flat out, bringing many of its already highly strung members to breaking point. Psi-Judge Kaleb Jezzail was one of these.

Called in to investigate what seemed to be a standard poltergeist emanation amid the ruins of the Susie Weißmeyer Block, Psi-Judge Jezzail encountered something far, far worse; the immeasurable pain and suffering caused by Necropolis had attracted the attention of Gorgomoth the Devourer, a powerful psychic entity from another dimension. Having discovered in Mega-City One a veritable smorgasbord of negative and violent emotions upon which to feed, Gorgomoth had already decided it wished to gain permanent access to the city. It quickly overwhelmed Jezzail's shattered psychic defences, driving the Psi-Judge completely insane and taking possession of his mind. Gorgomoth had gained its first disciple.

This is the background to the latest adventure supplement for the *Judge Dredd Roleplaying Game*. This is 98 pages of hi-octane excitement, the kind that only happens in Mega-City One!

Isolated from the world, the vast kingdoms of the dwarves wax and wane hidden from the view of other races, fighting invisible battles against foes only they know. They smile inwardly when other races accuse them of insularism, of not giving full support when asked, when they never ask for any when facing the innumerable dangers of their underground homes.

Dwarves are monolithic in bearing and attitude to the point that many believe that they are all alike, gruff warriors that hide behind their beards and armour. The truth lies in just the same way as their kingdoms: deep beneath the surface. The halls of stone of dwarves invite none and accept none, being better protected than the communities of any of the other races and having contact with the outside only through their trade with outsiders, through their adventurers or through ambassadors who never get to see the full extent of a dwarven hold.

Dwarves are not unfriendly despite all the appearances, their culture steeped in customs and traditions is not easy to understand, and they do not try to explain it to outsiders, content on carrying their honour and pride with them wherever they go.

The latest 128-page *Quintessential II* book takes a long hard look at the dwarves and presents fascinating new options for old and new players alike.



The life of the common folk is assailed from all fronts and, while adventurers may prove a solution to invasion by monsters and an oppressive governor, they are in no position to help them against a harsh winter, a poor harvest, plagues or, in the most extreme cases, war. Such protection is the responsibility of the people's liege, be he a chieftain, king or emperor. It is the liege upon whose head weighs the consequences of a poor decision, upon whom the responsibility lies to protect his land from invaders and who can muster the power of that same land in a spiritual bond that legitimises his rule.

Wielding the power of his ancient bloodline, a true liege inherits the heavy responsibility to dictate the fates of his subjects, to place his mark on the weave of history and ultimately to pass down such noble heritage to his successors, so that they may rule with wisdom and strength.



In this boxed set, you will find everything you need to create and manage enormous kingdoms, to wage war, to forge trade and diplomatic alliances which will last centuries and to ensure your character's places in the records of history.

The three main books give players all the tools they need to create powerful characters whose actions determine the fates of thousands as well as provide rules to help players manage whole kingdoms in fantasy worlds. The rules for characters and kingdoms can be separated so that they can be used in any pre-existing campaign, with an easy to adapt system for managing resources and direction the actions of an entire population, all the while leaving the door open for old-style adventuring. The third book deals with Tarasen, the official campaign world of *Bloodlines*, as well as its six great nations which provide a fertile ground for political as well as military conflict, the bread and butter of a liege's life.

The boxed set also contains a set of cards detailing the units of an army, usable in the *Bloodlines* epic combat system, as well as maps of battlefields in which to stage the clash of armies, in addition to the larger maps of Tarasen and its territories.

Bloodlines is Mongoose Publishing's first fully boxed game, giving a truly epic feel to the business of ruling kingdoms and founding dynasties.



In this first supplement to the cult hit game *Lone Wolf*, we take you to the Darklands! This 128-page book is packed with information about this most terrible country and the vile beings that rule this blasted scar on the face of Magnamund. This text definitively lists the Darklords in all their ebon glory, with their powers, their provinces, and their legions in never-before-seen detail. By the time you have finished reading this tome of terror, you will know the ways of evil on Magnamund much better than you did before. You will know which Darklord rules in the domain of Nightmares, which one revels in the applications of torture, and what horrors churn to be awakened in the underhalls of Helgedad.

You have been warned.

There is no force of darkness in Magnamund greater than the Darklords. Incarnations of evil borne of pure malice and hatred, they are the personifications of evil brought forth into the world by Naar, the true Lord of Evil and the greatest of the Dark Gods. Each one is subtly different and while they all serve the same ends, they do so often at cross purposes.

Dare you head off into the Darklands?

There are monsters in the deep, whose flesh is perfect obsidian and whose eyes shine like midnight stars, yearning to hunt again beneath the open sky. They are the drow, and it is their doom to never again feel the light and heat of the sun, until such time as the elven gods are thrown down and all their favoured children slain.

The cities of the drow spread like a cancer throughout the veins of the world, glittering jewels of decadence, soaked in blood and steeped in corruption. Ruled by great, matriarchal families and the will of the Dark Mother of Spiders' clergy, these cities are cosmopolitan nightmares, home to the worst depravities imaginable and swarming with untold legions of drow.

While all drow have earned a reputation for cruelty and deadly cunning, none deserve it more than those who command the primal, arcane forces. This book, the *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Drow Magic* shows why.



In this, the latest in Mongoose Publishing's line of books designed to broaden the horizons of wizardry in fantasy gaming, you will find a host of new options specifically designed with the sinister needs of the drow in mind. You will find page after page of new spells; spells which create living webs, which infect enemies of the drow with deadly soul poisons or virulent diseases, which summon up gibbering mounds of shadow to bite tear at flesh and spirit.

You will also be introduced to the drow dark weaver, a contemporary of the wizard and sorcerer whose powers stem from both his arcane studies and his devotion. The dark weaver is the spider in the shadows, the avenger in darkness, the protector and shepherd of the drow, and he is the master of those most powerful and feared of all drow enchantments, the black ceremonies.

Within this new book are all the rules needed to bring ceremony magic, a whole new form of spellcasting, to your fantasy campaigns. Magical ceremonies are those enchantments which require the participation of dozens or even hundreds of ritualists, which are powered by the ritual sacrifice of living beings or heaping mounds of treasure and which have the capacity to bring about catastrophic changes throughout the campaign world. Thanks to the power of ceremonial magic, and more specifically black ceremonies, drow in fantasy gaming will never be seen the same way again.

Monty's Mutterings

News and Gossip from Mongoose Hall

+++ New guy starts at the Studio! A warm welcome to Rich Ford who has joined the editorial team. Rich has moved down from Leeds to sample the sophisticated pleasures of life at Mongoose Hall. He has taken over the Quintessential and Ultimates lines and is also spearheading a project shrouded in mystery, known only by the code name of 'Drow Trilogy'. He also continues the tradition of only employing people called Richard or Ian...+++

+++Studio Mighty Armies competition. The real results showed a tie between Old Bear and Mark Humphries from Accounts, who generously let the Studio Manager have the tournament prize (a Mars Bar). Ian claims to have taken the winnings home for his son, Ben, but some of us doubt this.+++

+++First Starship Troopers models seen at Mongoose Hall. These are really cool, but you can't see them yet because you're not a Mongoose and I am.+++

+++Studio nicknames. Old Bear (Ian Barstow); Doghouse (Ian Belcher); Fordy (Rich Ford); F5&^£* (Rich Neale). Now you know.



Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.

As an adventurer, you will be used to hardship. You can wade up to your neck through leech-infested swamps; you can shiver on an arctic plain, with nothing to eat but the stiff body of your companion, who was lucky enough to die first; you can struggle through a seemingly endless desert, blinded by the sun and dried crisp as a mummy by the heat, while scorpions and venomous reptiles lurk in wait and vultures circle overhead. In all of these terrible straits, one thought may serve to comfort you: *no matter how bad this is, it could be worse.*

There is one place where even that thought cannot bring comfort, because it is the worst place that can be found anywhere. It is a place so dreadful that its very name is a curse and good folk fear to mention it. That place is Hell.

All too often, Hell is merely glimpsed from afar. Legends, frequently contradicting each other, tell of its many awful sights. So varied are these accounts that one might wonder whether they were describing the same

place. It is a realm of endless fire, though insectoid ice devils dwell there. It is all chaos and horror, yet the devils are fundamentally lawful, or else why do they always work with contracts? The place is supposed to be inescapable, yet fiends are often to be found walking the material plane. The souls of evil people go to Hell when their bodies die, yet evil ghosts are often reported, so why are they not in Hell?

Other questions beg to be answered; for what purpose, other than sheer sadism, do the fiends torment the damned? Are all devils members of the same monolithic force? What actually happens to the soul of a person who sells his soul to the Devil and what can he expect in return?

Inside the 256-page *Book of Hell* you will find an exhaustive guide to Hell in which all of these questions are answered. The *Book of Hell* is a bestiary, spellbook, resource guide, gazetteer and Who's Who for the place we have chosen to call Infernum. Although it reflects our own 'take' on the outer planes, it is fully compatible with other works on the subject. In particular, the concept of what a 'devil' is has been expanded immensely. The civilisation, social conduct and objectives of these fascinating beings has been fully investigated. They are far more than mere scaled and horned warriors of darkness.

Remember, Hell ain't a bad place to be...



For more details on the new blister packs for the Barbarians and Orcs, go to page 48 of this issue and all will be revealed! The Barbarians have berserkers and a war mammoth (pictured left) whilst the Orcs have a giant trebuchet and the awesome hydra tamer!

Barbarian Berserkers and War Mammoth painted by Nathan Webb



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Classic Play

520
system

BOOK OF HELL

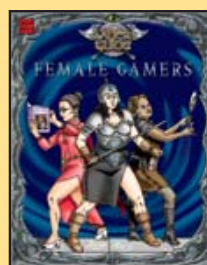
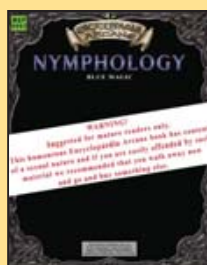
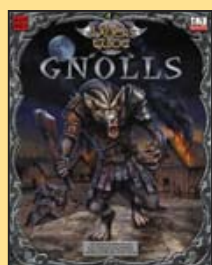
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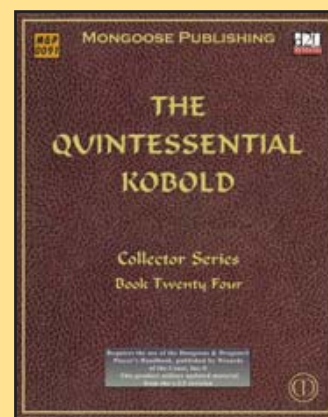
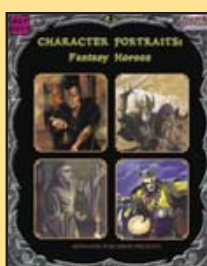
WARNING
FOR MATURE
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Signs & Portents PRESENTS

THE PDF COLLECTION



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this
Space!



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Out Now! the Quintessential Kobold!

Tales from

MONGOOSE HALL

Ian Barstow

Last month we had a look at the background to this latest fantasy slugfest.

This time round we see just what happened when Agamar, Orfeo and Tharg got back together.

Will it be a happy reunion, or does the fact that Tharg think he is the Hand of God (Kelemvor, to be precise) mean there is trouble brewing ahead?

Read on, if you dare...

So, we are in a tunnel. Well, that's highly original. This party seems to have spent more time underground than a team of Welsh miners. The party is currently somewhat scattered. Orfeo, Agamar and Esslin Thann (soon to be Ranger of the North) are down by the deep gnomes whose name I can never pronounce properly, but ends up sounding like a recipe for Scandinavian sausages, while Tharg is returning to the party having had his mind 'realigned' by the god Kelemvor. With him is Esslin's brother, Jerrith, a clearly ornery type who appears to have no respect for half-orcs chosen by their god as an instrument of, well, death in this case.

I could go into detail about wandering, but frankly that's about as exciting as watching pro-

am knitting on the sports channel. Rather, suffice to say that we finally got together without any unpleasant happenings. Needless to say both Orfeo and Agamar were thrilled to see their old comrade return. Actually, Orfeo popped out to the toilet while Agamar took the opportunity to update Tharg on his death list, which had just made double figures. That's the trouble with paladins, they are so thorough.

It turns out that the new party members are going to be particularly unruly, judging by the fact that they are showing serious signs of having minds of their own. I'm used to Sabah Karambunai, the People's Armpit, who was amenable to being ignored for whole sessions. The Thann brothers appear intent on having a say in planning, which is unfortunate as planning isn't this party's strong suite.

Ian's Gaming Tips #521

Splitting the Party

Don't do it. It never works. People get bored, eat mate loaf and generally cause trouble, making the rest of the party shout louder than ever to attract the GM, who in turn gets stroppy. It's a vicious circle, especially if the GM misses out on the mate loaf.

It turns out that we still have a few square miles of tunnel left uncleansed, meaning that we have to leave those cheerful svirfneblin behind and head out once more into the unknown. Actually we all know what is out there: namely, XP, GP and KIA.

So, we head off back down the tunnels. Orfeo is giving me a bit of a grilling, particularly after I reveal that I am now the chosen one of Kelemvor. As such I am incapable of murder or anything else remotely naughty as I am merely carrying out the god's will. This news doesn't go down well with our resident cleric, who is clearly jealous of Kelemvor's favour. This is as it should be as Alex has minged out his character extreme, to the point where in my considered ability he is practically unkillable. With the ability to get away from any given situation using his clerical benefit for the Travel domain, or simply magically flying about or teleporting out, he is always good to go. Add to this his *vest of healing* (which appears to be made out of kevlar) which appears to actually make him gain hit points when he gets wounded...

...Methinks Alex has spent many dark hours alone poring over his unfeasibly large roleplaying library hunting for just the right combo. I could, of course, be being totally unfair. He may have accidentally come across this fantastic combination of abilities. Based on this theory though Liberace has a good chance of being WWE's next King of the Ring.

Setting off down the tunnels we get back into our usual habit of Tharg and Agamar talking the whole time, much to Mark's disgust. Mark has taken on the job of Games Master and is quickly realising what a chaotic outfit this is. Tharg (my completely excellent character) is carrying about 50,000 gp's worth of magic items and both Agamar (Matthew) and Orfeo are even more loaded down with cool kit.

This of course can be a nightmare for Games Masters. In this case, how much loot do you give new characters joining a party this mingy. Too much and you perpetuate the problem. Too little and they become redundant sidekicks.

Ian's Gaming Tips #902

Cruel To Be Kind

As Games Master, sometimes you have to be able to say no. This can be tricky when the person sniffing around for magic items is going to be giving you all the gulf jobs in the office the next day. The weak willed could easily succumb. This has proved no problem for Mark, who luckily hates everybody.

So we head off down the corridors of doom, merrily talking away while Esslin Thann (not quite Ranger of the North yet) attempts to scout ahead, regardless of the fact that a deaf kobold could hear us coming several miles away.

After a few mundane scraps we are a touch banged up, but nothing major, and we potter along towards our destiny. Esslin has got fed up of us not taking scouting seriously and has gone on strike, obliging myself and Agamar to take on the job as a team. What this actually amounts to is that we continue our conversation at a different point in the party marching order.

Anyway, we enter a room with a pool and I seem to remember advising caution. Agamar, however, has other ideas. Matthew decides that the best way of checking if the pool is occupied is to smack the water with his sword. For a second nothing happens, before a multi-headed beast later identified as a dark spawn emerges and promptly rips his head off.

For a second there is something of a stunned silence. In essence, what happened was this. Despite having 15 scrolls of cure light wounds on his person at the time, Agamar had allowed his hit points to drop to 23 without bothering to top up. The dark spawn manages a critical hit and before you know it the creature has done 34 points of damage. All this in one hit.

Recovering from this surprise, Tharg swung into action, berating the creature with a torrent of appropriate abuse as his fighting skills kicked in. Hitting the thing twice in my own turn, I then proceeded to belt it another three times during its attacks due to my allegedly over-powered Combat

Instincts feat which allows me to strike back at anything that attacks me and misses by more than five on their attack roll. I can personally recommend this feat.

Ian's Top Feats #6

Combat Instincts

Get hold of our Ultimate Feats book, head for page 34 and don't leave home without it.

Having laughed off the 42 points of damage I did in my own attacks, the thing goes down like, well, Agamar actually, after taking close to 90 points of damage on its own turn. Thus, by the time the rest of the party arrives the room contains one dead paladin and one equally dead monster.

This is something of a turning point in this particular party's history. As you will have gathered if you read S&P 10's Tales from Mongoose Hall there was a feeling of immortality about the three original survivors which has almost instantly been removed. From a roleplaying perspective this required me to evaluate just how Tharg would handle the death of his closest companion. From a religious point of view Kelemvor obvious decided it was Agamar's time, but how should an already unstable Tharg handle the situation?

Tune in next time to find out.

STARSHIP TROOPERS™

Countdown to Invasion!

**DO YOU APES WANT TO
LIVE FOREVER?**

Write for the Mongoose

Want to write for your favourite RPG publisher? Want to get paid for it? Got a great idea for an article? If the answers to these questions are 'yes', then Signs & Portents wants to hear from you.

Where to Start...

We will need a brief synopsis of your intended article, no more than one page long. Also include a paragraph or two of your actual writing style, so we can see whether you have what it takes and any samples of previously published work. If we like what we see, we will commission a first draft from you and you will be on your way to becoming a Mongoose contributing writer. And every article we publish will be paid for...which is nice.

Things to Remember

Provide your full details, including name, address and email address if available.

Supply articles via email or on disc. We can read most formats, although MS Word is always a safe bet. You will be provided with a style guide when we commission your article. Make sure you read it!

Subject Matter

First and foremost, the article has to be based on one of our product lines. That is not as limiting as it sounds, however. The d20 fantasy family alone should give you plenty of scope. Think of all our various products, like the Quintessential series and the Slayer's Guides. With more than 80 fantasy-based books to choose from...well, you get the idea. But don't stop there. Think Babylon 5, Judge Dredd, Slaine, Armageddon 2089, not to mention the barrage of forthcoming games that we have coming. If you have ideas for any of our games we want to hear them.

So, you have chosen your game, but what do you actually write about? Scenarios are good. In fact, we love them. Give me a scenario to edit and I am a happy camper. Perhaps you want to discuss the philosophy of a game. That's good. We encourage intellectual thought process around here. If you have something meaningful to say, then try us out. If we don't like it, we *will* tell you. Think hard before you try humour though. With guys like Jonny Nexus about, you will need to be sharp if you want to break in. If you think you have what it takes, though, then feel free to try your hand. Just be prepared to be told you may not be as funny as you think you are.

If you want to write new rules for a game, with new uses for skills and maybe some new feats, then be our guest.

We cannot promise that we will like what you have done, but you will get constructive criticism in return, and not just a terse one-line rebuff.

Editing

It is a painful fact that whatever you write, it will get edited. That is why editors exist, after all. Even this passage will have been edited. If you can get over this hurdle you are well on your way to attaining the mentality needed to be a writer. It will help if you can handle criticism as well. Take it from us – writing is a tough business. Just ask any author doing the rounds looking for a friendly publisher.

We have various house styles that we use and you do not need to know them. As long as your submission is literate and tidy, we will do the rest.

Little Details

If you are not sure how long your article is, assume around 800 words fit on one page. Do not use the word processor's page counter as a guide. By the time it has been edited, laid out and had artwork added, it will look nothing like that screen of text in front of you.

Remember to run the article through a spell checker before you send it in. It will still get proofread, but it shows willing. Anything not spell checked will be rejected straight away.

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States of Decay

Death Worlds in the Babylon 5 RPG

Darrian Drader

Not every planet in the Babylon 5 universe is a thriving metropolis, replete with a myriad creatures awaiting the arrival of some nosey player characters.

Some worlds are less hospitable - places that have suffered in the lottery of life, either through the fault of their inhabitants or the vagaries of nature...

'How you ever wondered why there are so many dead worlds out there? Let me tell you why. It's because despite the best advice of people who know what they are talking about, other people insist on doing the most massively stupid things.' – Galen, Crusade, *The Memory of War*

The Babylon 5 universe that we are most familiar with contains races such as the humans, the Centauri, the Narn, the Minbari, and many others – all races that have not only survived adversity but gone on to found colonies of their own and exert their influence throughout the galaxy. They have thrived, despite threats to their existence, such as wars with other space faring races, the Shadow Wars and other major perils that arise with alarming frequency. Nearly every major spacefaring race has endured periods of upheaval on their home worlds, usually serious enough to have caused their annihilation had events unfolded differently.

However, for every major spacefaring race, there are several that reached

some critical flashpoint in their history and failed. The specific reasons for their destruction are as varied as the number of worlds that now lie dead and forgotten. Typically however, the millions or billions of lives that were extinguished could have been saved had certain protective measures been taken or cooler heads prevailed. Now these worlds are little more than sundered orbs, sometimes completely devoid of life, their formerly dominant species either completely eradicated or in a state of evolutionary remission, hanging on to their fragile existence by a thread. In other cases, these worlds have become havens for pirates, rogues and outlaws.

Most of these worlds lie cold and forgotten, neither linked to the rest of the galaxy by jump gates nor appearing on the starmaps. They would be completely forgotten were it not for the desire on the part of many governments and organisations to find them.

Companies, such as IPX, are notorious for funding expeditions to dead worlds in the name of xenoarchaeology. In truth these expeditions are usually little more than interstellar treasure hunts, their greatest finds being advanced technology that could potentially break new ground, or be used to advance military technology.

Journeys to these dead worlds are often fraught with hazards. Dangers include lethal security systems, xenophobic and barbaric native life, crumbling structures, lingering hazards associated with the very cause of that world's downfall, and sometimes other dangers that are

even more sinister. The doom of the *Icarus*, the expedition to Z'Ha'Dum during which Anna Sheridan disappeared, is sadly par for the course. But death and misfortune is a calculated risk. Individuals who choose to take part in these missions know that success could mean acquiring the money they need to become independently wealthy while failure often results in death, or worse.

In addition to items that can be exploited, there also lies the possibility that some forgotten culture has already solved problems currently faced. During the Drakh plague, the *Excalibur* was dispatched to several dead worlds in a search for a cure, and it was ultimately the discovery of alien technology that saved humanity on Earth from extinction.

Troubles that occur in one world often repeat themselves on other worlds, regardless of the differences in species and culture. Nuclear annihilation, plague and catastrophe often play roles in the destruction of worlds. The following tables allow you to quickly generate the type of information you need to create your own dead worlds to explore, although this only helps form the basic framework upon which you will still need to add additional details to flesh out the worlds and make somewhat clichéd ideas unique.

Cause of Destruction

The first thing you need to determine is how the civilisation fell. While it may have been a slow decline, it might have also been a sudden disease or catastrophe that caused the

extinction of the dominant species on the planet.

Table 1: Cause of Destruction
D20 Roll

D20 Roll	Cause of Destruction
1-3	Plague/Disease
4-5	Key Food Source Extinction
6-10	Nuclear Annihilation
11-13	Technology Revolt
14	Changes to the System's Star
15	Interstellar Collision
16	Exterminated by Aliens
17-19	Climate Changes
20	Species Vacates

Plague/Disease: The species was destroyed by a plague. This may have been bioengineered, or it may have occurred naturally. Often times diseases that are lethal to creatures develop independently in warm, life rich areas and are then released when

civilisation encroaches into those areas. This plague is still active and it may have the ability to jump species and affect other forms of life. It may pose a threat to civilisations that currently exist, and it may also affect different species in different ways.

Key Food Source Extinction:

Whether by disease, climatic changes, over hunting, or some other cause, the key source of food for a civilisation becomes extinct. Unable to adapt, the civilisation also becomes extinct.

Nuclear Annihilation: The discovery of fission technology is a key step in reaching for the stars. While it is a viable source of energy, only a responsible civilisation avoids the temptation to use it as a weapon. Numerous worlds have succumbed to this temptation and have destroyed themselves as a result.

Gamma radiation lingers for thousands of years after a global nuclear war. For the lingering effects of radiation, consult the following table:

Technology Revolt: The society was adept at the creation of machines. Whether it was purely mechanical or biomechanical, the technology eventually turned on its creators. It may have achieved sentience and elected to destroy its creators in an effort to become its own master, or it may have brought about the destruction of its creator race by simply following the programming it was given.

Changes to a System's Star: One of the most important elements in a world's survival is its local star. If it is too close it is too hot to sustain life. If it is too far away, it becomes too cold for life to exist. A planet may support life well until the star changes. Its sun may go nova, it may actually increase its output of heat or it may go through a slow cooling trend. In either case, the world that once depended on this star is destroyed by it. The Dilgar homeworld is one inhabited planet that was destroyed when its sun went supernova.

Gamma Radiation

Degree of exposure	Fort Save	Damage	Description
Mild	12	1d4-2* Con	50-150 Rads. Character suffers from fatigue, nausea and fever.
Low	15	1d6-2* Con	151-500 Rads. Character suffers the beginnings of a slow destruction of marrow, and the start of infection and haemorrhage.
Moderate	18	1d6-1* Con	501-1,000 Rads. Body hair (especially head hair) begins to fall out. A lowered white blood cell count also means the character's blood clots much more slowly (if at all), meaning natural healing is much more difficult.
High	21	1d6 Con	1,001-4,000 Rads. Loss of fluids/electrolytes in the intercellular spaces and gastrointestinal tract. If the character dies as a result of Con loss, it is because of electrolyte imbalance, advanced bone-marrow decay, and terminal infection of his weakened internal organs.
Severe	24	2d6 Con	4,001+ Rads. Character suffers from severe damage to the vascular system, which causes cerebral oedema. Shock and neurological disturbance can bring about death if the character remains exposed for much longer.



I can see my house from here...

An alternate possibility along the same lines is when a planet or other stellar body enters or leaves the orbit of a star system, causing the life supporting planet to shift positions. Gravitational pulls change and the planet move closer or further away from its star, depending on what other bodies in the solar system changed positions.

Interstellar Collision: An asteroid or comet a mile or more in diameter collides with the planet. The impact is felt worldwide causing a global catastrophe. Entire cities are shaken to the ground, a massive dust cloud blocks out the sun for months or years. Life that was not destroyed when the asteroid hit is left to freeze to death as thick dust clouds from the surface blot out the sun.

Exterminated by Aliens: Although less common, off-world enemies have exterminated populations of entire worlds. The weapons used against them include nuclear weapons, mass drivers and more advanced technology, such as the Shadows' planetkiller.

Climate Changes: Through the burning of fossil fuels or a naturally occurring ice age, the planet either becomes too warm or too cold to sustain life. Ecological conditions cause crops to fail and animals to lose their natural habitats. While civilisation may not have completely perished, widespread starvation ensues, resulting in greatly reduced populations. Current inhabitants may have been forced to revert to hunters and gatherers, or they may live in small, protected technological domes where they must take special precautions when entering the outside world.

Species Vacates: The species decides to leave the world and not come back. The species may still exist, in fact it may be one of the First Ones, but it is no longer found on the planet where it originated. It may have been abandoned for more resource-rich planets, or it may have been left in order to transform it into a nature reserve. The race may have taken its technology with it and eliminated any traces it ever existed there at all,

or it may have left behind a wealth of items and technology to be found by others.

Level of Development

The level of development a culture was at before its fall helps determine what type of technology and structures are left behind. If the results of this roll are incompatible with the results of *Table 1*, keep the result you wish to develop and re-roll the other one. Note that it is possible to have some elements of a certain level of development, but not all. A race may have created biotechnology, but has yet to leave the planet for even a brief excursion into orbit.

**Table 2: Pre-fall development
D20 roll Level of**

	Development
1-3	Medieval or earlier
4-5	Industrial revolution
6-10	Information age
11-16	Space age
17-19	Interstellar travel
20	Transcendent

Medieval or earlier: The overall technology level was low. Weapons are primarily hand-held melee types while some variation on the bow and arrow is the primary projectile weapon. Habitations may include caves, huts, manors or castles. Building materials mainly includes wood and stone. Transportation is usually limited to foot travel or whatever mounts the world's wildlife has to offer.

Industrial: Basic industry using unintelligent machines have made it possible to mass-produce materials, foods and, in some cases, medicine. The dwelling types are much the same as those in the previous era, except that they may now include indoor plumbing and electricity. Forms of flight and motorised transportation may exist. Early forms of broadcasting slowly begin to appear towards the end of this age.

Information age: The industrial revolution has led to a streamlining of the production process. Food and materials are produced more efficiently usually using lightweight, but durable materials. Plastic becomes popular. Transportation is much like that found in the industrial age, but it uses less fuel. Computers are invented and might even achieve sentience. Broadcasting is refined and made available in most areas of the world.

Space age: The production process has improved through the invention of new materials that use fewer resources. Transportation into space becomes far more affordable, safer and allows for travel throughout the local solar system. Top speeds approach a quarter of the speed of light. Advanced metals and plastics are used in the construction of dwellings. An occasionally exotic material, such as crystal, is used as well.

Interstellar age: The major difference between the interstellar age and the space age is that travel is now possible via hyperspace

jumps. Propulsion may result from the standard burning of fuel or from gravity drives. Exotic materials begin to appear more often in the construction of buildings. Biotechnology begins to appear in advanced interstellar cultures.

Transcendent: This applies to races such as the Shadows and the Vorlons. Their physical forms have undergone fundamental changes as they continue to evolve. They may have chosen to exist as pure energy or they may have taken on truly unusual physical qualities, such as having a distinctly different appearance to other species, existing simultaneously in real-space and hyperspace, or possessing the ability to alter appearance at will. Transportation has continued to evolve, and is superior to that of most races at the Interstellar level. Chances are that these beings chose to abandon a dead world rather than being the victims of an apocalyptic doom.

Species Type

Deciding on the basic form of the creature is the first step in determining what the culture that once dominated the planet was like. Many top scientists have suggested that the most advanced physical form is that of the humanoid, which could explain why it is more common to find variations on the humanoid form than it is to find true insectoids, creatures that walk on multiple legs, or other forms found in nature. The Gaim are an example of a sentient insectoid creature that takes the humanoid form. If you are generating this aspect of your dead world randomly, feel free to make the creature a humanoid version of the indicated form. Deciding on the body form of the alien will help give you a general idea about the type of art and cultural relics the characters may encounter. It may also help determine the general look and feel of certain things, for example: beings with claws need larger buttons on control panels than creatures with slim, fingered hands.

Table 3: Species

D20 Roll	Species Type
1-3	Reptilian
4-12	Humanoid
13-15	Insectoid
16-18	Mammal
19	Aquatic
20	Other

Reptilian: The one thing that reptilian races have in common is that they are covered in scales. Many remain cold-blooded, though a number of species are able to evolve beyond this limitation. Some move in a plodding and slow manner, while others are snake-like with rapid-strike movements. Coloration, form and size of scales are known to vary greatly. The most commonly known reptilian humanoids are the Drazi.

Humanoid: By far the most common type of alien in the Babylon 5 universe is the humanoid. Included among the humanoids are humans, Narn, Centauri, Minbari and the Markab. The humanoid body type may apply to creatures from different kingdoms, such as reptilians, insectoids, etc. Often times, other than internal anatomical differences that require xenobiologists to accurately recognise, the only thing distinguishing one type of humanoid from another are the bumps on their foreheads.

Insectoid: Insectoids vary greatly in form and function. Some have managed to evolve into their homeworld's most dominant race without taking on a humanoid shape. Others take on a more humanoid shape, but still retain hive societies, or insect-like facial features. Aside from the Shadows, the most commonly encountered insectoids are the Gaim.

Mammal: These aliens are not found as often in the Babylon 5 universe, but that does not exclude their existence. These beings are usually warm blooded, covered in a furry hide, or have other animalistic features.

Aquatic: Aquatic aliens originate either from worlds where liquid oceans are prevalent or worlds that contain no landmasses outside of the ocean. They may be aquatic mammals, or they may be scaly and almost reptilian in appearance. Most only breathe water (or other native liquid), while some have long since evolved to breathe liquids and gaseous atmospheres.

Other: The form an alien takes is limited only by the creativity of the Games Master. The Vorlons, which are made purely of energy, and the shadows, which are basically spider-like but are also invisible unless they choose to reveal themselves, are examples of body types that don't fit the existing paradigms.

Climate

A world's climate is a generalisation only. If it is inhabitable, it may be primarily covered in one type of climate, but it will also include other climates, though only in reduced quantities. It would be difficult for a world that is completely locked in ice to support life. The same holds true for a completely desert world. A world may be rich in forests, but it would be almost impossible for the entire body to be covered in forests with no variation in temperature. If you go with an absolute, then the world is likely now completely uninhabited. On the other hand, if it is still liveable, chances are that there are oceans, cold or glaciated regions at the polar caps, and some forestation that replenishes the oxygen in the atmosphere.

Table 4: Current Climate

D20 Roll	Climate
1-4	Desert
5-8	Arctic
9-10	No atmosphere
11-16	Liveable
17-19	Thin atmosphere
20	Liquid

Desert: Desert planets are normally worlds that were once completely liveable, but through years of global climate changes, the majority of

the landmass has succumbed to desertification. Any civilisations that might exist are most commonly found along the coastlines or the waterways. The major exception to this is if the world has a large natural resource within the scorching desert. Alternatively, if the desertification of the planet did not occur until the time that the society disappeared, oceans may have decreased in size, causing the continental landmass to expand, resulting in all of the former cities and civilised remnants existing only in the desert regions of the planet.

Arctic: Just as it is unlikely that a liveable planet would be all desert, it is equally unlikely that one would be completely arctic. Such planets may be locked in an ice age that has expanded the polar ice caps, or they may be naturally colder than other similarly inhabited worlds. If the system's star has grown cold, if the world has pulled away from its star through gravitational changes, or if the world underwent some form of apocalyptic change, it may be locked completely in ice. Life is sparse, though there may be a great deal of life remaining beneath the frozen oceans.

No Atmosphere: Some cataclysmic events can occur that cause a planet's atmosphere to completely burn off. All plant and animal life on the planet that is not protected deep underground is immediately destroyed when this occurs. The oceans boil off into space at the same time the atmosphere is destroyed, though some may settle back to the planet later in the form of ice. There is no hope for any unaided prolonged survival on this type of world unless the entire civilisation now exists underground. An example of this type of world is Epsilon 3, around which Babylon 5 orbits.

Liveable: This is the default inhabited planet. Though the world may be dead, it is entirely possible that it has a normal atmosphere with the normal range of climates and ecologies. Liveable planets may be slightly warmer or colder than one

another but, in general, humanoid life can exist on the surface of these planets without the aid of special equipment or pressure suits. Life may have died out because of a plague, or it may be tens of thousands of years since a nuclear holocaust and the planet may have finally recovered. Earth, Minbar, Centauri Prime and the Narn Homeworld are all examples of planets with liveable atmospheres.

Thin Atmosphere: Planets with thin atmospheres are generally not habitable by humanoids, though there are a few humanoid species that have managed to adapt to this environment and manage to thrive in these conditions. In general, the major races of the Babylon 5 universe must wear pressure suits whenever exploring worlds with this type of atmosphere. It is possible that the world once had a much more liveable atmosphere, but a catastrophic event may have eliminated much of it. An example of a planet with a naturally thin atmosphere is Z'Ha'Dum.

Liquid: The surface of the planet may have no atmosphere breathable by non-aquatic creatures. It may be a layer of gases that merely keeps the water below from freezing. Planets may have been this way to begin with, or they may have had a sudden influx of water due to a collision with a massive comet.

Dead Worlds

The following are four dead worlds that can be inserted into a Babylon 5 roleplaying campaign. Each world listed below discusses the reasons that they are now dead and provide reasons characters might wish to travel to them. Worlds without jump gates are probably not destination planets, but instead places that must be discovered, either by accident or during survey missions. Those worlds with jump gates have received more visitors in the past and have histories that can be researched by races that are part of the galactic society.

Aldras

Circumference: 25,450 miles

Water Percentage: 1%

Equatorial Mean Temperature: 90 degrees F.

Jump Gate: Yes

Overview: Located near the border between Centauri and Narn space, this planet was once home to an insectoid species known as the Varag, which were a locust-like species. Once aligned with the Centauri, the Varag sold processed metals and minerals to the Centauri Republic. Despite the jump gate in their orbit, they were not a spacefaring race, and their destruction came about unexpectedly.

History: Aldras was once a liveable planet, if not a little warm for the Centauri's liking. The Varag were an ancient race that moved quickly to the industrial age, and then their development came to a virtual halt at the information age. They developed nuclear fission technology and made a few short jaunts into space, but ultimately never made the big leap.

The Varag were physically similar to locusts, although they were able to assume an upright form and manipulate equipment with opposable thumbs. They originally developed into regional clans and, as their society progressed, these became larger and more formalised, but never made the leap to nations or countries. Most cities were autonomous and controlled, if not completely populated, by a single clan. Numerous clans held dominion over weaker clans, either by offering them protection, or by simply conquering them. In any case, disputes between the various clans and city-states were common.

When the Centauri Republic arrived, many clans were interested in

conducting trade. The Centauri found this world too limited in resources to bother conquering, but not so poor that they should be ignored either. Their solution was to dispatch an imperial cargo ship to the planet on a monthly basis to pick up the latest shipment from the Varag, which they would pay for by bartering their own goods.

The Varag were suddenly and unexpectedly destroyed by a massive energy wave. Because the Varag lacked advanced monitoring



Bad things live on dead planets - it's official

equipment, it is unknown whether the energy wave originated in space or on the planet. In fact, the way that the Centauri discovered that the Varag were no more was when their monthly freighter arrived at a world suddenly lacking the atmosphere and oceans that sustain life. The Varag bodies on the surface were either incinerated to ash or, on the opposite side of the planet, destroyed through explosive decompression.

The Varag had created numerous subterranean complexes throughout the crust of the planet and it is assumed that many of them retreated

to these locations in their final moments. Many remained intact, but by the time the Centauri had launched a recovery effort (something not deemed a priority by the emperor), the last pockets of survivors had died out.

Current State: The buildings in the cities of the Varag stand as dark, skeletal fingers reaching into the night sky from the rocky surface. Without an atmosphere to protect the planet from meteors and with its relatively large gravitational pull, the surface is a magnet for meteor strikes. Many buildings remain somewhat intact, though others are suddenly struck by incoming space debris, exploding in a shower of steel and glass.

Because of the jump gate and the numerous subterranean tunnels that still exist, this world is a hotbed for pirate activity. Raider groups frequently come here, locate a subterranean tunnel, block the entrance off from the vacuum of space by building a reinforced steel door, install an airlock, and make it a base of operations. Geothermal vents are often tapped as an inexpensive source of heat and energy. Ships are free to land in nearby abandoned cities, or they sometimes find large caverns that have split apart and are now open to space.

The Centauri largely ignore the raider activity on this planet as long as they are not targeting Centauri ships. Occasionally bold raiders that strike important enough targets draw ire from the target's government who will request that the Centauri take action against this den of rogues in their space. The Centauri normally respond by sending in a few warships, blast any raider lairs that they can detect from orbit, and then leave. The raider activity may slow or even stop for a few years, but eventually it returns.

Adventure Hooks: Characters may be drawn to this world by tracking

fleeing raiders back to their base of operations after a raid. They may also be sent here to infiltrate a particular group.

In addition to becoming involved due to the raiders, xenoarchaeologists may want to come here to study the remnants of Varag culture. Artefacts of their culture still exist in fragments strewn throughout the wreckage. There was some innovative computer technology used by the Varag that some corporations may be interested in purchasing from anyone lucky enough to find an intact mainframe.

There are many who wonder what sort of energy field was so massive that it was able to burn off the planet's entire atmosphere. Was it some anomalous, naturally occurring mass of energy floating through space, or was it a weapon built here on the planet with the intent to use against their enemies. If so, most governments would be interested in uncovering any designs that might still exist.

Kedia

Circumference: 24,500 miles

Water Percentage: 60%

Equatorial Mean Temperature: 115 degrees F.

Jump Gate: Yes

Overview: Located in the outer rim, several hyperspace jumps from any major star systems, Kedia is a world possessing a number of deserted quantum-40 mines. Once the home of highly spiritual humanoids, the world has lain in ruins for 500 years; a radioactive desert planet that could have been one of the wealthiest planets in the galaxy.

History: It is unknown which race first made contact with the denizens of Kedia. These humanoids had recently managed to pull themselves out of a severe Dark Age, relying on religion for enlightenment. Not having reached an industrial revolution, the natives, a fair-skinned humanoid species called the Kedians, had relied upon religion to bring a

halt to the wars that ravaged their planet. The world was split roughly in half, each side worshipping a separate polytheistic pantheon.

The current belief among most historians is that the Centauri republic was the first spacefaring race to make contact with the Kedians after having detected quantum-40 during a survey mission. This is a supposition that the Centauri flatly deny, and no conclusive evidence has been found by those brave enough to travel to the surface. What is known is that whichever race first encountered them, the Kedians were given technology that they should not have obtained for at least several hundred years. In exchange for advancing their civilisation, the Kedians were shown how to mine quantum-40 and given the tools necessary to do so. The rare metal was then sold to several races and used towards the construction of jump gates.

Although the Kedians advanced technologically in a matter of a few years, their societal mentality remained that of a culture emerging from the Dark Ages. They held fast to their religious beliefs, despite the fact that they were extremely divisive. The Kedians that primarily lived in the northern hemisphere followed a polytheistic religion that believed that the gods would one day judge the souls of the mortals while the faction living in the southern hemisphere believed that the gods created the world but otherwise took no part in its development and cared not for what happened to the mortals after death.

As technology increased, so too did communication and transportation, leading to a situation where the two factions were forced to deal with one another on a far more regular basis. Cultural tolerance was not something that they valued and, as a result, a few short years into their quantum-40 production the most militant leaders of both groups decided that the only true religion was theirs and the other should be eradicated. This mandate quickly translated into a series of

wars that lasted over one hundred years, fought with increasingly larger, more advanced and deadly weapons.

Ultimately a fanatical religious leader, by the name of Zaiel, came to the decision that the destruction of the gods worshipped by the southern faction was all-important. With that in mind, he turned to nuclear munitions, the most powerful weapon in his arsenal. Having been given the information about the technology, his scientists had developed these devastating weapons twenty-five years before, but kept them hidden from their enemies. Zaiel made the decision to use them against the southern faction, believing that they had not yet developed it. He was wrong. Both sides of the conflict had amassed enough nuclear warheads to destroy each other several hundred times over, but each had held these weapons in case the other side was apparently going to win.

The first strike against the Southern Hemisphere hit three cities located in strategic locations, but this left enormous sections of the continent untouched. The southern faction responded to the strike immediately with their own volley of nuclear weapons. Once both sides had hit critical enemy targets, they launched their missiles indiscriminately against the other. This conflict lasted for half a day, after which there were only a handful of survivors. By this time the world, its atmosphere, its oceans and other water supplies were poisoned. Those who survived the initial strike against them died later from radiation sickness.

Current State: Kedia is now a radioactive desert. The nuclear exchange led to a long-lasting nuclear winter, followed by a period of massive desertification of the planet. Most of the planet's landmasses are blasted, though there are some remnants of structures to remind anyone looking down upon the planet of the species' existence. Some quantum-40 can still be found on the planet, but it requires mining.

Adventure Hooks: Despite the centuries' old nuclear exchange, there are still those who entertain the notion of braving the radioactive climate to mine the quantum-40. Several governments have issued a challenge that anyone who can find a profitable way to reopen the quantum-40 mines will be handsomely rewarded. In addition to the quantum-40, there are those who seek to gain political leverage by unearthing evidence that it was the Centauri Republic that introduced advanced technology to the Kedians. Still others are willing to finance archaeological expeditions to the planet simply to learn more about the Kedian culture.

Lidial

Circumference:

23,450 miles

Water Percentage:

73%

Equatorial Mean

Temperature: 89

degrees F.

Jump Gate: No

Overview: Located in the unclaimed territory between the Drazi Freehold and the Tal-Kona'Sha lies the world of Lidial.

The world's climate is comfortable for most humanoids, and remains unchanged to this day. The humanoid inhabitants of this world never progressed beyond the space age, having colonised six of the planets in their solar system, but did not make contact with the other spacefaring races. The world and its system now stand deserted, victims of a bioengineered plague that destroyed their species.

History: Lidial is dominated by three large continents, each of which was home to a separate culture of humanoids, the total population hovering near one billion since they hit the industrial age. In their ten

thousand years of recorded history the three separate groups advanced rapidly to the information age, at which time their development slowed to a crawl. The three groups were the Toreel of the northern continent, the Marshand of the eastern continent, and the Golias of the southern continent. The three groups had little in common, and through their history a continual state of cold war existed between them, which was based on distrust and fear rather than tangible threats and hostility. In fact, after the point where the three continents

The end came about not because of an armed conflict, but because one of the Toreel scientists working on an improved strain of super-virus had a minute hole in his protective suit, which allowed enough of the virus in to infect him. Within three days he was physically sick, and before he and everyone he had come into contact with could be confined, the virus had already escaped into the population. The fact that the three groups had little actual contact with one another slowed the advance of the disease, but it did not stop it. The



On some planets you'll need a bit more than a rucksack and a torch...

each adapted central governments, armed conflicts became a thing of the past. War was frowned upon by all involved as uncultured and uncivilised; meanwhile each group amassed arms to use against the other, just to be prepared for the event that one of the others became aggressive. As time went by the military technologies that were developed became more and more insidious. Weapons were developed and tested, then run in computer simulations against the intelligence that the others had in their arsenals. Eventually these weapons included nuclear and antimatter warheads, bioengineered viruses, and a host of more conventional weapons.

Toreel civilisation was completely wiped out inside a month. The others watched and waited in the hope that it would stop there, but the virus quickly mutated and infected a third of the animal species on the planet. Eventually it was birds that spread it to the remaining two continents. One year after the virus first broke free, the entire population of Lidial was dead.

The remaining six colonies were well aware of the fate that befell their worlds, but were powerless to do anything but sit and watch the horrific video feeds coming in. Worse yet, they were each dependant upon Lidial to provide them with food and

fuels. Faced with the prospect of dying slowly in their colonies with no food or going back to the planet to die under their own sky, most chose to return home. In either event the remainder of the population was dead within five years.

Current State: The planet of Lidal now stands deserted. The cities are in disrepair, overgrown with vegetation, but otherwise still stand in their former locations, though the bodies have long since been reduced to bones and dust. One-third of the animal species, mainly those that were land-bound, also eventually succumbed to the disease. Vast amounts of accurate and easily read records still exist describing the fate of the planet. Worse yet, the virus still stirs in the very air, waiting for new hosts to infect.

Adventure Hooks: Characters stumbling across the long-abandoned space stations and enclosed colonies should have little problem deducing what happened to the native population of Lidal. The planet is a treasure trove full of completely functional weapons, crafts, art, precious metals and information. A host of spacecraft capable of going from the surface to space, and then cruise at top speeds at an eighth of the speed of light can be found in many locations. They lack only jump engines to make them truly useful to travellers, and many can be retrofitted. In addition to this, a great deal of valuable viral research can be found here and sold to various governments.

Landing on Lidal is a dangerous proposition, however, since anyone not protected by a pressure suit and then carefully cleaned after contact with the surface runs a high risk of becoming infected themselves. Any humanoid race has an 80% chance of being susceptible to infection. If infected, a being dies in 4d8 days unless a cure can be found and becomes contagious before showing symptoms of having the illness. Most scans used by Babylon 5 itself

and the main races are capable of detecting any individual infected with the virus before they are allowed to enter the station. Nevertheless, there are always ways for an unwitting individual to sneak the virus past security and into the station, which would pose a threat to nearly every spacefaring race in the galaxy.

Presari

Circumference: 19,250 miles

Water Percentage: 80%

Equatorial Mean Temperature: 35 degrees F.

Jump Gate: No

Overview: Presari once contained an information age civilisation of roughly three billion reptilian humanoids called the K'Sall'it. Climate changes brought about the destruction of the native species, leaving the cities mostly intact, although they have deteriorated towards ruination through neglect. Today the world has cooled to an extent never seen in the lifespan of the K'Sall'it species.

History: The K'Sall'it were a race with roughly eight thousand years of recorded history. The world was once much warmer than it is now, and the K'Sall'it had spread throughout their planet, building a civilisation based on free trade and individual freedoms. Several small countries were scattered across the globe, most of which were led by a monarch. The powerful wheels of industry propelled most nations further and further forward into prosperity.

Like Earth and many other worlds, Presari was locked in a period where the consumption of fossil fuels was the foundation upon which the world was built. As time went by, like many other worlds, they realised that the prevalence of combustion engines was causing their world to warm. Many environmentalists warned that the globe could not continue to warm at this rate and support the variety of life that was found at the time. Although this race of beings had long since evolved beyond being

cold blooded, they still preferred the heat to the cold, and many of them chose to ignore the warnings of their scientists.

In a mere three hundred years, the fossil fuels they had been warned about caused the worldwide temperatures to warm to a point where the globe was fifteen degrees warmer than it had previously been. This caused several keystone species in the food chain to die as their habitats changed irrevocably. This resulted in decreased game animals. Fish and other sea creatures died *en masse* as they became over-harvested and the oceans were polluted as poisonous by-products were dumped from the vessels that sailed the seas.

The end result was a much colder world than the warmer one that was expected. Like most liveable planets, the climate went in cycles between ice ages and warm periods. The beginning of the K'Sall'it's history documented the world coming out of a massive ice age. What they did not understand until it was too late was that the temporary warming triggered the next ice age. The increase in the global temperature was caused by an increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. There are, however, numerous checks and balances built into the ecology of the planet that are able to eliminate the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and trap it in the ocean. When diagrammed, the cycle forms a wavelike pattern, dipping below the baseline temperature close to the amount that it had gone above it. The increased amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere caused the oceanic forces to work at an accelerated rate, causing the planet to go into a cooling trend that proved to be more rapid and more severe than previous ice ages.

As the climate cooled, crops of food became less bountiful, which led to widespread starvation. Even countries that had previously traded their food with others had a difficult time feeding their own people. Many of the species that had recently managed to adapt to the warm

weather were forced to re-adapt to weather colder than had been common before the global warming occurred, causing yet another near-extinction.

The K'Sall'it migrated south towards the equator, causing crowding in areas that were having difficulty providing food and sanitation for the people there. This led to a high rate of crime, disease and starvation as millions of K'Sall'it competed for a limited number of resources. As time went by, the massive glaciers that were spreading throughout the world sundered the majority of the previously verdant forests and the cold weather moved down to the equator as well. The forces that had begun taking a toll when the K'Sall'it were forced to the equatorial region of the planet accelerated, resulting in a five year period during which time all but roughly one-and-a-half million K'Sall'it died.

The K'Sall'it that survived were forced to abandon their cities and take up their ancestral roles as hunters and gatherers. This was not easy for them since so much of the natural flora and fauna had been destroyed during the height of their accomplishments. The following years saw their numbers reduced to a mere three hundred thousand, a level that has been maintained ever since.

Current State: While the K'Sall'it species still exists at less than one percent of the number they had once achieved. Those that exist now are hunters and gatherers, with little more than an oral tradition recounting the heights of civilisation that they had once achieved. They are primitive, barbaric and tribal, fighting against the elements and one another for survival.

Adventure Hooks: Travellers who discover Presari find a frozen world populated by sparse wildlife and savage inhabitants that are barely recognised as intelligent. Despite this, locked beneath the ice are the treasures of an abandoned civilisation. Starfaring civilisations with no legal or moral standards preventing them from taking slaves would find the K'Sall'it easy pickings. In fact, many of them would willingly submit to slavery, accepting the trade-off between backbreaking work for a warm place to live and readily available food. Characters may arrive here to find that just such an occurrence has already happened, and they may find themselves in the unenviable position of trying to free the K'Sall'it or leave them to their masters.



'We'll just park up here for a bit...'

Gangs of the Sprawl

Tim Hitchcock

Following on from his *Aftermath* CyberNet background in S&P #9, Tim Hitchcock has come up with rules on how to create underworld gangs to inhabit your creations.

Whether your characters are in a gang or are up against one, there's no doubting that they are an integral part of future genres.

Introduction

Nothing better defines the theme of *youth gone bad* than the street gang. Gangs carry with them violent images of icy teens warring for control of street turf, honour and daily survival. With such a plague already rife within our modern cities, imagine what might exist within the brutal expanses of the post-modern sprawl. This article introduces a system for designing and stating sprawl gangs for CyberNet, and presents a sample gang based on material from the *Aftermath* mini-setting (see S&P #9).

Creating a Sprawl Gang

Even though a gang is made up of a number of members, each has a distinct personality and reputation. Creating a gang should therefore be similar to creating a character, and their development should include such attributes as reputation, wealth and impetus. Individuals belonging to a gang gain the benefits of its reputation and limited access to its resources, however gang members are also obligated to act in accordance with the gang's propositional attitude. Most gangs also have a code or

set of rules dictating the responsibilities and expected behaviour of their members, including a penal system for those that break policy. When it comes to gang law, there is no such thing as a soft touch. A gang's reputation is constantly at stake and they cannot afford to let their guard down or go easy on those that despoil their resources or thwart their designs. Most gangs have a clear-cut set of rules covering such things as the types of jobs their members can take or what an individual's responsibilities are to the group. Some have strict dress codes, hand signals or icons for which there is precedent. When an outsider violates a gang's code the punishment can be harsh and painful, but when a fellow member strays, his offence often cost him his life. In game terms, joining a gang is simply a matter of pledging allegiance, although full benefits are usually not granted to those members with an allegiance strength of less than +2. Any time two or more gangs with similar interests compete in the same territory, they are automatically considered opponents.

Below are a few things to consider when designing a sprawl gang.

Size: The size of a gang refers to the number of members and ultimately determines relative power. In most instances, it is safe to say that the larger the gang the more powerful its influence is. The more members a gang has, the more territory they



can control and the more public they become.

Region of Influence: A gang's region of influence determines where a member gains the benefit of his affiliations. Gang members outside of their region of influence gain no reputation or wealth benefits from being in the gang. Region of influence is determined by the size of a gang and can apply to a few city blocks or a global network depending on the size of the gang.

Reputation Bonus: Belonging to a gang automatically grants members a reputation bonus. The bonus is dependent on the size and infamy of the gang. Gang members beginning play with the criminal occupation increase their reputation scores by +1.

Restriction Reduction: Belonging to a gang grants the member the ability to draw resources from less than legal outlets to complete gang-related operations. The restriction bonus lifts penalties for certain goods. Lifted restrictions are determined by the size of the gang and limited to their region of influence.

Gang Size and Affiliation Benefits

Classes: It is important to decide what kind of members the gang attracts. In general, most are filled with criminals, jackers and thugs who rely on the power of the group to assert themselves, however some gangs are highly specialised in their purpose and intent. It is possible to have a web-only gang that controls cyber territory by occupying certain servers, or a gang of professionals who run chop shops for stolen high-tech military gear.

Leaders: Gangs tend to be hierarchical structures with power filtering down through the ranks to those strong enough to take it and climb. A typical gang usually has a few strong leaders who call the shots, with a handful of other members just beneath them that make sure the orders are carried out.

Other Important Figures: While these members have no hand in running the gang, their contributions are often crucial to the gang's success. An example of an important figure might be a connection able to hook up the group's thugs with hi-tech weapons or a corporate whose covert wages pay a gang to drive

residents out of a sector in which his company wants to erect new developments.

Sprawl Gang Creation Outline

1. Overview: Write up the gang's background, basic function, and include the kind of activities in which they are involved. Try to limit these to one or two prime directives. This section should also include the gang's stat block and membership rules and policies.

2. New Crunch: Based on the purpose and description of the gang, write up any new gang specific crunch such as a PRC or feats, special equipment, new drugs or computer programs for which they might be infamous.

3. Who's Who: Note the gang's typical members and leaders, and write up some NPCs stats for some of the gang's important members. Also, try to include the motives and connections of the group and various members as it makes things easier when playing a group.

4. Where's What: Map out and detail a typical gang hangout or street territory so you can have a ready to use plug-in encounter.

5. Making it Useful: Finally, it's always good to make a short list of ideas on how you might want to use the gang in a game, which includes several plot hooks.

Sample Sprawl Gang

Maglev-Flux Hustlers

Size: Small (approximately 200-225 members); City Influence (Tier II, sector 47); Reputation +1; Wealth +1

Classes: Jackers (48%), Runners (18%), Connections (12%), Corporates (8%), Professionals (7%), Webcrawlers (4%), Tech Savants (2%), Other (1%).

Leaders: Jared Lennox (Corporate5/Connection10); Spitfire (Jacker8/Runner2)

Other Important Figures: Shayna (Professional3/Tech Savant4), head of e-security (webcrawler5), head of negotiations (connection5), head of security (soldier3).

Gang Overview

The Maglev-Flux Hustlers are a divergent sprawl gang whose roots are tied to an elite courier service whose purpose was to provide a secure means of transferring hack-free data. The group was originally conceived and funded by Dumarron Inc., an information management, transfer, and storage conglomerate that was one of the initial corporations involved in the restoration of the city. Eventually Lanitrex bought up Dumarron Inc., but part of the courier division splintered from the corporation, stealing their hi-tech equipment and delving into the profitable business of running contraband information for high-ranking corporate officials who required black-market services. The splinter group consisted mostly of young thrill-seekers and took to

Gang Size and Affiliation Benefits Table

Size	Number of Members	Influence	Reputation	Max. Applied Restriction	Restriction Reduction
Tiny	10-100	Local	+0	Licensed	-1
Small	100-500	City	+1	Restricted	-2
Medium	500-5,000	Regional	+2	Military	-2
Large	5,000-100,000	National	+3	Illegal	-3
Massive	100,000+	Global	+4	Illegal	-4

calling themselves the Maglev-Flux Hustlers after the unique vehicles Dumarron had commissioned and trained them on, which they use to traverse the steel cages that encase the city's superhighways: magnetically powered mini-luges called 'maglev-fluxers'.

The internal politics of the Maglev-Flux Hustlers are strong. Dumarron Inc. was a Japanese subsidiary, and all its employees were instructed in mental discipline and strategies taken from the Hagukure and the Art of War. The founders of the Maglev-Flux Hustlers broke from Lanitrex as an act of defiance, claiming to remain loyal to Dumarron Inc. The leaders of the Maglev-Flux Hustlers run it like a nijitsu dojo with most of the members considering themselves loyal unto the death. Over the last 15 years or so, the Maglev-Flux Hustlers have expanded their focus from running information to dealing drugs. While running information is extremely lucrative, most contracts are only 'one-shot' deals. Drugs, especially addictive ones tend to attract repeat clients, which in turn creates a very dependable source of income. Since few drugs can be distributed via the web, the gang's skills are perfectly suited for running, and drugs are easy to transport by maglev-fluxer. A contract with a major supplier opens up decent opportunities for steady cash flow and free drugs.

Currently, the Maglev-Flux Hustlers run their operations from suite 4208 on the 42nd storey of the Hiruma-Giffer building, a former industrial plant located on Tier I in Sector 379 west. Erected during the Phase III reconstruction period, it is one of the older structures of the sector and therefore contains

a fair amount of concrete and steel girder construction in addition to acrylite. The Hiruma-Giffer building is conveniently situated next to one of the Tier's largest cageway maintenance centres, allowing the organisation covert admission to the cageways as well the opportunity

There are approximately 200 of members of the gang, two-thirds of which are young thrill seekers, jackers and runners lured by the romance of *caging* and quick money. Those that are successful and trustworthy enough to work their way up through the ranks are eventually

trained to use maglev-fluxers to *cage* (run goods throughout the city by travelling the cageways on maglev-fluxers). Gang members trained in such skills are informally referred to as cagers. The remaining gang members are older, corporates, connections, professionals, webcrawlers and tech savants. These members are responsible for setting up deals and runs, plotting new routes through the cageways, servicing the equipment and otherwise maintaining the facade of legitimate business. The gang's front is a small company called Hiruma Data Storage, which offers select clients long term, high-security storage in special climate controlled safes. While the safes are generally used to store DVDs, hard drives, and other data, they are also perfect for storing drugs.

Anyone looking to set up a contract or deal with the Maglev-Flux Hustlers needs to work their deals through a connection with at least a +1 allegiance strength to the gang. Establishing a +1 allegiance requires minimum contact level of +6 with one of the gang's connections or corporates. Once a successful contact is made, a contract is purchased the cost of which is based on the number of runs

and the type of goods run. Use the chart below to determine the Purchase DC for a run.



to bring in blueprints, projections, technological developments and other information pertaining to the city's superhighway network, all easily procured through an intricate network of well-bribed Lanitrex blue-collars.

Running Costs

Contract	Purchase DC Modifier
Single Run	+5
10 Runs	+8
20 Runs	+12
Short-term Contract (1 month)	+16
Extended Contract (6 month)	+20
Long-term Contract (1 year)	+28
Licensed Goods	+1
Restricted Goods	+2
Military Goods	+3
Illegal Goods	+4

Gang Crunch, The Tools and Techniques of Caging

Maglev-Fluxer

A maglev-fluxer is similar to a mini-version of a high-speed maglev train, which uses high-powered electromagnets to glide over tracks. The vehicle itself looks like a brace of flattened oblong disks connected by a multi-jointed spine. The rider kneels on the larger of the two plates, straps himself in and then leans forward to grasp the steering mechanism and controls located on the smaller plate. The bottom of both plates are slightly concave and contain powerful electromagnets providing the force to hover and shoot the vehicle above almost any large steel surface. Instead of tracks, the maglev-fluxer can be used to ride the highways, steel safety cages or, with a much greater degree of

difficulty, the girders used in city construction that support the exterior Acrylite panels. The device runs entirely on electromagnetic energy and once fully charged, it runs silently for over an hour. Using a maglev-fluxer to ride the cageways is extremely dangerous for those without proper training. First off, the vehicle cannot support a great amount of weight (never more than 250 lb.) without losing its magnetic bond. Additionally, the magnetic bond is also broken once the maglev-flux's charge runs out. Either factor can result in dropping its rider from the apex of the cageway, 50 feet or more straight down onto a well-trafficked asphalt super highway.

Driving a maglev-fluxer is difficult, especially on different types of surfaces. While most people can get the vehicle to travel forward in a straight line, there is knack to getting it to turn, stop quickly, or even reverse. The most deviant use that dreg-heads have found for maglev-fluxers is that they can be ridden along the steel cages that cover the city's highways. The common term for this extremely dicey use is called 'caging'. As the most prevalent use for maglev-fluxers is to run contraband though out the city, they have been declared illegal.

Use the chart below to determine the Drive skill checks for specific manoeuvres. All of the DC modifiers on the chart below stack.

Manoeuvres, Simple	Drive Skill DC
Caging (horizontal)	10
Caging (vertical)	15
Manoeuvres, Stunt	Drive Skill DC Modifier
Caging (inverted)	+4
Reverse	+2
Quick Stop	+4

Maglev-Fluxer

Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Man	Top Speed	Defence	Hardness	Hit Points	Size	Purchase DC	Rest.
1	0	0 lb.	+0	-4	80 (8)	8	5	15	M	28	Ill +4

Joining the Maglev-Flux Hustlers

Joining the Maglev-Flux Hustlers provides a character with a few benefits as determined by the strength his allegiance.

Same Skill, New Use

Knowledge (Streetwise)

Characters with a +2 alliance to the Maglev-Flux Hustlers can use their Streetwise skill to check if they know specific information about travelling the cageways. Successful checks can determine such things as the safest, fastest, or alternate route between two destinations and the locations of gang-related resources near the cageways.

Cagers

Cagers are the Maglev-Flux Hustlers' elite couriers. Jackers trained to run the cageways on maglev-fluxers. Jackers with a +3 alliance to the Maglev-Flux Hustlers can opt to follow a cager skill tree instead of one of the standard skill trees listed in the class description.

Cager Skill Tree

Learning to ride the cageways takes special talent and training as well as a certain disposition most common to criminals and jackers. There is more to caging than getting goods from one part of the city to the next, there is the thrill of risking your neck travelling at high speeds, unnoticed,

high above the ground on a tiny device and knowing that at any time the slightest error in mechanics, skill, or judgement will send you hurling to your death.

Cager: You have been fully trained in riding a maglev-fluxer on the cageways. You gain a +4 competence bonus to all Drive checks when riding the cage and, as a full-round action, you can take 10 when caging on a horizontal surface, provided you are only attempting a single manoeuvre and are not otherwise distracted (by pursuers, withdrawal, etc.). In addition, you can use an Edge Die to attempt to modify any Drive checks you are forced to make while manoeuvring a maglev-fluxer.
Prerequisite: Dex 14+, Drive +4 ranks

Cage Roll: While moving, you can attempt to spin your ride around the cageway bars in a spiral. Performing a Cage Roll is a full-round action that requires a successful Drive skill check (DC 25). A failed Cage Roll always indicates a chance that the driver has broken magnetic contact with the cage. Anytime the driver fails a Cage Roll check by 10 or more he must make a successful Reflex check (DC 20) to catch himself or fall from the cageways to his death.
Prerequisite: Cager

Girder: You can attempt to ride your maglev-fluxer on the steel girders that support much of the city's exterior acrylite shielding. Since most of the girders are sealed with acrylite, maintaining sufficient magnetic contact is difficult and only experienced cagers would even consider attempting such a feat. Any attempts to Girder carry a +10 modifier to Drive checks.
Prerequisite: Cager

Cage Drop: When riding the cage, you can attempt the near suicidal act of dropping from a higher section of the cageways to a lower section by shutting off your maglev-fluxer, free-falling, and then overcharging your ride's electromagnets in order

to lock onto a lower section before taking full impact. Performing a Cage Drop is a full-round action that requires a successful Drive check (DC 25 + 2 for every 10 feet dropped before a new surface is reached).

If a driver performs a successful Cage Drop of more than 20 feet, to avoid heavy impact they must complete a successful Cage Roll, or take appropriate falling damage. In this case, failure does not indicate a secondary fall. *Prerequisite:* Cage Roll

The Who's Who of The Maglev-Flux Hustlers

Jared Lennox, the head of the Maglev-Flux Hustlers is an old *Phase-IIIer*, meaning he arrived as part of the recon program. One of the original corporates hired by Dumarron to help run their covert organisation, his concepts and leadership was crucial in initiating the gang's split during the Lanitrex buy out. While Jared handles the business aspects of the Maglev-Flux Hustlers, the Cagers are trained and run by a woman called Spitfire. Spitfire was an extreme sports star bounced from the spotlight for illegally hot-rodding her bikes in the 1500cc trick jumps. Along with a few cybermods, she maintains her notorious edginess with a custom cocktail of zippers and dust. Spitfire joined the group about 5 years back along with her life-partner and ride-tech Shayna.

Jared Lennox (male) Corporate 5/ Connection 10(criminal): HD 5d6+5 plus 10d8+10; hp 83; Init + 0; Spd 30ft.; ED 2d6 plus 4d10; Rep +5; WB +26; DV+27 (armoured clothing), flat-footed +21; Base Atk +8; Grp +9, Atk +8 ranged (2d4, Walther PPK 'Agent'), Full Atk +8/+3 ranged (2d4, Walther PPK 'Agent'); SV Fort+1, Ref+6, Will+8; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 18

Skills: Bluff +14, Craft (visual art, writing), Drive +5, Etiquette +19, Forgery +6, Gather Information +13, Hide +8, Intimidate +14, Knowledge

+8 (business) Knowledge +8 (current events), Knowledge +13 (streetwise), Move Silently, Profession +20, Speak Language+1 (Japanese), Repair +13, Sense Motive +17, Spot+13.

Feats: Bug Out*, Simple Weapons Proficiency*, Personal Firearms Proficiency*, Corporate Sponsor*, Ganger Rep, Frightful Presence, Licensed and Authorised, Political Influence, Trustworthy, Windfall x2.

Class Features: Acumen, Negotiations Talent Tree (Handshake, Fine Print, Binding Contract), Greed Kills, Acquisitions Talent Tree (Blue Light Specials, Open Warehouses, The Connection Shopping Network), Networking Talent Tree (Name Dropping), Cornered Market (Narcotics).

Contacts: Corporate Contact Level +5 (Dumarron Inc.), Prime Contact Level +11, Prime Contact level +14, Prime Contact level +17.

Cyberwear: Infrared Cybereyes, redundant biosystems (delta), Neural Booster (delta).

Self Points: 184.

Languages: English, Japanese.

Equipment: Armoured Clothing, Walther PPK 'Agent' (.32 autoloader).

Description: Jared appears to in his mid-forties, a well-built and well-dressed man with deep, brown eyes, a firm jaw line and neatly shaved head.

Attitude: Jared is a calm, but firm, leader running the gang with the suave business sense of seasoned corporate. He never sweats, never loses his cool and never lets on that he has been offended until someone winds up dead.

Tactics: Jared prefers to keep himself out of sight and out of mind. He rarely handles deals directly, relying on other gang members to sort them. He reserves his appearances for his long time clients and spends the majority of his time checking routes, sales figures and organising new prospects. To help maintain the gang's legitimate front, Jared still leaves work at the end of the day, so folks can see him coming and going. Jared has infrared cybereyes and if attacked his first manoeuvre is either to shut off or shoot out the lights. If

he feels the least bit threatened, he exits combat and lets his men finish the job for him.

Spitfire (female) Jacker 8/Runner 2 (athlete): HD 8d6+8 plus 2d8+2; hp 52; Init +3; Spd 30ft; ED 5d10; Rep +2; WB+12; DV 28 (undercover armour) flat-footed 18; Base Atk+6, Grp +10, Atk +9 ranged, 2d6 (Beretta 92X), Atk +9 ranged, 1 (shuriken), Full Atk +9/+4 ranged, 2d6 (Beretta 92X); SV Fort+ 3, Ref+10, Will+2; Str 14, Dex 16, Con13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills: Balance +14, Bluff +11, Climb +12, Concentration +3, Craft (mechanical) +7, Demolitions +4, Disable Device +7, Drive +16, Escape +10, Hide +13, Jump* +1, Knowledge (appraisal, popular culture,) +2, Knowledge (current events) +4, Knowledge (streetwise) +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Perform (act)+1, Pilot +5, Profession +8, Ride +3, Repair +8, Search +12, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +12, Swim*+1, Technical +10, Tumble +10.

Feats: Archaic Weapons*, Dodge, Ganger Rep, Vehicle Expert, Force Stop, Drive-By Attack.

Class Features: Hyperactive, Boosting Goods, Cager Talent Tree (Cager, Cage Roll, Girder, Cage Drop), Fearless, Leaping Stand.

Contacts: Connection Contact Level 5.

Self Points: 97.

Cyberwear: Bone Sheaths (Alpha)(-4 damage), Spinal Reinforcement (Delta).

Languages: English

Equipment: Undercover armour, Beretta 92X (9mm autoloader), Shuriken

Description: Spitfire is a tall, athletically built 30-something woman with short brown hair and brown eyes. Her features are vaguely ethnic, though not enough to be specific.

Attitude: Spitfire is an abrasive and demanding woman, whose command over the gang's cagers is based more on their respect for her considerable talent than anything else. She maintains her less-than-charming demeanour by a healthy concoction of Z-dust, a tailored drug made from zippers and dust. If she is affectionate with anyone, it is her life partner Shayna, however affection is a relative term for Spitfire.

Tactics: Spitfire is accustomed to getting what she wants and hates to lose, so she can be extremely tenacious when it comes to completing a job. She is an aggressive fighter, but unless she happens to be totally strung out and suicidal, she generally has the sense enough to take off when hard pressed. If forced to retreat or flee, she immediately goes to round up a few gang members before returning to the scene of a confrontation to settle things; she is loath to let threats remain unresolved.

Shayna (female) Professional 3/ Tech Savant 4(criminal): HD 7d6; hp 29; Init +2; Spd 30ft.; ED 4d4; Rep+2; WB +9; DV 18, flat-footed

13; Base Atk +3, Grp +3, Atk +3 melee 1d3 + paralysis/Fort DC15 (stun gun); SV Fort +2, Ref+5, Will+8; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha12.

Skills: Computer Use +11, Craft (chemical, pharmaceutical, structural, visual art, writing) +3, Craft (electronic) +10, Craft (Mechanical) +21, Decryption +6, Demolitions +10, Disable Device +11, Drive +7 Escape +5, Forgery +3, Gambling +5, Investigate +8, Listen +5, Knowledge (arcane lore, art, behavioural sciences, business, civics, current events, earth and life sciences, history, physical sciences, popular culture, streetwise, theology) +3, Knowledge (tactics, philosophy) +5, Knowledge (technology) +10, Navigate +8, Profession +7, Repair +19, Research +8. Spot +10.

Feats: Gearhead* Builder (electronic/mechanical)* Cautious, Educated (tactics, philosophy), Licensed and Authorised, Street Cred.

Class Features: Expertise (Repair), Ubiquitous, Higher Education Talent Tree (Savant – Repair, Invention), Jury-Rig +2, Push Technology, Robotechnology.

Contacts: None.

Self Points: 81.

Cyberwear: Cyberarm (toolset).

Languages: English.

Equipment: Demolitions kit, duct tape, multipurpose tool, tool belt,

New Tailored Drug

Drug	Type	Save DC	Initial Effect	Secondary Effect and Duration Addiction	Addiction	Withdrawal	Overdose
Z-dust	Ingested	18	+10 to Move	+20 to Move and +2 to Skill checks for 2 hours	18	1d6 Int, 16	4, DC 18
Purchase DC	Restriction	Craft DC	Time				
12	Illegal +4	26	11 hrs.				

portable cellular phone, mesh vest, flash goggles, 3 flashbang-grenades, stun gun.

Description: Shayna is a somewhat mousey-looking Hispanic woman, in her late twenties. She is stocky but muscular and dresses like a mechanic, complete with grease stains. She also has a prominent cybernetic left arm, to replace the one she had torn off by a prop engine.

Personality: Shayna is quirky and intelligent. While not excessively friendly or outgoing, she enjoys intelligent conversation and answering questions on a variety of subjects.

Tactics: For the most part, Shayna likes to service, repair and trick-out rides. If attacked her first response is to flee. If hard pressed, she throws flashbang grenades to aid her escape. She also packs a stun gun in case anyone gets too close.

Berk (male) Jacker 3 (criminal):

HD 3d6; hp 13; Init +6; Spd 30ft.; ED 2d6; Rep+0; WB +7, DV17 (leather jacket), flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +3, Atk +5 ranged 2d8 (sawed-off shotgun); Atk +3 melee 1d4/19-20 (knife); SV Fort+ 1, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills: Balance +8, Bluff +6, Climb +5, Craft (mechanical) +8, Disable Device +6, Drive +10, Escape +8, Hide +8, Knowledge (current events, popular culture) +2, Knowledge (appraisal) +6, Knowledge (streetwise) +5, Listen +7, Move Silently +8, Pilot +7, Profession +3, Repair +8, Search +8, Sleight of Hand +4, Spot +5, Technical +8, Tumble +6.

Feats: Brawl*, Sneaky*, Vehicle Expert, Improved Initiative, Street Fighting.

Class Features: Hyperactive, Cager Talent Tree (Cager, Cager Roll).

Contacts: Connection Contact Level 5.

Self Points: 75.

Cyberwear: None.

Languages: English.

Equipment: Sawed-off shotgun, knife, leather jacket, cellular phone.

Description: Berk is an average looking 20-year-old street-punk in ripped jeans, biker boots, and a leather jacket. His short spiky hair is dyed jet black and he sports a spiked dog collar and matching wristbands. His skin is covered with tattoos and eyes are hidden behind a pair of wraparound, mirrored sunglasses. Berk is one of Jared's 'go-to' guys. If it's dirty, Berk will make it dirtier.

Personality: Berk is bright and adventurous, appreciative of his work, and always up for new challenges. He is also a sucker for women and drugs and can easily be side-tracked by either temptation when not on a run.

Tactics: If he feels threatened, Berk will instantly to fire his shotgun. He is also not one to stick around after the discharge to see what comes next. After an altercation, Berk leaves the area and lays low. 'Shoot first, then run', he could care less about asking questions – questions are for the cops.

Miruma-Giffer Building, Suite 4208, Sector 379 West, Tier I

General Features

This former factory was converted to office space and previously belonged to Dumarron Inc. before the Lanitrex buyout. The space itself is on the south-east corner of the building, and its walls consist of crystal-clear acrylite. The west and north walls actually face the inside of the building and beneath the drywall is 3-feet of solid concrete that forms a protective firewall between the other tenants. Inner walls are aluminium stud and drywall construction. All ceilings are 12 feet high and the rooms are lit by

overhead fluorescent lights. With the exception of private rooms, security cameras monitor all areas. Unless otherwise noted, all doors are acrylite tinted and textured to look like wood.

Acrylite Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 20; hp 25; Break DC 30.

Specific Features

1. Elevator: Though these elevators run throughout the building, they have keyed switches that prevent riders from entering private floors without permission.

2. Data Storage Rooms: This climate-controlled room houses a number of huge, steel, data storage safes.

3. Camera Post: This area is equipped with a monitor hooked up to the floor's security camera system. A gang member occupies it at all times.

4. Conference Room: Once used for conferences, this room is currently set up for the gang's webcrawlers and connections who work dozens of computers through hook-ups trying to hack information, round-out deals, and handle clients.

5. Private Conference Room: A large table sits in the centre of this room surrounded by several chairs; behind it sits a large wooden desk. There are no windows in this room and it is extremely private. Jared uses it for special meetings or issues that require he perform them behind tightly closed doors.

6. Lavatory: This small room contains a toilet and a sink.

7. Spitfire and Shayna's Area: Spitfire and Shayna live in this section, which includes a bedroom, lounge, kitchen, lavatory and storage area. There is also a private entrance into the MechShop.

8. Private Rooms: This section is the permanent residence of higher-ranking gang member and includes a bedroom, kitchen, lavatory and storage area.

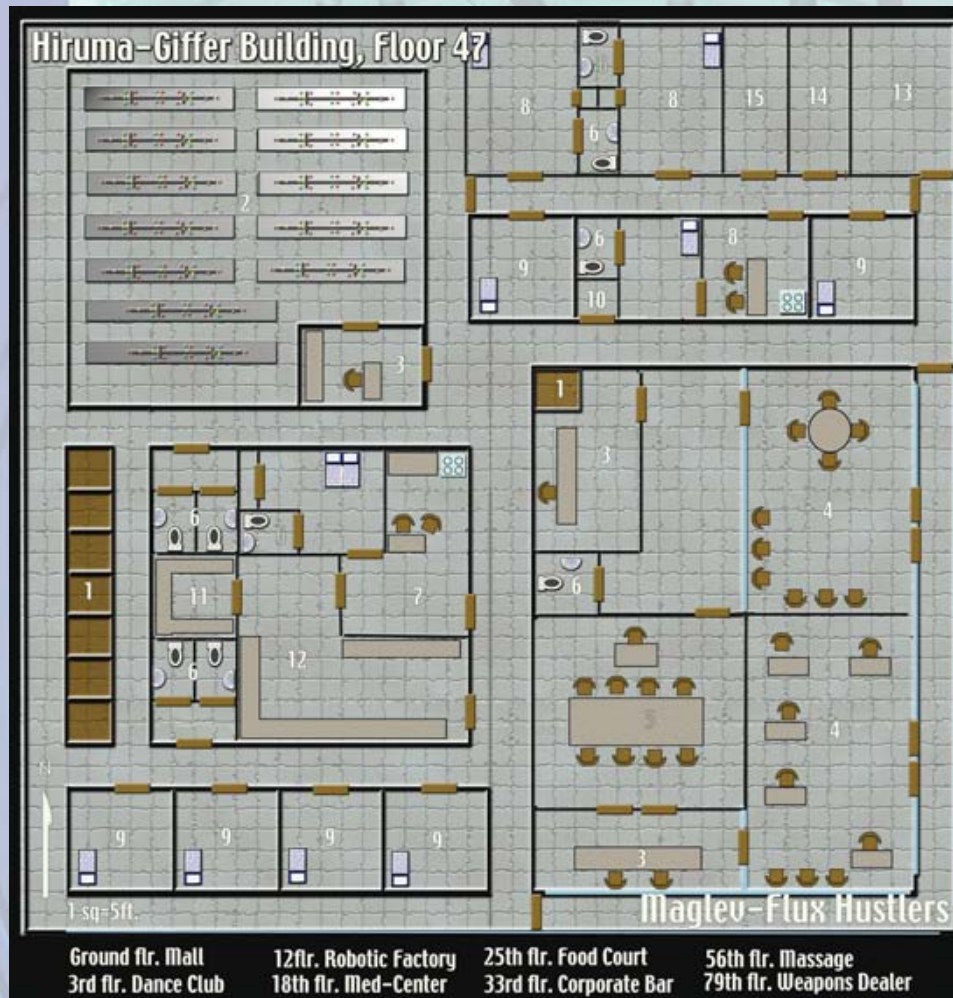
9. Hostel Rooms: This room is available for gang members to use when travelling in on runs from other sectors, or when the gang needs to hide out a client for a few days. The main contents of this room are a bed and a locker.

13. Training Room: This room is used to train members in caging, combat, acrobatics and other tricks of the trade. It can be set up for a number of uses depending on the current needs of the gang.

† The characters are offered a maglev-fluxer at an irresistible price only to discover that it was recently jacked from a gang member when he and his crew arrive to take it back.

† A megacorp entrepreneur hires the characters to hack into the contents of an important file that he mistakenly believes is being transferred by a black market remote access server called Maglev. His sources have informed him Maglev is an 'archaic system of transfer', which he has mistakenly interpreted to mean, easily hacked. Instead, the file is being transported web-free and hack-impervious by a cager.

† During a run, an inexperienced cager takes a nasty fall. Local thugs looking to score some of his cargo drag the dying cager into a nearby bar or some other hangout occupied by the characters. Meanwhile, the Maglev-Flux Hustlers swear vengeance on anyone they think may have been involved with the accident, the cager's abduction, or the theft of any of his property. By their relative proximity to the altercation, they (mistakenly or not) believe the characters linked.



10. Storage Room: This room holds general cleaning supplies, mops and brooms.

11. Tool Room: This room contains shelves lined with various tools associated with demolitions, electronic, mechanical and computer servicing. There is enough gear here to equip 15 workers.

12. MechShop: This room contains several benches and a variety of old engine parts, crates of salvaged electronics, wires, old computers, and a number of odd projects in various stages of completion.

14. Chemlab: When products run low, the Maglev-Flux Hustlers have no qualms about making their own. This room contains tools and supplies that can be used to manufacture or cut a variety of standard and custom narcotics.

15. MedRoom: This room contains medical supplies and treatment areas to take care of hurt gangers, particularly those injured while participating in illegal activities.

Plots Hooks

One of the characters has a patron who hires him to get his hands on a maglev-fluxer.

† The characters develop a contact inside the gang who informs them that the Maglev-Fluxers are short a few men and are looking for recruits. Especially those who can help them do some groundwork clearing out a nearby warehouse occupied by a rival gang.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The Inspiration for the D&D Game, its Creation, GenCon's Founding, How TSR came into Being, and its Early Days

BY GARY GYGAX

PART 1 - WAY BACK WHEN...

The number of times I have been asked questions about how the D&D game was created, what inspired it, GenCon's beginning, the formation of TSR, what it was like way back then is innumerable. Suffice to say that my usual response to such queries is terse. Such questions require complex and lengthy answers not suited for even a general seminar at a convention, let alone a letter or email response. When the Editor of *Signs & Portents* proposed my writing a column dealing with these topics it didn't take me long to agree. Here at last I had a proper forum for detailing the answers, one to which I could refer others to later on when again asked about the topics. So here you are about to read the first of many instalments dealing with the beginning of the gaming hobby, as we know it today.

The initial essays will perforce deal with the near-ancient history of my childhood and adolescence, for it was then that the interests that brought into being GenCon, the D&D game and Tactical Studies Rules began. The accounts will move progressively closer to the present time, ending when the early days of TSR came to a close in 1978. Come with me now on my journey back to the time when

I was first introduced to fantasy, for that is how it all began.

My father was a marvellous storyteller. What a treat it was for me at age three and later to have him tell me a bedtime story. Those tales were usually of giants and dragons, wise old wizards with magic rings, cloaks of invisibility, and always a little boy involved in the adventure and derring do. My mother was also attentive to her eager little son's demand for exciting stories. She read many sorts of things to me ranging from the Sunday newspaper comic strips and *Jack & Jill* magazine through stories from *Book Trails*, a set of books for young people, and volumes of fairy tales. What I wanted most were adventure stories, and of those I loved fantasy above even tales of pirates and jungle epics.

Back in the 1940s there was no television, and that was good. Listening to radio programs surely developed my capacity to imagine based on what I heard. There were many exciting radio programs, children's and adult, and I loved listening to them, just as I did going to the movie theatre on Saturday afternoons. Afterwards I would gather with the other boys and we would play 'let's pretend' games based on whatever we had heard on the radio or seen at the theatre. The array of props used was typical of the time – toy guns, wooden swords, shields made from the lids of fruit

crates, and whatever else was around and would make do.

The girls didn't join in play with the boys much, only when playing hide and seek in the evenings. That didn't really matter much, as there were about a dozen boys in the immediate proximity of my house. The lads on my side of Kenmore Avenue called themselves the Pirates. Those across the street were the Indians. Peashooter and snowball fights raged between the two groups, but when any 'strangers' showed up we were one. There were periodic scraps to see which boy was where on the toughness ranking, and one girl was right near the top. Although I was a couple of rungs beneath the top, about number four, I had a full back yard, so I generally got to call what make-believe game we would play...my first experience as a Games Master.

All play wasn't outside. I loved card games, playing pinochle when I was age five, chess at age six, the one pretty well, the other badly. When I could, I'd rope in a friend to play such games with me. It was easier to get them to play with my blocks and toy soldiers, though, so that happened a lot.

Next issue tells of my move from Chicago to Lake Geneva in 1946, and the first real roleplaying game that was run there, so come on back.



Mighty Sorcery

Matthew Sprange

New spells and castings for Mighty Armies

Spellcasters in Mighty Armies are masters of the battlefield, able to influence the fortunes of their allies as they vanquish their enemies. The study and practice of battle magic has a long tradition throughout the ages and sorcerers, shamans and mages alike have amassed a vast repertoire of potent magicks.

Players may choose to use these new spells alongside those of the Mighty Armies rulebook, increasing the tactical options of their Spellcasters.

Break Bind

Bind is perhaps one of the most tactically useful spells available on the battlefield, for it can seriously disrupt an enemy formation and leave it weak at the point of attack. It is therefore little surprise that so much study and effort has gone into defeating this enchantment. Though

A Barbarian shaman calls upon arcane powers from his chariot

many Spellcasters rely on Arcane Shield, some will bolster their defence against this spell with Break Bind. Break Bind may be cast on any unit or Group that succumbed to Bind during the last player's turn. Both players roll one dice. The player performing Break Bind may add one to this dice roll for every extra MP he is prepared to sacrifice in augmenting its power. If he scores higher than his opponent, the unit is no longer bound and is free to move and shoot.



Chain Lightning

Similar to the familiar Lightning Bolt spell, Chain Lightning draws upon the same arcane energies but splits them into multiple blasting strikes.

Chain Lightning works in the same way as Lightning Bolt but gives the Spellcaster three Shooting I attacks, rather than a single Shooting II.

Forced March

Conjuring mystical energies, the Spellcaster invigorates his forces, causing them to increase their movement. Select any friendly unit or Group on the battlefield. For this turn, its Speed will be increased by 1".

Hinder

The Spellcaster concentrates on the ground beneath an enemy unit, causing it to temporarily turn to swamp or force the grass to grow and grasp at vulnerable legs. Select any enemy unit or Group in line of sight. For the next turn it will be considered to be within terrain. Mobile troops are immune to this magic effect.

ASSASSINATION CONTRACTS

Johnathan M. Richards



Assassin characters are now a viable option in fantasy d20 games: there is the prestige class in *Core Rulebook II* and Mongoose's *Power Class* series has a 20 level Assassin core class permitting a player to run an assassin straight from 1st level. Of course, for a player to properly run an assassin character it only stands to reason the Games Master will occasionally need to come up with a contract or two, to allow the assassin to perform his primary function. (Sure, assassin characters often go adventuring with the other members of an adventuring party but we must not forget their main reason for being is to kill people for money.) The Games Master may wish to have a few contracts available at a moment's notice, for when the assassin checks in with his Guild headquarters to receive the details about his newest target or 'puts out feelers' among his contacts if he is a freelance. This article provides two dozen such targets. Not all assignments are suitable for every assassin character, as some are primarily geared for higher-level play.

Each of the 24 contracts below detail only the assassination target, the client and any complications inherent in the mission. There are no statistics given for the individuals involved in each contract; they are meant solely to provide the Games Master inspiration and a quick idea upon which to build as elaborate a roleplaying experience as he wishes.

1. The target: Vladimir Boskoff, a glassblower in a small town.

The client: Martin Chomsky, his business rival, owner of the only other glassblowing company in town.

Vladimir is by far the more highly skilled and Martin is tired of coming up short by comparison.

Complications: Unless the job is made to look like an accident, suspicion will fall immediately on Martin, as Vladimir has no other known enemies. If the law starts investigating Martin, he will break down and confess everything – including the name of the assassin he hired. Unless the assassin took precautions to hide his identity from Martin, he will soon have the law hunting him down.

2. The target: Peter the Squint, owner of a pawnshop.



The client: 'Ragged Man' Markos, who feels Peter cheated him on a deal. Nobody cheats 'Ragged Man' Markos and lives to tell of it.

Complications: Peter the Squint is a front man for the local Thieves Guild and has all of their resources behind him. If he finds out about the contract ahead of time, he will have Thieves Guild thugs keeping an eye on him; even if the hit goes well, the Thieves Guild will start their own investigation into the matter.

3. The target: Bevular the Red, a wizard.

The client: Faskard Willowwand, a rival wizard. Faskard has long envied Bevular's collection of magical items and wishes them for his own.

Complications: Faskard will want to accompany the assassin so he will be ready to loot the place after Bevular has been taken care of. Depending upon Bevular's level, he might have all sorts of magical traps protecting his home.

4. The target: Lord Boscombe, a minor functionary.

The client: Patricia Kettlekeep, a poor young lady in her early twenties. Lord Boscombe accidentally killed her father when he recklessly ran his carriage through town at high speed. When confronted with the accusation, Lord Boscombe fervently denied it and had Patricia flogged in the streets for slander. Burning with hatred, Patricia has saved up what little money she could and seeks to hire an assassin willing to kill Lord Boscombe.

Complications: Lord Boscombe lives in a fancy manor house with many guards and dogs. On the plus side, even if the payment for the assassination is rather small, there should be plenty of loot at Boscombe's manor to make up the difference. One other possibility is that Patricia's treatment has left her unstable – she may follow the assassin, wishing to see Boscombe suffer in turn.

5. The target: Elizabeth McCourrigan, a librarian.

The client: Jasper Fellowick, a jilted lover. Unwilling to accept the fact Elizabeth continues to spurn his affections, he is determined if he cannot have her, no one else will.

Complications: Elizabeth's twin sister, Rebecca, has come to stay with her recently. Jasper is unaware Elizabeth has a sister; if the assassin is not careful he may easily end up killing the wrong woman.

6. The target: Foster Biddlewell, a well-off baker.

The client: Fran Biddlewell, his wife. Fran has had all she can stand of her husband's frequent (and blatant) womanising and would not mind inheriting his successful bakery once he is gone, either.

Complications: Fran has started drinking heavily and when she has had too much to drink, her tongue loosens considerably. If the assassin allows her to know his true identity, it is not likely to remain a secret for long.

7. The target: Kurt Longfellow, a wealthy banker.

The client: Ennius Longfellow, his eldest son. Ennius would rather not wait to inherit his father's considerable wealth, especially since the old man has taken to spending it rather freely of late. Also, he fears he is soon to be written out of his father's will.

Complications: Kurt is already dead; a doppelganger saw a source of easy riches, slew him and has taken his place. The assassin is in for a surprise when he goes to kill a mind-reading doppelganger able to assume any shape at will!

8. The target: Voltan Wyvernsting II, eldest son of the wealthy Wyvernsting family.

The client: Torgar Wyvernsting, Voltan's younger brother. Their father, Yeric Wyvernsting, is sick and not expected to recover. Torgar wants to ensure he is next in line to inherit, for the majority of the Wyvernsting wealth has always passed on to the eldest living son.

Complications: Voltan suspects Torgar wishes him ill and is cautious to the point of paranoia.

9. The target: Rufio, the local constable of a mid-sized town.

The client: A group of beggars, drunks and poor-folk from the bad side of town. Constable Rufio might be the head of the law in the town but for fun he likes trolling the back alleys of the poor quarters at night and killing anyone he finds alone. He figures they will never be missed and he will never get caught.

Complications: Constable Rufio has the whole town militia behind him; none realise what his nocturnal activities entail, nor will they ever believe it without the strongest of evidence. The assassin is sure to be a hunted man after killing the town constable.

10. The target: Fast Norbus, a two-bit thief.

The client: 'Three Fingers' Pluto, another thief and Fast Norbus' former partner. Fast Norbus cheated 'Three Fingers' on a swindle, running off with both shares of the loot.

Complications: Fast Norbus is a wererat, so his damage reduction will make him difficult to kill unless the assassin has a silver weapon handy. Fast Norbus' lycanthropic nature is not public knowledge (even 'Three Fingers' is unaware of the fact) and should come as quite a surprise to the assassin!

11. The target: Father Griswold, a local cleric of a lawful good church.

The client: Brother Robert, a cleric of a chaotic evil church. Brother Robert wants Father Griswold out of the way, because he is too well loved by the townspeople and is a central power in the lawful good church. With him out of the way, Brother Robert's religion might take a firmer hold in the town.

Complications: The assassin will have the righteous wrath of an entire lawful good church upon him, complete with angry clerics and paladins capable of divination magic

to track down their beloved Father's killer.

12. The target: Osmodeus, a wealthy merchant.

The client: Jonas, a rival merchant.

Complications: Osmodeus and Jonas are not really merchants. Instead, they are assassins from a rival guild trying to move in on the territory of the assassin character's guild (assuming he is a member of such a guild; otherwise, the rival guild may just want to do away with any 'freelancers' in their city). They have been setting up fake 'hits' like this one, luring the assassins in on a mark only to find they have been expected. Upon attempting a hit on Osmodeus, the assassin character will find himself outflanked and outnumbered by enemy assassins seeking his death!

13. The target: Rustoc, a winemaker.

The client: Justin Graelle, a rival winemaker. Justin simply does not want the competition.

Complications: Rustoc is the cousin of one of the non-assassin characters run by a player in the assassin's adventuring party. If word ever gets out who killed his cousin, there will be hell to pay!

14. The target: Seralinthe, a high-level female elven rogue.

The client: Sudbury Links, a rich halfling merchant.

Complications: The assassin character is not the only one hired to kill Seralinthe. Sudbury belongs to a gentlemen's club whose members are primarily wealthy merchants, all of whom have recently felt the sting of Seralinthe's thefts from their warehouses and caravans. They have each hired a different

assassin to take her out, with a rather substantial side wager as to which will strike the killing blow. Part of the assassin's assignment is to return with Seralinthe's head as proof of the killing; the assassin will no doubt be surprised when he shows up to bring down his victim, to find a small number of rival assassins all vying to do the same! Add in the fact that Seralinthe is quite capable of taking care of herself and you end up with an interesting, multi-team free-for-all.

15. The target: Matthius Brink, a shady character about whom little is known.

The client: Frundle Featherdown, a gnomish politician.

Complications: Matthius Brink is an assassin of about the same level as the Character. In fact, Frundle has also hired Matthius to assassinate the character! He is merely curious as to which one is the more talented at his profession, possibly with an eye towards long time employment in the near future. After all, Frundle has quite a few political enemies...

16. The target: Mister Tibbles, the black cat familiar of a mid-level wizard, Augustus Prynn.

The client: Harvander Galligue, a rival wizard and Augustus' sworn enemy.

Complications: Augustus has publicly challenged Harvander to a mage duel, a challenge Harvander dares not refuse. He figures that by removing Mister Tibbles, Augustus will be weakened enough that Harvander can triumph. The only problem is the duel is scheduled for dawn the next morning, so the assassination has a strict time constraint. As a possible added complication, the Games Master may decide that 'Mister Tibbles' is not a harmless black cat familiar but an imp who frequently wears a feline shape.

17. The target: Lord Gronul Edgewater, a nobleman.

The client: Joban Edgewater, Gronul's younger brother, who professes to want him dead so he may inherit the family fortune.

Complications: Gronul has no younger brother; 'Joban' is none other than Gronul himself under the effects of a *hat of disguise*. He often hires assassins to try to kill him, as it keeps him in good practice: despite the appearance of typical foppish nobility, Gronul is actually an accomplished fighter/rogue, and skilled with a rapier. So far, this practice has also whittled down the assassin population considerably in Gronul's city.

18. The target: Sir Cedric Fallowmere, a paladin who has sworn to clean up the corruption of the Thieves Guild in a major city.

The client: Hespra Finn, a go-between on behalf of Guildmaster Jerrick, self-proclaimed King of Thieves.

Complications: To drive the point home to Sir Cedric's paladin order, Guildmaster Jerrick wants the boastful paladin slain in broad daylight in a public place with a large number of eyewitnesses observing the sudden assassination. Naturally, this makes it much more difficult for the assassin but the Thieves Guild is willing to pay a rather large sum of money for such a blatant lesson on the inadvisability of confronting their organisation.

19. The target: Arthurus, an art collector.

The client: Madame Czezchny, a reclusive art collector, who wishes Arthurus' private collection of marble statuary for her own. She wears a veil to conceal her identity when meeting with the assassin.

Complications: Madame Czezchny's love of fine statuary comes quite naturally, for she is actually a medusa. She does not care how the assassin kills her rival but when he comes to her to claim his reward, she plans to add him to her own private collection...

20. The target: Stephan, a roguish young man with an equal love of gambling, women and alcohol.

The client: Ricardo Spiltner, a well-to-do businessman, whose daughter Jenna is in love with Stephan. Ricardo does not want his daughter to have anything to do with such riffraff and, having caught her trying to sneak out of the house after he expressly forbade her from seeing him again, has decided to take matters into his own hands once and for all.

Complications: Surprisingly, none. This is a straightforward kill, which may come as something of a surprise for the player if the Games Master has been springing all manner of complications on recent assassination missions. Of course, if the Games Master wishes to spice it up a bit, it is always possible many of the ne'er-do-wells who hang around Stephan have several levels of rogue and/or fighter and are willing to back up their drinking buddy. For that matter, Stephan may well turn out to be a sorcerer, perhaps using *charm person* spells to ensure the loyalty of his friends and the affections of any young lady who catches his eye.

21. The target: Duke Vanderbilt, a local Lord.

The client: Baron Kranz, his rival.

Complications: The Duke is currently recovering from a hunting accident at his lodge out in the forest, so Baron Kranz wants him slain there, while he is relatively weak and without the large number of retainers who are constantly around him when he is in the city. What he does not

realise, however, is the 'accident' that befell Duke Vanderbilt involved his hunting party being attacked by a vicious wereboar. They managed to kill the beast but not before it passed its lycanthropic curse onto the Duke, who is nowhere near as weak in his new hybrid form as his human form might indicate...

22. The target: Agatha Prunewell, a middle-aged widow of some wealth.

The client: Her daughter Joan and Joan's new husband, Teobald, a petty crook. Knowing of Agatha's extreme dislike of Teobald, the two were recently wed in secret and now wish to have Agatha killed before she learns of their marriage and writes her daughter out of her will.

Complications: Teobald and Joan have very little money up front, one of the main reasons they wish to grab Agatha's as soon as possible. The assassin will have to wait until after the deed is done to receive the rest of his payment. Of course, once Agatha is out of the way, Teobald will not take long to show his true colours, keeping the money for himself and claiming to the city guard he overheard Joan hiring an assassin (whom he will identify by name, if he knows the assassin character's identity) to kill her mother. In the eyes of the law, as Joan's husband, he is entitled to Agatha's money and property, which naturally is the only reason he married Joan in the first place. Assuming Teobald gets away with this plan, it is always possible the assassin will be hired at a later date by Joan to kill the backstabbing crook (assuming both Joan and the assassin character manage to escape the city guard after Teobald's accusations).

23. The target: Jasper the Knife, a rogue specialising in plundering ancient crypts and forgotten tombs.

The client: The ghost of Silas Redblade, Jasper's former partner.

Silas caught Jasper pocketing a cache of emeralds during their last mission together; he called him on it and Jasper slew him. Silas cannot rest now until his killer is slain.

Complications: As a ghost, Silas has no way of paying the assassin in material goods. He can, however, provide the assassin with a way of obtaining his own payment: Silas and Jasper have already researched the next target they were planning on going after, the elaborate burial ground of a group of dwarven warriors said to hold untold riches. Silas will relate all he knows about the trap-laden tomb, providing the assassin with enough knowledge to pick up where Jasper and Silas left off (since, after Jasper's assassination, neither he nor Silas will be able to profit from it). This is a nice lead-in to a dungeon adventure of the Games Master's devising.

24. The target: Anna, a recently hired servant in the service of Lord Justinian Faversham, a wealthy nobleman.

The client: Lady Jessica Faversham, Justinian's wife. Lady Jessica thinks her husband has been paying too much attention to this new servant, who she suspects plans to seduce him to further her standing among the staff (if she has not done so already).

Complications: First of all, Lady Jessica does not want any undue attention brought to Faversham Manor, so the assassination must look like an accident, preferably taking place when Anna is away from the manor on an errand. Worse yet (and unbeknownst to all parties involved save Anna herself), Anna is more than a simple housemaid: she is a succubus, sent by one of Lord Faversham's rivals to tempt him to evil. It is more than likely the assassin will find himself in over his head on this assignment!



Mastery of the Land

Extra Sovereign Mage Spells

Adrian Bott

When Adrian Bott wrote Sovereign Magic he really blew a gasket, coming up with a host of ideas that he had to whittle down to a mere 64 pages.

Chief amongst these was a list of spells which would make Xaltotun sit up and look.

Guess who got hold of the missing spells?

Crumbling Cliff

Evocation [Earth]

Level: Sov 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: 10 feet of cliff per caster level

Effect: Cliffs crumble

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell may only be cast on cliffs. They crumble exactly as if they had been struck by an *earthquake* spell (see *Core Rulebook I*). However, they also have a chance of burying characters who are in the path of the collapse, who suffer 6d6 points of crushing damage (3d6 if it is an ice-cliff) and may make a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to take no damage. If they fail the Reflex saving throw, then they are also pinned 3d6 feet under the rockslide and suffer 1d4 nonlethal damage per minute. If a pinned character

falls unconscious, he must make a Constitution check (DC 15) or suffer 1d4 points of normal damage each minute thereafter, until he is freed or he dies.

Any character who was climbing the cliff as it crumbles will also take falling damage as appropriate and receives a -4 circumstance penalty to his Reflex saving throws to avoid crushing damage and becoming pinned.

Electrical Storm [Plains]

Conjuration (Creation) [Electricity]

Level: Sov 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: Circle 30 feet across per caster level within general region of storm

Effect: Lightning bolts strike at random

Duration: 1 round per caster level

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: Yes

The weather must be cloudy and overcast, or already in the midst of a storm, for this spell to be cast. It massively increases the electrical build-up in the clouds overhead, causing bolts of lightning to discharge from the down to earth. On the first round of the spell's effect, the tallest structure or creature in the area of effect is struck by a lightning bolt as if a *call lightning* spell had been cast upon it, with 1d10 points of electrical damage per caster level being inflicted, to a maximum of 15d10.

On the rounds following, 1d3 targets (creatures or objects) within the area of effect are struck by lightning bolts inflicting 1d8 points of electrical damage per caster level, to a maximum of 15d8 points of damage. These targets are determined randomly, though high targets will always be struck before lower targets and metallic targets before non-metallic targets. This spell is hazardous to trees when cast into a forest region and hazardous to creatures when cast on to a plains region. It is most often used to break up and scatter armies.

Firedancers [Desert]

Conjuration (Summoning) [Fire]

Level: Sov 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Effect: Multiple salamanders

Duration: 1 minute per caster level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell may only be cast in a hot region, such as a desert. The sovereign mage summons a host of salamanders from the Elemental Plane of Fire to do his bidding. The host consists of one noble salamander, one average salamander per caster level and 2 flamebrothers per caster level.

Living Waters [Lake/River]

Conjuration (Summoning) [Water]

Level: Sov 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Effect: Creates water elemental body

Duration: 1 minute per caster level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

Often used as a last-ditch defence, this spell causes the waters of a river, lake or ocean to rise up out of their pebbled bed and assume a form whereby they might strike down invaders. It may only be cast within or into a natural body of water at least 50 ft. across. The spell enables part of the overall content of the water to become an elder water elemental (see *Core Rulebook III*). The sovereign mage 'rides' the elemental's body exactly as in the case of a *land figure*. The elemental body may use its own Will saving throw modifier or that of the controlling mage, depending on which is highest. While its body is in contact with a watery territory that the sovereign mage controls, it benefits from fast healing (2 hit points plus the caster's sovereign mage level per round).

The material focus of the spell is a single tear from a fey creature, which must be added to the waters before the spell is cast. The mage himself does not need to be the one to do this, though if he does not cast the spell within 10 rounds of the tear's addition, the spell will fail.

Mountain Host

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Sov 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: 50 ft. square

Effect: Creates gargoyles

Duration: 1 minute per caster level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell may only be cast within or into a region where there is a great deal of natural (rather than worked) stone. The *mountain host* spell causes a host of gargoyles to emerge from the rocks of the area, spontaneously generated by the spell. These serve the sovereign

mage to the best of their ability, crumbling into rock shards once the spell ends or when killed. The spell generates 1d6 gargoyles per 2 caster levels (maximum 10d6).

Nature's Prey

Transmutation

Level: Sov 7

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: Half-mile radius plus half a mile per 5 caster levels

Targets: All animals, beasts and magical beasts within area

Duration: 1 minute per caster level

Saving Throw Will negates

(harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell strengthens and fortifies the savage creatures within an area and is often used by entrenched sovereign mages to ensure that the animals of the region have the best chance of survival against invaders or hunters. Eligible targets receive an enhancement bonus to attack and damage rolls equal to the mage's spellcasting ability modifier and a +1 resistance bonus to saving throws. They also benefit from a 20% increase to their ordinary movement rate, rounded down.

Rock's Cloak

Illusion (Glamer)

Level: Sov 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: 30 ft. radius + 10 ft. per caster level

Targets: Any creatures within area of effect

Duration: 1 minute per caster level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell changes the appearance of creatures so that they appear to be made of minerals, enabling them to blend into a rocky background with ease. While creatures under the effect of *rock's cloak* remain

immobile, they receive all the benefits of *invisibility*. Should they move or attack, they are still difficult to see and receive the benefits of a *blur* spell effect. By taking a move-equivalent action to stand still and blend into the background, they may become *invisible* again. The effects only apply while the creatures are in a rocky environment. In environments where grey is not the predominant colour, such as a field or the sea, they become easier to see, granting observers a +2 circumstance bonus on any Spot checks made to notice them.

Rocktower

Transmutation [Earth]

Level: Sov 8

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: 50 ft. +10 ft. per caster level

Effect: Tower grows 40 ft. radius +2 ft. per caster level, height 40 ft. + 10 ft. per caster level

Duration: 10 minute per caster level

Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: No

This spell may only be cast within or into an area of earth, stone, sand or rock. It may be cast on the sea floor. It causes a tower to rise from the earth, made from rock and growing at a rate of 50 feet per round until its full height is reached. The mage may make the tower solid throughout, or add an opening at the base and spiral stairs up the inside with an opening at the top, but he may not include hinged doors.

There must be space for the tower to grow into; it will rise through air or water but will stop if it encounters greater resistance. The mage will usually stand on top of this tower when the spell is cast. At the end of the spell the *rocktower* crumbles into dust. Broken pieces also crumble. It cannot be broken up and used for siege ammunition, tipped over onto a castle or for other 'inventive' ends.

This spell is used by sovereign mages to assume a defensive position before battle, to prepare for distant casting when there is no tower to hand, or for surveillance purposes.

Shambling Sentinels

[Swamp]

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sov 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Effect: Three or more shambling mounds, to two of which can be more than 30 feet apart

Duration: 1 hour per caster level

Saving Throw:

None

Spell

Resistance: No

This spell functions exactly as the 9th level Druid spell *shambler* (see *Core Rulebook I*) with the exception that the spell's duration is far shorter.

Thicket

Conjuration

(Creation)

Level: Sov 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Effect: Wall of thorny brush, up to one 10-ft. cube per caster level
Duration: 1 hour per caster level
Saving Throw: No
Spell Resistance: No

This spell is functionally identical to the 5th level Druid spell *wall of thorns*, but has a longer spell duration. If cast into or within a

forest territory, the mage may double the effect, creating up to two 10 ft. cubes of thicket per caster level.

Tunnel Through

Transmutation [Earth]

Level: Sov 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: 1 mountain

Duration: 1 hour per caster level

Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: No



This spell opens a temporary passage through a single mountain. The passage is ten feet high and ten feet across. It must run in a direct straight line; if there are chambers within the mountain in the intended path of the spell, the spell will not penetrate beyond that chamber but instead terminate there. It can only be cast from outside the mountain

itself. The passage may be no longer than one mile in overall length.

Walking Woodland

[Forest]

Transmutation

Level: Sov 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Targets: One tree per caster level; these must be no more than 50 ft. apart

Duration: 1 hour per caster level

Saving Throw:

No

Spell

Resistance: No

This spell brings the trees of a forest to life, transforming them into Huge treant-like creatures, much as a druid's *changestaff* spell. One tree per caster level undergoes this transformation, becoming a huge entity that looks and fights just like a treant. As with *changestaff*, the transformed trees are not true treants and cannot converse with actual treants nor control trees. If

the artificial treants are reduced to 0 hit points or less, they crumble into dust.

Material component: A phial of sap from a true treant, voluntarily given.



A GREEN UNPLEASANT LAND

An eerie English background
for OGL Horror

Marc Farrimond

What with ghouls and zombies and the like making it big at the cinema this year, we thought you might like a suitably 'English' horror background to get stuck in to.

Time to visit the local pub, attract 'you don't belong around here stares' and then get eaten in the woods...

The British Isles are among the most picturesque and idyllic areas on the face of the planet, rolling countryside sweeps down valleys and dales into small, sleepy hamlets and villages, rural life is slow and sedate and most suburban areas are only a short drive to the countryside. But all is not as it seems in this tranquil landscape, for hidden in plain sight are those who serve darker powers, creatures as old as time itself, and those who are hell bent on the total subversion of mankind. This is the first in a series of articles that will look at the darker, sinister side of Great Britain and will present the Games Master with background information, cults, Non-Player Characters and creatures for use with *OGL Horror*.

Mansworth Beck on Sea

Located on the East Coast of England some forty-five miles from Sandringham lies the sleepy hamlet of Mansworth Beck on Sea, a small fishing village that has changed little from its founding back in 1586. Mansworth Beck on Sea has

been providing fish and seafood for the market towns of the Southeast of England for centuries and it is famous for providing some of the best mussels and oysters that money can buy.

Only a few minor 'B' roads connect Mansworth Beck with the rest of civilisation, and the long winding road that stretches between the village and its nearest neighbour is little more than a desolate and foreboding path that in places almost disappears into the North Sea. Far off the tourist trap of the Yorkshire Dales or the Norfolk Broads, Mansworth Beck is the kind of village that if you pass through and blink you will more than likely miss it completely.

With two-dozen houses, a local pub that doubles as a post office and general store, the local church and a small school house, Mansworth Beck makes its living from the sea, with generations of fishermen working the coves and bays up and down the coast to bring home the catch of the day. For the most part the fishermen will spend their days in search of shellfish such as oysters, mussels and cockles, though when the tide and weather is right they may venture further out into the dark and bleak depths of the North Sea and bring home cod, roe and mackerel and, on occasion, larger fish such as shark.

The people of Mansworth Beck are hardy folk, working the sea and tilling the land to provide everything that their small society needs and selling on seafood and home-made wines, cheeses, free range eggs and hand made goods to the consumer hungry people of England. Almost

seventy people live in the small town, with a further twenty living in the isolated farmsteads that surround the village, and for these folks life is peaceful and tranquil, with everyone knowing their neighbour and each family working the land and sea for the prosperity of the village. Life here is ideal for those who wish to get away from the hassles of everyday life and, on occasion, some rich couple seeking to escape from the city will venture to the area to seek out a new life or a retirement home. Yet very few people actually buy in Mansworth Beck on Sea and those who do purchase a home in this small hamlet will find themselves moving back to civilisation very shortly as they tend not to fit in with the locals' outlook on life.

The village tends to put work before anything else and it is not unusual to find children working alongside their families out in the fields, manning the boats or mending nets. Each person has their own place and the entire village works as an agrarian society, providing everything it needs to sustain its people, from food and shelter to clothing.

Even the power companies do not have a hold in this small village and the majority of the power is supplied via two gasoline-powered generators that provide heat and lighting, with the only sources of external electricity belonging to the local public house 'The Dog and Lamb', and the small refrigeration unit that is used to store food before it is delivered by the local delivery man to supermarkets and shops up and down the east coast of the country.

There are a few isolated farm houses dotted around the Mansworth Beck area that provide livestock, poultry and milk, making it possible for the people of Mansworth Beck to be self-sustaining for the most part, having to rely on very little from the outside world.

On occasion visitors will stray off the major roads and find themselves in Mansworth Beck on Sea and those that do are treated with respect for the most part, but many will leave the village feeling that something is not quite right with the small township, something that they just can't quite place their finger on. Cars break down and those seeking a telephone for help may find themselves out of luck if the phone in the 'Dog and Lamb' is out of service, as this is the only telephone in the entire area. The lack of technology means that even something so simple as street lights are few and far between in the area and during the hours of darkness it is difficult for a vehicle to navigate the village without coming close to hitting something or someone. Mobile phone masts are equally rare and it is extremely difficult to get a reception for even the most expensive and powerful of cell phones for almost a twenty-mile radius around the area.

There are very few vehicles in the village other than those used to transport food and such out to the nearby towns and cities, or tractors that work the land, and as such the roads are among the safest in Great Britain with almost zero fatalities each year.

Over the past few decades Mansworth Beck on Sea has become famous in the field of supplying shellfish and high quality oysters to some of the finest restaurants in the south of England. Each day the fishing boats go out into the waters around the village and come back with their bountiful catch, which are then cleaned and chilled for shipping.

It is a wonder just how much the fishermen of Mansworth Beck on

Sea manage to land in their nets and baskets everyday, given the fact that further up and down the coast the pickings are very slim at best. By all rights baskets should come up empty on a regular basis or the quality of food should be poorer than it is, but no-one can deny the results and the amount of shellfish and other seafood products that are shipped out to high class establishments each day speaks for itself.

But things are not exactly as they seem in Mansworth Beck on Sea, and its sleepy exterior hides a centuries old society that is as sinister as it is mysterious!

Although there is a church in Mansworth Beck on Sea, one would be hard pressed to find out what denomination it belongs to. There are no markings, crosses or iconography that can place the church to any particular religion, and even inside this humble building there is no lectern or lavish pulpit that one would expect from a church, just rows of bare, wooden pews and a small, raised platform. Here there are no tapestries or golden eagles; even hymnbooks and bibles are noticeable by their absence. The church is the hub of the community and every day at 7pm those who are not out in the fields or away at sea make their way to the church for evening song taken by Father Matthews.

Father John Matthews

The current leader of the village of Mansworth Beck on Sea is Father John Matthews, the curate



of the small village church and spokesperson for the village in matters that concern it and its connection to the outside world. Father Matthews, like everyone else in the village, can trace his ancestry back to the founding of the small hamlet and, like his father before him, he took the role of Father of the Flock once he reached adulthood.

The Flock is the most important aspect of life in the village and each and every person who lives in and around this mysterious place is a member of the Flock by birth. Once a member of the Flock, always a member and their life is dedicated to the prosperity of the village and its continued way of life.

Though on the outside the inhabitants of this village look like any other society, albeit a strange one, it is when one looks closer that we find certain traits that make it stand out. The very fact that everyone in the village looks alike should be a giveaway to anyone with an ounce of sense, and added to that fact there is a high number of disfigured people living in the village, will go to show that something isn't right.

The truth is that the villagers of Mansworth Beck on Sea are a secular cult that can trace its origins back hundreds of years and life here has changed very little since the 1500's. The citizens still intermarry and it is not unusual for brother and sister to wed here, leading to hideous mutations that are kept far away from the prying eyes of strangers to the village. The cult also practices an ancient and complex set of rituals to appease the gods of the sea in exchange for a bountiful supply of food and shellfish which they use to fund the village itself.

Every first of the month at high tide Father Matthews and the members of the Flock will parade down to the beach and offer up supplication to the sea god Manon in exchange for a boon. The sacrifice is always a human and the poor unfortunate will

be chained to a large rock when the tide is at its lowest ebb and left till the tide rises and takes them out to sea. The sacrifices are always taken from strangers who happen to wander by at the right time, or on occasion Father Matthews will order some of his men to make a trip to one of the nearby towns and pick up someone from the streets to partake in the ritual. Many of the towns and cities within driving distance of Mansworth Beck on Sea have a very high rate of missing transient people, prostitutes and runaways, though this is often put down to inner city struggles by the

harm on the Flock. These creatures are nightmarish to behold and they are lightning fast when attacking; this, and their unearthly strength, makes them a force to be reckoned with.

Years of inbreeding have thrown up the occasional mutant in the Flock and these creatures are little more than mindless aberrations that will attack anything they do not recognise. More than one lonely traveller has met a grisly death at the clawed hands of these creatures, often being eaten while still alive...

via its trade with the restaurants and supermarkets that sell its excellent seafood and shellfish, though of late fishermen from further up the coast have suffered with dwindling catches, while the nets of the fishermen of Mansworth Beck on Sea are filled to overflowing. Even more recently a Norwegian trawler that tried to fish in the waters off the coast of Mansworth Beck on Sea was found floundering, all hands lost and its catch missing.



authorities. Taking people from the streets is a highly dangerous task, but to date the Flock has been lucky and nobody has put two and two together and come up with the right answer.

Manon favours those who worship it and not only does it bestow food aplenty on its subjects but also will send aid in times of need. From the depths of the North Sea they come, moving silently up through the waters and attacking anyone who wishes

Father Matthews will do his very best to maintain the veil of secrecy that surrounds the Flock and protect it from the encroachment of the new millennium, using whatever methods he deems necessary, and will not stop at murder to maintain his position if needed. Recently a new road was planned to pass through Mansworth Beck, but at the eleventh hour the plans were mysteriously dropped without warning. The only contact the town has with the outside world is

The Flock

HP: 90
Force: 10 (+5)
Response: 10

Resources: 15
Information: 7
Occult: 12(+1)
Influence: 8 (+0)

Sea Creature

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 2d8 +20 (32hp)

Massive Damage: 15

Initiative: +3 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft. Swimming 60 ft.

Defence: 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural), touch 13, flat footed 15.

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +6/+9

Attack: Claw + 11 melee (1d6 +9), Bite (1d6 +9)

Full Attack: Two claws +10 melee (1d6 +9), Bite (1d6 +9)

Space/Reach: 10ft. x 10ft./10ft.

Special Qualities: Breath

Underwater, Damage Reduction 6, Fast Healing.

Breath Underwater: The sea creature can stay underwater indefinitely without needing to surface, but must return to water after being on land for 1 hour or begin to take 2 hit points damage every extra five minutes it is out of water. Coming from the depths of the North Sea the creatures are very resilient to cold and any cold based attack will have no effect against them.

Damage Reduction: The sea creature ignores the first 6 points of damage inflicted on it. Any damage caused by electricity will bypass the creatures natural damage reduction and deal an extra 10 points of damage per round the creature is in contact with it.

Fast Healing: While in water the creature regains hit points at a rate of 2 per turn.

Weaknesses: Aversion: Fire (10), Vulnerability: Fire (10) Electrical Damage (20).

Saves: Fort: +6, Ref +6, Will +6.

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +5, Move Silently +8, Swim +14.

Feats: Weapon Focus (claws), Track.

Evidence:

- **Investigate (DC 5):** Seaweed and saltwater can often be found hundreds of yards away from the sea, also the smell of salt prevails in the air.
- **Investigate (DC 10):** Claw marks and slime

trails often accompanied by pools of stagnant salt water.

- **Knowledge (DC 5):** The water is sea water but seems to be very corrosive on metals and stings the skin when it comes into contact with it.

Research:

- **Investigate (DC 15):** The townsfolk seem to congregate in the church every night at seven and then make their way to the beach before returning to the church at nine.
- **Investigate (DC 20):** There is a small rock outcrop that sits at the edge of the water that has groves on it that could have been made by constant use of rope over the years.

Horror Factor: Fear 15 Madness 19.

The Inbred

Large Humanoid

Hit Dice: 4d8 +10 (39hp)

Massive Damage: 7

Initiative: +5 (Dex)

Speed: 50 ft.

Defence: 19 (+5 Dex, +6 natural), touch 6, flat footed 16.

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +5/+7

Attack: Claw + 5 melee (1d6 +3), Bite (1d6 +3)

Full Attack: Two claws +10 melee (1d6 +3), bite (1d6 +4)

Space/Reach: 5ft. x 5ft./5ft.

Special Qualities: Thick Skin 5, Mindless, Darkvision

Thick Skin: All inbred Flock members are horribly mutated with pustules and bony growths protruding from their bodies. The skin of the inbred creatures is thick and covered in matted hair and absorbs the first 5 points of damage inflicted on the creature.

Mindless: The inbred Flock are all but mindless drones that will only act on instinct. A flock member

may attempt to control the actions of the inbred by making a difficult Willpower check (DC 20) or the creatures will become uncontrollable and go into a berserk rage (double damage when attacking, 20% chance of attacking a friend). Father Matthews will automatically extend control over any inbred due to his sway over the Flock.

Darkvision: Kept indoors and under tight lock and key, the inbred creatures have very sensitive eyesight and can see perfectly well in total darkness with a range of 60 feet. However bright lights will cause the creature to be distracted and suffer a -6 to all checks it must take in the turn afflicted.

Weaknesses: Aversion: Sunlight (10), Vulnerability: Sunlight (10).

Saves: Fort: +8, Ref +12, Will +6.

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 20, Con 19, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 5.

Skills: Hide +10, Jump +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6.

Feats: Brawl, Dodge, Knockout Punch, Lightning Reflexes, Track.

Evidence:

- **Investigate (DC 10):** The townsfolk all seem to look very similar to each other.

Research:

- **Knowledge (DC 15):** Newspaper reports note the disappearance of several homeless people in nearby towns over the past few months and reports mention a large black van often seen late at night.
- **Knowledge (DC 20):** A scientific program on the natural history channel recently delved into the world of inbred mountain men and stated that over years of inbreeding mutations will often occur.

Horror: Fear 14

Game Ideas

Here are a selection of plot hooks and game ideas that Games Masters may wish to consider, and to help them seed the Flock into their adventures.

Maiden Virtues

The trouble with inbreeding constantly is that the stock will usually go bad after a few generations and genetic abnormalities will become more commonplace, along with stillbirths and miscarriages. Father Matthews knows only too well that the way for the community to prosper and grow is for it to have an influx of new blood and fresh breeding stock. The men in the village outnumber the women almost three to one and, as such, more females of breeding age are required to continue the good work of the Flock. Father Matthews has recently been sending out small parties of men to some of the closer cities to pick up runaways who are walking the streets or prostitutes and bring them back to the village to be used for breeding purposes. Those brought back who are unable to conceive are often used in the monthly sacrifice to the gods of the sea.

- ❖ The players may be the friends or family of a runaway and while looking for her discover that a number of runaway teenagers have been recently vanishing from the streets.
- ❖ Further investigation will lead the players to uncover that runaways and prostitutes in the area have seen a mysterious black van on several occasions.
- ❖ Father Matthew has been seen preaching to runaways at a shelter in the area and disappearances often occur shortly after he has been seen. The police have investigated Father Matthew and so far come up with nothing concrete to hold him on.
- ❖ While looking for their lost friend the players accidentally witness a girl being forced into the back of a large black van and give chase, and end up following the van to Mansworth Beck on Sea. They watch from a distance as the girl is unloaded and bundled into the church.

Wrong Turn

While out on a camping trip on the east coast the players find that their vehicle has developed engine trouble and know that they will not get too far without having the vehicle looked at by a professional. A few moments after the vehicle begins to slow down and sputter the small town of Mansworth Beck on Sea coasts into view and looks like an ideal place to stop and ask for help. Things here are not as they seem and soon it will be apparent that something sinister lies beneath the peaceful exterior of the village.

- ❖ The only phone in the town appears to be out of order and the cell phone reception in the area is non-existent.
- ❖ The players are offered a place to stay for the night and a hearty meal, but as the night progresses something seems wrong and out of place with the locals.
- ❖ One of the players gets caught short during the night and while looking for somewhere to empty their bladder they hear strange chanting coming from the beach below.
- ❖ The player witnesses a sacrifice of a young woman he/she saw in the village earlier on and hears a strange moaning noise coming from the cove
- ❖ The players escape into the woods nearby and head as far inland as they can, the villagers in hot pursuit, along with some strange creatures that seem more fish than man.

Evil Doings Afoot

Mansworth Beck on Sea is an idyllic location, with steep cliffs dropping into the ocean and surrounded on all sides by deep thick woods, just the kind of place that a sightseer would love to visit. The players turn up posing as innocent tourists, lost and well off the map, but are in fact working for The Daily News, a hack paper that investigates bizarre

circumstances such as crop circles and UFO sightings, and when a mysterious parcel turns up at the paper's London offices, the editor assigns the players to investigate, all in the name of journalism of course.

- ❖ The parcel contains a very old manuscript (16th Century) that details a pact with the sea god Manon by the people of Mansworth Beck on Sea in return for prosperity for the town and its people, signed in blood by one John Matthews. Is this real or a very clever fake?
- ❖ As the players investigate the area, they discover that there are a large number of abandoned vehicles several miles from the village, all of which seem to be in good condition, but are lacking simple things such as fuel.
- ❖ The church has a large wooden statue of a mermaid over its doorway. The statue is similar to the figurehead of the HMS Vengeance that sank shortly after it left the harbour in Northampton in 1586 with all hands on board.
- ❖ The local bobby (policeman) looks very much like the landlord of the 'Dog and Lamb' public house, so much so they could be twins...



The
JUDGE DREDD
Roleplaying Game

The Geography of the Undercity *part 1*



The Mega-City One Substrata

The millions of residents of the cityblocks consider their mile-high homes to be the most important part of the Mega-City, but none of the immense structures could stand without the complex arrangement of foundations and supporting structures buried beneath their ground floor. Over the years, a complex stratum has developed and there are several layers of man-made caves and caverns between the blocks and the true Undercity.



City Bottom

As far as the majority of the citizens are concerned, the huge grey expanse of City Bottom is the lowest level of the Mega-City. Although at a casual examination it appears that there is a single slab of rockcrete covering the entire East Coast of North America, City Bottom is in fact composed of hundreds of interconnecting foundation slabs made from various materials – rockcrete is slowly being phased out in favour of the more versatile and cheaper plasteen. Each slab is fifty-foot thick, forming a ‘crust’ on which the unfortunate residents of City Bottom eke their

existence. While it is generally held that only the homeless and destitute live in the shadows of the cityblocks, there are in fact several different kinds of residences on City Bottom. The DP Camps and the cardboard cities are only a small part of the population; City Bottom dwellers (known as ‘low-lives’ or simply ‘lows’) consist of anything from tribes of sub-humes scavenging the refuse dropped from the blocks to

reach to all parts of the City. Sewer tunnels are usually between three and ten feet tall passages that serve to flush the millions of tons of human waste produced every day into huge Resyk plants. These, in theory, strip the effluent of any materials that are useful for Mega-City chemical companies. In practice, however, only a tiny fraction of the effluent is processed and most is simply dumped directly into the Black Atlantic. The

sewers are patrolled by legions of maintenance droids charged with the task of removing blockages and eliminating pests

the poor but proud residents of the ‘old towns’, old fashioned collections of pre-Mega-City style residential houses huddled in the shadows of the blocks.

Maintenance Level

Buried beneath the slabs of City Bottom, the maintenance level of Mega-City One houses the dozens of hidden but vital systems needed for everyday life in the huge megatropolis. The most important of these is the gigantic sewerage system. Some of the newer blocks have their own effluent processing plants, but the vast majority are connected to the complex network of tunnels that

– anything from rats to alligators. Some perps can make a tidy profit scavenging through the sewer system for valuable items that other citizens have accidentally flushed away, others take to the tunnels to confront their unknown dangers rather than face justice. The sewers are also home to a small population of sub-humes known as ‘drek walkers’. These reclusive creatures live in fear of the ‘Great Flush’ – a huge wave that washes the unwary into the toxic waters of the Black Atlantic, a semi-regular phenomenon usually caused by the timing of the commercial breaks in the most popular soap operas.

Underground



Matt Sharp

New Creep - Drek Walker

Medium Humanoid

Hit Dice: 1d8 + 1 (5 hp)

Initiative: +0 (+0 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 10

Damage Reduction: 0

Attacks: Spear +0 melee, Spear +0 ranged

Damage: Spear 1d6/0 melee or Spear 1d6/0 ranged

Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Qualities: Darkvision 10 ft., Light Sensitive, Stench

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +4, Climb +4, Search +4 and Spot +4

Climate/Terrain: The Mega-City sewer system, the Mega-City maintenance level

Organisation: Solitary, gang (2 - 8) or tribe (3 - 30)

Advancement: 2 - 6 HD (medium)

Yet another variation of the mutant species of homo-subterraneous, drek walkers are troggies that have adapted to survive in the claustrophobic tunnels and passages of the Mega-City sewer network. A typical drek walker stands an average of five foot tall with a skinny, almost emaciated build and thin, stick-like limbs. They have a crouched stance that makes them appear to be hunchbacks. They have long, disgustingly greasy hair that hangs in lank tangles over a brutish face that is twisted into a permanent scowl. Drek walkers survive by trawling through the effluent of the Mega-City One sewer system – they find enough to allow them to live, but are filthy, stinking and disgusting creatures that are shunned even by other breeds of troggie.

Combat

Drek walkers are fiercely territorial but cowardly by nature. A lone drek walker will attempt to avoid combat if possible, preferring to flee in order to regroup with its tribe so that they can return in order to attack en masse. Groups of drek walkers will attempt to separate foes so that they can attempt to eliminate them one at a time, although their lack of imagination tends to limit the extent of their plans.

Darkvision 10 ft.: The drek walkers' large eyes have adapted to see in the darkness of the sewer system, although their relative proximity to the lights of the surface world has prevented them from developing vision that is as acute as other types of troggie. They have Darkvision to a range of 10 feet.

Light Sensitive: Used to the murky darkness of their disgusting homes, drek walkers' eyes are extremely sensitive to bright light. If exposed to any light source brighter than a flashlight, a drek walker must make an immediate Fortitude save at DC 10 or become dazzled, suffering a -1 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls and skill checks for the next 10 minutes.

Stench: Living in a sewer naturally leaves its mark on the drek walkers. A drek walker possesses an unbelievable smell from the filth and grime encrusted into its body – this is enough to make other creatures extremely nauseous, gagging uncontrollably whenever a drek walker is nearby. All creatures with a sense of smell (except other drek walkers) within 10 feet of the drek walker must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10) or be overcome with nausea. This lasts for 10 rounds and causes a -1 penalty to all attack rolls and skill checks. A character equipped with breathing apparatus, such as a respirator or a dredge cloak, is not affected by the stench.

Every cityblock has a basement – known as the underblock – that extends into the maintenance level. The underblock's primary function is to act as the foundations of the enormous building above them, consisting of a sturdy, fifteen-foot thick wall and hundreds of support pillars. Each block makes different use of its basement area – some simply use it as a storage area or vehicle park, others convert the wasted space into apartments, although few citizens are prepared to endure life in the dingy basement habs. The underblock is the most vulnerable area of any cityblock, as destroying it will almost always lead to the building collapsing. Following the demolition of several blocks caused by the careful placement of Mega-Explosives in vital areas during Block Wars, the Justice Department was forced to tighten security in the maintenance level. Infrared PSU cameras were fitted to every underblock and the more volatile areas were also equipped with autoguns. While this did not completely eliminate the threat, it allowed the judges more time to react to prevent the horrific loss of life.

Access to the maintenance level is relatively easily achieved via the hundreds of manholes, drains and maintenance hatches located in block basements and on City Bottom. However, only the official maintenance workers are permitted to enter; if the judges catch any unauthorised personnel the penalties are severe – a violation of Code 5 Section 4 carries a minimum six-month sentence in the cubes. The maintenance level is also home to a small population of deep troggies that have tunnelled their way in from the buried cities, seeking a more prosperous life on the surface. Finding themselves unable to cope outside of their own environment, they make their lairs below the streets, emerging during the night to raid the cardboard cities.

Foundation Domes

Beneath the maintenance level is a sixty-foot thick layer of rockcrete

that forms the major foundation of the Mega-City. This layer is almost indestructible, reinforced with steel or plasti-metal girders that provide an incredible degree of tensile strength. The rockcrete is supported by hundreds of massive geodesic domes designed to absorb geologic pressure – making the Mega-City practically earthquake proof. Beneath the domes are a series of massive chambers – the Undercity. The domes themselves tend to vary enormously in both size and design. Most are barely 30 feet in height, forming dank and extremely claustrophobic caverns, but some were required to be large enough to accommodate a city – the largest cave, occupied by New York City, has a ceiling over 900 feet above the ground. The strength of the design was proved during the Apocalypse War of 2104 – while the entire south of the City was annihilated in a saturation bombardment of nuclear missiles, many of the caverns beneath survived more or less intact. However, the phenomenal radiation levels produced have rendered the area almost completely uninhabitable by all but the most hardy of mutant creatures.

Undercity Gates

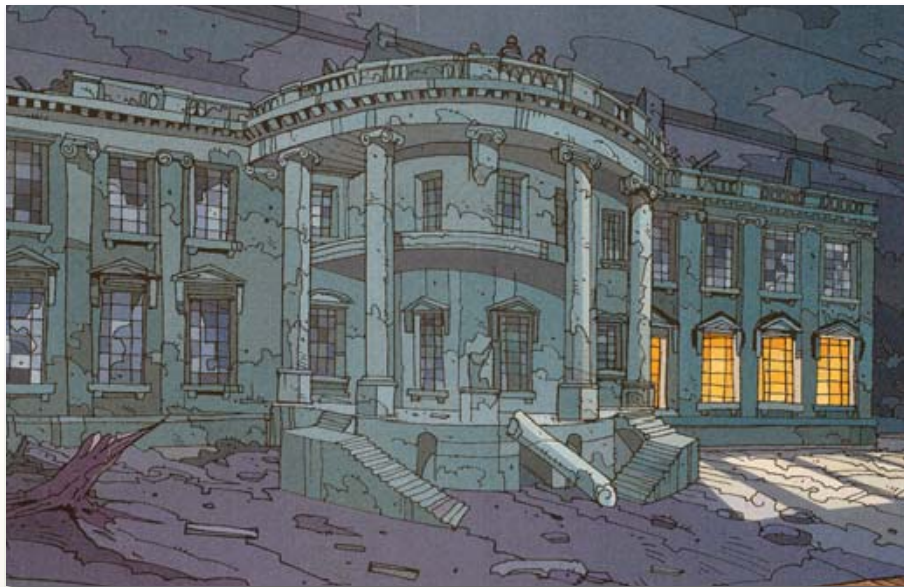
There are several massive Undercity Gates in the Mega-City – huge, six-foot thick bulkheads leading to the only official tunnels into the Undercity. The gates tend to be found near to the major subterranean cities – Gate 32 leads into New York, for example. The Justice Department uses the gates to enter the dark world of the Undercity – at one time there were regular patrols, but the chronic lack of manpower means that the judges only usually enter when they have a specific mission to accomplish. The Undercity Gates are the last sight that retiring judges who choose to take the Long Walk to the Undercity will see of the Mega-City – charged with bringing Law to the Lawless, most do not survive for long. It is a truly exceptional individual who lasts longer than a few months in the alien environment. Few others are permitted to enter. Lurking near to

the end of the tunnels are the wretches – tribes of skeletal, blind, sub-human creatures who rely on begging a few scraps of food from passing visitors.

Naturally, there are dozens of less official entrances into the Undercity. The troggies and the human tribes dig vast warrens of tunnels to access all areas of the subterranean world allowing them to trade or war with their neighbours. Sometimes they emerge on the surface – either into the City, the Cursed Earth or, if the digger is particularly unfortunate, the Black Atlantic. City maintenance workers fill in every tunnel that they find, but the task is almost never ending. Others on the surface sometimes attempt to bore into the Undercity – the tales of abandoned riches in the old cities tempt junk prospectors and CitiDef squads regularly make illicit training missions to a 'real life combat scenario' in the buried streets and blocks. Desperate criminals fleeing from the judges often find their way below ground, knowing that the Justice Department will not pursue them. Mutant wall hoppers making for the safety of the City sometimes attempt to burrow their way in, usually ending up in the Undercity instead.

A far more worrying phenomenon to emerge in the last twenty years is the problem of 'cracking' – where the ageing rockcrete splits to create a fissure that leads straight to the depths of the earth. Unlike the narrow tunnels and manmade passages, cracks are usually large enough to allow some of the more lethal inhabitants of the Undercity full access to the world above. Strangely, the appearance of a crack is often preceded by a massive rise in Future Shock Syndrome and other stress related disorders. Cracks are filled in as soon as they appear and any invading creatures are swiftly dealt with, but Tek Division has spent millions of credits researching ways to prevent the problem from occurring in the first place. So far, their efforts have been in vain.





Troggie Tunnels and Subterranean Road Networks

Over the years, the inhabitants of the Undercity have carved thousands of miles of tunnels and passages to every area of the dark world. Most are only large enough to accommodate one or two human sized creatures at a time, but some are more ambitious. One of the larger scavenger teams has spent decades excavating the old highway network, allowing the ramshackle vehicles of the Undercity dwellers to travel great distances with relative ease – provided they are prepared to pay the scavengers' toll, naturally. While the tunnels themselves are reasonably secure and not prone to collapse, the roadways are in a terrible state, suffering from nearly a century's worth of neglect. It is a brave person indeed who is prepared to risk his prized jalopy on the potholed and cracked roadways.

Big Smelly

The Big Smelly is a choked mass of chemical waste that winds its way through the heart of the Undercity. Once, the many rivers and lakes that make up the Big Smelly were known by their own individual names – the Hudson and East Rivers in New York, the Ohio River further to the west – even the great salt water bay of the Long Island Sound. Now, any

large body of water in the Undercity tends to be referred to as the Big Smelly. Cut off from the tides, the waters quickly become stagnant and sterile. It was the increasingly toxic nature of the Big Smelly that was the final deciding factor when the scheme to bury New York was announced – simply living within a mile radius of the corrosive waters of the East River was considered a health risk. Ironically, it was the chemical waste produced by the rockcrete processing plants that contributed the most pollution to the waters. The level of pollution in the stagnant rivers varies enormously – the worst area of the East River beneath the remains of the Brooklyn Bridge consists of almost pure hydrochloric acid, but some areas further inland are almost bearable – nearly safe enough to swim in (although this is not recommended!) Tribes of scavengers – dredgers – roam the safer banks of the Big Smelly equipped with nets and hooks, trawling for valuables washed inland from the Black Atlantic or the constantly blazing chemical soup that forms the 'water' of the Mississippi Burning in the Cursed Earth. Sometimes huge mutant creatures emerge from the waters to prey on the Undercity dwellers – these monstrosities are usually swiftly put down. The Big Smelly does have indigenous life, sleek predators called hood jaws feed on waste and dredgers who fall into the deathly waters and horrific mutant clawrentulas prowl in

the salt-water lakes. Despite the Big Smelly's dangers, barges and smaller boats regularly travel along the waters, trading with the tribes sited along the banks.

Big Smelly Fever

Entering the waters of the Big Smelly is extremely hazardous to all but the most hardy of creatures. The effect varies depending on the location, but even the cleanest areas can still prove to be lethal. Any character swallowing the water, or even drinking it (although most residents of the Undercity would never even think of this), must make an immediate Fortitude save or become infected with a disease-like contagion known as 'Big Smelly Fever'. This is characterised by debilitating nausea, blurred vision, painful stomach cramps, seeping blisters, lesions forming on all exposed skin and a high fever. In the most toxic areas near to the old Hudson River, the Fever is carried in a thick, choking smog that shrouds the riverbanks – even breathing can be hazardous in the Undercity! In some areas, particularly New York, the water is so polluted that it is literally corrosive, capable of causing terrible damage to any that dare to enter it unprotected. The worst area is found beneath the Brooklyn Bridge – anything entering the water immediately suffers 2d4 chemical damage as long as they remain submerged. Furthermore, the acid continues to react for a further 1d6 rounds even if the creature manages to leave the water, unless the effect is somehow nullified.

Big Smelly Fever

Infection: Ingested or Injury. In the most polluted areas, the Fever is also an inhaled contamination.

Fortitude DC: 15 – 25 depending on the pollution level. DC 8 for the airborne variation.

Incubation: 1d3 hours.

Damage: 1d3 Str, 1d3 Con, 1d3 Cha.



Reinforcements

The Orc Horde and Barbarian Warband get major reinforcements in Mighty Armies this month with the addition of Berserkers, War Mammoths, Hydras and Giant Trebuchets.

Allavandriel looked across the sunlit glade, straining her acute senses to the South. The host had fought against the invaders for the past two days but now there was no further contact - no runners, no walking wounded, no victorious return.

A howl pierced the air, over-riding the gentle brushing of leaves and branches in the glade. The inhabitants of the village, suspended high above in the trees stirred restlessly, while the remaining archer guard on the ground readied their weapons. Allavandriel raised her hand and dozens of arrows were notched to bows. Another howl joined the first, then another. The sounds of hundreds of bodies rushing through the forest reached her ears, underlined by a deep, regular bass note that shook the very ground.

The first of the men burst from the trees, and was instantly cut down by three deadly accurate arrows. More quickly followed him, unarmoured brutes with impossibly large weapons and a manic gleam in their eye. Flights of arrows were driven straight into their ragged lines but none took heed of the casualties that fell underfoot. The glade was soon carpeted with dead men but the fearless and crazed warriors continued their suicidal charge until they crashed into the elven defence. Allavandriel shouted for the spear guard to follow her into battle but already it was clear by the number of elven dead on the ground that the battle hung in the balance.

A gigantic roar shook the glade and Allavandriel looked up in fear and awe. A huge woolly beast with massive tusks flattened undergrowth and shouldered aside ancient trunks as it stormed into the fray. From a wooden howdah high on its back men threw spears and shot arrows into the elves around her. With a trumpeting cry the mammoth continued its charge, tearing into the defender's shattered ranks, throwing broken elven bodies into the air.

Allavandriel watched as the berserker men swept through the forest and started scaling the trees to reach her village. She heard the screams from above mingle with her own as the war mammoth rampaged towards her few spearmen, ignoring the thrusts of their weapons as it ground them into the earth.

BERSERKERS

Barbarians are true savages, brave in battle and dedicated to members of their tribe. The greatest of them are able to enter terrible rages when fighting, enhancing their strength and brute force against enemies. Utterly without fear, these berserkers are the hammer of any barbarian horde, acting as shock troops that will sweep aside lesser foes with ease and tie up stronger enemies for hours.

Speed	Fighting	Support	Special	AP
3"	+4	+2	Fearless, Horde, Rampager	5

WAR MAMMOTH

Large, powerful and irresistible, the war mammoth is one of the most awesome units available to any Mighty Armies force. Marching alongside warriors and berserkers, the war mammoth is the centrepiece of a barbarian horde, capable of smashing entire groups as its crew rain arrows and spears down on their unfortunate enemies.

Speed	Fighting	Support	Special	AP
3"	+6	+3	Fearless, Monstrous, Rampager, Shooting I	7



HYDRA TAMER

Though typically regarded as brutally ignorant, orcs can be extremely inventive in wartime. A small number are skilled in training creatures of the wild, none so fierce as the dreaded hydra. A mythic creature of monstrous dimensions, the hydra is a superb supporting unit, capable of striking enemies multiple times to overwhelm the strongest of defences.

Speed	Fighting	Support	Special	AP
4"	+3	+3	Monstrous, Swarm	5

GIANT TREBUCHET

Orcs prefer to take the fight to the enemy but their low cunning has enabled some hordes to construct terrible engines of war, such as the giant trebuchet. Hurling huge boulders across the battlefield, the trebuchet allows orcs to crush their enemies from enormous distances and it is even capable of laying low the mighty war mammoth of the barbarians. However, the trebuchet is extremely vulnerable to direct attack from fast moving units such as chariots so an orc warlord must take care to shield it properly while still leaving open a wide field of fire.

Speed	Fighting	Support	Special	AP
1"	+1	+1	Artillery, Monstrous, Shooting III	4

FURTHER REINFORCEMENTS

These four special units, available as blister packs from your local game store, are designed to expand and enhance the basic forces of the Mighty Armies box sets. In the future, you will be able to witness the awesome might of the wild elf Treeman, dwarven Engine of War, undead Giant, and many others, on your own battlefields. Each will cause you to re-evaluate your chosen tactics and provide new options for your armies.

Inside The Chainmail Bra

Can Roleplaying Solve World Hunger?

asks

Fey Boss

I'm going to touch upon a topic very near and dear to the hearts of many gamers – how we can solve world hunger through RPGs.

No, just kidding; instead I'm going to discuss dating and the gamers who date. In this case, I'm going to bring up to your attention one of the strange anomalies of the gaming world: gamers who date non-gamers.

Not too surprisingly, this occurs more often with the male of the species, being a gamer attached in some fashion to a female who is not. Some might consider this to be akin to the male with colourful plumage attaching himself to the drab female; and after all, even if it isn't four-colour you're playing, roleplaying games do tend to be brightly coloured and even festive in their manic efforts to draw the eye of the potential consumer. Who hasn't 'oohed' and 'aahed' over the latest sourcebook from some company, drawn to the florid covers at first and then, as the pages are thumbled through, remarked upon the interior art?

Even if the books themselves aren't your thing, there's still the accessories. Ah, the accessories. If you really want to get a non-gaming woman's interest at least partially hooked into the mania that is gaming, this is an excellent place to start. Lead miniatures have caused more than one girl's heart to be softened – after all, some of them are so cute! It should be noted that it's not wise to offer up your

priceless, rare elven ranger figurine that you've spent months priming, sanding, painting and then starting over on from scratch to a non-gaming woman. While she may appreciate the cuteness of it (and even more so if you've made it resemble Legolas), there's just no way that any non-gamer can appreciate the staggering amount of work you've put into something that small and delicate. There's also the chance that if you try to explain, she'll run screaming off into the distance.

Dice bags are another accessory that can get a fair amount of attention from the ladies. While a velvet Crown Royal or other liquor bag might draw the respect of the school crowd, I don't recommend it – it's a bit passé and the message it sends isn't *'I'm a hip, happening sort of fellow'*; instead it says to most women that *'not only am I a geeky loser, I'm a geeky loser who's also a drunkard'*. If you want to shake that title, you're best off going with something a bit more special. Velvet, in a non-alcoholic sense, is nice, as is silk – something hand-embroidered is even better, though then you run the risk of being *'the geek with beautiful embroidery, pity he isn't interested in women'*.

And of course then there's dice. Dice are without a doubt the number one accessory in the gaming world, the gaming equivalent of fine jewellery; men and women alike love dice and have shown visible displays of dice lust for years. The trick in this case isn't to invite the

lady over for a cup of tea and to peruse your dice collection. Instead, you've got to attempt to accomplish something trickier – you've got to get her into a gaming shop where she can see vast quantities of dice and be hypnotised by the 'pretty shiny' effect. These days it's even easier to get a girl's attention with dice – there are plenty of manufacturers who make dice out of actual gemstones at almost reasonable prices. While I can't recommend getting a non-geek woman dice instead of jewellery, it's at least an added bonus that might get her to try gaming once or twice.

The trouble with all of this is that it does very little to lure the non-gaming woman (hereinafter referred to as NGW) into both a relationship and gaming; on the one hand, it might successfully bring them into the hobby and a friendship. I'm told that 'friendship' is a word which when applied by women to men has been known to make even strong and brave men shudder with fear and abject misery. On the other hand, you might succeed in luring the NGW into a relationship but not gaming. This is where men tend not to show fear but really should.

Why? I hear you ask. Why ought men to fear involvement with NGWs? I tell you that the answer is plain. A NGW most often has at best a superficial tolerance for gaming; quite frequently she will consider it a childish holdover from her boyfriend or husband's youth, something which he will grow out of in due course. [Oh, this is so true –

Ed.] Because of this perception she will consider it as something to be treated with mild amusement or perhaps vague condescension. She is unlikely to be pleased at the news that the game will be meeting once a week from six to ten, oh, and could she see her way clear to picking up the crisps this time. In due course, her tolerance will begin to deteriorate and she will begin to actively disapprove of her husband or boyfriend's activities. Penalties may, as a banker might say, accrue.

The money is just one of the fronts on which the NGW will attack – all those rulebooks and supplements, all those shiny accessories and toys cost money, you know! She'll complain that you're throwing good money away. A word to the wise – this is never the time to point out how much money she spends on clothing, cosmetics or hair care. Whether or not she makes you sleep on the couch, she won't appreciate the comparison and will quite likely feel that you're comparing apples and oranges. *[Experience has shown me that the 'sleeping on the couch' bit is something of a fiction. What you are far more likely to get is an unwelcome back and gruff suggestions that you 'turn the light out and stop that scratching.'* - Ed] After all, without her clothing and makeup she wouldn't be herself – the woman you presumably love and desire. To continue the comparison, without your gaming books and hobbies you'd be a man she infinitely prefers. That's another point it's probably wiser not to make.

If there are children on the way in a union of a gamer and a NGW, you're quite probably doomed – the NGW will nest and will not consider it amusing when you suggest hanging a mobile of Golden Age superheroes over the crib, no matter how much you try to convince her that it will be inspiring. She's also unlikely to take it well when you go off to your

weekend games, and will take any effort on your part to leave for them as indication that you're leaving not for the game but to get away from her. Depending on how badly her hormones are making her moods swing, she may not be unjustified in this belief. Consideration is important; to this end, even after the baby is born you really shouldn't suggest to your NGW wife or girlfriend that your newborn looks an awful lot like a half-orc cub.

Take heart though, for all hope is not lost. If you've involved yourself with one of these NGWs, life is going to be difficult, but there are certain remedies available to you which do not involve altogether eschewing your convention shirts and subscriptions to gaming magazines in favour of pressed shirts, hand-painted silk ties and watching little Charlotte at her first piano recital. The obvious solution is to nip these problems in the bud early on by getting her just as hooked on gaming as you are. If the methods discussed earlier don't work however, you may need to increase your efforts by bringing out the big guns, the heavy ammunition – namely the full Lord of the Rings DVD sets. If Legolas isn't to her taste, then Aragorn will get her attention. *[Be concerned if your woman starts expressing her approval of Gimli, or worse, Galadriel.* - Ed] From there it's just a quick job to convince her that your 6th level fighter is right up there with that lot.

If you really don't like the thought of your NGW comparing you (possibly unfavourably) to Legolas and Aragorn, or the idea of her going all floppy-eyed over hobbits bothers you, then you're left with only one other option. It's an option that I don't mention lightly. It can be expensive, time consuming and soul draining. This option? *CosPlay* – costume play. It has many forms, including the SCA and anime and

has been known to work even on hardened corporate NGWs with no interest in anything remotely fantasy-oriented. If you go for this option, good luck – you've just consigned yourself to hour upon hour of listening to technical discussions of period and accuracy for anything from Elizabethan bodice lines down to how exactly to get the proper anime 'flip' to one's hair. Keep an eye on your chequebook, but console yourself with the fact that now your NGW partner has no excuse to carp at your shelling out cash for the newest RPG supplement. It's a drop in the ocean compared to handmade Belgian lace.

I realise that in all this I've concentrated on gamer men involved with NGWs, and not really given any attention to what a gamer woman should do when confronted with a non-gamer man she's interested in. There's a simple reason for this: I've never encountered the situation, even remotely. Gamer women seem to usually have the sense to stick with men who share at least some of their interests; more than one female gamer of my acquaintance married her Games Master *[Women will do anything for XP* – Ed], or at least another gamer she met at the tables. This should, if nothing else, provide some encouragement for those male gamers who haven't had luck so far.

NGWs are not the eighth plague of Egypt. There is hope for them, but not every NGW can be brought into gaming as a hobby. Go forth, ye legions of gamers, and provide unto the world such foodstuff as will feed the gaming soul. And lo, yea, and verily, there thus were brought forth caffeinated drinks and cheese-like snack foods in abundance – and even the NGW will pause from time to time from her healthful salad and pronounce it good.

Amen.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

CONAN
THE ROLEPLAYING
GAME

How often do you sit down to generate a new character and struggle to come up with a name? Then, after you come up with a great idea, your Games Master pooh-poohs it.

Even worse, as a Games Master how often do you look at the names submitted by players and start inwardly screaming at another 'Ben Dover' or a totally inappropriate name for the area the character comes from?

This can be especially difficult in a complex world like Hyboria. No orcs here to gall Grubnutz, or whatever. These are real people with real names (sort of).

To make things that little bit easier, as well as providing a bottomless pit of NPC names, we present the first in a series of guides to Hyborian regional names, starting with the mightiest nation of Conan's world, Aquilonia.

AQUILONIAN NAMES

Most Aquilonian names are Latin in style, although Poitainian names carry some Zingaran influences and are Italian in style. Surnames are not commonly used in Aquilonia. If there is more than one person in an area with a given name, then additional names are added, either in the form of a nickname or description (such as Dion the Fat) or in the form of adding the father's name (such as Gasparus, son of Micaelis).

Female Aquilonian Names

Adria	Adria	Agneta	Alianora	Alicia	Alitia	Amabilia
Amia	Amica	Anna	Audria	Avicia	Beatrix	Brigitta
Caecilia	Caelia	Carolus	Catalina	Catherina	Cecilia	Clementia
Coelia	Constans	Diana	Dionysia	Dorothea	Dulcia	Eleanora
Elena	Elinora	Eliza	Elizabeta	Emma	Emmota	Ethelreda
Fida	Florens	Francisca	Griselda	Guillemota	Guinevra	Hannoria
Helena	Isabella	Jana	Janetta	Juditta	Juliana	Juna
Junia	Katalina	Katharina	Laura	Matilda	Philippa	Rosa
Rosamunda	Rosamundi	Scientia	Ursula	Vanaria	Vulnia	Yolanda

Male Aquilonian Names

Adamus	Adrianus	Aegidius	Aemilius	Aeneas	Alannus	Aloysius
Ambrosius	Andreas	Antonius	Arcturus	Arturus	Attalus	Banthus
Baraccus	Cudburdus	Cutbartus	Cuthbertus	Danielis	Dexitheus	Dion
Emilius	Epeus	Flavius	Galfridus	Gasparus	Gaufridus	Gualcherius
Gualterius	Guglielmus	Guillelminus	Gulielmus	Hadrathus	Hadrianus	Hannor
Henricus	Hericus	Ioannes	Isaakus	Ishachus	Jeremia	Jerominus
Josias	Josua	Julianus	Laurentius	Lennardus	Leolinus	Leonardus
Lucian	Lucias	Marcus	Martinus	Mattheus	Matthia	Micaelis
Mycaelis	Offylus	Oliverus	Ollaferus	Omfridus	Onfridus	Patricus
Peregrinus	Petrus	Philipus	Phillipus	Phineas	Publius	Servius
Terentius	Thoma	Tobias	Tomas	Umfridus	Wido	Willielmus

The Bossonians and Gundermen have Germanic names, and these have carried over into their settlements in the southern Westermarck. Here, a man's name is incomplete without the name of his father: Jon Galter's son (i.e. Jon, son of Galter), Gault Hagar's son, Otho Gorm's son.

Female Bossonian / Gunderlander Names

Abba	Adalae	Adalberina	Adalgard	Adalmund	Adaluuih	Adalwar
Adelhaide	Agatha	Agga	Aia	Alba	Alberada	Aldburge
Aldwi	Alfgard	Alfsuind	Alfuuihi	Althilt	Ama	Amalberga
Bebelina	Benedicta	Berchta	Bernildis	Berta	Bertgarda	Bertlinde
Bescela	Bilitrudis	Biua	Blemdumen	Brunihilt	Clementia	Clodawiva
Dire	Dodonis	Duva	Egmund	Elftrud	Elsuid	Engilburch
Erinburg	Erkenradis	Erkensundt	Eswar	Etelgis	Ethelmoda	Etrele
Eua	Eutlinde	Evergerd	Fokka	Folclint	Folcuuihc	Friduwih
Gherwina	Gisla	Godila	Gullint	Hadewigis	Harduuih	Hathewa
Hernisinde	Hesa	Hettil	Hildegarda	Hildeswind	Hildrada	Ideca
Imma	Ingelsuind	Irmingarda	Iudith	Liudburg	Liudgard	Liuduuar
Megina	Meginfrid	Meginhild	Meginsuind	Meinwi	Notha	Oadrada
Othelhildis	Oulin	Oza	Petronilla	Reginlind	Reginsuit	Reinbolda
Reingardis	Reinwi	Ricbolda	Ricburgis	Ricgard	Richelda	Ricswidis
Sigibiren	Sigiuih	Sita	Sneinteild	Sophia	Susanna	Tetda
Thetburga	Thiada	Thiadgerd	Thiadhild	Thiaduui	Thiatgif	Thiatlind
Thiatmund	Thrudlaf	Thrutheken	Tiedrad	Uota	Uuenda	Uuerinza
Waltruth	Wela	Werenhild	Wicburge	Wigrad	Wivin	Wofolcrid

Male Bossonian / Gunderlander Names

Abbae	Adalbold	Adalger	Adelstamni	Aengilbald	Aica	Aladram
Alt	Altraban	Alwaer	Amelric	Amulric	Anneco	Ansbert
Anslech	Ardrik	Arlabald	Arnsbold	Artoldo	Ascelm	Asgrim
Athaluin	Athelhelm	Azikin	Badagar	Baldo	Banager	Bauo
Benno	Benzo	Berendei	Berfrid	Bernacr	Bernher	Bertold
Betek	Beververd	Blekulf	Blither	Blitro	Brother	Brunhard
Buna	Burigric	Clarbald	Degher	Ebald	Eilulf	Einungi
Ekgehard	Elo	Embo	Embric	Emeke	Emmo	Engilmar
Engris	Entet	Eoban	Erdei	Erpin	Esulf	Euermar
Euitet	Eureuerd	Everhard	Falko	Feginuuward	Fokko	Folcker
Folcolf	Folkhard	Folrad	Frabert	Franco	Frethebold	Frethured
Frithubodo	Fromir	Frumar	Gaiko	Galo	Gardolf	Garhelm
Garward	Gazo	Gebba	Gebehard	Gedefrid	Gelako	Gelbrath
Gelt	Geraccar	Gerauan	Gerbald	Gerbrand	Gerdag	Gerfrid
Gerhard	Geric	Gerlec	Gerlef	Gerloch	Germund	Gerolf
Gisi	Giswin	Godebert	Godebold	Godefrid	Godelt	Godescalc
Godezo	Godin	Godolec	Godolef	Goduuin	Godwert	Godzelin
Goteri	Gotram	Gozelo	Gozwin	Grimbald	Grimher	Grimuuald
Gumeno	Gummar	Gundacher	Guntberecht	Gunteri	Gunzelinus	Habo
Hadagrim	Hadauward	Hademar	Haderic	Hagabard	Hagano	Haico
Haldulfo	Hamulger	Hamund	Harbern	Hardbert	Hardnat	Hardrad
Harnod	Haszako	Hathagot	Hatharad	Hathowulf	Hathulef	Hathuuerk
Hatto	Hatzo	Hauec	Hebetet	Iggelgot	Occo	Odilgrip
Osdei	Osnath	Ouo	Popolin	Tanco	Thancbert	Volcram

JONNY NEXUS

ARE YOU SURE
IT HAPPENED
LIKE THAT?



Roleplaying scenarios often start with some kind of historical information: five hundred years ago a mad wizard built a mighty mountain fortress that now lays abandoned; two hundred years ago the invading orcs were defeated in a mighty battle, but now they're back, and the terrified inhabitants are trying to discover how they were defeated last time; two days ago the barbarian slept with the barmaid, and now her husband's back in town and looking to work through his feelings on the guilty party's face.

Actually, scratch that last one.

But you get the point: an adventure often starts with the characters obtaining some kind of historical information. The questions I'll ask in this article (I ain't promising to answer them, mind) are whether this information should be totally accurate, and if it isn't totally accurate, in what way should it be distorted, and why?

When we examine history we're not looking at hard facts. What we have instead is a collection of source documents each written sometime between then (when the events concerned occurred) and now, each of which are influenced both by when they were written (relative to the events) and who wrote them.

That last sentence has probably confused the hell out of you - frankly, it just confused the hell out of me whilst rereading it for the second draft. So let me take you through an actual case, using the various Star Trek TV series and films as an example. Many people (especially infidel Babylon 5 fans) complain of various inconsistencies (or 'continuity errors', as they put it when they are trying to make out they know what they are talking about) between each of the series. But these apparent errors can be easily explained away using an understanding of how history is recorded. So turn your roleplaying imagination on, and travel with me to the world of the 25th century, as we look back at the history of the Federation and its fleet.

We can group our historical sources into three main groups:

- The 'Enterprise' era (chiefly covering the period 2151-2154).
- The 'Star Trek' era (chiefly covering the period 2265-2270).
- The 'Next Generation', 'Deep Space 9' and 'Voyager' eras (chiefly covering the period 2364-2375).

But we can't simply take each of these sources as absolute fact. We must examine each separately, considering when it was written, who wrote it, and what they were trying to achieve.

It's my opinion - speaking as a historian of the 25th century - that the first of these sources to be created were those covering the 'Star Trek' era. These sources assert the following facts: humans were the driving force behind the Federation; James T Kirk was an intelligent and skilled captain; his five-year mission was such a great success that his ship's insignia was adopted throughout Star Fleet and the name '*Enterprise*' reserved for fleet flagships; Vulcans are a saintly people of impeccable moral standards.

Now anyone who has examined the actual sources (I'm sure that some of you have watched at least a few of them) will know those facts to be - at best - extremely dubious. James T Kirk - intelligent and skilled? The man whose first words upon landing on an unexplored planet would generally be along the lines of, 'Hey you with the red shirt - go and stand on your own behind that rock while the rest of us explore in this direction'? The man whose personal creed appeared to be: 'If I can't shag it, I'll just blow it away'?

I've heard people argue that Kirk was promoted to Admiral because his five year mission had the lowest casualty rate in Star Fleet history. Well all I can say is that if that (losing a red-shirt or two every other episode) was the best casualty rate, then a typical Star Fleet five-year mission must have made W.W.II's Bomber Command look safe.

Even considered in isolation, these sources are clearly deeply flawed, and they become even more obviously so when compared with the work of later historians.

My conclusion is that this entire source of historical information is clearly the work of a Star Fleet propaganda department - and a not particularly skilled one¹ at that - who took a minor, and largely undistinguished, real-life person, and turned him into a figure of legend. I believe that these sources were created around the start of the 24th century (i.e. around fifty years after the events portrayed) in order to enhance support for the Federation amongst its human population and to lessen their mistrust of Vulcans. (As we will see when we examine the work of later historians, initial relations between humanity and Vulcans were in reality very poor).

Let's now look at the set of historical sources that I, as a 25th century historian, would conclude were the second set to be created: the Next Generation', 'Deep Space 9' and 'Voyager' eras. Anyone examining these sources will be immediately struck by the huge difference in tone and content between these and the earlier propaganda works: sensitive, intelligent commanders; realistic portrayals of danger where death is regarded as a significant event, regardless of what colour shirt a person wears; and no assumption that human culture is so intrinsically superior that is acceptable, and perhaps even desirable, for Star Fleet crews to meddle in the affairs of other cultures.

However, it is notable that whilst these later sources do not repeat the 'myth building' of the earlier propaganda works, neither do they challenge those myths. There is one particularly jarring moment where the alleged chief engineer of the earlier *Enterprise* (one Montgomery Scott) has a conversation with the chief engineer of the current starship of that name in which he 'confesses' to routinely providing false information to his captain in order to make himself look artificially good. Inexplicably, the younger engineer does not report this conversation to his captain (which would inevitably have led to the court martial and imprisonment of Mr Scott). This lack of action makes sense only when you realise that as a Star Fleet officer of some years, the younger engineer would have been aware that the story of the earlier *Enterprise* was largely a fabrication, and that the anecdotes he was now being told were merely the sad boastings of a man who'd started to believe the lies the propagandists had told about him.²

It is also notable that these sets of historical records avoid entirely the issue of interpersonal relations aboard a starship. These records would have us believe that there were no personality conflicts whatsoever among the crews, a fact made even more surprising when you consider that the first officer of the *Enterprise* - who doubled as head of human relations - was, in the words of later historians, 'a sexual-harassment case waiting to happen'.

On a positive note, it does have to be said that some of the later works in this era - in particular those covering travel back to the mid 21st century and the events surrounding the discovery by humans of warp drive - are now regarded as the first movements towards the later revisionism (see below) that would totally alter our understanding of the history of the Federation.

My conclusion is that these sources were created at around the time of the events portrayed, as part of a type of record that in the 20th and 21st centuries was known as a 'docusoap'. Because of this, they are a reasonably faithful record of what happened to the crew of the *Enterprise D*; but there is very little analysis or criticism. Instead they simply tell the story and allow us to draw our own conclusions. They are the truth, but not the whole truth.

The final set of historical information to be created was, ironically, the set that covered the earliest time period, the 'Enterprise' era. These sources were clearly created by the revisionist historians of the mid 25th century, more than three hundred years after the events portrayed. The work of these historians was, as is always the case with any kind of revisionism, bitterly controversial, overturning as it did many cherished historical 'facts' and tearing down many established reputations. In fact, many people choose to ignore these later works entirely, focusing entirely

on the 'Star Trek', 'Next Generation', and 'Deep Space 9' eras as though the events of the 22nd century never occurred.

These revisionist historians have, through their uncovering of the events of the 'Enterprise' era, totally revolutionised our view of the Star Trek universe. In particular, we now know that:

- The name 'Enterprise' became famous not through the actions of the *USS Enterprise*, but through the actions of the earlier *SS Enterprise*, and its captain, Jonathan Archer. It can now be seen that the later Star Fleet propagandists created the 'Myth of Kirk' in order to bury popular knowledge of Archer's exploits. This new theory to explain the fame of the 'Enterprise' name makes far more sense than the earlier 'Kirk was a Good Captain' theory (which was always a far-fetched theory, even when unchallenged by evidence to the contrary).
- Humans did not first encounter Vulcans on equal terms, and in fact only achieved warp drive according to the barest technicality. (In the 'Star Trek' era sources, humans were portrayed as having ventured out into deep space in warp-capable ships where they discovered Vulcan. We now know that this was total propaganda, and that the truth - later hushed up - was that the Vulcans contacted us, after a single flight of a crude warp drive built into a converted missile).
- The Vulcans are not a kind, saintly people, who joined with humanity to build the Federation. They were in fact an aggressive, imperialist race with deep assumptions of racial and cultural superiority, who were only forced (grudgingly) into a federation when their attempts to shackle humanity failed.

Only now can we judge the three eras for what they are: 'Enterprise' - whole truth; 'Next Generation' and 'DS9' - partial truth; 'Star Trek' - clumsy patchwork of lies and myth building.

* * * * *

Okay, now that I'm back from my 25th century sojourn, I can answer the question that I guess you've been asking yourself for the last page or so, namely: what the hell is Nexus going on about? Well there is method in my madness. One of the bitterest complaints that I hear from Star Trek fans about Star Trek: Enterprise (second only to complaints about the dodgy 'Michael-Boltonesque' theme tune) is that it somehow 'ruins' the continuity established by the first four Star Trek incarnations.

But we can now see that this isn't true. In fact, the latest series deftly removes or substantially depreciates a whole load of utterly implausible events

in the continuity (namely series one, two and three of the original series³).

So the question is, how can you - as a GM - use any of this in your game? Well too often when a scenario-seed involves some knowledge of history only the length of time since the events occurred is taken into account, leading to two possible sets of facts:

- a) A pristine set of facts that tells the whole truth.
- b) A set of facts that has 'decayed' through age, where the facts are truthful, but over time various details have been forgotten.

But history isn't like that. Different people, for different reasons would have written different histories of the same events at different times. Some histories might be very precise and detailed, but largely false - because that's the way they were written. Only by understanding who wrote them, and why, can the Player Characters determine the actual truth behind the history.

And that's far more of a challenge than an old map saying 'here be the treasure'.

So don't give your players an 'Enterprise', give them a 'Star Trek' - and then sit back and watch the fun.

¹The output of the propaganda department was severely hampered by a clear lack of money, leading to such absurdities as portraying what were obviously wooden blocks as some kind of electronic data storage device. They also made clumsy attempts to engage younger audiences by spuriously including 'travelling' pop bands and having a navigator with an extremely dodgy haircut join the crew mid-voyage for no apparent reason.

²Some of you reading this might be drawn to conclude that I didn't much like Mr Scott. You'd be right.

³All right, I'll admit it: I was a fanatical Next Gen fan who despised the original series. One day I'll give you my theory that the so-called original series was merely a pale imitation of Next Gen.



Design and Conquer

by Adrian Czajkowski



The Sex Presidents



Introduction

The characters have been hired by the Church to recover the stolen Bones of St. Liberace from a secret reliquary in New York. The adventure is suitable for a team of four characters, each around 5th level. The scenario itself should provide at least two sessions of entertainment.

The adventure starts with the group already on the trail of the most likely culprits behind the robbery, a band of high-technology thieves cloned from the greatest criminals in American History, its presidents.

The criminal team is called the 'Sex Presidents' and comprises of 'Slippery Dick' Nixon, Ron 'The Dong' Reagan, 'Big Willy' Clinton, George 'Beaver' Bush, and George 'Little Beaver' W. Bush.

The adventure takes the characters across the Texan plains towards the hideout of the gang, a face-to-face confrontation with the Sex Presidents and the criminal mastermind behind them...

The adventure is broken down into the following scenes:

1. The Town of El Coyote

The party encounters a group of redneck good ole boys, and probably

A scenario for four 4th-6th level characters for the *Macho Women with Guns Roleplaying Game*

beat the snot out of them. From the pint-sized mayor 'Short Pants' they are directed towards the nearby swamps, to seek help from the inbred locals who live there.

2. The Farm

Deep in the humid swamps the party meet Billy Willy Rob Bob and his darling wife/sister/whatever Jilly Milly Bob Rob. The pair agrees to guide the characters towards the secret hideout in exchange for help. A giant mutant pig has been terrorising the farm over the last few months, and the characters are just the women to take down this 'Devil Boar'.

3. The Devil Boar

The party tracks the Devil Boar to its lair and discovers the tragic tale behind this genetic freak, his sad relationship with Billy Willy. The party can either be part of a happy family reunion, or have bacon for a month.

4. The Wilde Boys

If all goes well, the group is now led to a barren, dusty plateau with the secret hideout in the mountains ahead. They must first outwit a camp of camp road warriors, 'The Wilde Boys', who patrol the region for the Sex Presidents.

5. The Shantytown

A shantytown has developed on the outskirts of the secret hideout, filled with disgruntled contractors awaiting payment for building the complex. The party has the chance to do some initial reconnaissance and research into the hideout prior to infiltration.

Sarwat Chadda

6. The Hideout

Here the characters must use all their cunning to penetrate the secret hideout, defeat the Sex Presidents, and retrieve the Sacred Bones of Saint Liberace. As the hideout is not quite completed, they must contend with a failed air conditioning system and numerous leaks, leaving them wet, hot and sweaty...

Scene One: El Coyote

The following should be read out to the players...

You've been riding hard for three days on the trail of the Sex President gang when you reach the outskirts of the small Tex-Mex border town of El Coyote.

The air is hot, the landscape dry and dusty. The rocky scenery is decorated with a few misshapen cacti, a dry gulch and several small whitewashed farm buildings.

A lone tumbleweed rolls across your path as you approach the town. Up ahead you can make out a few features, a single street lined with rundown wooden buildings, a hotel, a church, a store, barn and a few houses, all in need of a coat of paint and some repair.

As you ride over the cracked, dry, parched earth, your bikes kicking up clouds of yellow dirt, you pass underneath an old gallows, the rope still swaying in the dusty breeze...

The town of El Coyote should provide the party some respite from the hard riding they have had to endure over the last few days, and their first clues to the location of the Sex Presidents gang. The town itself is the classic western ghost town, once a well-visited rest stop on the Tex-Mex trail, now forgotten, abandoned and decaying. The desert is encroaching on all sides, and half the houses are boarded up and empty. Even the vultures have moved on to better pickings elsewhere.

The houses line the single high street. They are wooden, but the paint is peeling off the walls, the windows are covered in dirt, and the drainpipes rusty. The main properties are;

Mr. Toomes Funereal Parlour – As the party drive up the high street, a tall skinny man dressed in black raises a hat to them. His storefront has three new (and empty) coffins leaning against it, and he has a tape measure in his hands.

The General Store – The party can get basic supplies from here.

The Church – Run by Pastor O’Leary, your archetypal drunken priest. He can be found at the hotel most days.

The Barn – This has been converted into a garage. Bits of various rusty cars have been spread outside, and a plump Mexican called Miguel dressed in greasy overalls is busy fixing an engine. He has the relevant Repair and Craft (mechanical) skills, each at +10, and can carry out simple work on the characters’ vehicles.

The Enola Gay Hotel – This is the most likely stopping point for the characters (detailed below). Refer to Map 1.

As the characters head to the hotel saloon, the sign reads ‘The Enola Gay’ and has a faded atomic mushroom cloud painted on it. The saloon is the focal point of the town; if you want any information, this is where you will find it. The interior is dimly lit, the windows have not been cleaned in a while and the owners are trying to save on the electricity bill. The floorboards creak, the chandelier is covered in dust, the chairs and tables in need of polishing. Only the long saloon bar is well kept, and somehow the shelves behind it well stocked with whiskey, gin, vodka, absinthe, and a large number of interestingly coloured spirits.

The saloon has the following occupants:

Dave McCraw – The barman and owner. He is well built, but age is taking its toll around his midriff. He keeps himself to himself, and minds his own business. He has a large baseball bat under the counter.

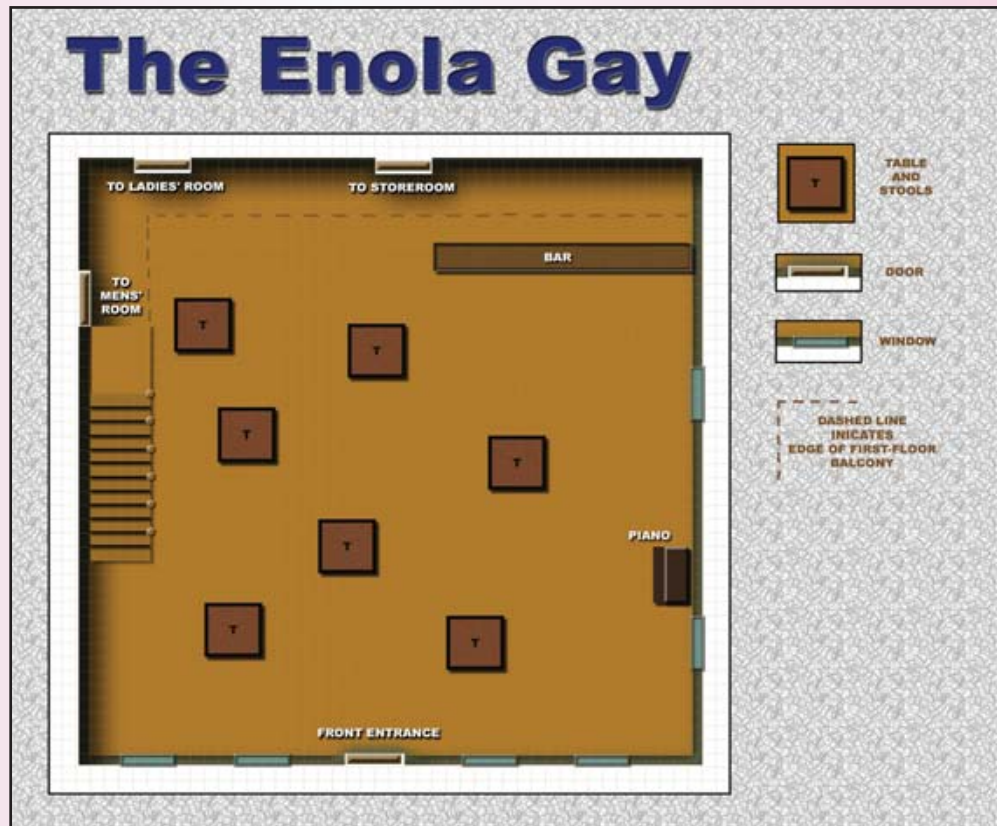
Old Sally – She has been here since before the Dang. A frail looking

woman in black, she sits quietly cackling to herself, a small glass of gin in front of her.

Thomas ‘Short Pants’ Bullen – The mayor. 4 feet of horny flesh, he was elected as a joke many years ago, but no one remembers why. He likes to impress, and will make a beeline to the sexiest looking character. His suit is worn and patched on the elbows and knees. He is full of impotent, greasy charm.

Father Pat O’Leary – The resident priest. He sits bleary eyed in a corner, mumbling into his bottle. He has a tendency to go off in a rant, and is especially wary of nuns (he had a bad experience a while back).

Little Carlos – A ten year old orphan. He does the odd job around the hotel, running errands, spying on people, fixing clothes. He will sidle up to the characters, offering his services for a dollar. He is tricky, cunning and an altogether rogue – he will clearly go far.



The others are the piano player, and three local residents, quietly having a drink.

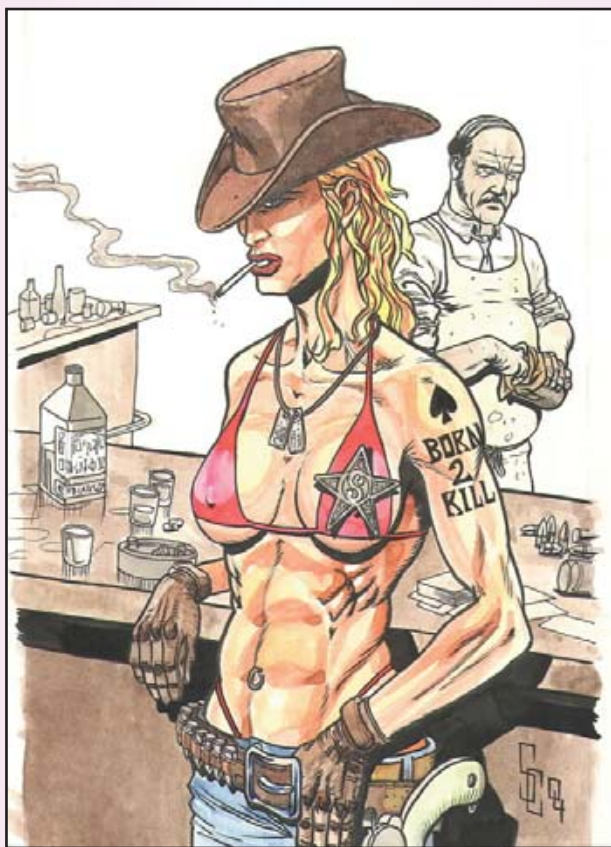
Both Dave and Thomas know about the Sex Presidents gang, as they have passed by the town a number of times. The best information that they have is the gang appears to be based in the mountains, three days ride from here. The bayou must be crossed first, and they would recommend the party use native guides as the safest way through the swamps. They can direct the characters to the 'Rob Bob' farm at the edge of the swamps. Carlos knows the way to the farm, and would be happy to guide characters there for a small fee.

The characters can acquire this information using any number of social skills, Bluff (seduction), Intimidate, Nookie even! Difficulties will vary between DC 15-20, bearing in mind the Non-Player Character's particular inclination.

While the characters are gathering this information, loud engines can be heard approaching, soon followed by the yelling of 'Heehaw!' and similar redneck exclamations of joy. The saloon doors swing open as four, large, rotund, Stetson-wearing, red-blooded Texans wander in. Their names are Red, Ted, Jed and Ned.

They fulfil every male chauvinistic, republican, NRA membership-owning stereotype you could wish for. They will patronise and insult the locals, throw their (considerable) weight around, get drunk, leery and very horny at the sight of the busty characters.

Each is armed with a hunting rifle and a Bowie knife. They own two pick-up trucks, parked outside, complete with petrol, camping and cooking gear to last a week.



Frankly, if this does not degenerate into a fight, you are doing something wrong. Everyone else will run for cover except Dave, who will wade in with his baseball bat. The furniture can be used for cover, and any missed shots may hit the large number of highly flammable spirits lined up behind the counter. Assume any natural 1 on shooting starts a fire, which will no doubt rapidly spread!

Scene 2: The Farm

Once the party has gathered the necessary information, they will head off south towards the swamps. If they have a guide (little Carlos for example), they will reach the farm

easily, otherwise they will need to Navigate (DC 15). If they fail their check, they can retry every hour.

The journey takes the party about three hours, so they reach the edge of the swamp as the sun is setting. Read out the following:

The smell of stagnant water, rotting wood and decaying foliage fills your nostrils well before the swamp comes into view. The ground begins to get marshy, the air turns humid and oppressive after the dryness of the desert. Mosquitoes buzz incessantly about you, and the croaking of the bullfrogs echo through the dimming light. You weave your way carefully through the dense, uneven undergrowth, the path now little more than a moss covered ridge with murky green pools on either side.

As the sun begins to disappear behind the distant mountain plateau, the sky turns from a mixture of fiery reds and oranges to deepening velvet blue. You spot lamp light in the distance...

The characters have reached the Bob Rob farm. The farm consists of a house, outhouse, a barn and a sty. The sty is empty, the wooden fence around it broken. The porch has a rocking chair, and a banjo rests against it. Within, the party can hear the sounds of life.

The two farmers are Billy Willy Bob Rob and his sister/wife/whatever Jilly Milly Rob Bob. They are the inbred descendants of a long line of inbred descendants.

Billy Willy is in his mid 30's, dungaree wearing, straw-hatted, chinless with a pair of eyes quite independent of each other. He is nevertheless honest and hard working, a considerate host, tender

lover of swine (in all senses of the word) and expert guide through the swamp.

Jilly Milly is cut from the same cloth as Billy Willy, right down to cute little freckles on her nose. She has a naïve manner, and is easily impressed by the city slicker type the characters no doubt are.

Billy will appear at the porch, lamp in one hand, shotgun in the other. If approached openly, he will invite the characters in, and offer them food. The house is simple, clean and filled with photographs of Billy, Jilly and various pigs dressed up in clothes. There is an air of sadness in the house, of loss.

Midway through the meal, a long, drawn out, ear-piercing squeal will cut through the swamp. The squealing continues for a few minutes, and both Billy and Jilly begin to get more and more distraught. Eventually Jilly degenerates into uncontrollable sobbing as Billy storms out of the house, firing both barrels blindly into the night shouting ‘Damn your evil hide, you devil boar! Damn you, you pig from Hell!’

If pressed, the couple will recount their tale of woe...

A month ago, Billy noticed new tracks in the swamp. These tracks were of a pig, but of gigantic size and weight. Billy thought nothing of it, but that night the pigs in the sty began to get agitated, squealing with fear, running around, eyes rolling madly in all directions. It was that night Billy heard the squeal of the Devil Boar.

Soon after he noticed a giant shape moving through the undergrowth, just beyond the lamplight. He fired at it, and it fled.

Over the next few nights, the same thing happened. The demonic squealing, the massive presence just outside of the light, the petrified pigs.

The pressure was getting to everyone. Billy tracked the Devil Boar during the day back to its lair, but on seeing it whole, its black skin glistening in the morning dew and its fearsome tusks covered in gore, the remains of last night’s feeding, he took fright and fled.

Then, last night, the Devil Boar attacked. He rampaged through the farm, knocking over the cart, smashing open the sty and chasing off the pigs within.

Billy and Jilly are desperate for help. They know about the Sex Presidents’ secret hideout, and the easiest way to get there. Billy will help the characters reach the mountains, if they rid him of the Devil Boar.

The couple offers the characters a bed for the night, and arranges to head off at first light.

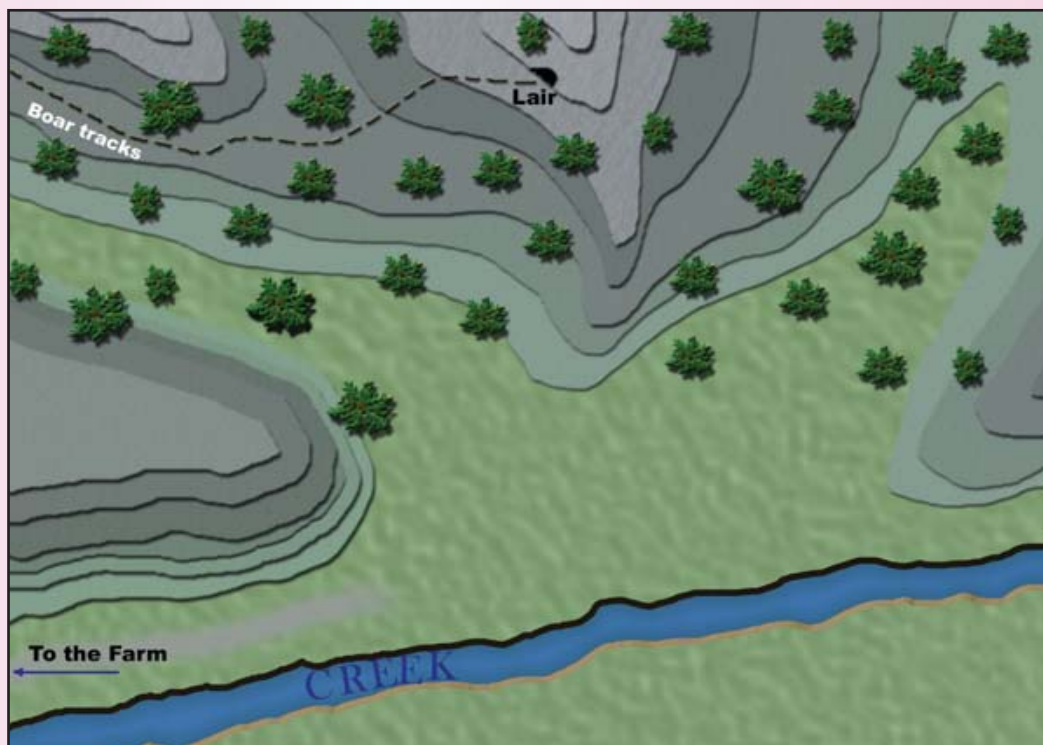
Scene 3: The Devil Boar

Billy tells the party to follow the creek back to the waterfall, where the Devil Boar has its lair. It is four or five hours away and the terrain is too rough and rocky for vehicles, so the party will have to walk. Jilly supplies them with a picnic hamper, and Billy can spare a box of shotgun cartridges if needed.

Encounters

Each hour, roll 1d6. On a roll of a 6, the party meets something from the list below.

1. **A tribe of Noblins**, living in a small village on the creek edge. They survive by fishing, scavenging and trading. They have not seen a woman in over 30 years, and are prone to over-react. They are led by the Big Nob, and he will try and buy one of the characters, offering members of his tribe in exchange. There are 20 of them (*MWWG rulebook*, pg.160).



2. **A flock of machine-gun-toting crows**, perched on a mangy mangrove tree. They do not start trouble, but will make loud comments regarding the character's dress sense, physical dimensions, personal odour, hair style, etc, etc. There are 10 of them (*MWWG rulebook*, pg.166).
3. **The Mariachi One Man Band**. This fast drawing killer in Cuban heels is also hot on the trail of the Sex Presidents. He is handsome, with shoulder length black hair, well dressed, and utterly lost. But in his cool Mediterranean manner, is just sitting on a log, playing his guitar, and cymbals, and harmonica, and drum. Of course he is armed to the teeth, pistol in boots, submachinegun in guitar, rocket launcher in drum, and the cymbals are razor sharp. Depending on how the party responds, he may fight them, help them, or try and shag them all. Or all three. His name is El Viagra, and if he survives this encounter, may reappear later on (see Scene Four).
4. **Large python**. The swamp is thick with branches, vines and creepers criss-crossing the path. Unfortunately one such vine turns out to be a 20' long python. Allow the character a Spot check (DC 25) to avoid being caught Flat-footed as it drops on top of her.
5. **Boar tracks**. Anyone with Tracking Feat will notice these large hoof prints in the soft mud. She can then estimate the size and weight of the creature. If they continue to follow the tracks (Search DC 20) they will make their way to the lair in half the time, and avoid any chance of being ambushed by the Devil Boar.
6. **Crocodile**. As the party is forced to cross a small muddy river, they will disturb a crocodile snoozing, half submerged, in the water.

Allow the lead character a Spot check (DC 30) to avoid being Flat-footed for the first round.

There are two approaches into the lair. If the party merely follow the directions given by Billy Bob, following the creek, the Devil Boar will spot them well before they reach his lair, and he will wait to ambush them. However, if one of the party has Track (DC 15) and/or Navigate (DC 20), they will be able to sneak round the back, and hopefully take the Devil Boar by surprise. The surrounding area gives between +2 to +4 bonus to the character's Hide Skill, compared against the Devil Boar's Spot Skill.

The Story of the Devil Boar

One of the effects of the Dang is the high percentage of science-fiction type mutations. The Devil Boar is one of these radioactive mishaps. Billy Bob and Jilly Milly are a devoted couple, but have not been blessed by offspring (given their biological relationship, this can only be a good thing), and who cannot forgive Billy Bob a moment of weakness, given the circumstances?

Sweet Pea was the couple's prize sow. The pair had brought it up and lavished all their care and attention to it, and she had given them several large litters of tasty piglets. One moonlit night, while Billy Bob was feeding the chickens, he caught sight of Sweet Pea. Perhaps it was a lust he had harboured for a long time, perhaps it was just a moment of madness, but in the soft warm hay, under the sweltering heat of the bayou air, they made love, long and tender.

The next morning, Sweet Pea was gone. Perhaps she felt guilt, shame, regret at a love that could not be named (without at least causing some gossip amongst the neighbours). She found a sheltered lair, and nine months later, gave birth to the fruit of their union.

The creature was either the best parts of either species, or the worst. He grew, and grew and grew. 8 feet tall, 420 pounds of muscle, tusk and bad attitude. He has become the terror of the swamp, destroying farms, rampaging through fields, devouring livestock, and stealing swine for his harem of loved up pigs.

A few months ago he visited the Billy Bob farm, and something stirred when he spied Billy Bob. The family resemblance or a tale from his mother perhaps. Whatever the reason, he realised he had found his father. For an already maladjusted teenager, this was the final straw.

The characters have a choice. The Devil Boar is just (*very*) misunderstood. If they are willing to parley, the Devil Boar has just enough understanding of English to explain Billy Bob is his father.

If the characters come looking for trouble, he will give it to them in spades!

The Lair

The lair is part of a cave complex overlooking the creek. The surroundings are heavily wooded, with plenty of hiding places and cover. The Devil Boar knows them all, and will use the area to his best advantage. Make sure you give him plenty stunts, hurling characters into the creek, charging out of hidden alcoves, grandstanding on top the dried bones of earlier hunters, etc.

The lair itself is some 40 feet deep, unlit and stinking. A dozen other pigs, his harem, lie snoozing in the dark. The Devil Boar has collected miscellaneous kit from other hunters, so allow the characters access to a few spare magazines, a torch, compass, empty backpack and some camping gear.

If the characters are especially sneaky and get the Devil Boar in his lair, he loses his Charging special trait as it is too small for him to move

effectively and, in this case only, counts as flat-footed (contrary to the Native Cunning special trait).

If by some chance the characters do parley and discover the Devil Boar's history, they should get as many experience points for returning him to his father and instigating a happy family reunion as they would have for blowing him away.

Scene Four: The Wilde Boys

Once the Devil Boar situation has been resolved, Billy Bob will guide the party through the swamp to the plateau. The journey takes two days, and the terrain becomes drier, more rocky and flat. Once per day, the party will have an encounter, selected from the table below.

1. Native American camp. A collection of tepees is spread before the party. There are a dozen or so natives busy at work, cooking, washing scalps and dancing around a campfire. The chief is 'Two Dogs Being Amorous', and his wife is 'Brown Cow'. They are peaceful, and talk Hollawoodese, a particular

branch of the Native American tongue involving 'How', 'White man speak with forked tongue', 'The Great Spirit Wampum' and so on. Feel free to ham it up big time. They may offer the party the peace-pipe (Fortitude save DC 20 to avoid passing out after a couple of puffs); as an option one of the characters may have a vision.

2. Waterfall. A sparkling clear waterfall appears ahead of the party. The pools beneath are cool and inviting. If the group go in, and frankly why should they not, have someone or something nick half their clothes.

3. Mexican bandits. Four bandits come galloping towards the group, and attempt to hold them up.

4. Collapsed bridge. The rickety old wooden bridge across the gorge has collapsed. The party can either detour for two days, or try and get across. There is just enough of the bridge left to try a very risky motorbike jump, or else they will have to try and get a rope across. The gorge is 40ft. across, and over 100ft. deep, but with numerous ledges.

5. Quicksand. One of the characters drives into quicksand. She can swim out if she keeps her nerve, Swim

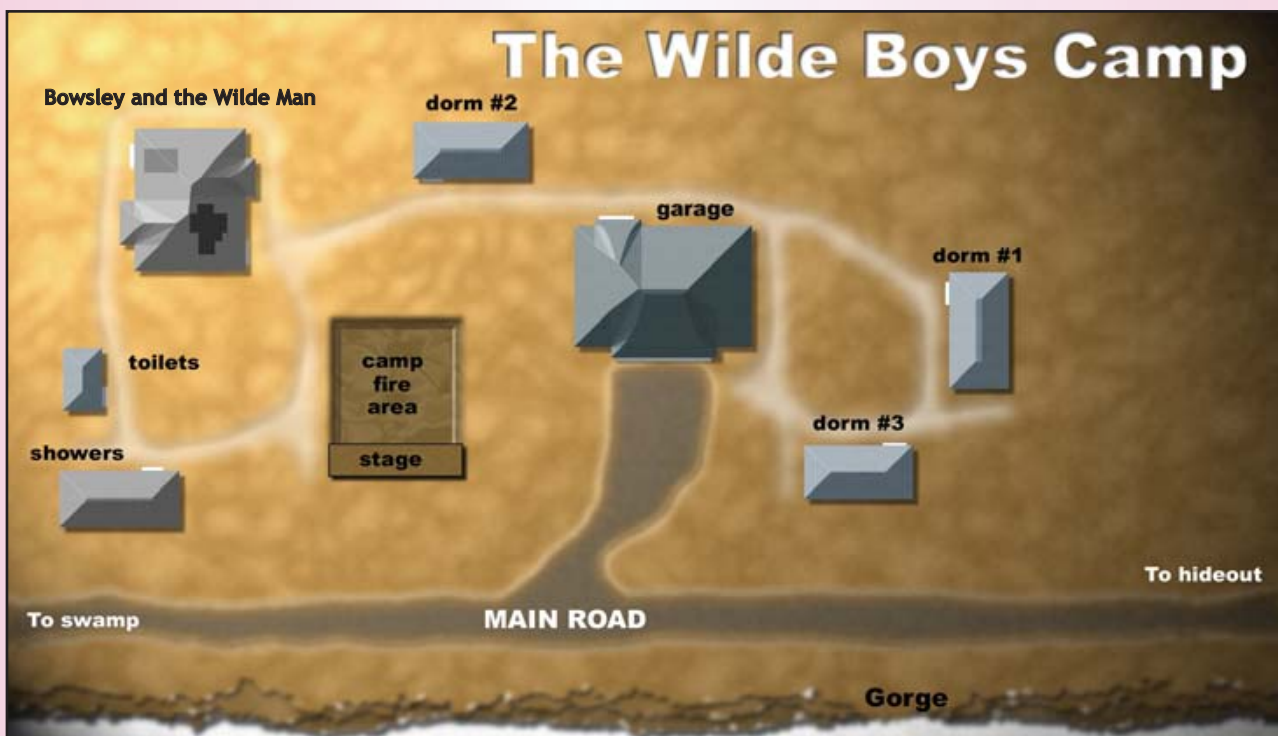
check (DC 25), or else must make a Strength check (DC20). Each time she fails the check, the difficulty goes up by 5. Once she has failed five checks, she has gone under.

6. Mechanical fault. One of the party's vehicles breaks down. Craft (mechanical) check (DC 20) to repair. Bear in mind if the group do not have the right tools, there is a -4 penalty on the repair rolls.

Now we return to the post apocalyptic desert landscape of the road warrior. Here they will get their first sight of the distant mountain range where the Sex Presidents have their hideout, 50 miles away. But first, they must face the band of thong-and-spike-wearing road warriors that patrol the plateau. Armed to the teeth, by day they drive souped-up cars, bikes and trucks at ridiculous speeds, with massive speakers blaring out various Wagnerian opera tunes.

But at night they retreat to their campsite, replace the leather for smoking jackets, recite poetry, enjoy amateur dramatics and the company of young upper class gentlemen.

The characters must pass by the camp, as it guards the only pass. The immediate area is very craggy,



with deep gorges, sheer cliffs and white, dusty roads criss-crossing the landscape. Several of the crevasses are bridged, but invariably these bridges are in poor repair.

If a chase ensues (and frankly, it should), the Wilde Boys will first try and shoot out the characters tyres, while the Hummer and Cavalier will try and ram them. There will be lots of leaping, screaming, explosions and overturning vehicles in this one.

If the characters are captured, they will be taken back to the camp (see Map 3). They will be tied up (Escape Artist check DC30) and left in a tent. El Viagra (see Scene Three) is also here, performing. Depending on whether or not the party encountered him earlier, he may offer to help them. Alternatively, they may be released, without vehicles and water, and will probably perish if they continue. Or they may try and escape, they could challenge the Wilde Boys to an impromptu poetry competition to the death, or wow them by performing one of Oscar Wilde's plays. If you get the chance, get a copy of Oscar Wilde's quotations, and pepper any non-character conversation with them.

Example Wildean Quotes

'All of us are lying in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the business end of a .44 Magnum.'

'The only thing worse than being talked about, is having to do another Fortitude save for Massive Damage.'

There are 10 Wilde boys in total, six troopers, two lieutenants, Bowsley and The Wilde Man himself.

The road warriors have the following vehicles and arms:

Four Yamaha YZ250F, ridden by the troopers. Each trooper is armed with a Mossberg shotgun (2d8 dam, Crit



20, Ballistic, 30ft. range increments). One Chevrolet Cavalier, two troopers. The roof has been removed and a massive harpoon gun mounted on it (2d10 dam, Crit 20, Piercing, 40ft. range increments, Single Rate of Fire).

One civilian Hummer, driven by Bowsley, the Wilde Man acts as gunner (vehicle mounted M2HB heavy machine gun, 2d12 dam, Crit 20, Ballistic, 110ft. range increments, Automatic, Linked).

Refer to pg.125, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* for the vehicle stats.

Each Wilde Boy has an axe, machete or similar bladed weapon.

Scene Five: The Shantytown

The characters are nearing the end of their adventure. Ahead of them is the mountain stronghold of the Sex Presidents gang, and the bones of St. Liberace are within.

But first...

Every supervillain demands a secret base, usually carved out of a dormant volcano, Alpine mountain range or underwater city. Little thought is given to the logistics required to make the supervillain's dream of a home away from home a reality.

Beyond the mere facts of men, materials, finance, and planning there is the inevitable fact that you need a workforce of hundreds, if not thousands, fed, watered and accommodated while your secret hideout is being constructed.

The Sex Presidents have only now realised quite how difficult it is to manage a secret hideout. The project has been completed, but they have failed to pay their contractors, who have now gone on strike.

So, the piranhas are in quarantine, the sharks with laser beams strapped to their heads have not arrived, and the 10,000-volt electrified fence needs recharging.

The Shantytown

As the characters come into sight of the mountain, they realise that a large shantytown of porta-cabins lies between them and their target. There is a significant workforce still based at the hideout, awaiting pay. The characters, if cunning, can use the workforce to gain access to the hideout.

The purpose of this stage is to allow the characters to gain some information on the hideout before they go in. The Games Master should decide what price the party may have to pay to acquire this information, but guidelines are given with each.

The Architect – Lord Fowster

Part of the shantytown includes an array of marble porta-cabins arranged around a fountain and cultivated garden complex. The architect of the hideout, Lord Fowster, sits patiently awaiting his fees (he is too much of a gentleman to ask). He styles himself as a lord of the manor, even though he began his career as a bricklayer, and can be found sipping cocktails, dressed in a white linen suit, at 11am, 1pm and 7pm on the roof top terrace of his porta-cabin.

He has access to all the plans of the hideout, but does not know about the traps – the electrical contractor installed them.

In exchange for ‘services’ (his interests include performing operas, the works of Babara Cartland, and late 20th Century game shows) Lord Fowster can provide the party with the hideout floor plans. The characters could use a combination of Perform (singing), or Knowledge (literature, popular culture or history) to try and gain Lord Fowster’s aid.

The Electrical Contractor – Sparks and Co.

The electrical contractor inhabits the only porta-cabin with a reliable electrical supply, and satellite dish. Jimmy Socket was responsible for installing the automatic trap devices in the hideout. He may be willing to give the characters the pass-codes through these traps and, if shown the floorplans, can tell the party where he installed them.

Jimmy is obsessed by two things; the size of his satellite dish, and building his fully functioning ‘living doll’. Craft (electrical), Computer Use and Nookie would be handy here.

The Mechanical Contractor – Windy Daze Ltd.

These guys installed the ventilation and air-conditioning. They have refused to complete their works until they get paid. As such the giant ventilation fans are only turned on a few hours a day. If approached and well handled, Mr. Daze himself can guide the party to the air-intake shaft, and tell the party when the fans will go off, allowing easy access into the hideout.

Windy is a fan of all things relating to motorbikes, leather and men with moustaches. The characters are not really equipped to fulfil Windy’s biggest fantasies, but any keen interest in motorbikes (and the necessary Craft and Repair skills) would help develop some bond between them.

The Drainage Contractor – Wetworks

This team designed the water systems to the hideout. They know how water runs from the mountain reservoir into the hideout, and can provide the characters the necessary scuba-gear to break in via the underground canal complex. Surprisingly, they also have a set of bikinis that just happen to fit the characters...

The Wetworks boys love getting wet, lots of lather and watching girls wash cars in their underwear. Frankly, this bit is easy. The party just need to give a demonstration of handwashing, just think of lots of thick hosepipes that just keep pumping and pumping frothing water all over the girls...

Scene Six: The Hideout

The first thing to note is that the complex is hot. The air-conditioning does not work, so everyone strips down to their underwear to avoid overheating. As such an overheating penalty should be applied to anyone

overdressed. If engaged in any strenuous activity, the character loses 1hp per activity for each layer of clothing, plus 1hp for any points of AC bonus.

This is clearly excessive, but its sole purpose is to convince the party to get undressed.

Secondly, half the systems have been altered since the contractors did their work. So, even if the party has visited the Electrical Contractor, the traps are still operational 50% of the time. The same applies to the ventilation fans. Whenever the group approach any point marked ‘T’ on Map 4, roll 1d6 on the table below.

1. Pit. The floor beneath the lead character drops open. She can make one Reflex save (DC25) to avoid dropping 30ft. into a tank of water. The tank was meant to contain piranhas, but they have not arrived. Climb check DC 25 to get out.

2. Blades. A pair of blades swing out from the wall, neck height and ankle height. The lead character can make a Reflex save (DC 25) to avoid them. If she has Acrobatics ranks 10+, the save is only 20. Damage is 2d8 for the blades.

3. Acid Spray. Jets of concentrated acid rain down on top of the party. Or would have if the tanks had been refilled. Instead the tanks have been filled with a chemical dye that is harmless, but glows in the dark. All Hide rolls are at -20.

4. Electricity. Two electrodes pop out of the wall, electrocuting the person caught between them. The damage is 3d8, Fortitude save DC 20 to half.

5. Laser Beams. The corridor is suddenly filled with dancing laser beams that start zigzagging across the area. Each round the party are trapped in there, they must make a Reflex save at DC 20. If hit, they take 2d8 points of damage.

6. Slabs. The concrete wall sections either side of the character slam together, then reset. Reflex Save DC 20 or DC 15 if the character has 10+ ranks in Jump. Damage is 4d8.

Room B1 – The Water Tank Room.

If the characters were able to gain information from The Wetworks, they will be taken to a nearby river, and directed to the underwater tunnels that lead into this room.

The journey will require scuba gear that the Wetworks would provide. The underground swim requires the following rolls;

The journey will take about an hour. The party has airtanks with one-and-a-half hours of air supply.

Navigate (DC 20). The party must make a check every 10 minutes, total of six successful checks to make their way through the underwater labyrinth. Each time they fail, that adds 10 minutes to their journey time, and means 10 less minutes of air.

Swim (DC10/20). While the characters have air in their tanks, all swim rolls are DC10 (again, roll every 10 minutes). Once they have run out of air, they will have to swim from air pocket to air pocket, and the difficulty is raised to 20. If they fail, they start to drown.

Room B2 – The Ventilation Shaft and Fan Room. If advised by Windy Daze, the party will be taken to a cliff on the mountain, and directed towards a large 20ft. diameter shaft, descending 100ft. straight down. The characters must climb down this shaft, avoid the large vent fan

midway. The fans have three speed settings, Off, Low, Fast. To decide the fan speed, roll 1d6. 1-2 it is off, 3-4 it is at Low speed, 5-6 it is Fast speed.

The fan can be disabled (Craft (mechanical) DC 15, or Disable Device DC 20), but will alert 1d6 guards in doing so. Or they can try and time their descent between the

Room G1 – The Entrance. This is monitored by two guards. They have a panic button, and hitting it will summon six more guards in 2d6 rounds. The guards check that the workers entering in the morning all have valid identification tags. If the characters have got some tags, they can use Bluff (DC 25), Disguise (DC 20), or Forgery (DC 20) to get past the guards with them. Bear in mind



fan propellers, involving a Reflex save DC 20 (Low Speed) or DC 30 (Fast Speed).

Room B3 – The Guard

Dormitories. There will be 2d6 guards in here at any one time. The room contains bunkbeds, lockers and various uniforms, but no weapons.

Room B4 – The Captain's Room.

It is locked (Disable Device DC 25 to open). Better furnished than the dormitories, this single room has a bed, wardrobe, en-suite and television. The wardrobe contains a smart captain's uniform, and 200 dollars' worth of miscellaneous jewellery (watch, gold cufflinks, tiepin).

Room B5 – Washrooms. There will be 1d3 naked men in here at any particular time.

from this point on, everyone is in their underwear due to overheating problems, and the characters may have to explain why they are carrying machine guns.

Room G2 – The Communication

Room. The room is locked (DC 30 to unlock). Two guards operate the telecommunication systems from here. It also controls all the security cameras to the hideout EXCEPT for Levels 1 onwards (the presidential suites). The guards here will also hit a panic button if they see any trouble, bringing 1d6 guards to the party in 2d6 rounds.

Room G3 – Kitchen and Dining

Room. There will be three staff in here, preparing food for the guards and the Sex Presidents. There are various basic foodstuffs stored here.

The Presidential Suites

Once the party has bypassed the main security measures, they will reach the upper levels of the complex. Their goal (in traditional kung-fu fashion) is to defeat the guardians of each level, and the Bones of St. Liberace are theirs.

Level 1 – One Bush in the Hand is Worth Two in a Bird

Read the following to the party;

The first level has been decorated in the manner of a Texan ranch. Steer horns hang from the walls, a mechanical bucking bronco sits in a corner and a large electric chair has pride of place in the centre of the room. Two men wait within the chamber, dressed in cowboy outfits, packing six-shooters. They bear a family resemblance.

This floor is guarded by Bush senior and Bush junior (DC 15 on Knowledge (history) to recognise them). They lack any real tactical ability, so will resort to combat almost instantly. They have one special ability:

Confusication: Instead of attacking, a Bush may make a Bluff check. The result is his Defence for that round.

Level 2 – Slippery When Wet

Read the following out loud;

The chamber is made out of marble, in the fashion of a public baths. The central floor area is a large shallow, mud-filled pool, stretching the entire width of the chamber. There is an exit on the other side, but you must wade through the mud to reach it.

The Richard Nixon clone (DC 15 on Knowledge (history) to recognise him) occupies this level. The chamber comprises of a large tank of 2' deep mud, and within it lurches the Nixon clone. He will engage one character in a mud-fight, and the loser will be so demoralised that they will not be able to continue, and must remain at this level.

Level 3 – Bedtime For Bozo

Read the following to the party;

This penultimate floor is decked out like a film set. Huge spotlights hang from the ceiling, film cameras whirl on automatic, and all the furniture is made out of balsa wood. The set itself is of a conventional 1950's suburban home. The set includes a kitchen, living room and bedroom. A dark haired man sits in the kitchen, reading a paper.

In actuality, it is a highly developed Virtual Reality set. As the characters enter, their costumes transform into the wide skirts and tight blouses of a housewife from that period. The Reagan clone (DC 15 on Knowledge (history) to recognise him) appears as the patriarch of the household, and each character must make a Will save (DC 15) to avoid transforming into a simpering housewife. If she fails the save, she will not be able to attack the Reagan clone, but instead just do as he says. However, as a housewife, she can only perform domestic chores, Reagan cannot get her to react violently, any fighting will reduce her to hysterical screaming. The access to the next level is hidden within the fridge.

Once out of this level, any characters that failed the housewife test revert to their original state, but have a –2 circumstance penalty for the rest of the adventure, due to the traumatic experience they have just suffered.

Level Four – WMD (Willy of Massive Dimensions)

Read out this description to the players;

The sweet smell of incense hangs heavy in the air. A Barry White love song carries softly towards you. This chamber is decorated like the harem of a sultan, thick rugs, satin cushions and silken sheets hanging from the ceiling. The entire atmosphere is charged with eroticism. Deep within this temple of love you can see a man, lounging beside a small fountain. He is dressed in a pale, semi-transparent caftan.

Within this lair lurks the Bill Clinton clone (DC 15 on Knowledge (history) to recognise him), perhaps the most fearsome foe the party will face. They should be fairly battered by now, so while they will outnumber Bill, he has a few tricks up his sleeve, and one very big one in his Y-fronts.

The Bones of St. Liberace are hidden beyond a secret door within the chamber, and Bill has the key for it tucked in his pants. He will try and engage the characters in conversation, and then try and stun them with his sexual magnetism.

Bill Clinton has the following special abilities:

Gratuitous Y-front Shot: As per Gratuitous Panty Shot, pg. 27, *MWWG Rulebook*.

The Serpent of Doom: Any female reaching into Bill's pants must make a Will save (DC 25) or fall into a swoon for 1d6 rounds.

Kinky Games: Bill has a lot of accessories in his bordello, especially handcuffs, silk ropes and scarves. If he succeeds in a Seduction check against a character, he may perform a Coup de Grace, and if successful, the character has been bound and

(optionally) gagged. DC 35 to escape (Escape Artist).

Light My Fire: Bill's cigar gives off a subtle toxin that makes females -2 on all rolls against him (Fortitude save DC 20 to avoid).

The Bones of St. Liberace

Once the characters have the key, and open the door, a blinding white light will dazzle them. Read out the following;

Unable to look into the blinding light, you feel a moment of disorientation, and then, just as suddenly, the light dims.

You find yourselves in a circular room, filled with TV screens. The screens play hundreds of scenes from your recent adventure; your arrival in El Coyote, the encounter with the Devil Boar, the meeting with the Wilde Boys amongst the many others.

A large black armchair faces you, and sitting in it is a middle-aged woman dressed in a white suit. She looks at you in a patronising manner, fingers steeped in front of her.

The party has now come face to face with the criminal mastermind behind the Sex Presidents, Monica Lewinsky (DC 15 Knowledge (history) to recognise her). She will take the characters' momentary confusion to explain the following (and remember, it does not have to make sense): Liberace was the One. His destiny was to recreate a new world, post-Dang, of perfect in its mathematical symmetry. However, he died prematurely creating an anomaly, the systemic fault within society reached a critical configuration, and the Dang went ahead.

While an intern at the White House, Monica gained access to secret government files on cloning technology. Subsequently she took

this information and established her empire, using the Sex President clones.

She hopes to use her cloning expertise to recreate Liberace and, when fully developed, use the code programmed into his DNA to create this analogue utopia.

The characters have a choice. The door on the left takes them to the Bones, kept in a white wooden box, but means things will continue without the messianic hopes of a resurrected Liberace, or they can take the right door, and return back home without the Bones, and Monica's scheme continues towards a (hopefully) brighter future.

Or all of this could be complete crap. Drill her and just grab the stuff, all right? The best solution would be to open both doors, grab the Bones, then return back to their place of origin for their reward.

Non - Player Characters

Scene One: El Coyote

The Rednecks (Low-Level Thugs for three of them, Mid-Level Thug for the leader Ned) pg. 273, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

The Mayor (Smart Ordinary 3/ Charismatic Ordinary 3), pg.282, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

Barman (Strong Ordinary 3/Smart Ordinary 3), pg.274, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

Scene Two: The Farm

Billy Bob and Jilly Milly (Strong Ordinary 1/Tough Ordinary 1), pg.273, core rulebook.

Scene Three: The Devil Boar

Python- Use statistics for the Constrictor snake, pg.257, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

Crocodile - pg.232, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

El Viagra (Strong Ordinary 3/Fast Ordinary 3), pg.273, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. Replace Profession with Perform (one man band).

Native Americans (Tough Ordinary 1/Dedicated Ordinary 1), pg.280 *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

Mexican Bandits (Strong Ordinary 1/Tough Ordinary 1), pg.273, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

The Devil Boar

CR 7; Large monstrous humanoid; hp 90; Mas 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defence 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16; BAB +10; Grapple +18, Attack +8 Melee (1d8+4, gore); FS 10ft. by 10ft.; Reach 10 ft; SQ Charge 4d6+7, scent, natural cunning, darkvision 60 ft; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +6, AP1; Rep +0, Str 20 (+5), Dex 10, Con 15 (+2), Int 7 (-3), Wis 10, Cha 8 (-2).

Skills: Intimidate +5, Jump +8, Knowledge (swamp) +3, Listen +8, Search +6, Speak English, Spot +8.

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Simple weapon Proficiency.

Talent (Strong Hero): Melee Smash, Imp. Melee Smash.

Scene Four: The Wilde Boys

Trooper (Strong Ordinary 1/Fast Ordinary 1), pg.272, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* except replace Armour Proficiency (light) with Vehicle Expert.

Bowsley (Fast Ordinary 3/Charismatic Ordinary 3), pg.279, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* except replace Renown with Vehicle Expert.

The Wilde Man (Strong 5/Daredevil 5): CR 10; medium sized humanoid; Hit Dice 4d8+8+5+5d10+5, hp. 80, Mas 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defence 21, touch 21, flat-footed 19; BAB +7; Grapple +10, Attack +11, Melee (1d8+6, axe), +9 Ranged; FS 10ft. by

10ft.; Reach 10 ft; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +3, AP6; Rep +2, Str 16 (+3), Dex 14 (+2), Con 15 (+2), Int 10, Wis 13 (+1), Cha 12 (+1).

Military Starting Occupation (Drive and Survival class skills).

Skills: Drive +8, Concentration +8, Survival +5, Climb +8, Balance +7, Jump +10, Tumble +7, Intimidate +6.

Feats: Simple weapon Proficiency, Brawl, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Track, Weapon Focus (axe), Power Attack, Drive-By Attack, Acrobatic, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Burst Fire.

Talent and Special Abilities: Smash, Imp. Melee Smash, Adv. Melee Smash, Fearless, Nip Up, Action Boost, Adrenaline Rush.

Scene Five: The Shanty Town

Lord Fowster (Smart Ordinary 5/Charismatic Ordinary 5), pg.282, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

Jimmy Sparks, Windy Daze, Wetworks Boys (Smart Ordinary 3/Dedicated Ordinary 3), pg.281, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

Scene Six: The Hideout

Guards (Strong Ordinary 1/Tough Ordinary 1), pg.273, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

Guard Captain (Strong Ordinary 5/Tough Ordinary 5), pg.274, *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

Richard Nixon (Smart 5/Fast 5); CR 10; Str 10, Dex 13 (+1), Con 12 (+1), Int 16 (+3), Wis 10, Cha 15 (+2); Sv Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +6; Init +5; BAB +5; Defence 17; Grapple +5; hp 45.

Skills: Balance +9, Escape Artist +9, Sleight of Hand +9, Knowledge (politics) +11, Hide +9, Move Silently +9, Tumble +11, Craft (mechanical) +11, Computer Use +11, Disable device +16 (Savant), Forgery +11, Profession +8, Knowledge (business) +11, Repair +8.

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Trustworthy, Improved Initiative, Elusive Target, Defensive Martial Arts, Iron Will, Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, Combat throw, Acrobatic.

Talents: Evasion, Opportunist, Uncanny Dodge 1, Exploit Weakness, Plan, Savant.

Ronald Reagan (Tough 6/Personality 5); CR 11; Str 15 (+2), Dex 11, Con 13 (+1), Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 16 (+3); Sv Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3; Init +0; BAB +6; Defence 15; Grapple +8; hp 69.

Skills: Bluff +6, Move Silently +4, Perform (act) +8, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (popular culture) +5, Profession +5, Intimidate +11, Ride +9, Climb +5.

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Renown, Brawl, Improved Brawl, Toughness, Knockout Punch, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Streetfighting, Defensive Martial Arts.

Talents: Damage Reduction 1, 2, 3, Unlimited Access, Royalty, Winning Smile, Bonus Class Skill (Move Silently).

George Bush Senior (Fast 5/Dedicated 2); CR 7; Str 11, Dex 12 (+1), Con 13 (+1), Int 15 (+2), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 13 (+1); Sv Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; Init +1; BAB +4; Defence 17; Grapple +4, Colt +6 (2d6 dam, 40 ft. range increments); hp 44.

Skills: Investigate +7, Sense Motive +9, Profession +5, Balance +9, Hide +11, Move Silently +11, Craft (mechanical) +10, Pilot +9, Tumble +9, Knowledge (current affairs) +10.

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Double Tap, Aircraft Operation, Elusive Target, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (colt).

Talents: Evasion, Increased Speed, Uncanny Dodge, Skill Emphasis (Sense Motive).

George W. Bush (Charismatic 5); CR 5; Str 13 (+1), Dex 13 (+1), Con 13 (+1), Int 9 (-1), Wis 10, Cha 13 (+1); Sv Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; Init +1; BAB +2; Defence 14 (Dodge); Grapple +4, Colt +3 (2d6 dam, 40 ft. range increments); hp 25.

Skills: Bluff +9, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +9, Disguise +9, Profession +8, Knowledge (popular culture) +7.

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Dodge, Run.

Talents: Fast Talk, Charm (republicans), Dazzle.

Bill Clinton (Charismatic 8/Personality 5); CR 13; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 13 (+1), Int 16 (+3), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 17 (+3); Sv Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +6; Init +0; BAB +6; Defence 18 (Defensive MA); Grapple +6; Sex Toy (acts as club) +6 (1d4 damage); hp 61.

Skills: Bluff +23, Nookie +23, Profession +9, Diplomacy +21, Investigate +11, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +13, Handle animal +13, Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Drive +5, Perform (sexy dance) +13, Craft (writing) +13, Knowledge (popular culture) +13.

Feats: Simple Weapons Proficiency, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Deceptive, Creative (applies to Nookie in this case), Blow Your Way to the Top, Dodge Responsibility, Promiscuous, Teflon Skin, defensive Martial arts, Frightful Presence (in his underpants).

Talents: Fast Talk, Charm (girls), Dazzle, Taunt, Unlimited Access, Bonus Class skill (Investigate), Deceptive, Royalty.

Monica Lewinsky (Smart 4/Criminal Mastermind 10); CR 14; Str 9 (-1), Dex 13 (+1), Con 10, Int 18 (+4), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 14 (+2); Sv Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +11; Init +1; BAB +5; Defence 14; Grapple +4; Ranged +6 (Luger, 2d6, 30 ft. range increments); hp 55.

Skills: Bluff +19, Diplomacy +15, Forgery +26, Intimidate +17, Profession +23, Research +24, Sense Motive +16, Gather Information +7, Investigate +16, Listen +7, Computer Use +11, Craft (chemical) +11, Craft (pharmaceutical) +11, Decipher Script +11, Demolition +13, Knowledge (technology) +11, Knowledge (tactics) +11, Knowledge (arcane lore) +11, Nookie +8.

Feats: Backstabbing Bitch, Deceptive, Lightning Reflexes, Meticulous, Me, me, me, Scriptwriting Stooze, Frightful Presence (the white suit), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Extra Life, Confident, Cautious.

Talents: Exploit Weakness, Plan, Infallible Scheme, Mooks, Backup Plan, Thugs, Mind like a steel trap, Sidekicks, Fortress of Doom.





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